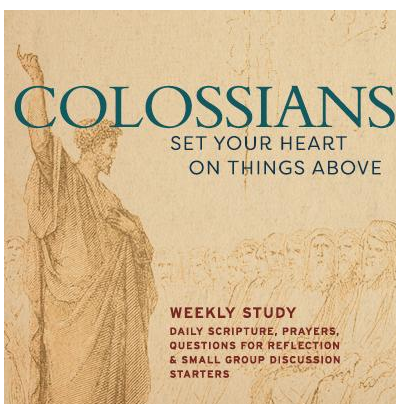




WEEKLY STUDY

Colossians - Week 2

Throughout this series on Colossians, we are setting our hearts and minds on “things above”. This week we are challenged by the Apostle Paul to live lives worthy of God and pleasing to Him. This feels like a tall task for mere humans like us. We are imperfect sinners who feel unworthy of God’s grace and mercy. But Paul spells out practices that please God. They include bearing good fruit, growing, allowing the Spirit of God to empower us, and always giving thanks to God who is worthy.

For those of you continuing to pray through the Psalms daily, you will read Psalms 120-126 this week.

Please note our prayer focus for the week in the box below. Join us in seeing what God will do as we unite in prayer.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Prayer Focus:

- Think of someone who is stuck in patterns of trying to earn God’s approval. Pray that they might receive their identity from the God who offers them grace and is pleased with them.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: COLOSSIANS 1.9-14 (NIV)

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.¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

- Our study this week centers around verse 10. How do we live a life worthy of the Lord and pleasing to Him? We are more likely to say (and feel comfortable saying) “I’m not worthy”, and apart from God, that’s true. But we are invited to be a part of what pleases him.

- **Prayer Prompt:** I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two camps. (Genesis 32.10)
- *God, through the power of your Holy Spirit, I long to live a life worthy of you. Guide me in the things that will bear fruit in my life. Amen.*

TUESDAY: JOHN 15.5-8

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.⁸ This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

- Jesus talked about what it means for us to bear fruit. Like any fruit-bearing branch, we have to stay connected to the vine from which is our connection and our source of life. Jesus said he is the vine. How often do you try to produce fruit on your own? What happens when you remain in Jesus and try to live out of that faithfulness?

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- **Prayer Prompt: But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Galatians 5.22-23)**
 - *Jesus, I want to remain connected to you. My life is so much more fruitful when I abide with you. Let the fruit of my life be my Father's glory! Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: 2 PETER 3.17-18 (NIV)

Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position.¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

- It's funny how only growing things...grow. Things that are alive tend to go through seasons of growth and fruitfulness. One thing we can be sure of is that we will never be finished in our pursuit of becoming more like Jesus, until we rest in his presence. In what ways are you growing "in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ"?
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- **Prayer Prompt: speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.¹⁶ From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work. (Ephesians 4.15-16)**
- *God, I want to live as a faithful part of the body of Christ that grows and builds itself up in love. Amen.*

THURSDAY: 2 TIMOTHY 1.6-9 (NIV)

For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.⁷ For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.⁸ So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.⁹ He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.

- Paul encouraged us to be empowered by the Spirit of God. And the Spirit of God does not make us timid, but give us power, love and self discipline. What are some signs of the presence of Spirit-empowered power, love and discipline in your life?

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- **Prayer Prompt: Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; (1 Corinthians 6.19)**
 - *God, thank you for your Spirit that lives in me. My very body was made to serve you. Amen.*

FRIDAY: 1 THESSALONIANS 5.16-18 (NIV)

Rejoice always,¹⁷ pray continually,¹⁸ give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

- We are designed to give thanks to God for his goodness, his kindness, and his faithfulness. It's the one thing that we can do to live a life worthy of God. Have you ever thought about gratitude as a gift you can give away? How does giving thanks in all circumstances form your daily outlook and your interactions with others?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever. (Psalm 107.1)**
- *Almighty God, I give thanks to you for your mercy and guidance. My only hope of a life worthy of you is...you! Amen.*

SATURDAY: EPHESIANS 4.1-6 (NIV)

As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called;⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism;⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

- “Live a life worthy...” Paul repeats this phrase in several places. Here he encourages followers of Jesus to not only accept the gift given to us in Christ, but to live out the calling that is ours to live. When the church is all striving towards that aim, we find unity and peace. We don't have to look far to see signs of disunity in the world around us. Humility, gentleness, patience, and bearing with one another in love is not the way of the world today. But we have received a calling to live differently! What does that look like in your life today?

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- **Prayer Prompt: For you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, ¹²encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into his kingdom and glory. (1 Thessalonians 2.11-12)**
 - *God, I am encouraged by the message shared through your Holy Word. Show me where I am a part of disunity and call me into your kingdom and glory! Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

Use the questions below to guide your conversation.

1. The sermon distinguished between humbly recognizing that we cannot earn God's mercy and allowing unworthiness to become our identity. Why is that distinction important? How can the belief 'I am unworthy' begin to shape the way someone relates to God, receives grace, or responds to God's calling?
2. Colossians 1.12-14 says the Father has qualified us, rescued us from darkness, and given us redemption and forgiveness in Jesus. Which of these truths do you most need to receive today?
3. Paul describes four marks of a life that pleases God: bearing fruit, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened for endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks. Which of these do you most clearly see the Spirit producing in your life right now? Which one are you most tempted to produce through your own effort?
4. We can easily turn Paul's description into a spiritual checklist. What is the difference between trying to produce these qualities through our own effort and intentionally staying connected to Jesus so the Spirit can form them in us? What practices help you keep Christ at the center?
5. The sermon reminded us that there is nothing we can do to earn God's approval, yet there are many things we do because we want to please him. What is one faithful step you sense God inviting you to take this week from a place of grace rather than striving? How can we pray for you?