

A Worthy Desire

Introduction. Desire gets a bad “rap,” but worthy desires should be infinitely encouraged. Everyone has worthy desires, and these are good because they press us toward a goal. I have a desire for all of you. Even though preachers come and go, I want you to hold on to this desire. It is the same desire that Epaphras, a servant in the Colossian church, had (Colossians 4:12-13; cf. 1:3-8). He did not wish for fame or money, but for something far more precious.

I. ***Epaphras “Labored Fervently” For The Colossians***

- A. The word resembles “agonize” and reminds one of the Lord’s prayer in Gethsemane (Luke 22:44; Hebrews 5:7). This was primarily an athletic term meaning “to contend for a prize” or “engage in a contest” (cf. Luke 13:24; 1 Timothy 4:10; 6:12).
- B. Epaphras had a deep-seated desire to see the Colossians succeed (Colossians 4:13). His prayer was full of zeal and intensity. Jesus illustrated persistence in prayer in two parables: the friend and the widow (Luke 11:5-10; 18:1-8).
- C. The virtue of persistence is demonstrated not only by Epaphras, but by Paul with his “thorn in the flesh” (2 Corinthians 12:7-8), and the Jews who had recently become Christians (Acts 2:42).

II. ***Epaphras Wanted The Colossians To Be Perfect And Complete***

- A. The word “perfect” means to be “mature” and “fully assured” means to be “fully convinced.” He meant that they should be full grown and have an understanding that penetrates their minds and fills their hearts.
- B. My desire for you is that you will be mature. The New Testament emphasizes many times the necessity of maturity (Matthew 5:48; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 4:13; Hebrews 6:1; James 1:2-4). How can we show maturity?
 - 1. Benevolence (Matthew 19:21).
 - 2. Love (Colossians 3:14).
 - 3. Good works (James 2:22).
 - 4. Control of the tongue (James 3:2).
 - 5. Obedience (1 John 2:3-5).
- C. My desire for you is that you will also be fully assured. I want you to have a conviction in what you believe. It is not good enough just to believe something, but I want you to know why you believe it (Colossians 2:1-2; 1 Thessalonians 1:2-5; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 10:22; 1 John 3:18-19). Conviction is:
 - 1. A cause for glory (Jeremiah 9:24).
 - 2. Is obtained by knowledge (Hosea 6:3; John 7:16-17).

3. Frees the soul (John 8:31-32).
4. Leads to eternal life (John 17:3).

III. ***This Prayer Requires Working Together***

- A. We cannot be striving for our own goals and ambitions in the church (Philippians 1:27; 2:2). When people acted together, great work was accomplished.
 1. Moses' hands were held up in battle so the Israelites could win (Exodus 17:12).
 2. The men of Israel punished the wicked acts of the men of Gibeah (Judges 20:11).
 3. The men of Israel came together to make David their king (1 Chronicles 12:38).
 4. The people in Jerusalem rebuilt the fallen walls (Nehemiah 4:6).
- B. As we work with this congregation, we want to see the church grow. We can hopefully teach and baptize people, but we can also grow by the saints increasing in spirituality, talents, level of interest, etc. (1 Corinthians 3:6).

Conclusion. This is not a difficult desire. I have it for each one of you, just as Epaphras had this hope for his Colossian brethren. You are the only ones who can make this goal come true. C. S. Lewis said, "Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and ambition when infinite joy is offered us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased."