

COLOSSIANS 1:9-14: Paul's Prayer

1. SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE (v9)

- * These 3 Greek words would have been central concepts in GREEK philosophy & GNOSTIC teaching.
- * We grew up hearing about IQ, then we learnt about EQ, now people talk about SQ.
- * Paul's prayer was that we might be FILLED.
- * In the language of the New Testament, filled with also implies CONTROLLED by.

→ *What do the expressions Spiritual Quotient (SQ) or spiritual intelligence mean to you? Why are they so important? How do you measure it? Do you have it? What do you lack? What might change if you had more of it?*

Where is God's will to be found?

- Found in His WORD.
- Found in the PERSON & WORKS of JESUS.
- Made specific & applicable in the MINISTRY & LEADING of the HOLY SPIRIT.

→ *How confident are you that you know God's will? What do you do when you're searching for it? How do you discern whether or not you're in it?*

Further comments

- God's will is not to be found in POPULAR OPINION.
- God's will is not necessarily the MAJORITY VIEW.
- God's will may cause OFFENCE (1 Corinthians 1:23).
- God's will is a NARROW WAY.

→ *Have any of these started to creep into mainstream evangelical thinking? Have any of them started to seduce you? How do we keep them at bay?*

Spiritual WISDOM = A deep understanding of the true nature of things from GOD'S POINT OF VIEW ... AMP: '*Comprehensive INSIGHT into the WAYS & PURPOSES of God.*'

→ *What is the difference between knowledge & wisdom? What is the difference between biblical & worldly wisdom and how do you tell the difference?*

Discernment is SPIRITUAL, not merely INTELLECTUAL (1 Cor 2:12-14).

- * All things should be filtered through God's WORD and the witness of the HOLY SPIRIT on the inside.

→ *What do we mean by 'discernment'? When & why is it needed? Can you give an example of when discernment has saved you from hot water?*

2. PRACTICAL OBEDIENCE (v10)

- * The knowledge, wisdom, understanding of v9 should, as an inevitable BY-PRODUCT, lead to HONOURING, PLEASING & OBEYING God ... which will, in turn, lead to GROWTH & FRUITFULNESS.
- * The Challenge: Is there a GAP between what you KNOW in theory and what you actually DO in practical obedience?
- * The FILLING of v9 should lead to v10 = That you may WALK WORTHY of the Lord.

→ *Can you be wise and disobedient at the same time? Can you be wise and dishonouring at the same time? What is honour and why is it important?*

→ *The warnings: "Beware striving to become so spiritually smart, always looking for some great, new revelation, so you end up out on a limb. Beware being full of great opinions & theories that you've never put into practice, observed in action or placed into their wider context. Beware telling everyone how much you honour God if you're constantly dishonouring everybody else." Have you ever seen people fall into these pits? Why are they dangerous? How do wisdom & obedience protect you from them?*

→ *If you're honest, do you have a 'gap?' How big is it? Where does it manifest itself? What can you do to close the gap?*

3. MORAL STRENGTH (v11)

- * We can ask God for STRENGTH: For ENABLING GRACE, access to His GLORIOUS POWER.
- * 'Hupomone' = Endurance when CIRCUMSTANCES are difficult.
- * 'Makrothumia' = Endurance when PEOPLE are difficult.
- * Where do they come from? 'The MIGHT of HIS glory,' meaning SPIRITUAL, not FLESHLY, SUPERNATURAL not NATURAL.

→ *Why were endurance and patience so important for Paul? How had he learnt them? Where had he got them from?*

→ *Are you strong in endurance (when circumstances are difficult) or patience (when people are difficult)? How do you make sure you're walking in 'the might of His glory,' rather than the effort of your flesh?*

4. THANKFUL HEARTS (v12-14)

- * If you can stay THANKFUL, you'll remain JOYFUL.
- * v13-14 give us AMPLE reason to be thankful → We have been RESCUED & RELOCATED, FREED & FORGIVEN, become CO-HEIRS with Christ.
- * Without JOY you start to become DRAINED: joy literally STRENGTHENS your heart (Nehemiah 8:10).
- * Any area of your life in which you LOSE that sense of GRATITUDE will be JOYLESS.

→ *"Have you noticed how the more you fixate on a problem, the bigger it seems to get? Or wondered how others are looking at the same set of circumstances and, instead of a problem, they're seeing an opportunity?" Discuss!*

→ *How can you guard your heart from becoming ungrateful? What disciplines can you put in place to keep yourself thankful? What are the dangers of the 'critical spirit?' What about a 'lack mentality' or 'victim mentality?'*

→ *"Any area of your life in which you lose that sense of gratitude will be joyless." What areas could we be talking about? Can you be joyful in some areas, but not others? Can you be thankful in certain areas, but not others? What causes people to slip from one into the other?*

→ *What happens when you lose your joy and how can you get it back?*

CHALLENGE: *Which of these four qualities (spiritual intelligence, practical obedience, moral strength and practising thankfulness) are you most in need of right now and what are you going to do about growing stronger in it?*