

Quarter One: Uniting Heaven & Earth: Christ in Philippians & Colossians

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Lesson 2—Reasons for Thanksgiving and Prayer

Wednesday: Gospel Fruit

January 7, 2026

- **Last Week:** “Persecuted but Not Forsaken”
 - Paul in chains; work in Philippi & Colossae
- **This Week:** “Reasons for Thanksgiving & Prayer”
 - Phil 1:1 – 18; Col 1:1 – 12
 - Paul’s opening prayer & thanksgiving in both Philippians & Colossians
 - Lessons for our own prayer life with God

Memory Text: “Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Phil 1:6, NKJV).

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** Fellowship in the Gospel (John L)
 - Phil 1:3 – 8 – Paul’s close relationship with Philippian believers; his witness of the gospel, even in chains
- 2. **Monday:** Paul’s Prayer Requests (John D)
 - Phil 1:9 – 11 – Paul’s special prayer for the Philippians and its meaning to us today
- 3. **Tuesday:** Spiritual Discernment Applied (James)
 - Phil 1:12 – 18 – Paul’s attitude about his imprisonment & passion to share Christ
- 4. **Wednesday:** Gospel Fruit (Jill)
 - Col 1:3 – 8 – Paul’s prayer for the Colossian believers
- 5. **Thursday:** Prayer Power (SQ)
 - Col 1:9 – 12 – Paul’s prayer for the Colossian believers; how to recognize God’s will

Wednesday: Gospel Fruit

Col 1:3 – 8; Col 2:1; 1 Cor 13:13; 2 Tim 2:15; Phil 2:16;

- Switch from prayer to Philippian believers to Colossian believers
 - Philippian church: Paul knew them & loved them
 - They knew & loved Paul (spiritual fellowship)
 - Colossian Church: Paul had never met them
 - Col 2:1 – “For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh”
 - Paul still loved them & sought to counsel them
- *Church leader – shared cup of tea with a church member
 - “I’m glad to see the comfortable way in which you’re living
 - Church member: “If you want to see how I really live, you need to come when you’re not here.”

- Importance of authentic Christianity:
 - Some Christians, if you knew how they really lived, you'd discover they are faking it
 - The Colossian believers had accepted the true gospel from Epaphras
 - Its authenticity was proved by the fruit in their lives:
 - The gospel had borne fruit (Lesson: "Gospel Fruit")
 - If people have not changed, either the true gospel wasn't preached –
 - Or people failed to surrender, receive & accept it
- **Paul's prayer for the Colossian believers:** Col 1:3 – 8 (one sentence)
 - Discover the "Gospel Fruit": fruit of an authentic walk with God
 - Col 1:3 – "We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,"
 - **Takeaway #1: Authentic Christians pray for others**
 - Pray for those you've met & loved
 - Pray for those you've never met
 - Pray for those you don't like
 - Intercede for both the church & unchurched
 - Col 1:4 – "since we heard of your **faith** in Christ Jesus and of your **love** for all the saints:"
 - **Takeaway #2: Authentic Christians reveal faith in Christ**
 - Faith recognizes dependence on God alone
 - Blood of Jesus cleanses me from all sin
 - Self cannot save me
 - Authentic Christians depend on God alone
 - Not self-dependence
 - Not other dependence – or church dependence
 - Faith is trusting in Jesus
 - Faith is revealed by actions
 - James 2:17 – "Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."
 - **Takeaway #3: Authentic Christians love others**
 - Paul combines "faith & love" as genuine indicators of conversion
 - Eph 1:15 – "Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints."
 - 2 Thess 1:3 – "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other."
 - John 13:34 – "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (35) By this

all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

- Fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5) = love

- Col 1:5 – “because of the **hope** which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the **word** of the **truth** of the gospel,”

- **Takeaway #4: Authentic Christians have hope in Christ**

- 1 Cor 15:19 – “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.”
 - If we don’t believe in the resurrection
 - Heaven & the hereafter
- The foundation for our faith & love is our hope in Heaven
 - *Woman – 8-year-old daughter died
 - 1 Cor 4:17 – “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

- **Takeaway #5: Authentic Christians follow the Word**

- Heard the “word of the truth of the gospel”
- 2 Tim 2:15 – “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
- John 17:17 – “Sanctify them by Your truth, Your Word is truth.”
 - The truth sanctifies us
 - The Truth is Jesus (John 14:6)

- Col 1:6 – “which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is **bringing forth fruit**, as it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth;”

- **Takeaway #6: Authentic Christians produce fruit**

- 2 Cor 5:17 – “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”
 - Anyone who has been born again – changed by the power of God – is a different person
- Gal 5 – works of flesh vs fruit of Spirit

- Col 1:7 – “as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,”

- **Takeaway #7: Authentic Christians witness**

- Epaphras evangelized Colossae
 - He shared the gospel
- Paul doesn’t have to witness to everyone
 - **All** are called to be His witnesses
- 1 Pet 2:9 – “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness, into His marvelous light.”

- Col 1:8 – “who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.”

- **Takeaway #8: Authentic Christians are united**
 - If there is division, Christ is not present
 - Eph 4:3 - 6 – “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; (5) one Lord, one faith, one baptism; (6) one God & Father of all, who is above all, & through all, & in you all.”
- **Paul’s prayer for the Colossian believers:** Discover the fruit of an authentic walk with God
 - #1: Authentic Christians pray for others
 - #2: Authentic Christians reveal faith in Christ
 - #3: Authentic Christians love others
 - #4: Authentic Christians have hope in Christ
 - #5: Authentic Christians follow the Word
 - #6: Authentic Christians produce fruit
 - #7: Authentic Christians witness
 - #8: Authentic Christians are united