

Showing Knowledge Of God's Will

Colossians 1:9-14

Objective: Help people grasp how their lives ought to reflect an understanding of Christ.

Reading: Colossians 1:9-14.

Introduction:

1. I remember how friends were surprised at the changes that had taken place in me after becoming a Christian; "Do you still like to hunt and fish and walk in the woods?"
2. Certain things have no need of changing; in a sense, you are still you; mannerisms, some of your likes and dislikes, personality ...
3. Yet based on a new found truth of God, revealed in Jesus Christ, there are also many things about us that should indeed change. As we become Christians...

Our lives ought to reflect a knowledge of God's Will. (HOW?)

This is what Paul, the Apostle, prays for on behalf of the Colossian Christians in Colossians 1:9-14. He prays that God would fill those Christians; **"...with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding."**, so that they may **"...walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, ..."** Walking in "a manner worthy", implies something should be different than what it used to be. It implies changes that need to be made based on the new understanding Christians have acquired. The Apostle then goes on to describe four ways in which such spiritual wisdom and understanding should be reflected in our lives.

A knowledge of God's will, ought to show up in personal changes identified as a matter of...

I. Bearing Fruit. Colossians 1:10, **"...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;"**

A. "Fruit" reveals the nature of what is within us.

1. Fruit on a tree tells you the inner nature of the tree; Apples, oranges, etc.
2. Jesus says the same thing about people in Matthew 7:16, **"You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they?"**
3. If Christianity has really meant something, if you have really been born anew, if you are really living by His spirit rather than your old inclinations, the "fruit" of your life should be different.
4. So what are you inside? Do you really have a heart that seeks to please God and to glorify Him? Or is that simply and outward show for whatever immediate reason you might have? Do you sometimes act Christian to please people, have friends, get approval or attention?
5. Is your life something that you don't have to hide? Or are you really hiding a lot of evil secrets so you still produce the same things your life always did?
6. Does your life produce strife and hatred and anger and confusion, or does it produce joy, unity, harmony? Does it serve to nourish others and build them up? What are the obvious results of the change that has taken place? Your fruit demonstrates who/what you are!! I hope you can see it and are pleased with it. I hope God sees good fruit from who you are becoming.

B. "Fruit" is also a matter of what you DO.

1. If you have any real knowledge of God's will it will naturally show up in the things you do!
2. Repentance, growth, a setting aside of bad habits and developing of God-pleasing ones....
3. What are your daily, weekly activities, the things you get involved in. Do they demonstrate a love for God and a commitment to bring Him honor and praise and glory, Christian?
4. Do your life activities demonstrate a knowledge of God? Things like helping widows and orphans that you may not have been concerned about previously? Going out of your way to reach out to and encourage Christians who are discouraged? Glorify God by teaching and living TRUTH? Speaking the word of truth to others, serving to influence them? What are you about during the week?

5. Galatians 5:22-23, **“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. ...”** Are these descriptive of change that has taken place in your life? Or do you hang on to behaviors and habits that you know are contrary to God’s desire and an understanding of His nature?
6. Not that you ever reach perfection; my understanding is there will always be room for growth on our part, but you should see changes. Changes maybe in the TV shows you choose? The friends you keep? The words you consciously choose?

If we have really acquired any spiritual wisdom and understanding, we should also be

II. Increasing in the knowledge of God. Colossians 1:10, **“...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;”**

A. Anticipates an expanding knowledge base.

1. To have any understanding of God should result in wanting to know more! So, do you know more now than you did a year ago? Are you so impressed by God that you ask questions and seek better understanding?
2. More Bible. More memory verses. More details. More parables understood.
3. Where does such increasing knowledge come from? It comes from asking questions! Thinking about things. Reading, study, discussion. Real life application to my own life and to help others.
4. I ought to know more about anything I really care about as time passes.
5. I ought to know more about my spouse as time passes; stories, events, dates, relatives ...
6. Do you know more of the Bible stories that relate things about God?

B. Knowledge not just of facts, but relating to His character as well.

1. I to know things about my wife, like her age and birthday, but I ought to know (and want to know) how she feels when I forget to give her a card or pick the wrong kind of flowers. I ought to know what a great homemaker she is and how dependable she is.
2. Beyond knowing facts and stories and Bible trivia, I ought to be coming to a genuine appreciation of God’s holiness and purity, and truthfulness and dependability!
3. Knowledge of God yields a confidence in how God might feel about concepts, things not even mentioned in Scriptures by grasping motivation principles.
 - a. How does God feel about drug abuse?
 - b. What about keeping speed limits?
 - c. Bible speaks of the evil of drunkenness, but what about marijuana, or suggestive TV shows?
4. Such increase in knowledge involves really struggling over right and wrong in many situations.
 - a. What would Jesus do in my situation? Would He retaliate by gossiping, by slandering?
 - b. Would He move in with His girlfriend, or would He resist?
 - c. Would He cheat on His taxes?
5. Such increasing knowledge requires caring enough to spend time thinking about what He would do, want, stand for. Maybe discussing the questions with other godly individuals.
6. Do you really hunger and thirst to know Him?

C. Do you really know Him more deeply now than before?

1. Are you still serving out of fear or can you now genuinely serve God out of love?
2. Are you just memorizing doctrine, or are you grasping concepts – the spirit behind those doctrines?
3. Are you really seeking to know His word and His will; His desires and instructions?
4. Do you know what He would do in a situation even when there is no direct parallel in Scripture? How would He feel and respond to abortion? Stem cell experiments?

When a life is bearing appropriate fruit and is growing in how well it knows God the third manifestation ought to just slide into place. Such knowledge of God will show itself in one...

III. Being Strengthened. Colossians 1:11, **“... strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; ...”**

A. A manifestation of God’s power at work.

1. The Apostle is not talking about the power miracles that God performs to help Christians defeat their problems or opponents.
 - a. Like when the walls of Jericho came tumbling down.
 - b. Or when Paul silences Elymas the magician by striking him blind for a season. (Acts 13)
2. Paul IS talking about the power of God working in us and through us.
 - a. About the unstoppable power of truth and love and faith.
 - b. More subtle and humble than spectacular. Working faithfully with great steadfastness and patience, like the power of grass to split a sidewalk.
 - c. Like the power of love to unite people who would ordinarily be enemies.
 - d. Like the power of truth and love and integrity to heal broken relationships.
 - e. Like the strength to confront issues you would rather avoid. Maybe to squelch pride in order to apologize.

B. Is such strength evident in you?

1. Are you increasing in your ability to endure patiently? To be content in all circumstances?
2. Illnesses? Hardships? Difficult people at work? To work through family, marriage struggles?
3. Do you need to have your way, or do you have the strength and power to calmly stand for truth and righteousness and know that God is working?
4. Will you humbly stand for truth and love against all odds?
5. Can you put up with people without becoming bitter?
6. What would it take to get you to lie or deceive now? I hope a lot more than a year ago!
7. Are you demonstrating the power of more strength in resisting temptation?

Finally, the Apostle says that our knowledge of God ought to be reflected in our attitude. Our lives ought to show that we are continually;

IV. Giving Thanks. Colossians 1:12, "...**giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.**"

A. God has provided you with the greatest blessing imaginable!

1. Christ is the best thing that has ever happened to you or to anyone.
2. It is an enduring gift. In Christ, God's love is "**lavished**" upon you. In Christ you have "**every spiritual blessing in heavenly places.**"
3. In the face of all of life's problems, do you still realize what you have in Christ?
4. Do you grumble and complain about life, or live it in appreciation to God no matter what?
5. Do you always feel the privilege of being His? Qualified to share in the inheritance?
6. Do you realize the gift you have been given? Colossians 1:13-14, "**For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**"

B. If you grasp the concept, your life should be filled with joyful thanksgiving.

1. Are you actually doing all this joyfully?! Taking His place in suffering joyfully? Serving Him, thanking Him joyfully?
2. You can and will if you count your blessings and grasp the gift you have in Jesus Christ!

So What?

If your life has not been reflecting a knowledge of God, if you have not really been walking in a manner worthy of Jesus Christ, I pray, with Paul, that you will grasp the truth and demonstrate appropriate changes in your life.

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Matthew 7:16

B. "Fruit" is also a matter of what you DO.

Galatians 5:22-23

II. Increasing in the knowledge of God.

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B. Knowledge not just of facts, but relating to His character as well.

C. Do you really know Him more deeply now than before?

III. Being Strengthened.

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IV. Giving Thanks.

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Colossians 1:13-14

B. **Joyful** thanksgiving.

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Grasp the truth and demonstrate appropriate changes in your life.