

98-07-10a Colossians

Let's prepare to resume our study in Colossians this evening by opening with a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for blessing us and for preserving us, for providing for our needs and for giving us the opportunity to worship in freedom and with no distractions to take away from our concentration.

We pray tonight as we look at the scriptures that God the Holy Spirit will give us insight and understanding. We pray that these things will be more than just words that rest on the page, or words that we hear spoken, but that they will enter into our hearts and our souls and become the power unto salvation that Paul writes about in Romans. That God the Holy Spirit will take these things and transform us, renew our minds, and conform us more closely to the image of our Savior.

We ask these things in His name. Amen. Well, we resume after a break of some weeks in our study of Colossians by way of a quick one-minute review.

We know the situation in Colossae. We know that this small church meeting in the home of Philemon and his family has formed and grown by the conversion of people who live in the Lycus Valley who come out of a predominantly Greek culture. There may be some Jewish influences, but even those have been Hellenized and they are primarily coming from a pagan background in which existed a lot of vice and immorality.

But due to the ministry of Paul in the region, and more particularly following their salvation due to the teaching ministry of Epaphras, their pastor, these people have come to appreciate God the Father and relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. They are making progress as they learn the word of truth under Epaphras. After a period of time has passed, they have grown, their lives are bearing fruit.

They are progressing in their understanding and in their inner transformation through the things of God. Epaphras realizes that there is a process of erosion taking place due to the environment in which they live. There is a backward pull back into the culture from which they came, their old habits, their old associations, their old vices.

There is also the attack of religion in various forms, philosophy and religion in the area. There are some vestiges of Jewish religion, ritual type behavior, people who claim that their Bible is the oldest Bible and their Bible is older than anything Paul said or Epaphras said. In order to truly worship God, they need to learn those scriptures, the Old Testament.

There are those who have developed what they believe to be greater insight than the Apostle Paul has or Epaphras has into what God desires, into the things of God, whether it's angels or the things that please God by way of lifestyle. So these ideas and these teachings are confronting the people in this church, and not only here but also in Laodicea and all the way down the valley to

the coast where Ephesus and the church at Ephesus exists. This was the primary location, the headquarters for Paul when he evangelized this region some years before.

So there is a maelstrom of ideas swirling around these people and their faith has been called into doubt. Some things that in their innocence and their naivete, perhaps when they first came to faith in Christ, they took for granted, they took Epaphras at his word, they heard some of them the teaching of Paul, either first hand or second hand, and they just accepted these things. But now these things have been undermined and called into question by these other ideas.

You don't really understand the whole picture. You've done well as far as you've come, but now let us help you along to a greater, more fulfilling life. And there's doubt in the air.

There's uncertainty in the air. There's also temptation and the backward pull of the culture. So it's like a lot of things.

You can sort of get a running start. When I was little, my dad made a go-kart out of 2x4s and old wagon wheels and things. It had a swiveling front end and a rope to steer with.

I think every boy that's ever lived has had a go-kart. And the thing I remember about that go-kart is that it was great when your brother or your friend got behind you and pushed and gave you some momentum. They'd run as fast as they could and they'd give you that final push and hopefully not fall down and knock all the skin off their palms on the asphalt.

And you'd be rolling. And if you were going downhill or something, that's great. But if you level out or if you hit an upgrade, especially a homemade go-kart, it doesn't really have a whole lot of rolling ability.

And so it slows down as soon as the push is gone. Well, Epaphras has pushed them to a certain level. He's taught the Word of God, God the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God in their souls.

It's brought them to a good place. They're at sort of an intermediate stage as believers. Paul commends them, as we have seen in the first several verses here, for their faith, their hope, and their love.

They've made progress, they've grown, and their lives are bearing fruit. As he tells them in verse 6, the gospel that has come to you is bearing fruit among you ever since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in the truth. The truth was communicated, the truth reveals the grace of God.

When they came to a knowledge of that grace, fruit started growing and being produced in their souls. All of this was fine. But now the go-kart is hitting a little bit of resistance.

There's a little bit of an uphill climb. There's the resistance of ideas. There's the resistance of old habits and old associations.

And now we're getting into a little bit of a faith test. A little bit of a commitment test for the Colossian believers. Do you really understand what it is that your new life is all about? What it consists of? This happens a lot to parents when their children become teenagers.

Because you can imagine this scenario. You may have lived through this scenario yourself where you may have wandered around or kind of knocked around or sort of gradually fell into church and learned some things. And then at a certain point, you really sort of catch.

Your interest is caught by a particular teacher or a particular church or some push that you get behind your go-kart that really gets you moving. And you realize that the things of God are important and you build up some momentum and you build up an interest. And you learn and you grow and you really feel that sense of acceleration in your spiritual life and growth.

Then after a time, the newness and the excitement sort of tapers back to a more comfortable level and you're sort of putting one foot in front of the other and moving along. And then, especially if you're a parent, and this is only one example, but one of the ways that you find out that this is what happens if you are a parent because your children as they get into the teenage years and then go out into the world, they get exposed to all of these same types of things that the Colossians are being exposed to. They go out and say something that they've heard at home or that they've heard at church about Christ or about God or about the things of God.

And somebody comes back and says, Where did you get that? What makes you think that's true? And it's one of these things that's been heard and repeated and taken for granted for so long that maybe they don't have the foundation underneath it. And they say, Well, I don't know. I thought everybody believed that.

So they go back home and they say, Well, Mom, Dad, I was talking about this subject today with another Christian or with somebody at school or one of my friends, and they don't think that's so. And they pointed out a verse over here in Scripture that seems to say something different. What's the deal? How do we know this is so? And then you begin to find out, whether it's through your children or through your own conversations or whatever, well, there seem to be some things I've sort of just taken for granted because I trust my teacher, I trust the Word of God at face value, but when challenged, I'm not sure I really have the deep roots to be able to defend and argue for these things.

And I'm not Josh McDowell or somebody that can write a book and defend the faith and these things we believe, evidence that demands a verdict and this sort of thing. I just take these things for granted. I think they're so, but I'm not sure I can really document my faith.

This seems to be what took place in Colossae. They had that momentum that got up to a certain point, but now these ideas and this opposition is sort of filtering in from the environment. That happens to us today.

It happens to our children. It can happen to us. We can be happy-go-lucky, perfectly content with what we've learned and we rely on it, we exercise faith in it, we learn, we grow, we flourish.

Then from some unexpected quarter, it can be in your family or it can be in a conversation or you go off for a special event like a retreat or a conference or something and you get in conversation and somebody presents a conflicting viewpoint that raises doubt in your mind and you're not really confident like you were before. You're not really certain like you were before. You've never really stopped and thought.

And so now there's this element of doubt. You might even go back to the source where you learned these things at first and that source just says the same things they've always said. And it doesn't reinforce.

You think, well, you know, I've heard all that before, but it doesn't satisfy my doubt. It doesn't answer my questions. This, I think, is what happened in Colossae.

And Epaphras, he says, teaches the same things he's always taught, but it's not doing the job. It's not getting the message across. It's not firming up and confirming the truth in the minds of his congregation.

So he goes to Paul. He says, Paul, you're the apostle. You taught me these things.

You have this special gift of insight and understanding in the things of God. Help me take back to my little flock the things that will reinforce their faith and their soul. Here's the things that have come up.

These are the things that they face. They're no longer sure that they're really pleasing God, that they are experiencing the fullness of life in Christ. People keep telling them they need more.

They should do more. They should do certain things. They should, they should, they should.

So Paul recognizes this. From his experience as an apostle, he has seen the whole gamut from beginning to end, baby believers to mature believers, all of the different forces that come against them. And he recognizes this and he says, I'll tell you what, Epaphras, I'll sit down and write a letter.

I'll write your congregation a letter. We'll send it back. I was going to write a letter anyway to Philemon to get Onesimus back in the household there.

And we'll just pack this letter along. And I had a letter underway to the church in Laodicea. We'll just put them all in the same pouch.

We'll send them back there. I can address all these things. We have Tychicus to carry them back there.

And we'll get the believers there something fresh for the Holy Spirit to use in their souls. So he writes this letter. This is one of the reasons that you will notice as we go through the remainder of chapter 1 and into chapter 2, the recurrence of this little three-letter Greek word, pas, P-A-S, which means all.

We sort of scanned through, I think, a few lessons back and noticed how many times Paul uses this word. It begins in verse 9. For this reason we, since the day we heard of your faith, your hope and your love, we do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled. What does filled mean? It doesn't mean that you may have an ample portion.

It doesn't mean that you'll have a pretty good quantity. Filled is a totality kind of word. If you fill a glass... My grandpa had a horse named Fill-a-Glass once.

But if you fill a glass, it's full. That's all you can put in it. You've heard this analogy where people are talking about priorities.

So they take a glass jar and they've got some big rocks. They've got some small rocks, like gravel. Then they've got some sand.

And they say, well, let's look at this jar. Let's see if we can fill up this jar. So they put in all the sand.

The sand fills it nearly full. And they say, well, now let's put in the rocks. Well, they won't fit.

You can't put the big rocks in there because it's already got all this sand in. So they dump the sand back out and they say, now let's try it a different way. And they put the big rocks in first.

You fit like three or four of these big rocks in. Then they say, well, now is this jar full? People say, well, it's full of rocks. But can you fill it any more? Yes, you can.

You take the gravel, you put it in there, and it fills in all the spaces around the big rocks. And they say to the audience, well, now is this jar full? By then people are wising up. They say, well, probably not.

So then they take the sand and you pour the sand in there and it fills all the cracks between the big rocks and the gravel. So now the thing, you know, you can't see through it at all. It's got the big rocks, the little rocks, and the sand.

And so then they turn to the audience and say, well, now is it full? And everybody says, yes, now it's full. It can't fit anything else in there. So then the guy reaches around and gets a pitcher of water, pours water in there, which filters between the rocks and the gravel and the sand, and fills it up to the brim.

The point of that little demonstration is priorities. You've got to put your big rocks in first so that

everything else will fit. If you put your little stuff in first, you can't get your big stuff in, the big rocks meaning your major priorities and so forth.

But it has the idea of full. Are you full? The interesting thing about verse 9 here, when he says that he prays and asks that they may be filled with the knowledge of his will. And when we think about filling in a Christian's life, what do we think about? Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.

But here Paul says, he doesn't say, I pray that you may be filled with the Spirit, does he? He says, I pray that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. There is a much greater emphasis on the acquisition of this knowledge and spiritual understanding than there is on the acquisition of the Spirit in the epistles. Why do you suppose that is? Why does Paul spend much more time? You can remember when we went back and surveyed all of the chapter 1 greetings, looking at the thankfulness of Paul.

Remember in addition to the thanksgiving that he describes in each of those chapter 1's, you also find references to the truth and to the knowledge of his will and so forth. Time and time again, you can't even enumerate. I could give you a page of solid references, of nothing but Paul talking about the knowledge of God.

How many passages do you find where he is saying, be filled with the Spirit? Well, there is only the one. So, that should tell us something. Why doesn't he say more about the filling of the Spirit? Acquiring fullness of the Spirit.

Well, because we've already got it. The Spirit is there. The Spirit is with us.

He indwells us. He seals us. He fills us.

He gifts us. He regenerates us. Those are your five, by the way.

If you don't have them written down somewhere, your five ministries of God the Holy Spirit. It's a nice thing to memorize and to understand what the Holy Spirit does at salvation. Of course, number one, he regenerates.

He gives us new life. Secondly, he seals us. This is the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

We're baptized into Christ. We're sealed into Christ. He indwells us.

He takes up residence in us. And I find nothing in Scripture to indicate that he ever leaves. Jesus says, I have to go away, but I'm going to send you another comforter.

He will be with you. He's going to take my place to comfort you. His name is the Comforter.

The paraklesis, the one who is called alongside. So, he indwells. He gifts us.

He is the bestower of our spiritual function. What is our spiritual gift? It is the thing that we do or the thing that we are that benefits other believers. Your spiritual gift functions around and with other believers.

It is for the benefit of the body of Christ. And it may have a name and it may not. Just being yourself, it may just be your sparkling personality or your unfailing good cheer or your natural nature for helping or for serving or for encouraging or for staying with and bearing with some of the rest of us that have obnoxious characteristics and obnoxious personalities.

Some people are just very flexible and very gracious. It doesn't seem to abrade them. They've got a special sort of a Teflon skin to deal with other people in the body of Christ that most of us can hardly ever get along with.

And just being that way, that may be your gift. That's your contribution to the body of Christ. It's like a piece of cartilage between two bones in a joint.

You are the thing that reduces the friction and that helps things to move along. It's a gift. Not everybody can do that.

Not everyone has the patience. Not everyone has the particular kind of faith. You talk about the gift of faith.

It's not a gift of being faithful unto death and being burned at the stake and so forth. It's a particular kind of faith. It's trusting God in unusual circumstances for a specific purpose.

And there are people that are just gifted in that way. So don't worry about your spiritual gift. If you concentrate on the things that Paul is talking about in Colossians 1 and 2 here, your gift is going to function.

It's going to bear fruit all over the place. And you may never even be able to put a name to it. But that's what the Holy Spirit does.

He regenerates. He seals. He indwells.

He gifts. And He fills. And the filling of the Holy Spirit is a subject unto itself.

But the distinction that people have made between indwelling and filling is not always accurate. It kind of depends on what people say. But if you're thinking about the presence of the Holy Spirit, the presence of the Holy Spirit in our souls, that is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

And He doesn't leave. Because He could not maintain His sealing ministry if He left. He seals us unto the day of redemption.

The day of redemption is when Christ returns. And if the Holy Spirit left you, you'd lose your

salvation. Because He is the mark.

He is the seal. When God assigns Him to us, that identifies us as a believer. The indwelling Holy Spirit is our seal.

In Greek, it's arabon, A-R-R-A-B-O-N. It's the clay seal that went on a scroll. And He seals us unto the day of redemption.

He seals us into the body of Christ. He seals us into relationship with the Father. And His very presence is that seal and that mark.

He's like that owner's stamp. And He never leaves. You can go out and be a mass murderer.

You can do the most awful things. You can backslide as far as you want to. And there's going to be all kinds of terrible consequences.

But the Holy Spirit leaving is not one of them. It is a unique ministry in this age. The Holy Spirit could leave believers in terms of His ministry, His specific ministry, like the King Saul.

The Holy Spirit departed from Him. But that doesn't happen in our dispensation. So, the filling of the Spirit is an important subject to understand.

But here, Paul doesn't even mention it. He says, My prayer for you is not that you may be filled with the Spirit. My prayer for you is that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Why? Because that's what the Holy Spirit uses. What is the sword of the Spirit? What does it say over in Ephesians 6? What is the sword of the Spirit? It's the Word of God. If you don't know the Word of God, what is the Holy Spirit going to use? What is He going to swing in His hand when it's time to operate? When you need a sword, you don't want to have, you know, you see these movies, these tongue-in-cheek musketeer movies and so forth, where a guy thinks he's grabbing a sword and he actually gets a candle and the other guy just whacks it into little giblets.

If it's time for a sword, you've got to have the real thing. There is no substitute for a sword in a sword fight. You know, you see guys using wooden sticks and fire pokers and other things, but they don't use that for very long.

They don't carry it around. They say, you know, this fire poker works even better than a sword. I think I'll just carry that around.

You've got to have a sword. And the best sword is a two-edged sword so you can hack coming and going. You don't have to swing once like the old broadsword in England was sharp on one side and big old heavy thing, four or five feet long, and whack with it once and then you had to raise it back up.

It's like a single-action revolver where, you know, you pull the trigger and the hammer falls, and then you've got to let the trigger all the way out and pull the trigger again to have it cock back. But the two-edged sword, you can swing one way and then you can get them on the backstroke. So God the Holy Spirit needs a sword.

He has no words to speak. He doesn't speak from himself. Jesus says in John, along there in 15, when he's talking about the ministry of the Spirit, he says he's not going to say anything out of his own mind.

He's not going to pull anything out of his own treasure box. He's going to speak my words. He's going to communicate the things pertaining to me to you.

Everything God the Holy Spirit speaks has to do with Christ. It's the Word of Christ. That's what he speaks.

He doesn't just come along and say, Hi there, I'm the Holy Spirit. Let me tell you a few things about myself or about why I'm here. He doesn't make an issue out of himself.

His objective is to focus us on Christ and through Christ to God the Father. So if you want the Holy Spirit active in your life, if you want to feel the power of the Spirit and the filling of the Spirit, don't run around trying to seek the Spirit. He's already there.

Seek the Word. Because being filled with the knowledge of God's will, that's what gives the Holy Spirit words to speak. Now he's got something he can use.

The Word of God is alive and powerful. It's sharper than a two-edged sword. It pierces to the dividing asunder of the soul and the spirit and the joints and the marrow.

It is the critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Notice the Holy Spirit is not the critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart. It's the Word.

Who is wielding that Word? Who is inserting that sharp sword? Who is doing the dividing asunder? Swords don't just run around hacking and slashing on their own. They don't work without an operator. So you have this wonderful picture of balance in the soul because you have the Spirit of God and the Word of God.

If you cultivate the Spirit and neglect the Word, you're lost because the Holy Spirit will have nothing to say. You don't give him any words to speak. You give him no sword to wield.

If you seek the Word apart from the Spirit, you're going to have the knowledge that puffs up. But that knowledge, if the Holy Spirit is not able to wield that sword, it's not going to pierce to the dividing asunder of your soul and your spirit. It's not going to be a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

And if it doesn't get in there and critique your thoughts and your motivations, it can reside in there and just be an academic pursuit and something that flavors your conversation and gives you good grist for the mill when you get around other believers, but it doesn't really wreak any change. The Spirit has to be able to use the Word. We've gotten away from talking about being yielded and so forth.

I still don't like that vocabulary, but there is an element of humility to let the Holy Spirit do what he wants to do with the Word of God in your soul. You have to be seeking that. Search me, O God, and know my heart.

Try me and see if there be any wicked way in me. That's an Old Testament prayer from a man who had the Spirit and had the Word. And he says, God, search me.

Look around in my heart. Lay it open. Flay it open if you have to with the Word.

But root out bitterness. Root out anger. Root out fear.

Root out insecurity. Root out distractions. Eyes on self.

Eyes on people. Eyes on things. God the Holy Spirit does that with the Word.

The more of the Word that we give him to use by pursuing an understanding of the Word, the more active he's going to be. And his activity in our soul is what transforms our minds. His activity is what enables our growth.

He is going to prune and chop. He is going to break the rocks in our soil. He is going to encourage and cultivate growth in our soul.

And that's where the fruit is born. That's why it's called the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit is not in there.

He's not in there giving off apples and oranges and fruit, is he? Why is it called in Galatians 5.22 the fruit of the Spirit? He's the gardener. He is the one that cultivates it. He's the one that nurtures it.

He gives it just what it needs. He feeds it the right nutrients. He prunes when it needs pruning.

He weeds when it needs weeding. He hoes out the rocks and the stobs and things when those need to be removed. He uses the Word of Christ.

He uses the Word of God in our souls. And we talk about this and we've heard it for years. And sometimes, despite our best efforts, it still doesn't really... We don't stop and think about the fact that this is a really live activity that's actually going on in our own personal soul.

But if you stop and think about it, right now, right where you are sitting, God the Holy Spirit is

actually co-located with your soul. There actually is the Word of God in there with Him. And He has the ability to take it and make changes in our soul.

He can change what we think is important. He can change what we fear. He can change what we like.

He can change what we love. That's why in Romans 5.5, the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by whom? God the Holy Spirit. How can you be a person that has a genuine heart for ministry? A genuine ability to perceive and exploit opportunities for ministry? You have to give the Holy Spirit free reign in your soul.

You have to give Him something to work with in the form of the Word of God. And you have to want it. You have to pray like David prayed.

Search me and know my heart. Try me. See if there is any wicked way in me.

Get it out of there. Plow me up and make me fertile soil for that fruit. And what is the fruit? The interesting thing here in verse 9 when he says, to ask that you may be filled.

This, *pleroma*, is the Greek verb. You've probably heard it before in connection with the studies on filling, especially filling of the spirit. But *pleroma* normally takes a dative or a genitive object.

Be filled with something. A dative, in the old case system of Greek, we had the dative, the locative, and the instrumental. Now the new thing, it's like the new math that came in in the 60s and just messed everything up.

In my opinion, the new case system is more confusing. But we used to have a dative, a locative, or an instrumental. Dative means, you may have heard people talk about the dative of advantage or the dative of disadvantage.

It's, what does this relate to? I'm going to do this action. I'm going to perform this action with reference to somebody. It's either going to help them or it's going to hurt them.

I'm not doing it to them, but this action is going to have an effect on them. That's the dative. It may be to their advantage.

It may be to their disadvantage, usually. The locative means it's location, where I'm going to do this in a particular place. The instrumental means this is the means by which I'm going to do this action.

And so if you have a dative, locative, or instrumental, all three of them are spelled exactly the same. So when you see a verb and then you have a dative case next to it, you have to figure out, well, is this a dative, is it a locative, or is it an instrumental? And sometimes that's sort of a judgment call, and your theology can get in there and mess it up. But we don't even have to worry

about that here because we don't have a dative or a locative or an instrumental, and we don't have a genitive, which is also used with *pleroma*.

This is an unusual construction because we have the accusative, and you say, well, it's all Greek to me. The point here is if you translate this accurately into English, it doesn't say be filled with knowledge like you're going to get it in a pitcher and pour it into you, and you're just going to fill up and reach a limit. It says literally to be filled with respect to, and it puts it more in the realm of the abstract.

It doesn't mean walk around just every time you jiggle you slop over knowledge and wisdom. You're just full of it. You can't say anything but wisdom and knowledge.

It means when it comes to spiritual wisdom and understanding, my prayer for you is that you have as much of it as you can hold, that you are pushing the envelope when it comes to these things, that you're aggressively out there doing the Proverbs chapter 2 thing. You've got your pick and your shovel, and you're finding it. When you seek and search, you're finding it.

Be filled with respect to these things. It says that you may be filled with respect to the knowledge, and this is a word many of us are familiar with. It's not just *gnosis*.

It's *epinosis*. *Epi* is over or upon the preposition. When you put it together with the noun, it's over and above knowledge.

It's emphatic as far as knowledge goes. It's not just, well, I know that Athens is in Greece. I know that London is the capital of England.

It's a knowledge that makes a difference to you. It's a compelling knowledge. A man named Meyer has defined *epinosis* as knowledge which grasps and penetrates the object.

You know this thing, you grasp it, and you thoroughly understand it. It's a compelling type of knowledge. Paul prays that believers be filled with respect to this kind of knowledge, that when they go for it, it's there.

They have as much as they can hold. This knowledge of His will. This is the lemma.

This is not the overarching will of God encompassing every single thing in the universe. This is God's will with respect to us, our life, our moral choices, our operative choices in life. God's will as it relates to us.

That you be filled with the knowledge of His will. This is the whole issue in Colossae, isn't it? What is the will of God? These people are saying that it's God's will that I keep the Mosaic Law. These people are saying, oh, God's not even there, let's come back and have a party.

These other people are saying, well, to really please God, to be in His will, you need to be

acquainted with His intermediaries. Do we have any religions like that today that say there are intermediaries between man and God? I heard on the TV where they're fixing to make somebody, they're going to beatify them, and then they're going to turn them into a saint. Fixing to make a new saint out of someone.

I think, as I recall, it's like a politically correct saint. Somebody that I think is going to help the church along in some way by making them a saint. Catholic Church.

But the intermediaries. Mary is a great intermediary. Let's do all our praying to Mary.

She's got an in with God. God smiles on her a lot more than He does on me, so I'll talk to her and let her go in and make my case. Or I'll go talk to the priest and have him light a candle for me or tell me how many candles to light.

Then I'll have some authority for what I'm doing. Intermediaries. People were pushing this kind of a thing in the Lycus Valley.

They were saying, look, there's angels. These emissaries. Get acquainted with them.

We know their names. We know their functions. You can learn a lot about the spiritual realm if you pay attention to this.

We have the same kind of thing going on today. And the importance of knowing the will of God, being filled with respect to the knowledge of His will, that's the whole thing. If we don't have a knowledge of His will, there are a thousand different directions that we can spin off in.

If you're looking at a bullseye, if you're down on the rifle range, you think about all of the points in a sphere where you could shoot and miss the bullseye. There's only one bullseye. There's only one direction.

There's only one angle of elevation that you can fire to put a bullet through the bullseye. There are literally thousands of other directions you can go, and they're all wrong. If we don't understand the importance of knowing where the bullseye is and concentrating on it, we're going to aim at nothing and we're going to hit it every time.

So this is why the first thing, when Paul says, this is what I pray for you. I think of you, you're growing believers. What do I pray? I pray that you'll be filled with the knowledge of His will, that you'll know what God's will is.

That is what's going to equip you to filter out these strange things that are being thrown at you. That's what's going to restore your confidence that the things you heard at first are true. They're real.

They're factual. They're concrete. They represent the truth of the word and the will of God.

And for that reality to resume its rightful place in your soul, you've got to be filled with the knowledge of His will. So that's what Paul prays. And then he describes where you get that knowledge.

What is it? What does it consist of? Wisdom and spiritual understanding. Wisdom is the word Sophia. My parents had a dog named Sophia.

She was a black Cocker Spaniel. I think they named it for Sophia Loren. Her mother, who was her companion, was a blonde Cocker Spaniel.

Her name was Marilyn. So there was Marilyn and Sophia. Sophia in Greek means wisdom.

Sophia means it has to do with your mental faculties. Your brain is functioning. You're in a particular sphere of operation.

You can pick the simplest thing, ironing clothes. You have to have some knowledge about ironing clothes, as I have discovered when I first started trying to iron. If you turn the temperature to, of course, I've been reading about the old days where they had to put them on the stove, and they had a little clip handle, and you'd have three or four irons.

And this is where you get the thing, I've got too many irons in the fire. Well, you'd have all these little flat irons all in the fire, and if you leave them there too long, they get too hot. And so you'd have too many irons in the fire.

But you'd clip the handle onto one and pull it off and iron for a while, and, of course, there's no electricity in it, so it cools after you do like one leg of your pants. So you put it back on the stove and unclip it and clip the handle onto another iron. You'd get on there and iron the other leg of your pants.

And usually people would just have two or three irons, and they'd rotate them through. Well, now we've got these electric irons, and you can put water in them, and you can use spray starch, and you can do all these things. But for any people, I'm sure everybody is ironed, you know that you've got to know something.

You can't just go in there on your mother's silk blouse and start ironing away. It'll just crinkle and shrivel and never be the same. You can't set the thing too low and not make steam, because, at least in my iron, the water just dribbles out, and it gets wetter and wetter, and it turns into a sloppy mess.

You have to have some knowledge. You have to have some wisdom, not just, I understand the principle of plugging in an iron and it heats. I know that by applying pressure, the heat will unwrinkle the fabric and all this.

It's a practical knowledge that applies to a specific sphere. You know how to take this electrical

gadget and knock the wrinkles out of a piece of clothing without burning a hole in it or permanently changing its characteristics. So it's using your mental faculties to get a particular job done.

That's Sophia. Sophia is like a practical wisdom. And that's the word that Paul uses here when he says that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom.

Then the second word here is understanding. Understanding, Sophia, by the way, is S-O-P-H-I-A. The understanding word here in Greek is sunesis, S-U-N-E-S-I-S.

Sun means with, asis. To be honest with you, I didn't look it up. I don't know what it means.

But understanding, it has the idea of thinking with or using something, applying something that you know. And this is insight and discrimination. Based on your working knowledge, your Sophia wisdom, you've got some practical wisdom here, now you're going to exercise insight and discrimination.

In my ironing example, if you've put your iron on cotton and you've got it full of water and you've got your spray starch out, you're going to do all your cotton stuff first. You know the principles of ironing. You know how to do it.

That's your Sophia wisdom. But when you look at the basket of clothes, you say, I think based on what I know, it would be wise to do the cotton things first and use my spray starch and then set this aside, and then I'll cool the iron down and I'll do my lighter things. Maybe there's some things I don't want to use steam on.

I've got some wool or whatever, so I'll use up the water and the iron and then I'll use a dry iron on these other things. So you're making decisions and choices and you're prioritizing based on your practical knowledge. You know enough about ironing not only to iron, but also to do ironing in a way that's beneficial and that reaches out into your larger environment.

I'll get these things done here because I know that the person who wears them is fixing to leave and I'm not going to save that to last. You've got some insight and some discrimination. You're making choices and setting priorities based on what you know.

That's sunesis. And at the end of this, it says wisdom and understanding, and then the word spiritual is at the end, and it applies to them both, because this is all in the realm of the spiritual. This is what the Holy Spirit helps us out with.

So it's so important to know that the Spirit is there, to be positive to the idea of Him doing His work in our soul and to give Him something to work with, because He will take the Word of God and turn it into Sophia and sunesis in our souls. We'll know how to do the things that we need to do and we'll know when and where to do them and how it fits into the larger fabric of our life and the lives of others. What more do you need? That is fullness.

That's how to live your life. There is no more than that. That's the worthy walk.

That fulfills the purpose and the plan of God. And so that's what Paul prays. We'll take our break here and then we'll continue picking up in verse 10.