

Sermon or Lesson: Colossians 1:11 (NIV based)
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: All Power For Great Endurance And Patience

INTRODUCTION: When you think about power from God for ordinary believers, what comes to mind? Power to do miracles - like parting the Red Sea? Power to endure physical torture of religious persecution - like beatings and imprisonment? Power to smite invincible enemies of the faith - like calling down fire from heaven to burn them up? Even though God is infinitely capable of bestowing these unusual kinds of power on whomever He wants, we are going to see in this study of Colossians chapter 1 that God normally empowers believers for purposes different than these unusual kinds.

READ: Colossians 1:11, with vv.3-4,9-10 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - From the authority directly given to him by God, Paul is writing authoritatively to the believers in Colosse, as well as to all believers today. (v.1)
 - - It is the will of God that believers read, study, learn, and fully implement in their lives the teachings in the Book of Colossians. (vv.1-2)
 - - God intends that faith in Jesus as the Christ is to be accompanied by having 'love for all the saints' and other spiritual dynamics, which are to be produced through the gospel. (vv.4-6)
 - - And furthermore, God intends for the gospel to "bear fruit" in the lives of people "all over the world", like it was doing in the lives of the Colossian believers. (v.6)
 - - We believers are to possess a Kingdom perspective that is characterized by "spiritual wisdom and understanding", so that we can correctly determine and comprehensively live in accordance to God's will. (v.9)
 - - But due to our corrupted perspective, we believers need increasing enlightenment from God through gaining spiritual knowledge from His Word, in order to improve our ability to determine and live in accordance to God's will. (from v.9; cf. 1 Corinthians 2:9-16)
 - - So, to live a life of spiritual maturity, that pleases God and bears fruit for His Kingdom, we believers must be continuously growing in our knowledge of God so that we can determine and live according to His will. (v.10)
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[Lesson Question: For the phrase "being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might", discuss, analyze, and formulate the corresponding dynamics that relate between God with His power and us human believers with whatever power we have.]

SECTION POINT: God allows and desires that believers access His power that enables them to successfully "live a life worthy of the Lord".

"being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might"

- - From our previous study of verse 10, "living a life worthy of the Lord" certainly necessitates that we each continuously expend substantial time, efforts, and resources

in order to "please him in every way, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing in the knowledge of God".

- - An overwhelming hindrance to this pursuit is the reality that we each inherently possess a sin nature that is actively and aggressively at war with everything we try to do to "live a life worthy of the Lord". (Romans 7:14-24a; Colossians 1:10)

- - We each do not have within our own human nature sufficient power to consistently and comprehensively subdue this sin nature that we inherently possess. (Romans 7:14-24a)

- - To the rescue of believers, though, is the power of God to "strengthen [us] with all power according to" "the power of his glory". (Colossians 1:11; Strong's #2904, #3588, #1391, #0848)

- - God has or possesses "all power", some of which He wants to share with us or bestow upon us believers - within the limits of or "according to" what He determines should be "the power of His glory".

- - Thereby, we true believers literally have available to us access to the power of God to "enable", "empower", or "strengthen" us to sustain victory over the war that our sin nature wages against us every day. (v.11; Strong's #1412; cf. Ephesians 2:18-21)

- - But of course, in this life, God never overpowers us or forces us to comply with His will. Instead, He always allows us the freewill right to choose good or to choose evil. (some examples from the very beginning of the human race: Adam and Eve chose to eat the forbidden fruit - Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-13; Cain chose to murder his brother Abel - Genesis 4:1-10)

- - So, by God's design, accessing and "being strengthened with [God's] power" require that we each develop and maintain the spiritual disciplines in our life that are necessary to successfully collaborate with God's desire and empowering of us to "live a life worthy of the Lord". (vv.11,10; Note: Some (but not all) of these spiritual disciplines necessary to successfully collaborate with God for empowering are cited in verses 9-12.)

[Lesson Question: Discuss, analyze, and formulate the interconnection and dynamics between the phrase "so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully..." in verse 11 with the contents of verses 9,10, and 11a.]

SECTION POINT: "Great endurance and patience" are required to successfully engage in and accomplish the many facets of "living a life worthy of the Lord".

"so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully..."

- - Even with assistance from God and His empowering, actively battling and opposing our own inner sin nature is an ongoing daily struggle, thereby requiring "great endurance and patience" in order to maintain success.

- - Likewise, developing and maintaining the spiritual disciplines in our life that are necessary to successfully collaborate with God's empowering also require "great endurance and patience" in order to maintain success.

- - Our own inner sin nature is so powerful and effective that it even can exert enough pressure and influence in our life to entice or force us to abandon "continuing in the faith, established and firm, not [being] moved from..." it. (v.23)

- - Even as believers fully committed and disciplined to 'living a life worthy of and pleasing to the Lord', we can nevertheless be drawn away or "dragged away... by our own evil desires". (v.10; James 1:14)

- - Another reason we need empowering from God to "have great endurance and patience" is described later in verses 1:24-25, 28-29, that ministering the Word of God to other people, whether in the church or outside the church, involves "suffering" and "afflictions, for the sake of..." those people being ministered to, whether believers or unbelievers. (v.24)
- - This ministering the Word of God to other people is an "energy-draining struggle" and "labor". (v.29)
- - By implication then, from our inherent sin nature, both believers and unbelievers who are being ministered to naturally exert resistance and difficulties to those "servants" doing the ministering to them. (v.25)
- - A battle always occurs, whether overt or covert or subliminal, when "proclaiming Christ, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that" 'everyone may be presented' "perfect in Christ". (v.28; e.g. see v.17 in Matthew 17:14-20)
- - Considering that it is God's will that every believer is to be using their God-given spiritual gifts to minister to other people, then all believers (like those in Colosse) need to "be strengthened with all power" from God "so that [they] have great endurance and patience" as they experience "struggle", "labor", and "suffering" within their ministering to other people. (1 Corinthians 12:1,7; Colossians 1:29,24)

- - To summarize, the many facets of "living a life worthy of the Lord" will naturally generate conditions and situations in which "great endurance" is needed - "to persevere, remain under, patiently bearing up under" difficulties that challenge one's faith, and "not surrendering to circumstances or succumbing under trial". (v.10; v.11, Zodiates #5281 p.1425)
- - Also needed is "great... patience" - "long-suffering", "forbearance, and fortitude" that are characterized by "calmness in the face of suffering and adversity". (v.11, Strong's #3115, with AHD - 'longanimity')
- - The assistance of God's power is required to "live a life worthy of the Lord" that "pleases him in every way". (vv.11,10)
- - And when we believers access and apply power from God within the many facets of "living a life worthy of the Lord" to successfully accomplish God's will comprehensively, we can consequently and simultaneously experience "joy". (vv.10,9,11)

BIG IDEA: God allows and desires that believers access His power to fortify them with "great endurance and patience" that will help enable them to successfully engage in and accomplish the many facets of "living a life worthy of the Lord".

APPLICATIONS:

- - Are you daily and effectively drawing on God's power to help you genuinely and successfully "live a life worthy of the Lord"?
- - - Or instead, are you essentially and in reality relying on your own abilities in your attempt to daily "live a life worthy of the Lord"?

- - Are you consistently maintaining success at subduing all aspects of your sin nature? With the assistance of God's power?

- - - - Or instead, are you experiencing a roller coaster of vacillating successes and failures at subduing all aspects of your sin nature? Is this because you are not effectively collaborating with God to draw on His power to assist you?

- - - - And as a subsequent consequence of this, are you working strenuously to falsely convince yourself and other people around you that you are living a victorious Christian life - a mighty stalwart and pillar of the faith - when in fact you are not?

- - In the living out of your faith, how have you been doing in regard to "endurance and patience"? Have your endurance and patience been proper, godly, and exemplary? Even to the extent of equipping you in "pleasing [God] in every way" and facilitating you in "bearing fruit in every good work"? (v.10)

- - - - Or instead, have you exhibited sporadic successes in your "endurance and patience" in living out your faith? If you exhibit frequent failures in your "endurance and patience", whose power do you think is responsible for that - yours or God's?

- - Have you been using your God-given spiritual gifts to minister to other people? And with "great endurance and patience"?

- - - - Or instead, have you been misusing or failing to use your God-given spiritual gifts? Whose power do you think is responsible for that - yours or God's?

- - When other people are trying to minister to you, are you highly cooperative and receptive? So that they do not need to exercise endurance and patience with you?

- - - - Or instead, are you a difficult person to be ministered to - trying to be in control, complaining, criticizing, arguing, gossiping, sowing discord, unsupportive, not teachable, and etc.?

[Additional Lesson Questions to ponder (optional, if time allows):

- - What significance could this emphasis on "all" (in verses 9,11) or "every" (in verse 10 twice) (using the same Greek word (Strong's #3956)) have on the intended meaning of chapter 1 so far, and the intended message for believers? Appropriately use surrounding Scripture words or phrases to support your answer.

- - What kind of results would be expected when believers essentially fail to draw on God's power to assist them in daily "living a life worthy of the Lord"? Describe.

- - How does God make available or instill "all power" to ordinary believers? Logically, what "qualification" (v.12) conditions or requirements does He have for us to satisfy before He will instill "all power" upon us?

- - Would we normally associate "all power" with situations in life that require "great endurance and patience"? Answer: No, normally we would associate "all power" with doing mighty works and great accomplishments for His Kingdom, and taking a public stand for one's faith. - - So, what does this suggest about our need for God's power in our life daily?

- - Do new believers normally expect to be needing "all power" from God as they proceed into living a new life for Christ? If not, then how are new believers suppose to find out that they need "all power" from God in order to live a new life that is "pleasing Him in every way" (v.10)?]

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