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Prayer:

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Old Testament

Deuteronomy 30:9-14

GOD DELIGHTS IN YOUR FRUITFULNESS (MOSES SPEAKING)

“... and the LORD your God will make you abundantly prosperous in all your undertakings, in the fruit of your body, in the fruit of your livestock, and in the fruit of your soil.

“For the LORD will again take delight in prospering you, just as he delighted in prospering your ancestors, when you obey the LORD your God by observing his commandments and decrees that are written in this book of the law, because you turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

“Surely, this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too hard for you, nor is it too far away.

“It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will go up to heaven for us, and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?’

“Neither is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us and get it for us so that we may hear it and observe it?’

“No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe ...”

OVERVIEW

Deuteronomy 30:9–14 is part of Moses’ final address to the Israelites before his death and before they enter the Promised Land. In this passage, Moses assures the people that God will bless them abundantly if they return to Him with all their heart and soul. It emphasizes that God’s commandments are not distant or inaccessible—they are near, understandable, and within reach.

BIBLICAL CONTEXT

This passage is situated near the end of Deuteronomy, a book largely composed of Moses’ farewell sermons to the Israelites. Chapters 28–30 form a unit where Moses presents the **blessings for obedience** and **curses for disobedience** (chapter 28), the **covenant renewal** (chapter 29), and the **call to repentance and restoration** (chapter 30). Verses 9–14 fall within the section of chapter 30 that promises **restoration and blessing** after exile, should the people turn back to God.

Theologically, this portion reflects **covenantal mercy** (mercy that flows from God’s enduring promise, not our flawless performance), even after failure and exile, repentance leads to restoration. It also offers a clear message that God’s law is not obscure or impossible to follow; it is “very near,” residing in the people’s hearts and mouths.

Covenant renewal is a bit like turning over the soil after it’s been neglected—a way of getting back to the relationship God originally planted with His people. In farming, you don’t throw away the land just because weeds have taken over or the crops didn’t come up last year. You till it, fertilize it, and start again. That’s what covenant renewal is in the Bible: God doesn’t give up on His people, even when they’ve wandered. Instead, He calls them back—like Moses did in Deuteronomy 30—to remember their roots, turn their hearts back to Him, and start fresh. It’s not about making a brand-new deal; it’s about restoring what was always meant to grow.



HISTORICAL / NON-BIBLICAL / POLITICAL CONTEXT

At the time Deuteronomy was written or compiled (often thought by scholars to be around the 7th century BCE during King Josiah's reign, though traditionally attributed to Moses ~1400s BCE), Israel was a nation struggling with fidelity to God amid political instability. Deuteronomy likely served as a **covenantal reformation document**, calling Israel back to its roots during a time when foreign alliances and idol worship had crept into national life.

This passage reflects a **post-exilic mindset** as well, possibly shaped by or echoing future generations who experienced exile and longed for restoration. The emphasis on internalizing God's law contrasts with surrounding cultures where divine will was mediated solely through elites or distant oracles.

Politically, this call to personal and national repentance would have functioned as a **rallying cry for unity**, not through military might but through shared moral and spiritual conviction.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE / BIBLICAL TIMEFRAME

- **Traditional dating:** Moses' speech given ~1406 BCE, just before Israelites enter Canaan.
- **Scholarly dating:** Composition or final editing around the **7th century BCE**, during King Josiah's religious reforms (~640–609 BCE).
- **Post-exilic relevance:** Particularly resonant after the **Babylonian exile** (~586–538 BCE), when hope for restoration and return was paramount.

SCHOLARLY METAPHORICAL INTERPRETATION WITH MODERN-DAY & GRANT COUNTY CONTEXT

The central metaphor in verses 11–14 is **accessibility**—God's word is not "in heaven" or "across the sea" but "**very near to you**". This counters the notion that divine truth is inaccessible, esoteric, or reserved for the elite. Instead, it affirms **personal agency and responsibility**: God's will is planted within each person, in their "mouth" (what they say) and "heart" (what they believe and feel).

In a **modern context**, especially in places like Grant County, Indiana, where people often wrestle with how to live faithfully amid economic pressures, community challenges, and polarized public discourse, this passage reminds us that **faithfulness doesn't require complex rituals or unreachable insight**. It begins with everyday choices, conversations, and convictions rooted in love and obedience.

In a rural, faith-oriented community, this passage can be read as an **encouragement toward grassroots renewal** ... that revival and restoration don't need to come from Washington, D.C., or denominational leadership, but can start in the heart and home of each person. The "word is very near," meaning faith is not foreign; it's familiar, even if neglected.

SUMMARY

Deuteronomy 30:9–14 is a powerful reminder that God's blessings and commandments are within reach. Moses urges the people to return wholeheartedly to God, assuring them of prosperity and joy if they do. The law is not mysterious or distant; it is accessible and already part of them. This passage offers enduring hope: that renewal is possible, that God's word is not a foreign demand but a familiar guide, and that each individual has the ability and responsibility to live faithfully.



New Testament

Colossians 1:1-14

(Note: This is not someone talking about Paul—this is Paul himself writing in the customary Greco-Roman letter style, where the author names themselves at the very beginning.)

THE GOSPEL IS BEARING FRUIT (PAUL WRITES TO THE COLOSSIANS)

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God.

This you learned from Epaphras (EH-pa-frahs), our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God.

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, so that you may have all endurance and patience, joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light.

He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

OVERVIEW

Colossians 1:1–14 serves as the introduction to Paul's letter to the Colossians. It contains a standard epistolary greeting, a thanksgiving for the faith of the believers in Colossae, and a prayer for their continued spiritual growth. Paul expresses joy over their reception of the gospel and offers a powerful theological foundation that will carry into the rest of the letter: that their hope is grounded in Christ, and that their growth comes from God's power and grace, not merely human effort.

BIBLICAL CONTEXT

The letter to the Colossians is attributed to the Apostle Paul, written while he was imprisoned (likely in Rome or Ephesus). Colossae was a small city in Asia Minor (modern-day Turkey), and the church there may have been founded by Epaphras, not Paul himself. Epaphras was a trusted co-worker of the Apostle Paul and is believed to have founded or played a key role in establishing the church in Colossae, as well as possibly in neighboring cities. Mentioned in **Colossians 1:7** and **4:12–13**, Paul describes him as a "faithful minister of Christ" and someone who "is always wrestling in prayer" for the believers. He likely learned the gospel from Paul during Paul's ministry in Ephesus and then brought it back to his hometown region. Epaphras' deep concern for the spiritual well-being of the Colossians suggests he served not just as a messenger but as a pastor and spiritual leader deeply invested in their growth.



Paul writes to correct doctrinal confusion and to reaffirm the supremacy of Christ over all creation, philosophies, and powers. In this first passage (vv. 1–14), Paul:

- Greets the community.
- Commends their faith and love.
- Thanks God for their growth.
- Prays that they continue to grow in wisdom and spiritual strength.
- Encourages perseverance grounded in the hope of the gospel.

The emphasis on knowledge, endurance, and spiritual strength sets up the larger theme of Colossians: Christ as the all-sufficient source of wisdom, salvation, and purpose.

HISTORICAL / NON-BIBLICAL / POLITICAL CONTEXT

In the Roman world of the 1st century, Colossae was a relatively minor city, overshadowed by nearby Laodicea and Hierapolis. However, like many urban centers in Asia Minor, it was religiously complex, with a mix of Judaism, local paganism, Hellenistic philosophy, and early forms of syncretism (the **mixing of God's truth with pagan ideas**, rituals, or teachings.). Christians in Colossae were likely dealing with teachings that tried to blend Christian faith with elements of mysticism, angel worship, and legalism (the belief that following religious laws or rules is what earns a person salvation, favor with God, or spiritual status). You can't buy your way to heaven, and good deeds are a manifestation of your belief, not a currency transaction to get to heaven.

Politically, Rome emphasized order, allegiance to the emperor, and the Pax Romana. Christianity's claim that Jesus (not Caesar) is Lord subtly challenged Roman ideology. Paul's stress on spiritual endurance and divine strength may have served as both comfort and warning to Christians in this delicate social balance.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE / BIBLICAL TIMEFRAME

- **Authorship:** Traditionally dated around **60–62 CE** during Paul's first Roman imprisonment.
- **Location:** Written from prison (Rome or possibly Ephesus), addressed to the Colossian church in Asia Minor.
- **Church Status:** Still relatively new and not personally visited by Paul.
- **Church Founding:** Likely established by **Epaphras**, a co-worker of Paul (v. 7).

SCHOLARLY METAPHORICAL INTERPRETATION WITH MODERN-DAY & GRANT COUNTY CONTEXT

Metaphorically, this passage can be read as a letter to a small-town church that Paul may never have physically visited, yet deeply cares about. The Colossians are encouraged to embrace **hope, wisdom, and perseverance** ... spiritual qualities just as vital today as in the 1st century.

In **Grant County, Indiana**, where communities may feel overlooked or overshadowed by larger cities, this passage reminds believers that **their faith matters**, and that **their endurance and love are seen by God**. Just as Paul affirms the fruit of the gospel growing throughout the world, churches in rural or economically challenged areas are part of that same movement.

Paul's prayer (that the church be **filled with the knowledge of God's will** and **bear fruit in good works**) resonates in a modern context where churches must navigate competing worldviews, digital overload, and social divisions. The metaphor of being **"rescued from the dominion of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of His beloved Son"** (v. 13) can speak to those feeling disillusioned, trapped by addiction, poverty, or anxiety—offering a theological grounding for **personal transformation and community renewal**.



In **Romans 10:6–8**, the Apostle Paul directly quotes **Deuteronomy 30:12–14**, and applies it to Jesus and the gospel:

“Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ (that is, to bring Christ down) or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim).”

Paul reinterprets Moses’ words as pointing to Christ ... specifically, the incarnation (Christ coming down from heaven) and resurrection (rising from the abyss). His point: you don’t need to search for salvation; **Christ has already done the work**. Just like Moses said God's word was "very near," Paul says **the gospel is now near—because of Jesus**.

SUMMARY

Colossians 1:1–14 introduces Paul’s letter with heartfelt gratitude and deep spiritual encouragement. He gives thanks for the Colossians’ faith, love, and hope, highlighting the work of the gospel in their lives and globally. He then prays for their continued growth in spiritual wisdom, endurance, and joyful gratitude. Paul ends with a reminder that they have been delivered from darkness and brought into the kingdom of Christ—a kingdom defined by redemption and forgiveness.

For modern readers—especially those in close-knit communities like **Grant County, Indiana**—this passage offers both **validation and challenge**: God sees your faith, your love matters, and you are called to keep growing in wisdom and good works, rooted in the transformative hope of Christ.



Addendum

Common Links between Deuteronomy and Colossians Scriptures

1. God's Will Is Knowable and Present

- **Deuteronomy 30:** Moses proclaims that God's command is not far off—it is *"very near you, in your mouth and in your heart"* so you can observe it.
- **Colossians 1:** Paul prays that the Colossians will be *"filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding."*

Connection: Both texts affirm that God's will is **not hidden** or unknowable. It's something that can be **received, understood, and lived out**—whether through Moses' law or Christ's Spirit.

2. Faith Requires a Life Response

- **Deuteronomy 30:** Obedience involves turning to the Lord *"with all your heart and with all your soul."*
- **Colossians 1:** Paul praises the Colossians for their *"faith in Christ Jesus"* and *"love for all the saints,"* which bear fruit in their lives.

Connection: Faith isn't just belief—it's **transformational**, leading to **fruitful living** and relational love. The Colossians are walking the path Moses described: **hearts and actions aligned with God.**

3. Fruitfulness as a Sign of Spiritual Health

- **Deuteronomy 30:** God promises blessings on *"the fruit of your body, livestock, and soil."* Fruitfulness is a sign of covenant health.
- **Colossians 1:** Paul says the gospel is *"bearing fruit and growing... just as it is among you."*

Connection: Whether it's literal crops or spiritual maturity, **God's people are meant to be fruitful.** That fruit comes from staying rooted in God's revealed will—accessible in Moses' day through the Law and in Paul's day through the Gospel.

4. Thanksgiving and Delight in Obedience

- **Deuteronomy 30:** God will *"again take delight in prospering you"* when you return to Him.
- **Colossians 1:** Paul overflows with *thanksgiving* for how the Colossians are growing and walking *"worthy of the Lord."*

Connection: When people walk faithfully—whether in ancient Israel or the early church—it **brings joy to God and gratitude to leaders.** There's a shared tone of spiritual **delight and hope.**

Grant County, Indiana Reflection

In a region where people value both hard work and faith tradition, this pairing reinforces that:

- God's truth isn't far off—it's **right here** in Scripture, in Spirit, and in the **daily choices** of ordinary people.
- Just like the Colossians, the **fruit of faith** isn't measured only in beliefs, but in **love, endurance, gratitude, and spiritual growth.**
- Moses calls people to turn to God with heart and soul. Paul celebrates those who already have—and encourages them to grow deeper.



The “Prayer” Connection

Prayer ties **Deuteronomy 30:9–14** and **Colossians 1:1–14**, even if it isn’t mentioned by name in Deuteronomy. In fact, prayer becomes the *bridge* between knowing God’s will and living it out, especially in how Paul models it in Colossians.

1. Prayer as the Way to Draw Near to God’s Word

- **Deuteronomy 30** tells us that “*the word is very near you*”—in your mouth and your heart.
- While not explicitly about prayer, this idea of **internalizing God’s word** is deeply related to what prayer does: it draws God’s word **into our hearts** and **shapes our responses**.

In Grant County terms: You don’t need to travel far, learn Hebrew, or be a scholar to connect with God. **Prayer makes God’s word accessible—it helps you listen, reflect, and respond.**

2. Prayer Deepens Understanding and Action

- **Colossians 1:9** is explicitly a prayer: “*We have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all spiritual wisdom...*”
- Paul isn’t praying for comfort or success—he’s praying for **wisdom, understanding, and a life that bears fruit**.

Connection: Both Moses and Paul say God’s will is knowable. Paul shows us that **prayer is how we seek and receive that wisdom.**

3. Prayer Bears Fruit

- **Deuteronomy 30**: When people turn back to God (a form of repentance and prayer), He **blessesthe fruit** of their lives.
- **Colossians 1:10**: Paul prays the church will “*bear fruit in every good work.*”

In both passages, **prayer isn’t just about asking**—it’s about aligning ourselves with God so that our lives are **productive, faithful, and full of love.**

4. Prayer Comes from a Heart Turned Toward God

- **Deuteronomy 30:10** emphasizes returning to the Lord “*with all your heart and with all your soul.*”
- **Colossians 1:12** ends in thanksgiving—an important expression of heartfelt prayer.

Connection: Whether turning back after failure or giving thanks in faith, **prayer is the honest, heart-level response to God. It’s not ritual—it’s relationship.**

Grant County, Indiana Reflection:

In a rural community grounded in both tradition and resilience, this week’s scriptures remind us:

- **Prayer doesn’t require special training**—just a heart open to God.
- Prayer helps us **internalize God’s word** and turn it into action.
- As with farming, **fruitfulness comes from tending** the soil of the heart. Prayer is how we water that soil daily.