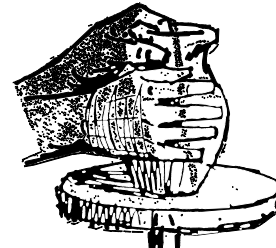


His Workmanship at Westside

*"For we are His
workmanship, created in
Christ Jesus for good works."
—Ephesians 2:10*



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Isaiah 64:8

Prison Prayer, Part 3: Be Fruitful, Know God, Be Strengthened *by David B. Curtis*

We have been looking at Paul's prayer in Colossians 1:9-14. His prayer is an expression of God's desire for the entire body of Christ and is an example for our prayers. Paul mentioned two major and specific requests on behalf of believers. First, He asked God that they would **"be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding,"** v. 9. Then, Paul asked God for **"a walk worthy of the Lord,"** v. 10.

In the last half of Col 1:10-12, Paul used five participles to describe five directions a worthy walk will take:

1. **Pleasing** the Lord fully (in all respects),
2. **Being fruitful** in every good work,
3. **Increasing** in (or by) the knowledge of God,
4. **Being strengthened** with all might, and
5. **Giving thanks** to the Father.

Last week we discussed what it means to be pleasing to the Lord. Today we will discuss how to be fruitful, increase in the knowledge of God, and be strengthened by God's great and glorious power.

II. BEING FRUITFUL IN EVERY GOOD WORK. *Being fruitful* is the

Greek word *karpophoreo*, "fertile, fruit-bearing," the same verb used in verse 6 and used also in Mt 13:23; Mk 4:20, 28; Lk 8:15 (parable of soils), and Ax 14:17; Rm 7:4-5. It is from *karpos*-plucked fruit, and *phero*-bring forth, bear. For Paul, fruitfulness is the result of God's work within us through fellowship with Him, abiding in Him, Jn 15:1-8, by means of the Spirit and His Word. We will never be fruitful if we are not continuously abiding in Christ Jesus. *"Being fruitful"* is a continuous present—always bearing fruit, in every moment. This not only reminds us that our lives are to be constantly producing fruit for the Lord, but also reminds us of the ongoing work of the Father as our spiritual Vine Keeper. He is constantly at work to take us from barrenness to fruitfulness; from no fruit, to fruit, to more fruit, to much fruit as He desires for us to abide in the Vine, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is our Life, Jn 15:1-7.

What is fruit? God defines our fruit or our good works, cf. Mt 25:34-40; Heb 9:14; Jas 1:27; 1 Pet 2:9. The Holy Spirit Who dwells in us produces the fruit of love, joy, peace, longsuffering (patience, endurance),

gentleness, goodness, faith (and faithfulness, trustworthiness), meekness, temperance (self-control), righteousness, truth, repentance, holiness, mercy, and praise, Gal 5:22-23; Eph 5:9-10.; Phil 1:11; Heb 12:11; Jas 3:7-18; Mt 3:8; Lk 3:8; Rm 6:22; Heb 13:15. Fruit is also producing new Christians by teaching the gospel, see Mt 13:3-9, 18-23. (Mk 4:3-8, 14-20; Lk 8:5-8, 11-15); Jn 4:35-37; Rm 1:13; Phil 1:22; Col 1:6. Fruit is also serving the saints, especially by our financial support, Rm 15:25-28; 2 Cor 9:10; Phil 4:15-17. God called us to bear fruit, Jn 15:1-8, 16; Rm 7:4.

The phrase **"in every good work"** marks out the sphere of fruitfulness—not just one work, but *every good work*, cf. Tit 2:14; 3:1, 8. We are to be fruitful or productive in all our good works because God has created us for this, Eph 2:10. Why? So that God may be glorified, Mt 5:16; Jn 15:8. As we abide in Christ, He abides in us, and His Spirit dwells in us, too. Are we bearing fruit? Are we praying for ourselves and the church to be pleasing to God in all aspects of our lives? Are we praying for fruit—
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"...May you be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; may you walk worthy of the Lord, pleasing Him fully, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father Who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light." —Colossians 1:9-12 (good to memorize)

fulness in good works?

III. INCREASING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. "*Increasing*" is the Greek *auxano* which means "to grow, cause to grow." It was used of growth in plants and infants, of increasing numbers of a group, of the increase of the gospel, and of growth in godly character (spiritual growth).

"*In the knowledge of God*" likely points not to the sphere, but to what causes the growth, the knowledge of God, which has its source in God's Word. This Word is alive and powerful; it contains within it the power to transform the believer's life, Heb 4:12; 1 Thes 2:13. We need to grow in the knowledge of God HIMSELF, not just His will, see Jer 9:23-24. To know God is eternal life, Jn 17:3. Naturally, this knowledge is not simply intellectual information about God. Paul has in mind an intimate personal understanding of God. Knowing God intimately and personally through His holy, inspired, and inerrant Word is a necessary element of spiritual growth.

How can we truly know God? The Bible suggests three ways: a. Through creation, Ps 19:1; Rm 1:18-20; b. through inspired revelation, i.e., all the Bible, especially the Psalms and the Prophets, cf. 1 Sam 3:7; 1 Chr 28:9; Ps 46:10; 100:3; Is 19:21; 37:20; 43:10; 45:3; Jer 24:7; Ezek 13:9; 20:20, 44; 23:49; 24:24; 28:22, 24, 26; 29:16; 34:30; 36:23; 39:22, 28; Dan 11:32; Hos 2:20; 5:4; 6:3; 13:4; Joel 2:27; 3:17; Jonah 4:2; Zech 4:9; 6:15; Mal 2:4; c. but especially through Jesus, Jn 14:7-9; 1:14; 6:69; Col 1:15; 2:9; Heb 1:3. Miracles and

God's works caused people in times past to know Him, to know that He is truly their God, Ex 6:7; 7:17; 8:10,22; 14:4,18; 16:6,12; 18:11; 29:46; 31:13; Deut 4:35, 39; 7:9; 29:6, 61; Josh 3:10; 4:24; 1 Sam 17:46; 1 Kg 8:60; 18:37; 20:28; 2 Kg 5:15; 2 Kg 19:19.

Today we are to know with certainty that our God has saved us through Jesus Christ, Ax 2:36. We are to know the certainty of His judgment and His grace and salvation for those who do know Him, 1 Thes 5:2; 2 Thes 1:5-10; Heb 8:11; 10:30; 2 Cor 8:9. Our behavior demonstrates that we know God, 1 Jn 4:2-8; Tit 1:16. Are we daily growing in this knowledge?

IV. STRENGTHENED WITH ALL MIGHT. Knowing our human tendency to lean on our own resources, Paul prayed for God's strength to enable us to walk worthy of the Lord and please Him. God desires that we be strong in our living for Him, 2 Tim 1:7-8, so His "*glorious power*" is available to the Christian. Paul often wrote of this glorious power: He experienced it in his own life, Phil 4:11; he wanted others to know about it and experience it, Eph 1:15-20; he identified it with the working of the Holy Spirit in the inner man, Eph 3:16; and he described its greatness, Eph 3:20.

The power of God is one of the great themes and propositions of the Bible. Through Christ, God promises us power and strength for every situation of life, yet our tendency is to trust in ourselves as though we were sufficient, which we are not. To stress the power available to us, Paul used three Greek words for power in Col 1:11.

This stresses that God's power is more than sufficient for anything we might face and that our human strength is not only insignificant by comparison, but totally insufficient in the spiritual and moral conflict we face in this life. Literally, the text says: "*With all power, being constantly empowered according to the standard or measure of the strength of His glory.*" "*With all might*" is emphatic because of the word order, and it shows what's available to us in Christ. It points to what God wants us to experience. This first Greek word for strength is *dunamis*, "power, might, strength, force." Our word dynamite comes from this word, but *dunamis* means more—it speaks of inherent ability that carries the potential to perform or accomplish a task. Many of Paul's prayers contained a strong emphasis on our need of the inherent power of God that He has made available to us in the Lord Jesus. "*Strengthened*" is *dunamoo*, our second Greek word: "to make strong, strengthen." It carries the idea of making strong someone or something that is inherently weak. Further, the verb is in the present tense and points to a steady access of strength, the constant source that is available to believers in Christ. The third Greek word for power is *kratos*, which speaks of God's power and is used only of God in the New Testament. The phrase "*according to His glorious power*" directs our focus to the standard or measure of the power with which God strengthens us. ("*According to*" means: "the standard, the measure by which something is

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Psalm 133:1



Fill your can-teen in 2013

“May you be filled with all the fullness of God.”
—Ephesians 3:19

Bear Fruit, Know God, Be Strong, from p. 2 done.) *Kratos* speaks of manifested power, power put forth in action—specifically, the historic acts of God as in creation, with Israel, and especially in the person of Jesus Christ. It also speaks of a power that overcomes some form of resistance like the resistance of sin, of Satan, of the world, and of death (spiritual and physical). Thus, “according to His glorious power” stresses the limitless source, the infinite power available to us in the person of Christ.

What is the **purpose** of such power? Notice carefully why we are strengthened, “**for all patience and longsuffering with joy.**” The text literally says, “unto of all steadfastness and longsuffering.” Patience and endurance with joy is the fruit which the Holy Spirit produces in us, Gal 5:22-23. *Patience* is the Greek word *hupomone*, which means “endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, perseverance.” This noun comes from *hupo-* “under,” and *meno-* “to abide, remain.” It means remaining under a trial without giving in; an ability to endure or stay or be steadfast regardless of the intensity and length of the testing. *Hupomone* is used in relation to the various trials that we all face in life as humans: sickness, pain, financial loss, death of loved ones, warfare, physical and spiritual weaknesses, and persecution. There is always a temptation

Discipleship Here At Home

to give up when things get difficult. *Hupomone* has the idea of “remain under pressure or trials.” It is continuing even when everything inside you wants to quit.

Longsuffering is another quality. The Greek term is *makrothumia*, which means: “long in compassion, even-temperedness, forbearance.” It comes from *makros*, meaning: “long,” and *thumos*, meaning: “passion, temper.” It is directed toward people or our relationships with others. It means: “not easily provoked into angry words,” or into some form of retaliation or revenge. *Makrothumia* is the Christ-like virtue manifested in the face of some annoyance, frustration, or provocation. This word is used of God in His relations with mankind; He is longsuffering and patient with us, forgiving and treating us
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Chapter Outline of Colossians, based on acronym HOPE:

Hope of the gospel, 1:23; **H**ope to be presented Holy and blameless, 1:22
Ordinances of men, 2:4, 8, 16-23; **O**bserving the truth you have been taught, 2:2-3, 5-7
Perfection, completeness in Christ, Who is All in All, 3:4, 11-14; **P**leasing God by thanksgiving, Praise, and new life of service, 3:14-25
Equal and just, fellow servants, 4:1, 7-14; **E**pistle to be read and shared, 4:15-18.

Job concerns Andrew Tope, Linda Szymanski, Lorenzo Gonzalez, and Frank Savarese are seeking jobs.

Traveling Mina Gonzalez is in Utah a few more days for music training.

Rejoice Alysha Elliott, daughter of Gina Elliott (Mina’s neighbors), put on Christ in baptism recently. Alysha moved Wed to IL, but write c/o Gina, 12532 E. 31st Ave, Aurora 80011

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help, and comfort here and away

Eric Perry—tennis elbow
Rod Green’s mother, Shirley—wrist surgery Thurs; asks for our prayers
Mark Campbell—moved to rehab Fri; impaired cognition from seizures
Ruth Hice, Pat Campbell’s mother—invasive colon cancer; moved to rehab Thurs; pray for her and her family; **Campbells** and **Brandon Thompson** will return from AR tomorrow

Valerie Greenwalt—biopsy last week for tumor in colon; surgical consult 8/5

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Logan Corray; Rocco Sangellino Jr; Addison Tope; Pat Wilkes—asthma
Pearl Chapman—leg pains; pancreatitis
Nell Free—pacemaker, heart; back pain
Autumn Hadders—epilepsy

Kirk Johnson—worsening MS; needs help around his house

Menards—aging; **Lloyd**, diabetes; **Virginia**, worsening rapid macular degeneration; high BP

Lynda Szymanski—COPD, lung

Directory updates: The Huelsman family will be part of this local work: Huelsman, Tim*, Lis*, Tyler, Hannah, Danielle, 32372 Lodgepole Dr Evergreen 80439 h-303-993-5924 Tim-719-213-3539 Lis-719-237-2716

lshuelsman@gmail.com
Brennan Blicharski and Gregg Geis were recently baptized into Christ.

Here is their contact information: Brennan Blicharski, 3668 S. Laredo St Aurora 80013 520-808-9846

Brennan.Blicharski@cummins.com

Gregg Geis, 4228 Wyandot St Denver 80211 303-902-9997

greggwgeis@gmail.com

Gary Boyd—grieving death of friend; pray for Robert’s widow **Sandy Soderlund**

Expecting Amy Vander Kooi—Aug

Fruitful, Knowing God, Strong, Col 1:10-11, from p. 3

with grace. *Patience* conveys the idea of having a capacity to be injured without paying back. It is used with regard to people, not circumstances. It's having a long fuse. Paul says that patience is a mark of love: "*Love suffers long and is kind*," 1 Cor 13:4. The loving person is able to be inconvenienced or taken advantage of and yet not be upset or angry. This love is very slow to anger or resentment, and it never retaliates.

Abraham Lincoln gave us a good example of *makrothumia*. One of Lincoln's earliest political enemies was Edwin M. Stanton, who called him, "A low cunning clown," he nicknamed him "the original gorilla." Lincoln never responded to the slander. And when, as President, he needed a secretary of war, he chose Stanton. When his friends asked why, Lincoln responded, "Because he is the best man for the job." Lincoln treated Stanton with every courtesy. The years wore on. When Lincoln was shot, Stanton said through his tears, "*There lies the greatest ruler of men the world has ever seen.*" His animosity was finally broken by Lincoln's patient love.

The goal of steadfastness and longsuffering is so different from the typical reasons people generally have for desiring God's strength. We want healing from our diseases, cures in our relationships, sudden deliverances from our life-dominating patterns, but above all, we simply want God to remove our problems with the pain they bring. And when do we want this? NOW, of course! In fact, yesterday would have been better! Unfortunately, as Christians, we are often indifferent to the purposes that God has in suffering both in us and in those around us.

The Biblical emphasis is upon power for endurance and longsuffering. We are strengthened with "all power" and "according to His glorious power." It takes God's power to endure circumstances and to be longsuffering with people. Our natural tendency is to become easily upset at our circumstances or at people. God's power is important for us to overcome this tendency. Warren Wiersbe wrote, "*God's power is evidenced in our lives not only in our patience and longsuffering, but also in our joyfulness. When circumstances are difficult, we should exhibit joyful patience; and when people are hard to live with, we should reveal joyful longsuffering. We often use the words joy and happiness interchangeable, but a distinction should be made. Happiness often depends on happenings. If circumstances are encouraging and people are kind, we are happy. But joy is independent of both circumstances and people. The most joyful epistle Paul wrote was Philippians, and he wrote it from jail as he faced the possibility of being martyred for his faith,*" in *Be Complete* (Victor Books, Wheaton, Ill., 1986), p. 42.

Even as we experience trials in this life, God's power enables us to do so with joyful perseverance! The purpose of God's power in us is so that we will be able to endure suffering on behalf of Christ with the joy that comes from knowing that our hope in Christ is sure and that He is all that we need to sustain us: "*And you are complete in Him, Who is the head of all principality and power,*" Col 2:10. Are we experiencing this strength which God gives to those who do His will?

Westside church of Christ

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DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

Like us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/pages/Westside-Church-of-Christ/276475819148309

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes 9:00 am
Morning assembly 10:00 am
Afternoon assembly 1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes 7:30 pm

This morning: "Faith, Not Feelings," Jim Reingrover

This afternoon:

Paul's Prison Epistles Series

"Colossians 3," Rod Green

Our mid-year income and expenditures vs budget report is available online in the "Financial Information" file under "Member Files" in the Member's Section of our website. Account balances are included. The entire 2013 annual budget is also available in the same file.