

Read: Colossians 1:1-14

Thank You, Lord... Can I Have More?

Colossians 1:3-4,9b-10

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Alison just finished eating supper at the table. It was time for dessert. It was her favorite—strawberry shortcake. The cake was on the plates and the bowl of strawberries was making its way around the table. Suddenly, disaster struck. There weren't enough strawberries for everyone. Alison's mom mysteriously calculated the exact number of strawberries, divided it by the number of kids at the table, and then spooned them out evenly. Now everyone would be happy, right? Wrong! Alison complained, "But Mom, the berries don't even cover my cake." Mom replied, "Alison, be happy with what you have."

Be happy with what you have. Is that what your mom says too when you're at the store and you see the newest game or an action figure? Is that when Mom says something like, "Stop begging, be happy with what you have"?

Whether strawberries or toys, it's good to be happy with what we have. But when it comes to spiritual blessings, God wants us to beg, and ask and ask and ask, and want more and more and more. More of what? Let's call them our "spiritual strawberries." When it comes to spiritual things, to the strength of our faith, to the number of God-pleasing fruits, or works of faith, "We pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way." God never wants us to stop wanting more.

But that's sort of hard, because there's a part of us that doesn't want to do that. There's something in us that wants to do exactly the opposite of what God wants. But God has an answer for that. God tells us how we can grow in love for God and others. We grow when God feeds us. We grow the more we hear and know and read and study God's Word.

For the tons of spiritual presents God gives, each wrapped with the red ribbon of Jesus' blood—for faith in Jesus, for forgiveness, for the certain hope of heaven—we say "Thank you, God!" But never stop asking God for what you *don't* have. Ask him to cover your cake and dump on those spiritual berries. Ask the Lord for strength to please him in every way, for strength to produce fruit in every good work. And find that strength in God's Word.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- When Alison complained she didn't get enough strawberries on her shortcake, did her mom tell her—"Be happy with what you have" or "Ask for more and more"?
- When it comes to producing good spiritual berries of love for God and others, does God tell us—"Be happy with what you've got" or "Ask for more and more"?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- "Live a life worthy of the Lord." What exactly does that mean?
- What has God given us that gives power to live life for him?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Have an honest discussion with your parents (or guardian, etc.) what is getting in the way of your family "growing in God's Word."
- The devotion talked about "spiritual strawberries" as fruit that shows itself in life. Identify what a couple of those berries might look like in your life.

Closing Prayer:

Dear Lord, I am so thankful for everything you have given me in my life and for my faith. Don't ever stop strengthening and supporting me to live my life for you. Amen.