

## Redemptive Keys: Unlocking the Doors to Eternal Redemption

In this four-part study, we will look into four Redemptive Keys given to us in Paul's prayer in Colossians, Chapter One. They will unlock the doors to the fullness of your eternal redemption, both now and forevermore."

### *Colossians 1:9-14*

*"For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; {10} that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; {11} strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; {12} giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. {13} He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, {14} in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."*

### Redemptive Key #1

#### *"Filled with the Knowledge of His Will"*

"*Knowledge*" is easy to understand. It's simply information that can be known or learned. At first glance, Paul was praying that the Colossian church would not be ignorant of God's desires, plans and purposes for them. However, the implications of Paul's use of the word "*knowledge*" have deeper meanings that point us to the biblical sense of knowing with intimacy. Often, we read in the Bible of a husband and wife "knowing" each other. This is a statement of the deepest intimacy. The Bible calls this "*one flesh*." It's a way of describing a relationship where everything is so close that the deepest kind of "*knowing*" can be experienced on a continual basis. Therefore, we could paraphrase this ninth verse of the prayer as follows.

### Colossians 1:9 (My Amplified Paraphrase)

I've been constantly praying that you'll have an increasing abundance of knowledge about God's will for you, as you experience a growing personal relationship with Him. I'm also praying that you gain a full measure of the wisdom and understanding that comes from a really close, spiritually alive relationship with Him.

Can you say that you have asked God for an increasingly intimate relationship, one in which you would continually gain a fuller measure of wisdom and understanding of Him? It's a question worth taking the time to ponder.

### Paul's Concern

The Apostle Paul was deeply concerned that the Colossian church was under the threat of doctrinal contamination by an early form of Gnosticism. And so, Paul wrote that he was praying for them to be equipped to overcome this dangerous threat of apostasy. Paul's use of the term "*filled with the knowledge of His will*" carries the same connotation as having reached a seasoned, mature understanding of God's will.<sup>1</sup> He prayed that that the people of the church in Colossae would be mature in their relationship with Christ, and knowing Him as intimately as they did, would accurately understand His redemptive work at the cross. Knowing Christ intimately would be their best defense against this assault on the doctrine of a physical resurrection they had embraced.

The Gnostic concept of salvation... [is] a sort of spiritual do-it-yourself project. Gnostics hold that ... salvation is present in every man and woman, and that salvation is not vicarious but individual.... [It] must be... facilitated in order to effectively arise within consciousness. This stimulation is supplied by Messengers of Light who, in addition to their teachings, establish salvific mysteries (sacraments) which can be administered by apostles of the Messengers and their successors." - From "The Gnosis Archive (<http://gnosis.org/gnintro.htm>).

<sup>1</sup> My definition.

<sup>2</sup> [www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com) The Teaching Ministry of Dr. Bob Abramson

<sup>3</sup> Strong's number H2451

Paul had encountered the same Gnostic threat in the Ephesian church (about 100 miles from the Colossian church) and also, others in the region of Galatia. As we reference one of Paul's prayers to the Ephesians, we'll see it paralleled his concerns for the Colossians and also, for the Galatian churches in the region.

*Ephesians 3:14, 17-19*

*“For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ... {17} that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, {18} may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height - {19} to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”*

Praying that the Ephesians would be “*filled with all the fullness of God*” was a mirror into Paul's heart; but more importantly, into the heart of God for all His churches. This has not changed. The assault we face on our beliefs today, through so many false doctrines, continues to threaten the church. The timeless importance of biblically defined truth cannot be overstated. Anything that casts a shadow of unbelief on the physical death, burial and resurrection of Jesus is deadly. Being “*filled with the knowledge of His [God's] will*” for us is to know the truth about Jesus. It's a key to abundant life and eternity with Christ.

Because these beginnings of Gnosticism broadcast the lie that Jesus was *not* born of flesh and blood, Paul was compelled to pray against it, calling it an “*empty deceit*.” Let's unpack the significance of this. In Colossians, Chapter 2, Paul warned the church to “*beware*” of such people. They would be trying to influence the Colossians with persuasive words of “*philosophy and empty deceit*” that distorted “*the knowledge of His will*.”

*Colossians 2:4, 2:6-10*

*“Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words... {6} As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, {7} rooted and built*

*up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving. {8} Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. {9} For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;”*

We’ve seen how this “*philosophy and empty deceit*” had threatened the Colossian and Ephesian churches. Let’s look into the biblical evidence that this same Gnostic threat, along with other apostasies, was threatening to also weave its way into the churches in Galatia. Paul wrote the following.

#### *Galatians 1:6-8*

*“I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, {7} which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. {8} But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.”*

Paul’s jealousy for the true Gospel of Christ burned within him. His awareness of how destructive it would be to receive any other gospel was also clear in his letter to the Galatian churches. He literally pronounced a curse on people who would do this.

#### *Galatians 1:9*

*“As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”*

The Passion Translation (TPT) says it this way:

*“I will make it clear; Anyone, no matter who they are, that brings you a different gospel than the grace gospel that you have received, let them be condemned and cursed!”*

Being “*filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*” is your protection against apostate ideas. It’s your first redemptive key God provided you with to defeat these dangers. It’s not a halfway provision. God has provided all of it, complete in its effectiveness and power. Here’s a deeper look at it.

### *“In All Wisdom and Spiritual Understanding”*

Merriam Webster defines “wisdom” as “accumulated philosophic or scientific learning” and “the ability to discern inner qualities and relationships.” It’s “insight; good sense; judgment;” and “generally accepted belief.”<sup>2</sup> Though there are numerous other occasions when ‘*wisdom*’ is mentioned in the Bible, our concern should be with two ways it’s used. First, the Hebrew Scriptures use the term “*chokmah*.”<sup>3</sup> We meet this term as Solomon instructs his son (and therefore, all who read the Proverbs) to acquire it.

#### *Proverbs 4:7*

*“Wisdom is the principal thing; Therefore get wisdom.  
And in all your getting, get understanding.”*

When Paul prayed for the Colossian Church that they would “*be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*,” the Greek word he used for wisdom was “*sophía*.”<sup>4</sup> This is the root of the English terms, “sophistication” and “philosophy.” Strong’s defines “*sophia*,” as it’s used in Colossians 1:9, as “the art of using wisdom,” and “affection for wisdom.”

In Colossians 1:9, Paul’s use of the word “*understanding*” is a literary technique that strongly emphasizes and builds on a preceding thought. In this case, Paul reinforced the impact of “*sophia*,” (“*wisdom*”) by taking the thought further, through the use of the word “*understanding*.” The Greek word Paul used for

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<sup>2</sup> [www.merriamwebster.com](http://www.merriamwebster.com)

<sup>3</sup> Strong’s number H2451

<sup>4</sup> Strong’s number G4678

“*understanding*” was “*sunises*.”<sup>5</sup> It means to put together your thinking in a practical way, using God-driven discernment. As you can see, “*wisdom*” and “*understanding*” are closely joined in Colossians 1:9 to make Paul’s point. I have paraphrased this verse as follows.

Colossians 1:9 (My Amplified Paraphrase)

I, Paul, desire that you gain a clear, completely effective knowledge of what God’s wisdom and understanding will do for you... so much so that you are filled to the top, overflowing with it. Then, you can connect the dots, concluding what you will need, so you may have success as a Christian. Now, if you want to be filled with Redemptive Key #1, make the effort to go get it... and be sure to apply it!

Why was Paul praying that the Colossians would have a “clear, completely effective knowledge of God’s wisdom and understanding”? What motivated him to insert such a powerful and comprehensive prayer in the beginnings of his Epistle to the Colossians? (“*For this reason*” - Verse 9) How does “*this reason*” alert us to look for a second redemptive key to enrich our lives?

The answers are found in the next verse, Colossians 1:10. This verse really cannot be separated from Verse 9, as the two form one complete thought. We’ll look into Paul’s prayer, item-by-item, separating these items into the lessons that follow this one. For now, I’ll only list the answers for you below in the form of the subject headings of each lesson. We’ll unpack them as we go. Colossians 1:10 provides four elements, working together to answer the three questions above. Redemptive Key #2 comes from the first two of the four elements. Redemptive Keys #3 and #4 will focus on the final two of the four elements that reveal Paul’s “*reason*” for this prayer.) All four are God’s deep, heartfelt

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<sup>5</sup> Strong’s number G4907 - Definition paraphrased.

desire for you, as it was for the Colossian Church. His desire is that you enjoy the quality of a God-pleasing life, lived for Jesus.

Redemptive Key #2 - *“That you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him”*

Redemptive Key #3 - *“fruitful in every good work”*

Redemptive Key #4 - *“increasing in the knowledge of God.”*

Before moving on to “Redemptive Key #2 - Walking Worthy of the Lord, Fully Pleasing Him,” it would be appropriate to end this lesson with another set of Paul’s powerful instructions. They’re found in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians. In these verses, Paul both warned and encouraged the church (and therefore, us) to understand and fully embrace Redemptive Key #1 - “Filled with the Knowledge of His Will.” Below, I’ve provided three different contemporary translations. Each should speak richly to you.

#### *Ephesians 5:15-17*

*“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, {16} redeeming the time, because the days are evil. {17} Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”*

#### *Ephesians 5:15-17 (MSG)*

*“So watch your step. Use your head. {16} Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times! {17} Don’t live carelessly, unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants.”*

#### *Ephesians 5:15-17 (NLT)*

*“So be careful how you live. Don’t live like fools, but like those who are wise. {16} Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. {17} Don’t act thoughtlessly, but understand what the Lord wants you to do.”*

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