

Three Realms of a Believer's Walk

Colossians 1:3-8

- BGT** ³ Εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ πατρὶ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν προσευχόμενοι, ⁴ ἀκούσαντες τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ἣν ἔχετε εἰς πάντας τοὺς ἁγίους ⁵ διὰ τὴν ἐλπίδα τὴν ἀποκειμένην ὑμῖν ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, ἣν προηκούσατε ἐν τῷ λόγῳ τῆς ἀληθείας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ⁶ τοῦ παρόντος εἰς ὑμᾶς, καθὼς καὶ ἐν παντὶ τῷ κόσμῳ ἐστὶν καρποφοροῦμενοι καὶ αὐξανόμενοι καθὼς καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν, ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἤκούσατε καὶ ἐπέγνωτε τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ: ⁷ καθὼς ἐμάθετε ἀπὸ Ἐπαφρᾶ τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ συνδούλου ἡμῶν, ὅς ἐστιν πιστὸς ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν διάκονος τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ⁸ ὁ καὶ δηλώσας ἡμῖν τὴν ὑμῶν ἀγάπην ἐν πνεύματι.
- NKJ** ³ We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, ⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; 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, 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; ⁷ as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, ⁸ who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

My Identity as an INDIVIDUAL (Colossians 1:1)

- I am an individual, growing in discipleship
- I am part of God's plan, progressing in service
- I am under God's authority, yielding to leadership
- I am a family member, responding to relationship

My Identity as Part of a GROUP (Colossians 1:2)

- I am part of a group that has been set apart as holy by God.
- I am part of a group that God has deemed faithful.
- I am part of a group that God has made into a family.
- I am part of a group that has been placed in Christ.
- I am part of a group that has been brought together in a particular location.
- I am part of a group that God desires to give His continuing grace. (Greek Greeting)
- I am part of a group that God desires to give His continuing peace. (Hebrew Greeting)
- I am part of a group that God reveals His relationship to as "Father"

1. Paul's Response to the Colossian Believers (1:3)

"We give thanks to the God [and] Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you"

- A. Prompted Prayer** – Ongoing thanksgiving & prayer – (See v. 4) Does your life prompt others to thank the Lord for you? Conversion, yes, and conduct also (as we will see). Our salvation and our sanctification should cause others to praise the Lord.
- B. Personal Prayer** – We can become so focused on what people are not that we miss what God is doing in their lives! Are we thanking God for what He is doing in the lives of others? In our own life? In the lives of our family? In the lives of our church family? In other churches?
- C. Leadership Prayer** – Part of leadership is praying for one's flock. Parents, do you pray for your "flock"? Leaders, are we praying for the Northridge flock? Those desiring leadership, are you learning to pray for your church family?
- D. Patterned Prayer** – There is a divine order in praying. Prayer is to the Father, through the Lord Jesus, by (with the enablement of) the Holy Spirit. We do not pray to Jesus or the Spirit generally. Examine your praying.

2. Paul's Reasons for His Response (1:4-5)

"since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints; 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"

THREE REALMS OF A BELIEVER'S WALK (Illustrated by the Believers in Colosse)

A. Their Faith: Their Ongoing Belief in the Savior ("of your faith in Christ Jesus")

Birth – Believing God, taking Him at His word, for salvation (His command and promise)

- **John 3:16-18** ¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.
- **Acts 16:30-31** ³⁰ And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹ So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." (see also Rom 4:5)

Behavior – Believing God, taking Him at His word, for sanctification (His commands and promises)

- *1 Cor 16:13* – Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong.
- *2 Cor 5:7* – For we walk by faith, not by sight.
- *Gal 2:20* – I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.
- *Col 2:6-7* – 6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him...
- *Eph 3:17* – that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
- *Eph 6:16* – above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.
- *2 Thes 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,
- *Heb 6:12* – that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.
- *Heb 11:6* – But without faith [it is] impossible to please [Him], for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and [that] He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.
- *1 John 5:4* – For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world--our faith.
- *2 Peter 1:4* by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption [that is] in the world through lust.

B. Their Love: Their Active Care of the Saints (“of your love for all the saints”)

Love is Active, Sacrificial Caring – not warm fuzzy feelings or doing things because we feel like it.

- *1 John 3:16* – By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down [our] lives for the brethren.

Love is THE external authenticating characteristic of followers of Christ.

- *John 13:35* – By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

Love was evident among the saints in Colosse, but they were also encouraged to love further and more.

- *Col 1:8* – who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.
- *Col 2:2a* – that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love...
- *Col 3:12-14* – ¹² Therefore, as [the] elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also [must do]. ¹⁴ But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

How is your love for the saints? Are you expending effort to know the needs of your church family? Are you giving of yourself to meet those needs? Are you practicing love? Are you seeking to put on love?

C. Their Hope: Their Forward Focus on Eternal Rewards

(“because of the hope which is laid up [lit. being laid up] for you in heaven”)

The reason why we do what we do now – something bigger and better later! (see Moses in Heb 11:24-26)

- *Rom 8:24* For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?
- *Rom 12:12* rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer;
- *Eph 1:18* the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints,
- *1 Thes 4:13* But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope.
- *Titus 2:13* looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,
- *1 Pet 1:3* Blessed [be] the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
- *1 Pet 1:13* Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest [your] hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
- *1 John 3:3* And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Are you hoping in the Lord? Are you looking to eternity, rather than the world? Are you looking for the Lord’s coming?

Heb 10:19-25 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and [having] a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of **faith**, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of [our] **hope** without wavering, for He who promised [is] faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up **love** and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as [is] the manner of some, but exhorting [one another], and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.