

# Laboring in Prayer

Colossians 1:9-12

Introduction: In Col. 1:9-12, Paul gives a number of reasons why he prays for the church in Colossi. Paul would like to see the church in Colossi grow in knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual understanding. He would like them to be fruitful in good works. Paul would like them to become stronger in the Lord while joyously displaying patience and long-suffering. He directs them to give thanks to God; after all, He has provided us a means of salvation. These same reasons could easily be conveyed for our benefit here in South Dakota as well.

Our lesson is about improving our prayers. To remind us of some of the things we should pray for; to recognize our most powerful avenue for change in this life; to understand that praying is hard work and we need to work at it all the time.

## I. Pray always.

A. Supplication is a petition or request whereas a prayer is a need or vow (Eph. 6:18).

B. We must let God know our requests (Phil. 4:6).

C. The Apostles made it their life to do two things: pray and teach (Acts 6:4)!

## II. When we pray together we stay together.

A. While facing the prospect of death, Paul encouraged the saints in Corinth to pray together on his behalf (2 Cor. 1:9-11). Prayer is a gift to the recipient. The benefit in prayer is not just the request.

B. We make up a family of God's children. When difficult times come, we should pray together on the behalf of others.

## III. Our prayers should not be limited to only a certain group of people.

A. We are to pray for all men (1 Tim. 2:1). Notice who all "men" include (1 Tim. 2:2-4). Yet, God doesn't hear all men (Jn. 9:31). Our prayers for them are that much more important. Prayers might just save their souls.

B. As verse 4 mentioned, we should even pray for the salvation of men's souls (Rom. 10:1). This is not salvation by prayer. It is a prayer that may result in souls becoming obedient to Christ.

## IV. Praying is work.

A. Epaphras understood this (Col. 4:12). Epaphras was a fellow prisoner with Paul. He had a lot of time on his hands. Yet, he labored in prayer.

B. Paul conveys this same thought in Col. 4:2. I'm afraid we are far from vigilant in our prayers. Again Paul asks for prayers on his behalf (Col. 4:3-4).

C. We must be persistent in prayers (Rom. 12:12; Acts 12:5).

D. Jesus himself showed how much effort a prayer can require (Luke 6:12).

Conclusion: Prayer is our most powerful source to effect change in our life. By prayers, we can ask God to heal the physically and spiritually sick. Through prayer souls can change and become obedient to the Lord. We can obtain forgiveness for our sins through prayer. We can ease our concerns in prayer (James 5:15-16).