

Last time we saw how Paul continuously prayed that the Colossians would be filled with *the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding* (Col. 1:9), and today we continue looking at the apostle's encouraging passage in this letter.

Paul wrote in Colossians 1:10-11: **"...so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy;"**. (ESV)

This is not the first time Paul instructed a church to **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord**. He said the same thing to the Ephesians (v4.1), Philippians (v1:27), and Thessalonians (v2:12). In many of our previous studies, we've seen the importance of maintaining a thriving faith, one that produces fruit and has tangible evidence of the Spirit working in our lives.

Christianity is not a passive religion, and saving faith is more than a one-time event, where we just raise a hand, "accept Jesus into our heart," and then never think about it again. Salvation is not fire insurance, if you know what I mean. Being a true disciple of Christ involves obedience and daily surrender of our will to Christ's lordship over our lives (which is why we call Him the **Lord** Jesus Christ!). And because of this, we must **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord**.

But what does this mean, practically speaking? Thankfully, Paul explains it right here in this passage.

Looking through these few verses, we see this walk comprises having a true faith in Christ, loving other believers, hoping for heaven, and of course, sharing and living out the truth of the gospel both inwardly and outwardly. This **bearing fruit in every good work** blesses us, those around us, and most importantly, God. In doing so we are **strengthened with all power according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy**.

I feel it is important to examine the **strengthened with all power** discussed in this passage, because it can easily be taken out of context. We must look at this carefully to understand what we receive and why we receive it.

Many people often quote Philippians 4:13 (*I can do all things through Him who strengthens me*) thinking that God will give them the strength to win ball games or make it through a busy work week. But the context of that verse is about Paul's troubles and tribulations, and he was discussing his ability to be content in all situations, especially hardships (cf: Phil. 4:10-20).

Likewise, when we look at verse 11, we must take into account the last portion of the sentence: **for all endurance and patience with joy**. The word *endurance* is from the Greek

hypomonē which is more often translated as *patience*, or as Strong's G5281 puts it, "*the characteristic of a man who is not swerved from his deliberate purpose and his loyalty to faith and piety by even the greatest trials and sufferings.*" And the English word *patience* in this sentence is the Greek *makrothymia*, which is most often rendered as *longsuffering*. So both of these words Paul used here refer to patiently enduring trials, tribulations, and suffering.

The strength God gives us when we walk in a manner worthy of the Lord Jesus is not to win the big game or make it through Bay Area traffic during morning commute (although that often does feel like great tribulation!), but instead it is to endure real hardships with patience, knowing God is in control. This boils down to faith and trust that God has our back even when it doesn't seem like it. The Spirit gives us the power to endure tribulation and significant suffering with patience and, yes, even **joy**. And as you can imagine, this is not something mustered from within, but instead is both an inward and outward sign of our salvation and the amazing grace and love God shows His children.

The apostle Paul was intimately acquainted with suffering. His life in Christ was one of extreme hardship, yet his joy in the Lord and even his joy in enduring trials for God's glory exudes from the pages of his 13 epistles. And this same joy is available to us even today if we commit ourselves to walking in a manner worthy of the Lord, putting less effort into our earthly ambitions, loving others as ourselves, and pursuing Christ with our whole heart. God does much of this hard work in our hearts through His Holy Spirit, but it still takes our continued effort, submission, obedience, and commitment to walking the narrow path for His work in us to bear eternal fruit for His kingdom.

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