

(Colossians) God's Desire for You

by Brian Brodersen

The sermon emphasizes the importance of praying for the will of God to be fulfilled in our lives, and for the church to be all that it is supposed to be.

Duration: 49:00

Scripture: Colossians 1:3-7, Colossians 1:9-11

Topics: "Christian Living", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of finding purpose and meaning in life by entering into a relationship with God. They explain that without a personal connection to God, life can feel futile and meaningless. However, by putting faith in Christ and becoming a Christian, individuals can experience a sense of purpose and fulfillment. The speaker also highlights the significance of living a holy life according to God's word and being thankful for His blessings. They emphasize the need to prioritize pleasing the Lord and seeking His will, rather than becoming overly focused on serving Him without maintaining a personal relationship.

Transcript

Colossians chapter 1, let me read you verses 3 through 11. We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints, because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you as it has also in all the world and is bringing forth fruit, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth. As you also learn from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ, on your behalf, who also declared to us your love in the spirit.

For this reason, we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy. As you go through the Bible, there are many places where we have prayers recorded for us. Back in the Old Testament, there are places where we have the record of Moses praying for the people.

We have the record of the prophets praying. And as we come to the New Testament, we have the Lord Jesus praying for us, John chapter 17. And then throughout the epistles, we have occasions where the

apostles and particularly Paul, the apostle, records for us his prayers.

This prayer in Colossians is for me personally, the most glorious of all of those prayers in the New Testament. For some reason, this one seems to just really hit home for me. Now, the other ones, of course, are great.

They're glorious. They are just as inspired by God. But yet this one in particular, for me, just really seems to get down to the things that that I seem to be always thinking about or dealing with in my life.

The wonderful thing about these prayers in the Bible and particularly these ones here in the New Testament is that in these prayers, we see what the will of God is for us, because you remember the apostles wrote by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. So this was Paul's prayer for the church in Colossae, but it's actually the prayer of the Lord for each and every one of us. In other words, these things that are asked for in this prayer are the very things that God wants to do for us.

Now, I know that I myself at times seem to be unable to really connect in prayer. There are times I just feel speechless. I feel incapable of even expressing what needs to be expressed.

It's during those times that we can turn to these prayers and we can pray them knowing that we're praying according to the will of God. What a wonderful thing, because it is true that there are times we don't know what to pray for. Paul even talked about that.

He said, the spirit helps us in our infirmities because we don't always know how to pray as we ought, but the spirit makes intercession for us. And so if you don't know how to pray, if you come to those times where you feel like you just can't even verbalize what needs to be expressed, then you can turn to these prayers in the New Testament and particularly to this one here, and you can know that you're praying in the will of God. And so Paul says to this church in Colossae, he says, since we've heard about all that God has been doing for you, we haven't ceased to pray for you.

An interesting thing that seems to be quite common is that we often pray for the unbeliever. We often pray for ourself in the sense of petitioning God for certain needs, mainly things in the material realm, but we at times rarely pray for the church. Oh, I know what it's like to pray for unbelievers.

Oh Lord, I just pray that that person would come to know you and oh God, they need to be saved so desperately. And quite often, unbelievers are on our heart in prayer and that's good. That's completely valid.

And then of course, it's good to petition the Lord for the things that we need. Those are good things, but we need to also keep in mind other Christians. Sometimes we pray for people until they become Christians and we go, okay, got them in.

That's great. Okay, now let's move on to the next person. It's fine to move on to the next person, but let's not forget the one that did come to the Lord because that's when the battle begins.

That's when they need that extra amount of prayer. The church of Jesus Christ is in desperate need of prayer. We need to pray for one another.

And if you would like to pray for me, I would request that you pray this prayer for me. It's a great prayer. It really is expressing everything that I think I need.

This is it. And if I could just have this realized in my life, this is the ultimate as far as I'm concerned. But this is what we need to be doing on behalf of the body of Christ.

We need to be praying this prayer and others like it for God's people, praying for people individually, praying for the church collectively. Because you see, it's when the church is all that it is supposed to be. That's when the world is going to be impacted the greatest by the church.

Praying for God to reach the world is an important prayer, but God has chosen to reach the world through his people. So in order for the world to be impacted by Christ, the church has to be all that it's supposed to be. And if we're not praying for one another, if we're not praying for the body of Christ in general, then the church is going to be far short of God's desired place for it and subsequently not as effective as the church ought to be.

So Paul understood that. And he spent much of his time praying for the churches that he established and praying for those individual believers that he knew within the fellowship. And so he begins and he says, we pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will.

This is where it all begins. Praying that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will. The will of God is the most important issue facing each one of us today.

What is God's will for your life? Do you know that God has a plan for you? Do you realize that? Do you understand that regardless of what you might think of yourself, God has great thoughts toward you and he has a great plan for you? I think that some Christians are guilty of thinking that God has a plan for everyone but them. You know, they can see how God could use this person and they, oh yeah, they identify with God's choice over here. Yeah, boy, I could see that person being used by God.

But when it comes to themselves, they just think, well, you know, it's probably not possible with me. And sometimes we even develop the mentality that God just uses a select few and everybody else, you know, just left to kind of go through life and just hope for the best and hope it all works out. That is not biblical thinking because the Bible makes it clear that God has a plan and a purpose for each of our lives.

He has a specific calling upon each of our lives. We were created, as a matter of fact, for this one thing, to do the will of God. We're told in Revelation chapter 4 that all things were created by God for his will.

They were created. So the reason that you exist, the reason that you live here on planet earth is because God placed you here and he placed you here with a purpose in mind. He has a will, he has a plan, he has something for you to accomplish for him.

Isn't that a wonderful thing to know? I mean, just to know that, that life is truly meaningful. It's not meaningless as modern philosophers want us to think. Life does have a purpose.

There is design, there is a designer, there is a preordained plan that God has for each and every one of us. Paul's prayer is that we might be filled with the knowledge of that will, that we might come to know thoroughly the will of God in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that we would know the will of God, that we would understand how to apply ourselves to fulfill it, that we would have insight from the Lord as to what he wants to do with us. That's what Paul is praying for, and that's what we need to pray for one another.

Boy, if you ever want to know what to pray for me, just again, pray this prayer, pray this specifically. I want to know God's will. What does God want? Now, there are certain general aspects of God's will that are revealed to us in the scriptures.

There are certain things that God wills for all of us. He wills that all people be saved. Now, we know that that isn't necessarily going to happen.

God wants it to, but we have a choice in the matter. Man has a free will. He must choose.

But God does will that we believe in Jesus Christ. He believes that all men be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. He believes that we, or he wills that we put our faith in his son.

And then we're told that he wills that we live a holy life. This is the will of God, even your sanctification. We read in 1 Thessalonians chapter four, and then we also read in 1 Thessalonians chapter five, that it's God's will that we give thanks.

So there are certain general things that we're told concerning the will of God. God wills that we believe in Jesus Christ. God wills that we live a holy life.

God wills that we express thanks to him, be grateful for all that he's done. And those are the general aspects of God's will. He wills the same thing for every one of us in that area.

But then, of course, we're all different, and there's a specific aspect to the will of God also that needs to be discovered that isn't necessarily clearly revealed in the scriptures. So how do I come to know the will of God in the more specific sense? Well, first of all, I have to make sure I'm in the will of God generally. So I can't know God's will specifically until I first of all become a Christian.

God does not reveal his will or his purpose to those who are outside of a relationship with him. You first of all have to come into a relationship with him. That's why the person outside of Christ senses that life is meaningless, because for you it is to a large degree.

It's meaningless because you haven't entered into the purpose for which you were created. You have to put your faith in Christ, come to know him in a personal way, and then suddenly there's that sense of purpose. There's that sense of meaning to our existence.

I remember before I was a Christian, I think if I could sum up my feeling about life, it was futility. That was the way I would sum it up. It was meaningless.

It was all purposeless. Just do the same thing every day, week in, week out. And where is it all leading to? What am I doing here? What does this all amount to finally? Well, it amounted to nothing.

That was because I was outside of a relationship with God. But once we come into a relationship with God, then we begin to understand there is purpose. For those that are outside, there is purpose, but you've got to get in to the family.

You've got to become part of God's kingdom, and then God's will begins to be revealed. So in order to discover the will of God specifically, I've got to come into conformity to God's will generally. So I've got to put my faith in Christ and become a Christian.

And once I become a Christian, I need to determine by the grace of God to live a holy life, the way God calls me to live according to his word, and to live thankful for all that he's done for me. And then those details begin to be realized. I believe that God has a specific plan for us in the smallest details of our life.

I believe that God has a plan for who it is that you're supposed to spend your life with, who it is that you're supposed to be married to. I believe God has a specific person picked out for you. I believe that God has a specific profession that he wants you to function in.

I believe that God has a specific location where he wants us to live. Things like that. Those are all part of the specific plan of God's life.

How do I begin to discover that? How do I come to realize and experience that? Well, I come to know Christ. I seek to live the way he wants me to live. I just am in an attitude of thanksgiving and praise to him for all that he's done.

And as I go about my life, as I go about asking God to reveal his will more specifically, he does that as I go. And so he leads me in different areas, and he shows me things that he wants, and he just brings this beautiful plan together that we could never ourselves even imagine. It's such a wonderful thing.

It's such a glorious thing. Living in a world that has no purpose, we as God's people have tremendous purpose. And so that's Paul's prayer in its first aspect, that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Do you know the will of God? Do you know that God has a plan for your life? Do you know that he has a specific purpose for you? He has something for you to accomplish. There's not a single person in the kingdom of God without a purpose. When we read about the gifts of the Spirit, we read that God has given a measure of faith to everyone.

God has given gifts to all of us. Now, the gifts vary from person to person. God has one task for one, and he has another task for someone else.

And not all of us have the same thing to do, but we all have something to do for the Lord, some wonderful act of service to do for the Lord, which is part of the purpose for our creation. This is part of why we're existing. Of course, the main thing is to just know him and experience him and enjoy him forever.

But there is this aspect of service to him also. And so Paul is praying that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will. Pray this for yourself.

Pray it for one another. Pray it for those people who have just come to know the Lord. Oh, Lord, show them your will.

Help them to discover your plan for their life and to get into it. Seek the Lord in this area, and he will show you. Maybe you've never even considered this for yourself.

Maybe you've thought, well, you know, of course, missionaries, they, you know, they understand what the will of God is, or pastors, or evangelists, or, you know, church workers of whatever sort. But, you know, maybe you think about yourself. Well, you know, I just, I'm just an average person.

I just worked down at the car dealership, cleaning up the lot. You know, what could possibly be there for me? Well, God has a plan. If that's where you're supposed to be, he'll keep you there, and he'll use you

there.

If he wants you to go somewhere else, he'll lead you somewhere else. But it's just great to see him somewhere else. But it's just great to see how God works these things out.

It's so wonderful. It's so glorious to be in his will. Paul went on to pray that we may walk worthy of the Lord, being filled with the knowledge of his will and all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that you may walk worthy of the Lord.

Walking worthy of the Lord. We have been called to a very high place. We've been called to be the children of God.

And because of our position, our lifestyle is to be indicating the position that we hold. Whenever someone is put in a high position, the standard of living or the standard for living is raised. Now, you don't put a high standard on, as high of a standard on the average person as you do, you know, put on somebody, say, for instance, in political office or something like that.

We expect more from people like that. Hey, we elected this person to office. We expect certain things from them because of the position that they hold.

The position demands a higher standard of life. So people born into the royal family, you know, there's a higher standard. You're a prince or you're a princess.

And so, you know, so there's a higher standard for you. And so whenever the prince goes off and does something un-princely, the newspapers capitalize on that right away. Oh, can you believe this? You know, look at Prince so-and-so, what he's doing.

Or look at Princess, what's her name? Look what's become of her. You know, why all the attention? Why all the negative reporting? Because this is royalty. You're so-and-so.

Likewise, we have been called to be the children of God. We've been called to a high standard. That's why when a Christian falls, the enemy capitalizes on it.

You see, because we're supposed to be something different. We're supposed to live on a higher level. That's why when a minister falls into sin, it's all over the newspapers.

You get a plumber falling into sin, nobody reports that. You know, you get some contractor, you know, out committing adultery or something like that, or even, you know, some business executive. There's no write-up in the paper on that.

But boy, you let a minister fall into sin and look what happens. Reporters come out of the woodwork, it's all over the papers. Why is that? Well, it's because the standard is higher for us.

See, we're children of God. And so we're to walk worthy of the Lord. We're to walk worthy of the Lord.

We're to walk worthy of that title, children of God. People are to be able to look at us and say, yeah, they're different. There's something unique about them.

There's something special. They're children of God. That's why they behave that way.

But isn't it so often the case that the children of God are barely distinguishable from the children of the world? There isn't a mark difference. So when someone finally says, well, I am a Christian, people are shocked. Oh, you got to be kidding.

I never would have suspected that of you. That's a failure to walk worthy of the Lord. But oh, how we need to pray this for each other, walking worthy of the Lord and then fully pleasing him, fully pleasing him.

This word pleasing is used just this one time in the Greek New Testament. There's not another use of it in the whole New Testament. It's found in classical Greek.

And it means to seek to please one person alone is kind of the essence of the word. So fully pleasing God, in other words, living to please the Lord completely and no one else. Sometimes to be pleasing to the Lord is going to set us at odds with people.

Paul said when he wrote to the Galatians that if he was to be pleasing men, he could not be the servant of Christ. So there are going to be times when we just are going to displease everybody else because our desire is to please the Lord. That's what Paul's praying, that we would be concerned to please the Lord above everyone else.

We wouldn't care what other people thought. We wouldn't be affected by that. But pleasing God would be our goal.

Lord, I want to please you fully and completely regardless of what other people think about it. Now, you know, it's interesting that there are people who are Christians who do love the Lord, but at times will be the ones who try to dissuade you from fully pleasing God, because if you fully please God, it's going to impact them in a way that they're not wanting to be impacted. This happens so often with parents when their children come and say, I feel like the Lord is calling me to, you know, move to such and such a place.

I feel the Lord is calling me out to the mission field or something like that. And the parent, a good, godly parent will, you know, sometimes because of their own attachment to the child, just say, oh, no, no, no. We don't want to talk about that.

The Lord has a plan, but yes, you know, right here. Here, we'll get you an apartment over here, and you can work out God's will right, right over here, you know, right in the neighborhood. We can see you, you know, regularly and all of that.

And, you know, the battle goes on then within the life of this person. Oh, what am I going to do? You want to please your parents because you love them, you respect them, you care for them, but yet you feel this calling that God has something else for you. And what you really need to do is please the Lord.

That needs to be all of our desire. That needs to be the desire within our homes as husbands and wives. Sometimes men and women compromise with the Lord because of their spouse.

Well, you know, if I do that, my husband isn't going to really like that. Or if I do this, you know, my wife, you know, she's going to think that I've gone a little overboard with this, you know, Christianity thing. And so what we end up doing is we end up living to please other people instead of pleasing the Lord.

Paul's prayer is that we would be fully pleasing to the Lord. We please the Lord above people. Now, this should really be the goal that all of us have, to please the Lord.

You know, there are those people who ask questions like this, can I do this and still go to heaven? You know, they're wanting to compromise with the world to some degree or whatever. And, but yet, you know, they don't want to miss the boat to heaven. So, you know, they'll come and ask permission.

Can I do this and still get to heaven? That is a question that none of us should ever be asking. If I have a question whether or not I should do it, the indication is that I shouldn't do it at all. See, that's the Spirit of God giving you a check.

That's the Spirit of God convicting you. That's the Spirit of God speaking to you. So if you have this sense like, you know, I probably shouldn't do that, but let me go ask the pastor, you know, save the gas, save the phone call, just don't do it.

See, because that's the Holy Spirit. That's what the Spirit does. And this should be our question, not how much can I get away with in a worldly sense and still go to heaven, but how much can I give myself fully and completely to God here on earth and please him thoroughly? That should be the question every Christian is asking.

How can I fully please the Lord? And anything that we would even think for a moment would not please the Lord, we ought not to have anything to do with it. You know, we go out to the video store and we're going to pick up something and we look at, you know, here's the titles and, oh, look at that. And I wanted to see that movie.

We ask ourselves the question, will this fully please the Lord? If I sit down and watch this, is this going to please God? Is this going to, is he going to delight in this? You see, if we would just live that way. Oh, how much better our lives would be spiritually. How much more in tune we would be with the Lord if we just sought to be fully pleasing to him all the time in every way.

That's what God desires. You see, this is, this is what God wants. God wants us to know his will.

He wants us to walk worthy of him. He wants us to be fully pleasing him, not just partially, but yet many of us are content to partially please the Lord. Well, Lord, I know this isn't exactly what you want me to do, but Lord, you know, I have needs and you know that, and you know, we make excuses and we go ahead and do things that are not fully pleasing to the Lord.

Paul's prayers that we would be fully pleasing, seeking to please God above all others. That's the implication being fruitful in every good work, being fruitful in every good work. We talked about the fruit of the gospel last time.

And this is something that the Lord has expressed over and over again. He wants us to be fruitful. He wants us to bear fruit.

Jesus said, herein is my father glorified that you bear much fruit. So the Lord wants us to be a fruitful people, just people who are manifesting the fruit of the spirit, the love, the joy, the peace, the kindness, the gentleness, the meekness, bearing much fruit, bearing much fruit, being fruitful in every good work, that our lives would be like a luscious fruit tree. You know how a fruit tree can just be such a delight.

So refreshing. In the afternoon, you go out and you walk through the garden and there you find a nice plum or a nectarine or something. You just take it down, shine it up and take a bite.

Oh, it's so refreshing. It's so, so wonderful. So delightful.

That's what the Lord is wanting us to be like, just like a glorious, delightful, right piece of fruit, just bringing pleasure to him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God, increasing in the knowledge of God. Paul really kind of brings it all home in this one statement here, increasing in the knowledge of God. The will of God is very important.

Walking worthy of the Lord is very important. Pleasing the Lord is very important. Knowing the Lord, all these things really ought to stem from our relationship with the Lord.

And I want to make a distinction here because it's possible to be very taken up with the things of God, but to miss out on intimacy with the Lord, which is the number one reason for our salvation. The Lord saved us, first of all, to know him and to have fellowship with him. Secondly, he saved us to serve him.

And what happens sometimes with Christian people is that we become so engrossed in serving the Lord, in discovering his will and pleasing him and all that, which is all perfectly legitimate and wonderful, as long as we keep the Lord in the picture. But sometimes people get so into the service part, they forget the Lord. Martha is a great example of that.

Maybe you remember her story where she was waiting on the Lord. She was so busy serving the Lord. Jesus was there in the living room, sitting down, expounding the glories of the kingdom of God.

And there were some people sitting, listening, and Mary was sitting at the feet of Jesus, just taking it in, all that the Lord was saying, just basking in that. And Martha is out in the kitchen. She's laboring away.

She's doing the dishes and she's preparing dessert and, you know, all that's going on here. And, you know, she's frustrated at it all because she's left to do this by herself. And she comes to the Lord and she says, Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me with all the responsibility in the kitchen? And she's sitting here and I'm in there laboring away.

And Jesus said, Martha, you are worried about and distracted by many things, much serving. That was her problem. Said, Martha, you're distracted by much serving.

And, you know, that can happen to us as Christian people. It's a strange thing to think of it like that, but it's actually a fact. A lot of people monitor their spiritual life by their service.

The more service, the more I must be right with God because look at all that I'm doing. But you see, doing is to proceed from something else. Doing is to be the result of my fellowship with the Lord.

If doing has replaced my fellowship with the Lord, then what I'm doing is a distraction from the main thing. So as strange as it might be, we cannot monitor our spiritual temperature. We can't evaluate our spiritual health by activity.

Activity can deceive us. Many pastors fall into this trap and think that everything is just wonderful because of all the service they do to the Lord and because, you know, the sizes of their churches and things like that. Oh, I must be great with God.

Everything must be right. I must be doing wonderful because, man, I taught that Bible study and it went so well. And look how many people came to our church this week.

And, you know, we've got this going on and that going on. It's all so wonderful and glorious. Wow.

You know, I must be just on top of it spiritually. Not necessarily. Not necessarily.

You see, God saved us to know Him intimately and personally. And that's to be the first thing. That's what Jesus said to Martha.

He said, Martha, Mary has chosen the better part, sitting at my feet, listening to me. That's the necessary thing. These other things, they have their place.

They have an importance, but they are not to take the place of the most important thing. And so Paul is talking about these things that are very, very important, but the most important thing is increasing in the knowledge of God. Getting to know the Lord Himself.

Realizing that I was saved to know God and to experience Him and to enjoy Him forever. So you see, we have to be careful and we have to always guard ourselves lest we get so taken up with the things of God, we neglect the Lord Himself. I do that quite frequently, to be honest with you.

And I have to catch myself and go back and just, Lord, forgive me. And I can jump into a day of service to the Lord and not even acknowledge God's existence because I'm so busy serving God. Increasing in the knowledge of God, just getting to know the Lord.

It's wonderful to study the Bible. It's vitally important. It's important to know doctrine, to understand what the Bible teaches.

But sometimes we fall in love with those things. We love those things more than the Lord. Oh, I love reading books about theology.

Oh, I love reading, you know, books about men and women who have served God. I love reading about prayer and all these things. But what about the Lord Himself? Charles Spurgeon made a statement, I read it the other day that was quite interesting.

And he talked about the tendency on the part of Protestants to put doctrine before the person of Christ. And he said it was a great concern to him at his time that they were more in love with doctrine than they were with the Lord Himself. And we all have to guard ourselves, especially those of you that are oriented toward Bible study and apologetics and those kinds of things.

All of them very wonderful. All of them have a great place in our lives, but none of them were meant to replace our personal relationship with the Lord. That's what God is wanting to let us know.

It's great to love doctrine, to study it, to know it, to be able to communicate it. But don't let it become the primary focus to the exclusion of the Lord and you. Don't let it take a place to where when you open your Bible, that's all you can open it for is to find some new, you know, bent on the particular doctrine that you're interested in at this point.

Make sure when you're opening the scriptures that you're opening them first and foremost because you want to know the God who saved you, the God who loves you, the God who is waiting to have fellowship with you. That's why you open the Bible first and foremost. And those other things, they all proceed from that.

So increasing in the knowledge of God himself and then strengthen with all might according to his glorious power for all patience and longsuffering with joy. Strengthen with all might. We need the power of God for everything, not just to do great exploits spiritually.

Oh, you know, man, we got to have a week of prayer because we've got this event coming up and, oh, we've got these things going on. We better really call on the Lord for this. But you know, on the day-to-day stuff, we don't really think like that, do we? We think that we can do it.

We can handle it. That's why we lack patience, longsuffering, and joy, because we think we can handle it. We seem to think that we don't need the power of God for those things, but the apostle knew better.

Listen to what he said. Strengthen with all might according to his glorious power. Now, you would think, by the way that most of us view things, that he would go on to say, you know, strengthen with all might according to his glorious power so we could take the gospel around the world, so we could preach to multitudes, so we could raise the dead and heal the sick.

And, oh, yes, we need his strength and his power for that. We certainly would. But do we realize that we need his strength and power to be patient, to be longsuffering, to have joy also? We do.

We need his strength and power for those simple yet essential aspects of our faith, because without patience, without longsuffering, without joy, my overall witness is undermined. You know, who wants to listen to a grumpy Christian? You know, who's going to be attracted to you, you know, when you're just a big crab? You know, praise the Lord, yeah. You know, and it's just, you have no patience with anyone, you have no longsuffering, and there's no joy there.

You see, what happens is it really just undermines our overall witness. Now, the two words, patience and endurance, or patience and longsuffering, it's interesting, because the words are, of course, we have two Greek words here, but the translation, patience and longsuffering, sometimes patience is translated longsuffering, sometimes longsuffering patience. So, in other words, the two words mean basically the same thing.

It's hard to make a distinction between the two in the Greek, just like there are English words that are different words, but have the same meaning. So, these words have essentially the same meaning, but I think you can look at these two words and see that there can be a distinction. Patience, I think, would have more to do with dealing with people.

Longsuffering might have more to do, in the context here, with dealing with situations, circumstances that arise in our lives. And the Lord wants us to have both patience with people and longsuffering when it comes to difficult circumstances. You know, it's possible to be longsuffering, to do well in the midst of a trial, to maintain an endurance and to just, you know, be pressing through it and, you know, having a handle on it, but yet at the same time be totally impatient with people.

You know, I've had this experience many times when I'm repairing something around my house that one of my children broke or something like that, you know. You know, to me, there's nothing worse than fixing something that shouldn't be broken. You know what I mean? It's like, you know, it's like, this should not be happening, right? I should not be doing this.

I have other things to do with my time, but because, you know, I did something stupid or maybe, you know, one of my kids did, you know, you end up doing this. But, you know, I've been able at times and lately

when I've had to do things like that, I've been able to be longsuffering, you know, in the midst of it. It's like, okay, got to do it, no sense, and, you know, having a bad attitude about it and just try to whistle while you work and you're out there putting everything together, you know, and then the next thing, you know, your son's trying to help you and he's the one who broke it in the first place and he's making it worse again.

It's like, get out of here, I don't need your help, you know, and so, you know, I was longsuffering with the circumstance, but then I was impatient with the person. And, you know, we can become like that. There's an amazing dichotomy that really shouldn't exist with us so often.

You know, we can be so spiritual in one sense and yet so carnal in another sense. I mean, I can just, you know, be praying, oh Lord and oh God, I love you and I want to know you and, you know, my wife, Brian, Brian, shh, Brian, be quiet, you know, honey, can you do this? No, not yet, I'm praying, now don't you understand? Oh God, I love you, you know, and, you know, it's Lord, I just want to be so spiritual and deep and, oh man, you're always bugging me, I'm trying to pray and seek God and be spiritual and you want me to, you know, help you in some way, help you bring in the groceries. I don't have time for that, I'm seeking God.

Did any of you guys do that or is it just me? I don't know. But, you know, these are the kinds of things where you see how important it is as Paul, you know, comes to this portion of the prayer to be strengthened. I need the Lord's help to be patient, to be long-suffering, to have joy.

I don't have joy naturally, I don't have that, I need that. You know, there's been an interesting, again, a dichotomy seen in the lives of some men who were renowned as great spiritual men. Oh, they could relate to God, they could pray like you couldn't believe, they could write things about the Lord that just would, you know, bring you to tears or just make you want to seek God and love Him more and serve Him in a greater way, but yet on a practical level they couldn't even communicate with people.

You know, there was one man who had such an insight into the things of God, just a tremendous understanding of spiritual things, wrote many wonderful books on seeking the Lord and things of that nature, and when he went to be with the Lord, his wife had remarried, and she was asked at a certain point, how was it to be married to, you know, this particular man? And her response was sad, really. She said, well, concerning that man, she said, my first husband loved God, my husband now loves me. You know, that's the dichotomy that should not exist.

If I truly love God and am as spiritual as I can possibly be, it ought to translate itself into daily living. There's another man similar to him, same kind of insights and so forth, written many great books on the Bible, and at the end of his life he lived as a recluse. He didn't want to associate with people.

He felt he was too close to God and just, you know, couldn't be around people. Now, you know, it's to some degree understandable. I mean, God is perfect, he's wonderful, people are not, and so, you know, you could see why someone would choose to just be with God all the time, but that's not what the Lord has called us to be or do.

He hasn't called us to just go isolate ourselves and just spend all of our time with him and reject people. Actually, the more we grow in the Lord and the more we love him and the more we become like him, I think the Scriptures clearly teach that the more patient and long-suffering and joyful and relatable and helpful to people we actually will become, because Jesus was, of course, that way, wasn't he? I've actually heard people say that, you know, they're so close to God they can't relate to people. You're not as close to

God as you think you are, because the closer you get to the Lord, the better you'll be able to relate to people.

Jesus is our model. How close was he to God? Well, he's as close as you could get. He's God the Son.

But what about with people? Oh, the Lord was so good, so patient, so long-suffering, so joyful in all of his dealings with people. He never got wearied or frustrated. He was always there to help and to meet their needs.

How did he do that? Well, he operated in the power of the Spirit, strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, just like we need to. We need to be strengthened with all might according to his glorious power for all patience and long-suffering with joy, because as I said a moment ago, it's the patience, it's the long-suffering, it's the joy coupled together with the deep spiritual experiences that we're having and growing in that really make for a full experience as a Christian and make for a very attractive life to people outside of the faith. People want to know spiritual things, and I'm sure they'd love to hear all about the deep, intricate--forget that word, I can't even pronounce it right now.

That was the wrong pronunciation. I'm going to try it again sometime. Intricate.

That's it. Intricate. Okay.

But you know, just the depth and all of that with the Lord. People want to hear about that, but they don't want to hear it from someone who is impatient, someone who has no long-suffering, someone who has no joy. So you see those things go hand in hand.

So this is Paul's prayer for the Colossians, and as I said, this is a prayer that you can pray for me as often as you'd like. I love this prayer, and I want these things to be realized in my life. This is a prayer that I do on occasion pray for the fellowship here.

And so, of course, there are those times when we go to prayer and we're led by the Spirit, and we don't really struggle with what to pray for or, you know, how to pray. But then on those occasions when we need that assistance, we can turn to the pages of Scripture, and we can find right here these prayers of the apostle inspired by the Lord, a declaration really of God's will. This is what God wants.

Once more, He wants you to be filled with the knowledge of His will and all wisdom and spiritual understanding. He wants you to walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. He wants you to be strengthened with all might according to His glorious power for all patience and long-suffering with joy.

Let's pray that for each other. Let's be people of prayer, continuing to lift up the body of Christ before the Lord, that we as God's people might be all that we potentially can be. Lord, we thank You for this prayer.

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