

# Bearing Fruit in Every Good Work

Local Matters Kickoff Sunday, April 2026 CGS – Colossians 1:9-14

**INTRODUCTION** – The book of Colossians is a letter Paul wrote to a church he hadn't visited, but would've been very familiar with. He wrote the letter to correct a misunderstanding in the church, and while we don't know the exact nature of that misunderstanding, it must've been about Jesus because Paul spends a lot of time teaching them (and us) who Jesus is and why he is worthy of our worship. This week's passage comes pretty early in the letter, while Paul is still setting up his argument. So far, he has expressed gratitude for the faith of the Colossian church, and now he seeks to encourage them to continue following Christ in a practical, visible way.

He starts by again expressing his continued prayer for them, but he goes on to tell them what exactly he has been praying for: "that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding" (v 9). He prays for their growth in knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. That's an excellent thing to pray for on its own, but he goes on to explain the end goal of that growth: "so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him" (v 10). On the surface, that sounds like a very far-fetched prayer request; impossible even. Who could ever walk in a manner worthy of the Lord? Who could ever please him fully? Who could ever deserve the love of God? No one but Christ. But let's look closer at what Paul is saying here. He's *not* saying, "I have prayed for you that you'd be able to earn your salvation." That's impossible. Elsewhere, Paul says no one can earn their salvation (Eph 2:8-9). What he's actually saying is that he wants them to live in a way that shows they belong to the Lord. To do right by him in light of all he's done for us. What does that look like? He tells us: "Bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (v 10). Let's follow his logic.

Paul prays for the church's growth in wisdom and understanding (v 9) so that they can continue to walk in a way that pleases the Lord. What pleases the Lord? Bearing fruit and growing in knowledge (v 10). We can't do any of that in our own strength, but only in his glorious might (v 11), by which we were adopted as his children in the first place (v 12). He was able to change our allegiance and adopt us as his sons because of the all-sufficient work of Christ on the cross (v 13-14). On the cross, Jesus made a way for us to change kingdoms, from darkness to light. Crucially, these two kingdoms have radically different values.

The best place to see the contrast between these two value sets is in Galatians 5:19-23. The "works of the flesh" are what you'd expect to see in the kingdom of darkness, but the "fruit of the Spirit" are what citizens of the kingdom of light should be producing. This is what Paul is referencing in Colossians 1:10. He wants the Colossian Christians (and us) to submit themselves to the authority of King Jesus, give thanks to the Father for adopting them, and then rely on the Holy Spirit to empower their wisdom and their walk. By doing so, we will bear the fruit of the Spirit and get to know God better.

As we kick off another month of Local Matters, let's think about what this looks like in our context. There are lots of ways to serve those around us in practical ways, and we should pursue them, but for your efforts to be empowered by the glorious might of God, your service for others has to start on the inside, not just the outside. Start by aligning your heart with God's heart. Draw near to God, spend time in his Word, and his kingdom's values will start to become your values. True, lasting service that bears the fruit of the Spirit and helps us know God better starts on the inside, and then overflows into those around you.

**GETTING STARTED** – As a group, take time to answer this question: In what ways have you served or been served by others, and what fruit grew as a result?

**IN THE WORD** – Let’s dig back into the passage. It’s important to strengthen our muscles in reading God’s Word. On Sunday, we walked through the passage in the sermon. Hopefully, that helped you to see the landmarks of the passage with fresh eyes. Now, with your group, go back through it and see what God is saying to you specifically.

First, before you read the passage, take a moment to ask God’s Spirit to quiet your mind and heart and to illuminate the text to you. Second, read the passage aloud to the group. Then, follow the simple method below (O.P.A.).

**Observe:** Make 8-10 observations from the passage. Pay close attention to observe and note repeated words and phrases, names, places, and themes.

**Principles:** From your list of observations, what patterns or big ideas do you see emerging? Can you distill it down into 2-4 big idea truths?

**Apply:** Moving from your list of principles, it is time to apply God’s Word. Remember, we believe that God’s Word is living and active and that it can change the way we live Monday-Friday. What is one tangible way to apply a truth from your list above?

**DISCUSS** – Another way to approach your time together is to talk through the following discussion questions:

1. What did you hear God’s Spirit say to you through the passage this week? How does it encourage you? How does it sharpen you?
2. How have you seen God at work in your life this week? Have you enjoyed him? Have you heard his voice and the leading of his Spirit? Big ways or small ways.
3. Based on verse 10, what does it look like to “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord”? What motivation does the passage provide for walking that way?
4. How would you expect our lives to look different if we’ve truly been set free from the “domain of darkness”? Does your life look like that?
5. How have you experienced the difference between efforts empowered by your own strength and efforts empowered by the glorious might of God?
6. Based on this passage, and in light of Local Matters, what are some tangible ways your Connect Group could serve others in our community? Check out [ccames.org/localmatters](https://ccames.org/localmatters) for ideas.