

ARE YOU DOING WHAT IT TAKES?

TEXT: COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

■ Columnist Herb Caen writes in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, “Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the fastest lion or it will be killed. Every morning a lion wakes up. It knows it must outrun the slowest gazelle or it will starve to death. It doesn’t matter whether you are a lion or a gazelle; when the sun comes up, you’d better be running.”

Spurgeon writes likewise, “If you are not seeking the Lord, the Devil is seeking you. If you are not seeking the Lord, judgment is at your heels.”

In the Christian life, it’s not enough simply to wake up. We are called to run, to become more like Christ, to press ahead in godliness.” (Larson, 216)

Despite the false teachers’ desire to lead the church astray through the promise of a so-called “superior knowledge,” Paul believed that he was writing to a church that was willing to hold fast to the gospel of Christ. The Gnostics taught that “Christ was a good place to begin.” Paul reminds them that Christ is the *only* place to begin and the *only* place to finish. It is Christ plus nothing! It is his prayer for the Colossians that they will be “filled” with the knowledge of God’s will. He wants them to comprehend the will of God as it pertains to their personal life and as it pertains to the purpose of God as a whole. His point is simple: to understand the will of God is to understand more about God Himself. This is the only spiritual “knowledge” they needed. His exhortation is simple: we must do whatever it takes to grow in God and walk worthy of the Lord.

Paul presents several essential *elements* to guide us in walking or living in a manner that both pleases the Lord and shows the world that we belong to Him:

- 1) We must walk worthy of the Lord (v.10).
- 2) We must increase in our knowledge of God (v. 10).
- 3) We must be patient and long-suffering (v. 11).
- 4) We must have a thankful heart (vv. 12-14).

I. WE MUST WALK WORTHY OF THE LORD (v.10).

A. Our walk must please the Lord in motive and practice.

Our “walk” is our conduct. ■ “In the Hebrew mind, knowledge and conduct were bound together. But in Gnostic culture, teaching was highly speculative and theoretical, not related to life. There was even one school of Gnosticism which reasoned that since the body was evil and the spirit was good, it did not make any difference what one did in the body. So they did anything and everything!” (Hughes, 24)

B. Our walk must produce fruit that glorifies the Lord.

Simply put, others should see your faith, God should be glorified and souls should be won to Christ.

II. WE MUST INCREASE IN OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (v.10).

A. Being fruitful increases our knowledge of God. It’s based on the principle of “cause and effect.”

B. The knowledge of God produces spiritual growth.

■ Curtis Vaughn writes, “What rain and sunshine are to the nurture of plants, the knowledge of God is to the growth and maturing of the spiritual life.”
(Barker and Kohlenberger, 818)

III. WE MUST BE PATIENT AND LONG-SUFFERING (v.11).

A. Godly patience is achieved by trusting in the strength of His glorious power.

■ Someone said, “Patience is accepting a difficult situation without giving God a deadline to remove it.

B. It is the power of God that allows us to be confident and joyful in adversity.

■ N. T. Wright explains, “A patient and long-suffering spirit, the quiet corollary of faith, hope, and love, is the product of the settled conviction that the Father of Jesus Christ is the sovereign Lord of the world, and that he is able to bring about his purposes in his own time and manner.”

(Barker and

Kohlenberger, 60)

IV. WE MUST HAVE A THANKFUL HEART (vv.12-14).

We should be thankful because....

A. God has made it possible for us “to share in the inheritance of the saints.” (v. 12)

B. He has delivered us from the power of darkness. (v. 13a)

CONCLUSION

■ Dr. Paul Brand was speaking to a medical college in India on “Let your light so shine before men that they may behold your good works and glorify your Father.” In front of the lectern was an oil lamp, with its cotton wick burning from the shallow dish of oil. As he preached, the lamp ran out of oil, the wick burned dry, and the smoke made him cough. He immediately used the opportunity.

“Some of us here are like this wick,” he said. “We’re trying to shine for the glory of God, but we stink. That’s what happens when we use ourselves as the fuel of our witness rather than the Holy Spirit.

“Wicks can last indefinitely, burning brightly and without irritating smoke, if the fuel, the Holy Spirit, is in constant supply.” (Larson, 26)

Walking worthy involves being like Christ as the Spirit enables us. Through Christ, it is possible to be fruitful, knowledgeable of God, patient,

long-suffering, and thankful --all of which are important *elements* of a victorious life in Christ.

Are you doing what it takes to walk worthy of Christ today?

References

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