

QUALIFIED BY GRACE: A 5-Day Devotional on Colossians 1:12

Day 1 — Unqualified, Yet Thankful

Scripture Reading:

Colossians 1:12; Luke 17:11–19; Romans 3:23; 2 Corinthians 9:15

Gratitude tells the truth about what we believe.

That's why Paul doesn't treat thanksgiving as a side note in Colossians 1:12. He ends his prayer where real faith always lands: "giving thanks to the Father." Thanksgiving isn't spiritual politeness. It's evidence. When grace is understood, gratitude follows.

Jesus once healed ten lepers, yet only one returned to give thanks—and he was a Samaritan, an outsider. Jesus noticed. "Where are the nine?" Gratitude revealed something deeper than healed skin. It revealed faith.

We struggle here because most of us secretly believe we've earned something. Even after coming to Christ, we slip into a quiet scorekeeping system. We thank God, sure—but cautiously. As if too much confidence might tempt Him to recheck the math.

But Paul won't allow that. He says we give thanks because God *has qualified us*. Past tense. Finished action. Thanksgiving flows not from our performance but from God's grace.

When gratitude is thin, assurance is usually thin too. But when grace is clear—undeserved, unearned, complete—thanksgiving becomes natural. You stop trying to impress God and start marveling that He welcomed you at all.

That's where real worship begins.

Reflection Questions

1. What does your gratitude—or lack of it—reveal about how you view grace?
2. Where have you been tempted to treat salvation as something partially earned?

Practical Application

Write down three gospel truths you didn't earn. Thank God for each one by name.

Prayer

Father, You have given me what I could never deserve. Guard me from casual gratitude and restore wonder where it has faded. Teach me to live thankful because Your grace is real and complete. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 2 — Who Really Qualifies?

Scripture Reading:

Colossians 1:12; Hebrews 9:27; Romans 2:13; Matthew 5:8

Most people assume heaven runs on basic decency.

Be kind. Try hard. Avoid the really bad stuff. Surely that's enough.

Scripture dismantles that assumption quickly. If God is perfectly holy, the qualifications are far higher than cultural common sense. Perfect righteousness. True holiness. A real family relationship with God Himself.

That's the problem. We don't qualify—and never have.

Paul isn't shy about that reality. Scripture insists that judgment belongs to God, not folklore about pearly gates and clever answers. And before a holy God, good intentions collapse fast.

So when Paul says the Father "has qualified you," he's not adjusting the standard. He's announcing a miracle. God didn't lower the bar. He met it Himself.

That's the heart of the gospel. God does not grade on a curve. He qualifies sinners through Christ.

This changes everything. Christianity is not self-improvement with Bible verses. It's divine rescue. And until we admit we were never qualified to begin with, grace will always feel like something you have to earn.

But once that truth lands, freedom follows.

Reflection Questions

1. Where do you see "good enough" thinking creep into your view of salvation?
2. Why is it comforting—not frightening—that God's standards are perfect?

Practical Application

Confess any ways you've relied on comparison instead of Christ.

Prayer

Father, Your holiness exposes my inability—and Your grace meets it fully. Thank You for qualifying me through Christ alone. Teach me to rest where You have finished the work. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 3 — Qualified in Christ

Scripture Reading:

Colossians 1:12; Romans 3:24–25; Romans 4:5; John 3:3

God doesn't just change our status—He changes us.

Through Christ, we are justified: declared righteous though we are not. The obedience of Jesus is credited to us by faith. That alone would be staggering grace.

But God goes further.

He also makes us new. Through the new birth, He gives us a holy nature that begins to desire what once bored us and resist what once owned us. We are not only forgiven sinners; we are reborn children.

That distinction matters. Justification gives us peace with God. Regeneration gives us a new direction in life.

Holiness doesn't qualify us—it is the result of God's qualification of us. Growth doesn't earn acceptance—it flows from it. That order protects us from despair and from pride.

You may feel painfully unfinished today. That doesn't disqualify you. It confirms that God is still at work.

Reflection Questions

1. How does separating justification from growth protect you from guilt?
2. Where do you see evidence of new desires in your life?

Practical Application

Thank God for both forgiveness *and* transformation—without confusing the two.

Prayer

Father, thank You for declaring me righteous in Christ and for making me new by Your Spirit. Help me grow without forgetting where my acceptance rests. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 4 — Heirs, Not Hired Hands

Scripture Reading:

Colossians 1:12; Romans 8:15–17; 1 Peter 1:4; Psalm 16:5–6

An inheritance is not earned. It's received.

That's why Paul uses this word so deliberately. We are heirs—not contractors on a trial period. Children—not employees waiting for approval.

Our inheritance isn't a slice of heaven divided into portions. It's God Himself, shared fully by all His people. Unlike earthly inheritances, this one is never diminished by sharing.

That truth steadies tired believers. You are not scrambling to secure a future God has already promised. You are walking toward what is already yours.

The Spirit Himself is your guarantee. Not a feeling. Not a mood. A seal.

Reflection Questions

1. Where do you live like a hired hand instead of an heir?
2. How does your future inheritance reshape present worries?

Practical Application

Replace one anxious thought today with a promise about your inheritance.

Prayer

Father, You have not merely rescued me—you have adopted me. Teach me to live like an heir who trusts Your future and rests in Your love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 5 — Saints in the Light

Scripture Reading:

Colossians 1:12; Ephesians 5:8; Revelation 21:23; Matthew 13:43

Light reveals. Light warms. Light heals.

Paul calls our inheritance one “in light” because it belongs to God Himself. Perfect truth. Perfect purity. Perfect joy. One day, the Lamb will be its lamp.

This hope strengthens weary Christians. When life feels dark, confusing, or heavy, the light ahead keeps us moving. We don’t deny present pain—we interpret it in light of future glory.

And saints aren’t spiritual elites. They’re sinners made holy by grace, walking imperfectly but honestly toward the light.

That’s our story. Qualified not because we were impressive—but because God is gracious.

Reflection Questions

1. How does future glory give strength for present struggles?
2. In what ways are you learning to walk in the light now?

Practical Application

Encourage someone this week with the hope of what lies ahead.

Prayer

Father, thank You for calling me out of darkness and into Your light. Fix my eyes on the glory to come and steady my heart until that day. In Jesus’ name, Amen.