

PRACTICAL THEOLOGICAL APPLICATION – PASTORAL LEADERSHIP PRAYER – Colossians 1:9-14

Excerpt from study on the Epistle to the Colossians – Biblical Literacy/Bible Survey/NT Epistles/Colossians:

This passage is a wonderful demonstration of how a pastor should pray for the leaders of a congregation. Especially when these leaders understand the needs of their congregation... that it is still immature and under pressure from cultural influences that seek to undermine the Gospel message.

Col 1:9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Col 1:10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,

Col 1:11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully

Col 1:12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

Col 1:13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,

Col 1:14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

1. Observations:

a. This prayer should be understood from a point of view that Paul deeply loved and was committed to this church and its leaders. Accordingly, Paul prayed:

- i. 1:9 – Pray for a specific action – Paul prayed specifically for Knowledge, Spiritual wisdom & understanding. Paul knew these leaders and knew exactly what they needed, and what they needed to hear from him in both encouragement and guidance.**
- ii. 1:10a – Pray for a specific purpose – Paul prayed that they would walk in a manner worthy of a representative of Christ in confidence and the knowledge of God’s will.**
- iii. 1:10b-12 – Pray for a specific result – Paul prayed that they would:**
 - 1. For each to bear Spiritual fruit.**
 - 2. To be strengthened in power and joy.**
 - 3. For the endurance necessary for these leaders to stand firm against adversarial influences.**
 - 4. That through all of this, these leaders would be seen as grateful because they have been spiritually qualified to inherit the Kingdom of God.**
- iv. 1:13-14 – Pray with a specific frame of reference – one of the best means to encourage people is to remind them where they were and how far they have come:**
 - 1. Having been rescued from darkness where despair and confusion reigns.**

2. Having been transferred into the Kingdom of Light where we have redemption and forgiveness.
 - b. This is a proactive prayer for church leaders who were doing well and needed to be encouraged and realigned – Paul is not merely reacting to their specific problems, but he is also rejoicing and urging them onward in their collective growth and maturity. This is what a good senior leader does... they see where the need is and express how to motivate leader/workers to accomplish what God desires for their own lives and for their congregation.
2. Application – as a Spiritual Leader we should understand that our words have much greater weight than we are often aware of or even intend, because people respect and trust God’s ministry in us and through us. Thus, we have the opportunity to really bring Grace to people, or we can become a source of Spiritual abuse... either intentionally or unintentionally. Spiritual leaders need to be circumspect in how we speak into another’s life. Some helpful Guidelines:
 - a. Pray specifically for personal spiritual maturity. As leaders we need to have a vision of what spiritual maturity looks like so that we can properly describe it, encourage it, and help develop it in another life.
 - b. To be bold enough and spiritually sensitive enough to properly assess people in your ministry – to understand where they are spiritually and what they can reasonably do. Common mistakes for spiritual leaders in their assessment of others is:
 - i. They presume that where these leaders are is where they’ll remain.
 - ii. They fail to sense what God is up too in another, and thereby fail to think God’s thoughts for them.
 - iii. They presume these leaders already possess maturity because they need help through their leadership, or alternatively they want to see it in a particular person.
 - iv. By making a presumption of immaturity, they discourage individuals from reaching beyond where they are right now.
 - v. Probably the most difficult part of developing leaders is to sense God’s desire for them, and breathe life into them to move them where the Spirit wants to take them... and to do this respectfully, without prejudice or presumption.
 - c. Questions we should be asking God for discernment about:
 - i. What does God desire to do in another’s life?
 - ii. What would it take to help move them to the next level?
 - iii. Are they ready to move forward?
 - d. These questions require the leader to know the person intimately and to understand what maturity and spiritual growth looks like.
 - e. The goal is not going to be the same for each person – the challenge is to have a picture of what maturity is and allow God to shape each person into what God has for each of them personally. All leaders should understand that God has already prepared leaders through ‘Spiritual gifting’ [supernaturally given] and ‘natural ability’ [that they have been given from birth and life development].
 - f. God loves individuality evidenced that each of us has our own unique DNA, retina scan, and finger prints. He prepares individual leaders uniquely.
 - g. Because God loves each person and has an individual plan for their life, senior leaders should not force a “one-size-fits-all” form of discipleship. There are basics each needs to

know, but have room for specific application based upon personal needs. Therefore we need to know our people well and dream big for them... encouraging them to reach out and engage their calling and potential.

- h. Like Paul, leaders should pray both for ministry and people from a different perspective.
 - i. Your walk with God has to be such that people see in you what you don’t see in yourself.
 - ii. When they see these gifting’s in us and speak this back into our life, it opens the door for us also to speak into their life as well... and then you can dream with them what God could be in them and through them.
 - 1. This is a mystery that is born in and through the Spirit.
- i. Pray this for yourself as well as for others.