

Colossians 1:9

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

Analysis

For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. Paul's intercessory prayer begins with epignōsis (ἐπίγνωσις, "full knowledge"), contrasting the false teachers' gnōsis (γνῶσις, "knowledge"). Epignōsis implies complete, experiential understanding, not merely intellectual grasp—knowing God's will personally through relationship, not secret formulae.

"In all wisdom and spiritual understanding" pairs sophia (σοφία, "wisdom") with synesei pneumatikē (συνέσει πνευματικῇ, "spiritual comprehension"). Wisdom applies knowledge practically; understanding grasps connections. Both are "spiritual"—produced by the Spirit, not human intellect. This directly counters the Colossian heresy's claim that special revelation beyond Scripture was needed for spiritual maturity.

Historical Context

Greek philosophy prized knowledge (gnōsis) as the path to virtue and enlightenment. Gnostic systems (developing in this era) taught that secret knowledge released initiates from material bondage. Paul redefines true

knowledge as knowing God's will through Spirit-illuminated Scripture, accessible to all believers, not elite mystics. This democratizes spirituality while maintaining high standards.

Related Passages

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Study Questions

1. How do you pursue knowledge of God's will—through Scripture study and prayer, or through subjective experiences and feelings?
2. What's the difference between accumulating biblical information and gaining Spirit-illuminated wisdom for life application?
3. Where might you be seeking 'deeper' knowledge beyond Scripture instead of deepening understanding of revealed truth?

Interlinear Text

Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσαμεν οὐ
For this cause also we since the day we heard not
G1223 G5124 G2532 G2249 G575 G3739 G2250 G191 G3756

παύομεθα ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι καὶ αἰτούμενοι ἵνα
cease for you to pray also to desire that
G3973 G5228 G5216 G4336 G2532 G154 G2443

πληρωθῇτε τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ ἐν
ye might be filled with the knowledge will of his in
G4137 G3588 G1922 G3588 G2307 G846 G1722

πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ
all wisdom also understanding spiritual
G3956 G4678 G2532 G4907 G4152

Additional Cross-References

James 3:17 (Parallel theme): But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

James 1:5 (Parallel theme): If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

Hebrews 13:21 (Sin): Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Colossians 4:5 (Parallel theme): Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

1 Peter 2:15 (Parallel theme): For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

1 Samuel 12:23 (Prayer): Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way:

Psalms 143:10 (Spirit): Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.

1 Thessalonians 5:17 (Prayer): Pray without ceasing.

Hebrews 10:36 (Parallel theme): For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

Colossians 3:16 (Spirit): Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.