

JESUS CHRIST, OUR ALL IN ALL

A Study of Colossians

STUDY TWO

A Prayer Worth Remembering and Modeling

Colossians 1:9–14

False teachers promise you a kind of knowledge and wisdom and understanding, but it isn't the knowledge of God's will. It's their new doctrine that is stimulating, and they deliver it with great charisma and persuasion. Some of the best communicators on the planet are false teachers.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

THE late Bible teacher and pastor Warren Wiersbe hit the nail on the head when he summarized the nature of false teaching: “Satan is so deceptive! He likes to borrow Christian vocabulary, but he does not use the Christian dictionary!”¹

Erroneous teaching sprouted throughout the Colossian church. It sounded intriguing, even wise, on the surface—using terms new believers would have been familiar with. Yet, at its heart, this teaching downplayed Jesus and distorted the will of God. After learning the news of this heresy from Epaphras, Paul quickly dropped to his knees in prayer and then rushed a letter to kill the doctrinal weeds in this newly planted garden of God.

So what did Paul pray? In fact, he told them in his letter, and it has been preserved for us all these years. We have it in Colossians 1:9–14, and it's that very subject that we focus on in this *Searching the Scriptures* Bible study. Paul perfectly models how Christians should pray for other Christians—even those whom you haven't even met.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

A Prayer Worth Remembering and Modeling
Colossians 1:9–14



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Before delving into the pool of Scripture, we should pray for the Spirit's aid. Use the prayer below to help you prepare your heart and mind for this study.

Father, I cannot thank You often enough that I have Your Word of Life translated so clearly for my understanding and working in me so profoundly for my transformation. I dedicate this time to You that You may use it for Your glory as You increase my knowledge of Your will and mold me into the image of Your Son, Jesus, in whose name I pray. Amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Paul had already mentioned his prayers for the Colossians in 1:3. He then shared the specifics of how he had prayed for them in verses 9–14. Paul's cosmic and lofty language flagged to the recipients that their embrace of Jesus had drastic effects . . . and that their new spiritual threat, tempting them away from Jesus, posed a danger of the highest level.



Observation: We Have Not Stopped Praying for You

During observation, we carefully think over the words of the text and how they relate to one another—not aimlessly but with purpose and direction. We want to know what the text says.² To do this effectively, we need to look for key components like:

1. The who, what, where, when, why, and how
2. What we can see, touch, taste, hear, and smell
3. The logical connections, flow of thoughts, and range of subjects
4. What's repeated, emphasized, related, alike, and unlike
5. What's written before and after



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Of the components listed above, those in categories three and four hold the most prominence in Paul's letter, followed by those in category one. Using these categories, observe *Colossians 1:9–14* and record what's noteworthy.

What spiritual blessings did Paul ask God to give to the Colossians (*Colossians 1:9, 11*)?

Don't just pray for someone else's health or success or material needs or social connections or relationships. Pray for these specific things that are mentioned right here . . . because I need to warn you, ours is a culture of deception. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

According to *Colossians 1:10*, what spiritual outcome did Paul want for them?



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Colossians 1:12–14 states why Paul prayed for them. What spiritual realities had happened to these new believers which led Paul to pray on their behalf?

Paul did not say God *would* deliver the Colossians from the kingdom of darkness. *God already had!* When people place their faith in Jesus, God immediately transfers them into the kingdom of His dear Son. Though they remain in the system of the world, darkness no longer enslaves them. Christians walk as children of the light. Already the sun is dawning. Soon, evil will pass away.



Interpretation: Producing Every Kind of Good Fruit

During interpretation, we seek to understand the text. Understanding the historical, cultural, and linguistic context of the passage helps us discern its theological truth. That truth is precisely what God wants us to believe and follow today.

For this study, you will need your commentary. Pastor Chuck's *Insights on Colossians* is a must-have for your library if you don't own a copy. An excellent online tool for this study is *Constable's Notes*. Before you consult these resources, however, formulate in your own words the meaning of the phrases discussed below and then compare them with the study tools. Then prepare for those lightbulbs to start flashing!

Looking at *Colossians 1:9*, distinguish and define what Paul meant when he said, “knowledge of his will” and “spiritual wisdom and understanding.”



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Distinguish and define “endurance” and “patience” as used in *Colossians 1:11*. Paul referred to these traits as outcomes of our being strengthened with God’s glorious power. Why do we need God’s strength to endure and have patience? What spiritual attacks do Christians normally face that require endurance and patience?

Colossians 1:11–12 states that Paul wanted the Colossians to live with joy and gratitude. *Verse 11* mentions how we receive this joy, and *verses 13–14* mention the *cause* for our gratitude. Summarize these logical connections below.

Such radical living flows out of an act of God on our behalf and the work of God in our hearts. We rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy because He did exactly that—Christ died for sinners and gave us a faith more precious than gold.



Correlation: On Guard against False Teaching

False teaching did not confine itself to Colossae in the early church. Nearly every book in the New Testament, in some way or another, mentions this invasive problem. Jude, like Paul, also felt compelled to address it by writing a short, twenty-five-verse letter that describes the lives of false teachers, explains their teaching, and counsels us on how we can guard against their errors.



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Read through *Jude* and summarize what he said on these three topics.

False Teachers

False Teaching

Guarding against False Teaching

Watch out for any teacher or any ministry that encourages exclusivity, regularly criticizes good teachers and reliable ministries, or engages in nonstop self-promotion.

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Application: Pray like Paul

To help you incorporate into your life the truths of this biblical passage, Pastor Chuck shares three simple guidelines to use when you pray for others.

1. *Pray faithfully*: Stay at it! Don't lose hope on lost friends or family. Don't accept Satan's lie that "so-and-so will never change." You worship the God of limitless possibilities.
2. *Pray specifically*: Toss out vague, complacent, lifeless language. Name your request. Specify the spiritual outcome you want in the lives of those you pray for.
3. *Pray confidently*: God can do it! Yes, He is able to do "infinitely more than we might ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). Plus, it delights our Father to give good gifts to His children.

Reflect on how you have prayed in the recent past. In what areas has your prayer life been strong? In what areas has it been weak?

How can you better follow Pastor Chuck's guidelines?

Only with the Spirit's power and illumination can a person embrace the gospel that gives life and cling to the same gospel that sustains life. That was the goal of Paul's praying back then. That is the goal of our praying today.



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A FINAL PRAYER

Choose one person for whom you can pray using Paul’s model and Pastor Chuck’s tips. Record your intercession below.

ENDNOTES

1. Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2007), 664.
2. Visit [sts.insight.org](https://www.sts.insight.org) to learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study.

