



By The Will Of God

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.
([Colossians 1:1-2 ESV](#))

Opening Paul's epistle to the Colossians, we see a familiar greeting and claim of authorship (likely with Timothy transcribing), very similar to all of Paul's thirteen letters in the New Testament. In the majority of his epistles he begins by presenting himself as ***an apostle of Christ***.

Why was this important? A true apostle of Christ must have met several qualifications from a biblical viewpoint. Among these were being eyewitnesses of Jesus's bodily resurrection, being hand-selected by Christ Himself, recognized by the early church, and having authority to perform miracles in the power of God. See [Acts 10:39](#), [Acts 5:12](#), [Acts 15:2](#), [Rom 15:18-19](#), [1 Cor. 9:1](#), etc.

In the early church era there were many false teachers, false prophets, and other enemies of the cross of Christ that were twisting and perverting the gospel in various ways. It is because of this that many of these letters were written by the apostles – to correct dangerous and defective beliefs in young Christian churches and to encourage right living.

By establishing himself as a true apostle of Christ, having met the necessary qualifications, he was able to speak on Christ's behalf. It is on this unique authority that we can say that New Testament epistles are indeed scripture inspired by the Holy Spirit (cf: [1 Thes 2:13](#)).

Paul also often made note that he was an apostle and slave of Christ ***by the will of God***. This simple statement holds great value when carefully considered.

First, Paul was submitting to the will of God. Paul had been a top-level Pharisee in his pre-Christ life, likely living in great comfort in the Jewish culture. He had to give it all up to preach the gospel after he encountered the risen Christ on the road to Damascus (cf: [Acts 9](#)). As Christians, we must always be submissive to God's will, even when it is not what we want or is uncomfortable. This is a hard lesson to learn, but one steeped in great reward.

And second, this corroborates the separate nature of the persons in the Godhead – Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ (the Son of God) by the will of God (the Father). And in this we are reminded that Jesus lived in submission to the Father's will while He was on earth, and still does to this day. Because of Christ's perfect obedience to His Father in all things (cf: [Rom. 5:19](#)), He is



our perfect model to follow as we give glory and honor to God the Father through our own obedience to His will (cf: [Matt. 26:39](#), [Phil 2:5-9](#), [1 Cor. 15:28](#), [Heb. 5:8](#)).

Paul's opening continues by addressing the *saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae*. As we learned in our Philippians study, all true believers are considered saints in the eyes of the Lord. Saints is rendered from the Greek *hagios* and means "holy ones." We are made holy by Christ's sacrifice, not our own works or actions, and are now fully qualified to be part of God's holy family (cf: [Heb. 10:8-10](#) and [1 John 3:1-2](#)). Knowing this should alter our attitude and actions as we consider the gravity of carrying Christ's holy name in our day-to-day interactions with others. We are holy, therefore we should act holy – or as Paul puts it later in this chapter, live in a "*manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him,*" ([Col. 1:10](#)).

Finally, Paul wraps up his introduction with, "*grace to you and peace from God our Father.*" While we could read this as a simple encouragement, we again consider that Paul was an apostle with the authority to speak on behalf of God. Extending grace and peace directly *from God* carries significant weight and was surely a powerful blessing for the members of the Colossae church!

As we go about our day, let's do our best to be more mindful of God's will in our lives. We may say it with our mouths, but we need to mean it from our hearts. Just as Christ and His apostle Paul submitted to God the Father's will, we too are called to obey God and submit to His will and authority over our lives. When we do, we find far more peace, joy, and satisfaction with life because we can release worry and fear and replace it with trust and comfort, knowing our good, good Father loves us very much – so much that He gave His only begotten Son so that we might live eternally!

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