

## For What Do You Pray?

Epaphras shows the working of spiritual love for these believers in Colossae by his intense struggling in intercessory prayer.

**Colossians 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for (or on behalf of) you in his prayers (Now we have something interesting, we have some of the things he prayed for these believers.) that...in order that...you may stand perfect and fully assured in the will of God.**

What do you pray when you pray for another believer? Of course, if there is a current challenge in their life, sickness, financial difficulties, a problem with their children etc., but just in general, what do you pray?

Oh, you don't? Well that is what we are learning here.

Here is an excellent guide for your prayers.

**In order that you may stand perfect.** Don't you wish someone would pray this for you? I sure do. Let's pray this for each of our young people. Let's pray this for one another in this assembly. Let's pray this for everyone who listens to our studies on the internet. The verb is an *aorist passive subjunctive*: *Aorist tense* emphasizes this as their constant position, regardless of what is going on in their lives. The *passive voice* is important here. They receive standing firm. Every believer receives

**For What Do You Pray?**  
**Colossians 4:12**

standing firm from the Holy Spirit. And the important *subjunctive mood*. This recognizes that this is up to each individual believer. You cannot make this decision for others. A parent cannot make this decision for his/her child, nor can a husband make it for his wife nor the wife for her husband. This is up to each individual believer to make the daily decision to stand firm in the Lord. God help the believer who arrogantly thinks he stands firm on his own. Actually, we could translate this *receive from the Holy Spirit that you stand firm*. And the subjunctive is the warning. Not all believers receive from the Holy Spirit the power to stand firm. This is where you come into the exhortation. You do not make a decision to stand firm but you make a decision to be Filled or Empowered by the Holy Spirit. Then, the third member of the One God, causes you to stand firm. The Greek word is used here intransitively, and it means to continue to endure, to persist in what you are doing. In the margin of the New American Standard Version (NASV): '*stand firm*.' First of all, '*stand*' and not waver or fall or depart from your position in Christ. If there is a difference between 'stand fast' and 'stand firm' it would be that stand fast means to 'remain in position' and stand firm means to 'refuse to change position or decision.' Here, Epaphras prays that they will make the decision to stand in Christ and refuse to change or move out of their relationship with Jesus Christ and His Word.

Stand firm in your faith, for we live by faith not by sight.

Stand firm in your increasing in the knowledge of God.

Stand firm in your growth in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 3:18)

**For What Do You Pray?**  
**Colossians 4:12**

Stand firm in your spiritual love. Do not waver in any of these.

Areas of your life. This is what all our young people need from K-12 and then college etc. Many leaders of our young people are renouncing their faith. Our young people need our prayers, that they will persist in the spirit-filled life; persist in walking by faith; persist in their growth in the Word of God; or as we have in Colossians 1:10 *increasing in the knowledge of God*; or as Peter says it in 2 Peter 3:18 *grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*. And refuse to move out of Christ, out of His Word no matter what it may cost them. As they think about marriage, they will stand firm in their position in Christ and seek a life-long partner who also stands fast in Christ.

Then we have the adjective *teleios* which refers to a purpose or goal. NASV in the margin: *complete or mature*. So *stand complete*. Do not confuse this word *teleios* with our Lord's last word on the cross, *teleo* where He cried out in John 19:30 '*it is finished*' where He was referring to the fact that the payment for the sins of the world was complete. That is, His spiritual death was complete. Then, He died physically. Our word has the various nuances of: complete, perfect, whole, full-grown, mature, adult.

Now we come to one of the least understood principles in the Christian life. The Complete Biblical Library in volume 6 so fundamentally describes what is going on with this word and the Christian life. "Mature Christian behavior is the goal of teaching and exhortation (Colossians 1:28 and 4 :12). Moreover, it is consistently a **relational** quality rather than a positional state achieved by being sinless or faultless. Just as sin is a broken relationship with God and not simply specific acts, so too, *teleios*

**For What Do You Pray?  
Colossians 4:12**

is relational.” This is a powerful concept. Epaphras is praying that they stay in fellowship with Jesus Christ everyday in their lives. And we stay in fellowship with Christ by or through His Spirit. Jesus Christ commanded, “Therefore you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Jesus was not commanding sinless perfection in life. He was inviting them to come to God the Father, through Him and therefore stand before God as perfect in Christ. Now, in our passage, Epaphras prayed fervently that they would stand firm in their daily lives as per their positional relationship with Christ and with God the Father. Both are accomplished by faith. As Paul says in Romans:

**Romans 1:17 For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man* SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.”**

**For in it *the* righteousness of God is revealed from faith.** In Jesus Christ for salvation.

**to faith;** Living by faith in the Holy Spirit.

**as it is written, “BUT THE RIGHTEOUS *man*.** By relationship with Jesus Christ by faith and the resultant imputation of God’s perfect righteousness.

**shall live by faith.** Daily keeping relationship with Jesus Christ through His Spirit by faith, growing in His Word, by faith, living as per God’s plan for us by the power and leading of the Holy Spirit.

So what Epaphras is praying is that they will stand firm in their relationship with Jesus Christ by not moving from their faith in the Holy Spirit.

Colossians 4:12 ...**always laboring earnestly** (fervently)

**For What Do You Pray?**  
**Colossians 4:12**

**for you.** Your spiritual benefit.

**in his prayers, that you stand firm, perfect.** Complete in your relationship with Christ, as you have an eternal relationship with Christ, stand firm in that by having a temporal relationship with Christ in your daily lives.

Now continuing his prayers (he is not through yet).

**and fully assured in all the will of God.** Oh, people, this is so important in the Christian life, being *fully assured*. This is a *perfect passive participle* of *pleroo*. To be fully assured, or to be absolutely sure, to be certain in life, to be fully convinced or to have full, complete, no doubts about your conviction. It also means to be fully determined. I am always interested in seeing some young people struggling in their education, until...until they find that course that they know that this is what I want to know and to excel in. I know a man who really struggled in life, until the day his wife handed him his first new born baby. That day, his life was changed. He knew immediately why he had to excel at his chosen work. Or a young person who struggles through his youth, always in trouble, then he joins one of the branches of service—and all of a sudden he excels. Why? What happens to these people? They found something they were fully committed to, and convinced this is why I am here! And it thrills me so, when someone believes in Jesus Christ and realizes this is their life, they can't get enough teaching on the Word of God.

How can we be fully convinced? What gives us this full confidence? The Word of God!

**For What Do You Pray?**  
**Colossians 4:12**

Growing in the knowledge of God the Father and increasing in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, you never get enough of sound teaching of the Word of God. I never grew tired of going to Bible study six nights a week. The more we learn of God and His plan for history and the more we learn about Jesus Christ, the more He will become the priority of our lives and guide in the decisions we make in life.

Simply stating this vital prayer request: be fully convinced that your relationship with Christ is in the Will of God.

**Fully assured in all the will of God.** About or in regard to or in obedience to. This is the location of being fully assured.

It is always dangerous not to be fully convinced when you marry someone. Many people, not fully convinced when they vote. But when it comes to your spiritual life, it is so imperative that you are *fully convinced*. If you are not fully convinced that this is the right local church for you, decide in what you are looking for in a local church. Then, decide if this local church is fulfilling what you want to learn about God, and about Jesus Christ and about His Word.

**First:** be fully convinced on the gospel—that you are saved forever by faith and only faith in Jesus and only Jesus.

**Second:** be fully convinced that God the Holy Spirit is in you.

**Third:** be fully convinced that the only way of being filled with and by the Holy Spirit is by faith in the Holy Spirit.

**Fourth:** be fully convinced that you are learning and understanding the Bible in truth.

**For What Do You Pray?  
Colossians 4:12**

If you are fully convinced of these things then you will be convicted and encouraged to stand fast in your commitment to Christ in every area of your life: morally, socially, politically, family and spiritually.

**Colossians 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of your number, bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly – fervently for your benefit in his prayers (and here is what he prays for you) that you may stand firm perfect in your relationship with Christ, and fully convinced – fully determined in all the will of God**

And people, do not speed read past “the all” that is in the Greek text. It means just that *all*, every area of your life is in the will of God. We cannot over emphasize the importance of the will of God for your life, for every area of your life. Geographical will of God—where you live, occupational will of God. And when I say occupational will, I include a woman who has decided before God that His will for her life is to stay home, managing the home for her husband and family, and if blessed with children, that rearing their children as unto the Lord is her full commitment before God. This is a challenge that many ladies today think is second class, they want to be out in the work world...Ladies please always remember that working is the man’s curse in Genesis 3:17,18 and 19. Why do you want to seek glory under the curse of the male? So God has a will for everyone who believes in Jesus Christ as their Savior. This will covers every area of their lives. Where they will live, whom they will marry, what they will do with their lives, where they will worship and study God’s Word. Jesus Christ as the

**For What Do You Pray?**  
**Colossians 4:12**

head of the Church has established local churches and through the Holy Spirit has gifted men with the gift of Pastor-Teacher. Many believers have found the will of God for their lives in service of the local assembly. Even in a small assembly as ours there are many things that need to be done. Finance management, Communion Service, Electronics –internet to sound system in the church; cleaning, food, special events, missionary outreach, publications, hospitality to visitors and each other; encouragement, teaching of children and the list goes on and on. The will of God includes your social life, how you will vote. And people, the will of God includes that throughout history, many will die as martyrs for Christ.

How confident do you have to be to die for Jesus Christ?

“A woman in India watches as her sister is dragged off by Hindu nationalists. **She doesn’t know if her sister is alive or dead.**

“A man in a North Korean prison camp is shaken awake after being beaten unconscious; **the beatings begin again.**

“A woman in Nigeria runs for her life. She has escaped from Boko Haram, who kidnapped her. She is pregnant, and when she returns home, her community will **reject her and her baby.**

“A group of children are laughing and talking as they come down to their church’s sanctuary after eating together. Instantly, many of them are killed by a bomb blast. **It’s Easter Sunday in Sri Lanka.**

“These people don’t live in the same region, or even on the same continent. But they share an important characteristic: They are all Christians, and they suffer because of their faith. While Christian persecution takes many forms, it is defined as any hostility experienced as a result of identification



**For What Do You Pray?  
Colossians 4:12**

with Jesus Christ. From Sudan to Russia, from Nigeria to North Korea, from Colombia to India, followers of Christianity are targeted for their faith. They are attacked; they are discriminated against at work and at school; they risk sexual violence, torture, arrest and much more.” (Open Doors: site <https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/>)

People, we are studying praying for one another. It is so urgent that we be in constant prayer for our young people in schools, colleges and universities and military service. We must follow Epaphras and pray that they stand firm in their relationship with Jesus Christ and that they be fully convinced and fully determined in their position in the will of God...Please join with each other in daily prayer for our young people. For Ryan, Makenzie, Ben, Nicholas, Thomas and all the young people whose names and faces are posted on our back wall. They will have so many counter attacks to their Christian faith from teachers, professors, from friends, in their romance with the opposite sex. They need to stand firm in Christ. We need to help them by being in fervent prayer for them.

But not only for our young people but for each other, for me, and my wife Judith for Kit, for Julie and Bryan, Jeff, Annelle, for everyone in this assembly. For the parents of our young people. For One Another in this assembly. Over the four decades in the ministry I have witnessed time and time again, people, just drift away – not going to another church but just drifting away from Christ. People, remember the battle is a battle of faith. Everyone is under siege from the world, Satan and their own Inherited Sin Nature (ISN). We need to pray for one another in this assembly. We need to encourage one another in living by faith.

**For What Do You Pray?  
Colossians 4:12**

The ‘will of God’ is so important to Paul. All through the book of Colossians he speaks of the will of God starting in

**Colossians 1:1 Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ  
by the will of God...**

Then in Colossians 1:9 we have Paul’s prayer for these believers:

**Colossians 1:9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled (same word as used in Epaphras’ prayer) **with the knowledge of His will** (And where is this knowledge of His Will?) **in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,** (from the Word of God.)**

And in Colossians 1:18 we have a clear declaration of the will of God for everyone—

**Colossians 1:18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.**

Oh, people, Jesus Christ desires to have first place in every area of your life and this is the Will of God for every believer in Jesus Christ.

What is the will of God for me? That His only Son, Jesus the Christ have first place in every area of your life, your time, your money, your priorities.

**For What Do You Pray?  
Colossians 4:12**

So people, let us learn from Epaphras, it is so important that we pray but it is equally important as to what we pray, especially for one another. Still in our book of Colossians, look what Paul prays for in regards to these believers.

**Colossians 1:9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of *it*, (we are guided in our prayers by reports that we hear, not just what is going on in their personal lives but in their environment that may affect their spiritual lives) we have **not ceased to pray for you** and to ask that (Now we learn more on what to pray for one another) **you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,****

**Colossians 1:10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;** (What a wonderful guide in our prayers for one another. He prays they will continue to grow in spiritual wisdom from the Word of God.)

**Colossians 1:11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously**

**For What Do You Pray?  
Colossians 4:12**

**strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might,** Here he prays that they will be empowered by the Holy Spirit, the power of God. Now, why, why be empowered by the Holy Spirit?

**for the attaining of all steadfastness.** *hupomone* which refers to patience in regard to circumstances, we all will run into circumstances that will challenge our faith.

**and patience;** You will love this one: *makrothumia* longsuffering, patience in regard to others. We all are challenged in our Christian lives by others, this is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, longsuffering,

**joyously** remember the issue here is what does *joyously* modify? Does it modify *giving thanks* or what precedes? People we are to be patient with challenging circumstances in our lives, joyously. We are to have longsuffering toward others – with joy! Then Paul concludes his prayer.

**Colossians 1:12 giving thanks to the Father,  
who has qualified us to share in the inheritance  
of the saints in light.**

Let's close our study on praying for one another with Paul's great prayer in

**Ephesians 3:14 For this reason I bow my knees  
before the Father,** (this is a knee prayer, this is a fervent prayer, this is *laboring earnestly*)

**15 (Why pray to God the Father?) from whom  
every family in heaven and on earth derives its**

**For What Do You Pray?  
Colossians 4:12**

**name**, (You can pray to the Father for anyone, anywhere on planet earth.)

**Ephesians 3:16 that** (Now we come to the content of his prayer for other believers) **He** (God the Father) **would grant you**, (this expresses Paul's desire for them from God, that God would graciously give them something. Now, look, Paul in talking with God the Father, pleads with God according to the essence of God) **according to the riches of His glory**, (that they are) **to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man**, (Paul often prays that believers will be empowered by the Holy Spirit.)

**Ephesians 3:17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love**, (In spiritual love. And how are they rooted and grounded in Spiritual love? By knowledge of the Word of God and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.)

**Ephesians 3:18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,**

For What Do You Pray?  
Colossians 4:12

**Ephesians 3:19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.**

Here is an excellent prayer for other believers who are in the Word of God. But I am including the first part of verse 20 because it is so important to our praying for one another.

**Ephesians 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, (that is the Holy Spirit.)**

So people, let's learn from Epaphras and from Paul, that we are to pray for one another, and they give us some guide lines as to what should be really important to us in our prayers.

**“Father, use me, in my prayers for others.”**