

What Would Your Best Life Really Look Like?

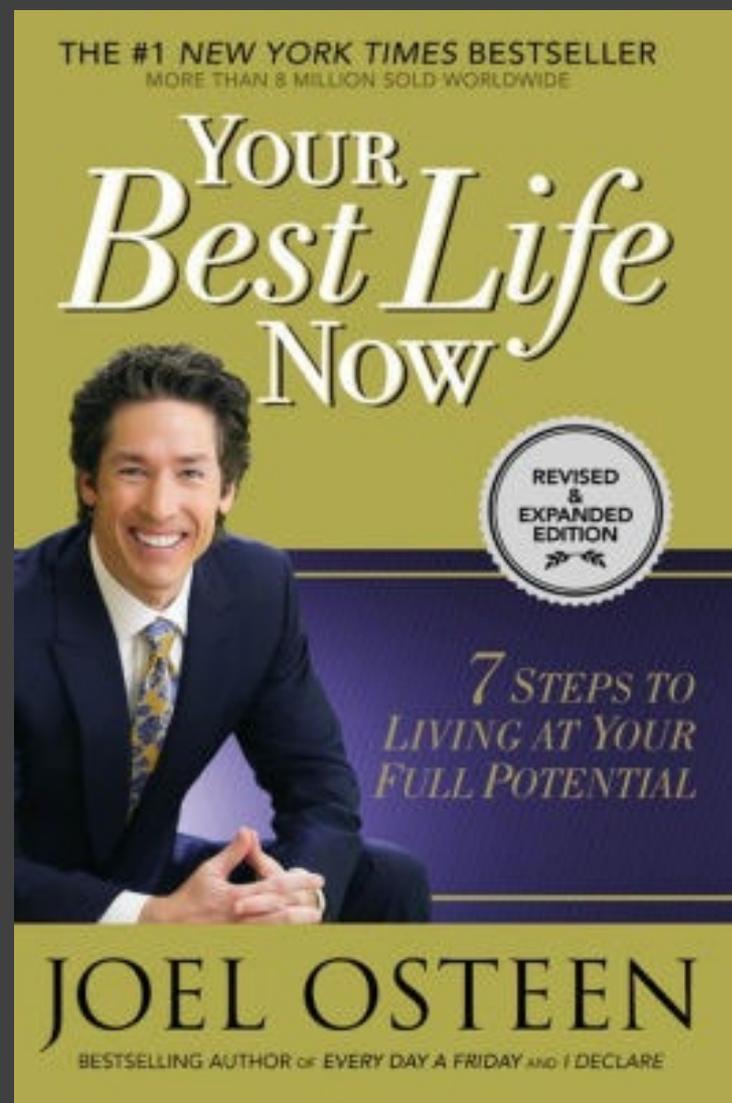
Colossians 1:9-12

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Colossians 1:9-14

And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

- In 2004, Houston televangelist Joel Osteen wrote a book entitled **Your Best Life Now**.
- Osteen's message is about “rising above our obstacles” to achieve “health, abundance, and victory” so that we can live successful, prosperous, and fulfilling lives.
- Ranked #1 on The New York Times Self-help Best Seller List.
- Remained a bestseller for more than two years, and has sold over 8 million copies.



Twenty centuries before Joel Osteen penned his prosperity gospel, the apostle wrote to the Colossian church about the **real Gospel** and what their **real “best life”** would look like as they lived by it.



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really look like?

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9 Διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς, ἀφ' ἧς ἡμέρας ἠκούσαμεν, οὐ **παύομεθα** ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν **προσευχόμενοι** καὶ **αἰτούμενοι**, ἵνα **πληρωθῆτε** τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τοῦ θελήματος αὐτοῦ ἐν πάσῃ σοφίᾳ καὶ συνέσει πνευματικῇ, **10 περιπατῆσαι** ἀξίως τοῦ κυρίου εἰς πᾶσαν ἀρεσκείαν, ἐν παντὶ ἔργῳ ἀγαθῷ **καρποφοροῦντες** καὶ **αὐξανόμενοι** τῇ ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ, **11 ἐν πάσῃ δυνάμει δυναμούμενοι** κατὰ τὸ κράτος τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ εἰς πᾶσαν ὑπομονὴν καὶ μακροθυμίαν. μετὰ χαρᾶς **12 εὐχαριστοῦντες** τῷ πατρὶ. . . .

SENTENCE ⁹ And so, ^rfrom the day we heard, ^swe have not ceased to pray for you, asking

SUB-POINT that ^tyou may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all ^uspiritual wisdom and understanding,

ELABORATION ¹⁰ so as ^vto walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, ^wfully pleasing to him:

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1. Paul prayed for his friends to be filled with **spiritual knowledge, wisdom, and understanding.**

⁹ And so, from the day we heard, we have not **ceased to pray** for you, **asking** that **you may be filled** with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰ **so as to walk** in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: **bearing fruit** in every good work and **increasing** in the knowledge of God; ¹¹ **being strengthened** with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; ¹² **giving thanks** to the Father

- Paul prayed for his friends to be **filled** with *knowledge* of God's will.
- A strong expression for knowledge. It means a deep and thorough grasp of all God's word and God's ways.
- A prayer that God will give them a complete understanding of everything he wants to do in their lives.

- He prayed for them to have *spiritual wisdom*—the ability to use and apply the knowledge we have.
- He prayed for them to have *understanding*—insight, discernment, the ability to grasp the meaning of things and to make right decision in every situation.

What do a *monkey's tail*, an *elephant's trunk*, a *giraffe's tongue*, and a *human hand* have in common?





- Each of these is a *prehensile* limb or organ.
- Prehensile: “*adapted for seizing or grasping especially by wrapping around.*”
- It is related to the word *apprehend*, meaning to take someone into custody.
- It is also related to the word *comprehend*, which means to grasp an idea—to wrap your mind around it.
- Paul prays for his friends to comprehend God’s Word and ways—to *grasp* it, to *wrap their minds around it*.

- Paul prayed for them to “be *filled*” will knowledge, wisdom, and understanding.
- The New Testament word here, *pleroo*, means “to *fill completely*, to *make full or complete*, to supply all that is needed.”

2. Paul prayed for his friends so that they would **honor the the Lord in their daily living** and **please him** in every way.

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- The Greek New Testament here literally says “that you may *walk around* (*peripateo*) worthy of the Lord.”
- Our pattern of daily conduct should be completely pleasing to God.
 - Every *place* you *go*.
 - Every *thing* you *do*.
 - Every *person* you *see*.

3. Paul prayed for his friends so that they would lead *fruitful lives*.

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- “Bearing fruit” is the first of the **four participles** that describe what a living a life that is fully pleasing to God looks like.
- Knowing God and his Word will **produce something** in your life.
- There will be **results**.

Galatians 5:22-23

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control.

Jesus said his followers would be identified by their **fruit**.

Matthew 7:16-20

¹⁶ By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷ Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸ A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. ¹⁹ Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰ Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

KNOW YOUR TREES



Silver Birch



Ash



Scots Pine



Oak



English Elm



Beech



Alder



European Larch



In John 15, Jesus describes the ***union*** between himself and the believer as a ***permanent, living connection*** between a branch and the vine to which it belongs.



"I am the Vine and you are the branches."

In that living union between the Vine and its branches, *the vine supplies* all the *life-giving sap* the branch needs to *produce much fruit.*



There are only two imperative verbs—**two commands**—in this passage:

“**Abide** in me.”

“**Ask** whatever you wish.”

Your part is to be **attached** to him.
His part is to **live** his life through **you**.



4. Paul prayed for his friends so that they would **grow in knowing God**.

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- Christian faith is a **living thing**.
- Living things grow.
- If it's real, it grows.

A baby needs somebody to feed him his bottle, change his diaper, and put him down when he needs a nap.



But when he's 25, he needs to fend for himself.

- Are you **growing** in your spiritual life?
- Are you **making progress**?
- Do you have a **deeper love** for God and his word?
- Are you walking in a **more perfect obedience**?

5. Paul prayed for his friends so that they would be **strong enough to endure to the end.**

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The Christian life isn't a **sprint**; it's a **marathon**.



The prayer is that they be strengthened with **all power**, according to **his glorious might**.

The same power by which Christ **rose** from the dead, **ascended** into heaven, and sat down **exalted** at the right hand of God is available to work in us!



6. Paul prayed for his friends so that they would have **good reason to be thankful.**

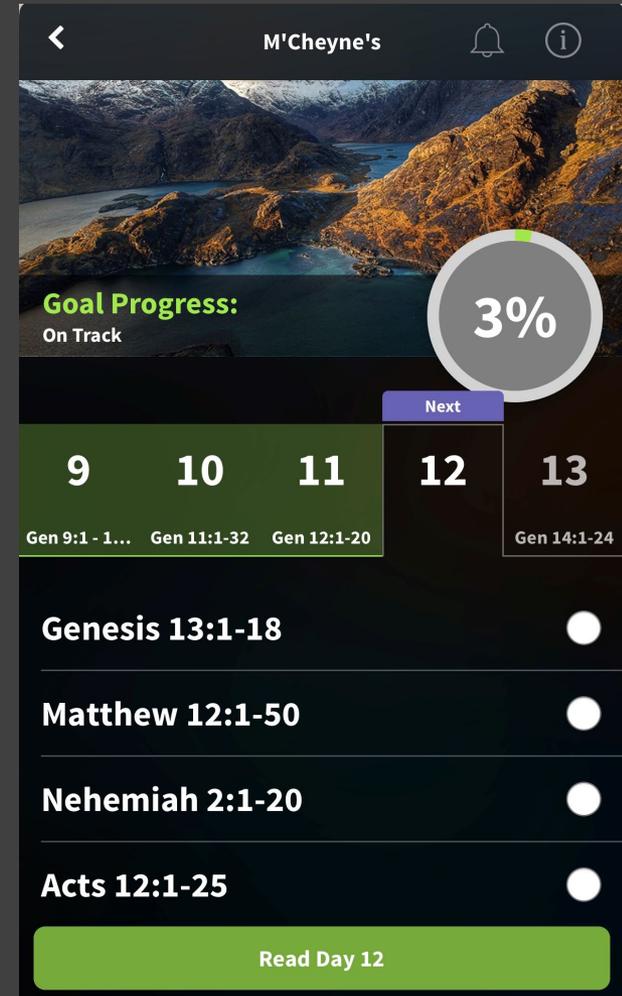
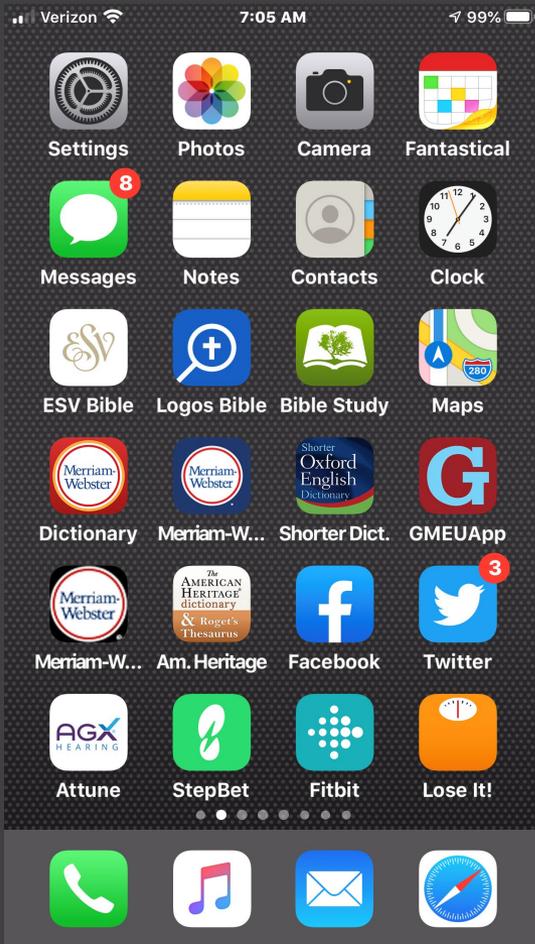
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Application

- Paul prayed this prayer for his friends.
- Might we also pray it for ourselves and the people we love?
- The prayer is really for just one thing: that God fill us with spiritual knowledge, wisdom, and understanding.

Do you **have a plan** for receiving spiritual knowledge, wisdom, and understanding?



- The goal of Paul's prayer was just one thing:
- That his friends would honor the Lord in their daily living and please him in every way.