

All In A Life Of Commitment November 15, 2020

Session #5—Committed to Pray Colossians 1:3-12

Scottish evangelist Oswald Chambers has stated: “Prayer does not fit us for the greater work. Prayer is the greater work.” Do you believe this?

Bob Branen (Faye’s husband) related a poignant story years ago. He was hospitalized, seriously ill. He lamented to his Pastor, Dr. Garber, that he could no longer serve as a master carpenter on church youth trips. Paul Garber responded: “You can choose now to be a prayer warrior.” Have you chosen to be a prayer partner?

PAUL’S CONNECTION TO THE COLOSSIAN CHURCH

Paul never met the Colossians. You can see this by viewing his three missionary journals. He had a friend Epaphras who ministered there (Colossians 1:7) and was concerned about a problem being introduced there: Gnosticism. According to the Gnostics God could not be known. Eons were manifestations of deity. Christ was an eon to them.

Paul began his letter to the Colossians with a plea for prayer. The point: Commit to pray for the salvation and spiritual growth of others. This commitment to prayer for others is our lesson today.

COLOSSIANS 1:3-6A

Let’s look at verse 3. Paul addresses God personally as Father of Jesus Christ to contrast with a Gnostic eon. He thanks God for the Colossian believers. Verse 4 verifies why (faith in Christ and agape love they show to the saints). Verse 5 gives a reward for these Christians (hope in heaven). The Colossians are aware of this hope because of what? (the truth of the gospel).

We have learned the first way we can pray for the glory of God and the health of the church: **PRAY WITH THANKSGIVING FOR OTHER BELIEVERS.** How might your prayer life be different if you focused on thanking God for other believers?

COLOSSIANS 1:6B-8

This passage speaks of God’s gospel and how the Colossians learned through Epaphras, Paul’s servant. You can read more of him in Philemon 1:23 (fellow prisoner), and in Colossians 4:12-13. Epaphras was from Colossae, worked with Paul and always prayed for the Colossians.

What did Epaphras appreciate about the Colossian church? These Christians had **LOVE IN THE SPIRIT.** What does that mean? This agape love comes from the Holy Spirit. It floods our heart and spills over into the lives of people around us. We bear witness to God’s love.

What kind of prayer is emphasized here? **PRAY FOR THOSE WHO MINISTER AND SPREAD THE GOSPEL.** What specific things can we pray for ministers, church leaders, and missionaries?

COLOSSIANS 1:9-12

Now we come to Paul's prayer for the Colossian Church. He is filled with hope for them because of verse 8: "Epaphras has told us about your **LOVE IN THE SPIRIT.**" What does Paul ask for these Christians? That they:

Be filled with the Knowledge of God's will;
Be fully pleasing to the Lord;
Bear fruit in every good work;
Grow in God's knowledge;
Be strengthened with all power;
Have great endurance and patience;
Joyfully give thanks to our Father.

Paul uses two terms to define these characteristics. First, he asks that the Colossians **WALK** worthy of the Lord. Your lesson book explains that this metaphor meant ethical behavior or conduct. To walk in the Lord, we need His guidance and power—we need prayer and Bible teaching.

Secondly, Paul refers to "the saints' inheritance in the **LIGHT**" (verse 12).

Jesus said: "You are the light of the world...let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven". ~~Matthew 5:14, 16

"When Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life'". ~~John 8:12

Jesus Christ is the true light. As we follow Him, we need to reflect His light to the world.

We need to echo Apostle Paul as **WE PRAY FOR THE SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF OTHER BELIEVERS.** The engage section of your Sunday School Study (p. 140) encourages you to pray for individuals who would welcome your **THANKSGIVING—MINISTERING/SHARING GOSPEL—SPIRITUAL GROWTH.**

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