

Confident “In” The Will Of God Colossians 1

The impact of his life had a profound effect on three generations. As the two grandsons described the imprint of their grandfather’s life, I could not help but wonder in secret, “Could my grandchildren say the same things about me? What would they say?” Especially gripping was the letter one attorney grandson wrote. He had planned to have the letter completed before his grandfather died, but like so many of us, time seemed to erase the best of intentions.

In his letter he was able to pinpoint the character and vision, the perseverance and tenacity that defined his grandfather. He passionately described his grandfather’s love for his grandmother. All of these traits were rooted, imbedded, and grown out of his commitment and love for Christ. He went on to share how his grandfather’s life placed the stamp on his own life and his resolve to build these same qualities and faith into the lives of his grandchildren with the hope of its result for future generations.

As I sat and listened, I wondered what would be written about our church? Would it be any different than what it would be for any one of us as individuals? Should it be any different? After all, we are individuals who bring the individual parts—legs, arms, eyes, ears, voices, hearts—that make up and define the body of Christ.

What is it that defines our character, both individually and as a church? Can we separate the two? I think not. The church is the sum total of the individuals who make up this organism called the “Body of Christ.” If, in fact, we are the body of Christ, how consistently are we a true reflection of Christ to our mates, our children, those who live around us, and those with whom we work?

Would the letter written about us as a church be read at our “funeral” and simply be history, or would it be a letter that would be of the character, vision, perseverance, and tenacity imbedded in Christ that would serve as a model and encouragement for future generations? Would it be a letter that reflected the sum total of each of our lives?

The church at Colossae was that kind of church. The Apostle Paul wrote a letter to that church that not only pinpointed its character and maturity, but it was a letter of encouragement. Although he had never personally visited this church, there was something that was so captivating about the individuals in the church that he was compelled to write this letter from his heart.

This is a letter that not only embraced their depth of spiritual character and love for each other, but also challenged them to “continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast” and not back off one bit from the hope they would bring to future generations.

LIFE RESPONSE:

This week **MEMORIZE** and **MEDITATE** on Colossians 1:18, *“He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.”*

- (a) As you memorize this passage, read the first part of Paul’s prayer in verse 9 (in the context of verses 15-20) as it relates to God’s will for your life.
 - (b) Write out in first person the prayer of Paul in verses 9-12. Make it a point to pray this prayer as your own each day this week.
2. As you read Colossians 1:15-20, identify the character traits of Christ as deity. What can you determine from your observations that would compel you to have Christ come to have first place in everything in your life?
 3. What steps can you take or how can you cultivate a mindset that would define a grid through which you can filter or decide if your next choice or action is a reflection of Christ as first place? Consider Luke 9:23-24; Matt 6:33; Luke 14:26-35; Rom 12:1-2.
 4. How does God’s will of coming “to have first place in everything” transcend what we do into our relationships with others, our attitude, thought life, character, reconciliation, forgiveness, anger, bitterness, etc.?
 5. How is “Christ in you, the hope of glory” reflected in your life? In your family?

“There are two kinds of people: Those who say to God, “Thy will be done,” and those to whom God says, “All right, then, have it your way.”

- C.S. Lewis, The Great Divorce

Colossians

A very special letter to a very special people

Colossae

The Church: Paul never saw



The People: Paul only *heard* about

For this reason . . .

- Faith in Christ Jesus
Freedom from law/guilt
- Love for all the saints
Magnetic to the community
- Hope – Laid up for you heaven
Anticipation of the resurrected Christ

FAITH-looks upward to God

Past work of Christ
Without faith
Impossible to please

LOVE-looks outward to others

Present work of others
Love is the greatest

HOPE-looks forward to Christ

Future anticipation of Christ
Hope does not disappoint

Central to the life and steadfastness of the church and individually is: Prayer

1 Thess 5:17 Pray without ceasing

Col 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer

Phil 4:6 In everything by prayer

Eph 6:18 Pray always

Colossians 1:9-12

*9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;
11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously
12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.*

Serves as an outline for the book

- ◆ The *will* of God
- ◆ The *walk* in God
- ◆ The *work* of God
- ◆ The *witness* of God

The prayer for the will of God

“For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding”

Colossians 1:9

- ◆ To be filled
 - a filling out to completeness*
 - totally controlled by*
- ◆ With the knowledge of His will
 - a deep and thorough knowledge*
- ◆ In all spiritual wisdom (broad term)
 - the ability to collect and organize principles from Scripture*
 - and understanding (specific)
 - the application of the principles to everyday life*

The practice of the will of God

- ❖ The person of Christ (Christology)
 - Christ's Deity:
 - ✓ His incarnation
 - ✓ His supremacy, sovereignty
 - ✓ His creation of all things
 - ✓ His power
 - ✓ His headship
 - ✓ His completeness

✓ His sacrifice for the world

❖ The preeminence of Christ

“So that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.”

➤ It's foundational to our faith

- ✓ Matt 22:37-39 To love the Lord God with all
- ✓ Luke 9:23-24 To deny self, take up cross, follow
- ✓ Luke 14:26 Hate his own life
- ✓ Rom 12:1-2 Personal transformation in thinking

What would my life look like if He truly had first place?

◆ The purpose of Christ Col: 20-29

26 *“the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints,*

27 *to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

28 *We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.*

◆ The ministry of reconciliation

“God willed to make known”

◆ The embodiment of eternal hope

“Christ in you the hope of glory”

Prayer:

Father in heaven, I thank You for the privilege of being a part of this church family. Thank you for our growing faith in Jesus Christ, our growing love for each other and the hope we have in Christ's return. I pray that I may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that I will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified me to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.