Pray This When You Need God's Direction

Colossians 1:9-12

Introduction: Torn within and without

Question: What do you pray when you need desperately need direction?

Answer: Pray Colossians 1:9-12

9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of His will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, 10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, 12 and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of His holy people in the kingdom of light.

Colossians 1:9-12

The context:

- **Epaphroditus and his hometown:** Epaphroditus came to know the Lord, got to know Paul, and went back to Colossae—a wealthy, affluent town that was very antagonistic to Christians.
- **A mess of bad teaching:** Epaphroditus tells Paul that groups are teaching bad philosophy about levels of angels, a group is saying the body is evil and demanding fasting, and some Jews are trying to get new believers to go back into the law.
- **Paul reminds them of truth:** He gives thanks for their faith and love for other believers, reminds them of the hope stored up in heaven, and notes that the gospel of truth is bearing fruit around the world.
- **A new unity that threatens the status quo:** In a world of slaves and free, Jews and Gentiles, this church brings a slave and master together with a new unity, making them public enemy number one.

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How to know the will of God

Colossians 1:9-10a

- **Wisdom:** The skill, the practical know-how how to live God's way in a particular situation.
- **Understanding:** Clarity and analysis to make decisions, evaluate conflicting counsel, and apply the truth of God's word.
- **Worthy:** *Axis* (used of scales). Bringing up the balance so how you live is commensurate with what He has done for you.
- **Pleasing to Him in all respects:** Flipping an old word for brown-nosing or kissing up on its head. It means making your main goal to please Jesus over and above anybody else.

What pleasing God looks like

Colossians 1:10b-12

- **Bearing fruit in every good work:** Being a 24/7 Christian who is winsome, loving, truthful, and kind at work, with money, and in relationships.
- **Increasing in the knowledge of God:** A full-circle cycle. When you choose to obey His promptings, He draws near, and you grow in an experiential, intimate knowledge of Him.
- **Strengthened with all power:** *Dunamis* (dynamite). God intervening according to His magnificent excellence because you cannot do this on your own.
- **Great endurance:** *Hupomeno*. Supernatural power to be under an impossible situation and bear up with a wonderful attitude.
- **Great patience:** *Makrothumo*. Having longsuffering with impossible people so that God gets the glory.
- **Joyfully giving thanks to the Father:** Recognizing that He has qualified, rescued, and transferred us from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His beloved Son.

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Discussion Questions:

1. How do you typically discern which path to trust when you are facing a major decision and receiving conflicting advice?

2. When you pray for direction, do you genuinely want to know God's will, or are you just looking for his approval on a decision you've already made? How does our response to a "no" or a "wait" from God reveal our true motives?

3. Look at Colossians 1:9-10. Why do you think Paul couples knowing the will of God with *wisdom* and *understanding*, rather than just an emotional feeling?

4. How does focusing on your direct relationship with Jesus change your daily choices at work, with money, and in relationships compared to just trying to follow a list of rules?

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