

A Practical Study of COLOSSIANS

How Christians Grow

“Christ is All and in All”

Key verse 3:11b — *“Christ is all and in all.”*

Study Number Five – Living in Christ – Colossians 2:4-8

Our KEY VERSES are Colossians 2:6 & 7.

When we’re talking about living in Christ, we’re talking about PASSION. We’re talking about some things that have to do with change from the status quo. These verses are very powerful.

One of the things that we have lost in the history of the church universal is that passion to be useful and fruitful in the lives of other people.

Ramesh Richard talks about this very subject. He gave this illustration from Gillette razor blades:

(Soul Passion: Embracing Your Life’s Ultimate Purpose by Ramesh Richard)

The astounding corporate energy put into the mundaneness of daily removal of facial hair helps illustrate preoccupation-turned-obsession. At the Gillette shaving

razor factory, two hundred men and thirty women—all Gillette employees—pass through the test lab. Another 2,700 off-site shavers test products at home. In the in-house lab, “researchers can count the razor strokes, clock the length of de-whiskerization and observe split-face shaving, in which dueling products are tested on opposite sides of a subject’s face. Shavers then peck at computer score pads to rate such facts as comfort, nicks and cuts, and the spreadability of shaving gel. If it sounds a little *obsessive* (the author’s word), try visiting Gillette’s British research center, “Where they have determined ‘that the average man spends 140 days of his life removing 27 feet of facial hair, and that a whisker is 70 percent easier to cut after being soaked two minutes in warm water.’ . . . “The quest for the perfect shave has *preoccupied* mankind for eons.”¹

1. “Gillette Works Itself into a Lather When Researching Shaving Products,” Roy Rivenburg, *Dallas Morning News*, 6 July 1996, sec. 3C, pp. 44-45

Don’t you wish we had the same passion for the Lord and that we were obsessed with the in-living Christ? That’s the main thought for this message.

But that’s not the way it is. We get out in the world Sunday morning with a wonderful time of “Blessed Be the Tie That Binds” and the first thing that happens is what John Ortberg describes:

(When the Game Is Over, It All Goes Back In The Box by John Ortberg)

Our problem generally is not that we don't know the rules, but that we don't live what we already know. A man is being tailgated by a woman who is in a hurry. He comes to an intersection and when the light turns yellow, he hits the brakes. The woman behind him goes ballistic. She honks her horn at him; she yells her frustration in no uncertain terms; she rants and gestures.

While she is in mid-rant, someone taps on her window. She looks up and sees a policeman. He invites her out of her car and takes her to the station where she is searched and fingerprinted and put in a cell. After a couple of hours, she is released, and the arresting officer gives her her personal effects, saying, "I'm very sorry for the mistake, ma'am. I pulled up behind your car while you were blowing your horn, using bad gestures and bad language. I noticed the 'What Would Jesus Do?' bumper sticker, the 'Choose Life' license plate holder, the 'Follow Me to Sunday School' window sign, the Christian fish emblem on your trunk, and I naturally assumed you had stolen the car."

The world gets pretty tired of people who have Christian bumper stickers on their cars, Christian fish signs on their trunks, Christian books on their shelves, Christian stations on their radios, Christian jewelry around their necks, Christian videos for their kids, and Christian magazines for their coffee tables but don't actually have the life of Jesus in their bones or the love of Jesus in their hearts.

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That’s basically the passion that Paul has for these Colossian saints in the Lycus Valley—that they’ll match by their lives what they believe in their hearts and their relationship with Christ.

We call these different stages of SPIRITUAL GROWTH. We’ve looked at four of them:

Stage #1: Christ has changed my life (1:1-8)

We focused on the words faith, love and hope—past, present and future.

Stage 2: The Will, the Walk and the Work of Christ (1:9-14)

—He tells them that he’s praying for them. Those three things that he’s praying is for them to know the will of God, to walk worthy of the Lord, and to work for Christ in the ways that they are gifted.

To be filled with the knowledge of His will, to walk worthy of Him and to work as the Lord has placed them.

Stage #3: Christ is in first place (1:15-20).

And then that key phrase was in verse 18:

“...in order that He might come to have first place in all things.”

That lead us to:

Stage #4: Maturing in Christ (1:21-2:3)

It's not just Christ being in first place, but it's following the divine principles of spiritual growth. That's the whole focus of that particular section.

At the end of verse 28 we have that **PURPOSE CLAUSE**:

“...we may present every man mature in Christ.”

In other words their goal and object in ministry, as Paul is telling them, is that they would be mature in Christ.

This study is a little different in that it is “Live IN Christ.” We're going to see the little word “in Christ” at least a couple of times in the key verses. Circle them when we get there so you'll understand what we're talking about.

When we're talking about living in Christ, the last verse we had was:

“in Christ are hidden all the treasure of wisdom and knowledge.”

That was loaded for the Gnostics because they believe that the knowledge was somewhere else. He's peeling off of that statement as we get ready to look at our study—Living in

Christ.

Trying to find something that would illustrate what we're talking about, marriage is probably the best illustration.

If you are married you know there's an invaluable principle of marriage—increased closeness comes with change.

When we mature, when we change for the sake of the loved one, there's always a greater closeness, a freer communication.

When the Spirit of God visits us in our time in the Word and He impresses upon us some things that are offensive to Him, we don't want to just write that off. We want to be very careful to listen to what's being said in the Word. We need to be aware that the Spirit of God is impressing upon us to address those issues. Spiritual progress and spiritual growth result from that.

That last message Jesus gave before He got down to the Garden of Gethsemane was:

John 15:4

Abide in Me and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, no more can you. Without Me you can do nothing.

It's daily abiding in Christ. Drawing upon all that He is and developing into His image using the resources that He

provides so that we might grow and mature in Christ.

The question is, are we maturing in Christ? Are we cooperating with the disciplines of being in the Word regularly? Are we sensitive to what He wants to do in our life?

There's a great joy and a thrill in that and also a tremendous blessing.

Let start with this verse:

Philippians 1:20-21

according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Having said that, put John 15 beside it and that'll be helpful.

Phillips did a great job paraphrasing that version but his remarks at the beginning of the book of Acts is a real treasure.

(Letters to Young Churches by J. B. Phillips)

The great difference between present-day Christianity and that of which we read in these letters is that to us it is primarily a performance, to them it was a real experience. We are apt to reduce the Christian religion to a code, or at best a rule of heart and life. To these men it is quite plainly the

invasion of their lives by a new quality of life altogether. They do not hesitate to describe this as Christ ‘living in’ them. Mere moral reformation will hardly explain the transformation and the exuberant vitality of these men’s lives—even if we could prove a motive for such reformation, and certainly the world around offered little encouragement to the early Christian! We are practically driven to accept their own explanation, which is that their little human lives had, through Christ, been linked up with the very life of God.

p. intro.

That is living in Christ.

This story in *Our Daily Bread* is so relevant:

The Way We Walk

A television program that I enjoy watching has a segment called Ambush Makeover. Two women are chosen to undergo hours of pampering to update their hair, makeup, and wardrobe. The change is often dramatic. When the women step from behind a curtain, the audience gasps. Friends and family members sometimes start to cry. After all of this, the person with the new look finally gets to see herself. Some are so shocked that they keep looking in the mirror as if to find proof that it’s really them.

As the women walk across the set to join their companions, the former self becomes evident. Most do not know how to walk in their new shoes.

(Our Daily Bread, October 14, 2011)

You know and that's it. We can put on all kinds of performances and parades and changes and everything, but do we really know how to walk in the Lord Jesus?

Here's another quote that fits here:

The apostle Peter had his own list of Christian qualities (2 Peter 1:5-7) that he encouraged believers to add to their life of faith:

Virtue. ...

Knowledge. ...

Self-control. ...

Perseverance. ...

Godliness. ...

Brotherly kindness. ...

Love. ...

Let's develop these qualities in increasing measure and integrate them into every part of our life.

(Our Daily Bread, October 17, 2011)

There are things that we do in the process of spiritual growth.

Now onto Oswald Chambers. This one's so good. This is going to encourage those that are having a rough time:

If you are going through a time of discouragement, there is a time of great personal growth ahead.

(source unknown)

That tells you that in the midst of the crucible, God has designed it and will use it for His glory and honor. There's going to be great spiritual growth.

Then this quote from Oswald Chambers :

What an astonishment it will be to see, once the veil is finally lifted, all the souls that have been reaped by you, simply because you have been in the habit of taking your orders from Jesus Christ.

(source unknown)

Heaven, heaven, heaven. Oh the thrill of being there with people whom we've had the privilege of touching their lives.

Key verses—verses 6 and 7. We left off at verse 3 so we're going to pick up at verse 4 and go down to verse 8.

v. 4 This I am saying, in order that no one may be deceiving you by plausible [but false] arguments.

“This I am saying, in order that no one may be deceiving you by plausible [but false] arguments.”

“This I am saying” was what he said in the last verse. There he said “in Christ is all the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

He says “I am saying [so] that no one may be deceiving you by plausible [but false] arguments.”

Obviously the Gnostics are at work. We’re going to see some PRESENT TENSE verbs in the remainder of the passage that will help us understand.

He says:

Colossians 2:1

I am desiring you to know how great a struggle I am having on your behalf and those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.

He’s letting them know that he is burdened in the Roman prison for folks in the Lycus Valley. He mentions Laodicea, the second church that is represented there.

“in order that no one may be deceiving”—that’s PRESENT TENSE. That means it’s going on.

“you by plausible [but false] arguments.”

He wants to make it quite clear that they aren’t telling the truth.

Give me the facts. We sometimes joke about used car salesmen being famous for covering up accidents and other issues with a vehicle. We like to have all the information

before we put money down on something that we're not sure about. That's in essence what Paul's saying. Don't get fooled by those who say that wisdom and truth reside somewhere else. He is very strong in that regard.

Here's one more verse from Ephesians:

Ephesians 4:14 (*The Living Bible*)

That we no longer be like children, forever changing our minds about what we believe because someone has told us something different, or has cleverly lied to us and made the lie sound like the truth.

Here's another verse we can look at:

1 John 2:27

As for you, the anointing which you received from Him is abiding in you, and you are not having need that anyone keep on teaching you; but even as His anointing is teaching you concerning all things, and is true and is not a lie, and even as He taught you, keep on abiding in Him.

One of the toughest assignments in the Christian life is to begin to move toward maturity. That's going to involve faithfulness and sensitivity to the Spirit of God as He speaks to us from the Word of God. He's saying you have the anointing of the Spirit and continue to abide in Jesus Christ.

Bottom line, don't get sidetracked. Stay focused on the Lord Jesus.

Peter can tell us the story of his water skiing experience. As long as he kept his eyes on the Lord, everything was fine. But as soon as he got his eyes off the Lord and on the waves, what did he do? He bit the dust or he bit the water. He went down.

The focal point of our life must constantly be on Jesus Christ.

Most people in their Christian life get sidetracked in some way or another. There is so much errant theology out there that people just seem to gravitate toward one thing and they get sidetracked.

There are those looking for more than what Jesus gave them when they came to know Christ. It's hard to say that but we've got to understand that Paul is keeping us totally focused on the Lord Jesus. That's where we need to be.

Now Spurgeon says it this way:

(Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five-thousand illustrations under one-thousand topical headings from the works of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon)

I believe certain doctrines because God says they are true; and the only authority I have for their truth is the Word of God. I receive such and such doctrines, not because I can prove them to be compatible with reason, not because my judgment

accepts them, but because God says they are true. Now this is one of the best services we can render to God,—to submit ourselves to him in our belief of what he has revealed, and ask him to fix his truths in our hearts, and make us obey them.

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He cuts to the chase doesn't he?

This is really a great statement:

(Through the Looking Glass: Reflections on Christ that Change Us by Kris Lundgaard)

*A lotta cats copy the Mona Lisa,
but people still line up to see the original.*

—Louis Armstrong

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There are a lot of people that will show up for all of the different things—programs, shows and stuff you've got going. But when they see the original, they want to come because they want to know what caused that to happen.

The written Word and the Living Word.

You want to hear Johann Sebastian Bach on this? Did you ever dream that he'd make a statement like this?

The aim and final end of all music should be none other than

the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul. If heed is not paid to this, it is not true music but a diabolical bawling and twanging.

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), a German musical composer, made this assertion while expressing his conviction concerning the purpose of music.

(source unknown)

Have you ever had that experience of being close because somebody's asked you to pray for them and they're halfway across the country? Here he's doing it. Look at verse 5.

v. 5 For though I am absent in my flesh, yet I am with you in my spirit, rejoicing and beholding your orderly manner and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

“For though I am absent in my flesh, yet I am with you in my spirit, rejoicing and beholding your orderly manner and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.”

Two things—which you speak in the flesh—you're going to speak depressed and negative. When you speak in the Spirit, it's going to be positive and uplifting. You're believing the best.

But here's Paul. He's in prison. He's praying for them. As he prays for them, even though he's absent from them, he says “I am with you in my spirit.” And in my spirit there are **FOUR THINGS** there:

“I am...rejoicing and beholding your...manner and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.”

Isn't that a lot different from what he said earlier in our series? “I'm fearful that some of you have already departed.” He was focusing on the NEGATIVE.

Now he's gained the victory through his prayer time and he's looking at it POSITIVELY.

“I'm not there in the flesh but I'm beholding what's going on.” And the rejoicing and beholding is a result of his prayer time.

Maybe that's what we need, to spend more time in His presence so we're positive and excited and eager.

And their “orderly manner,” their “steadfastness of [their] faith in Christ.”

They're holding their ground. They're not retreating. They're staying by the stuff.

They're listening to:

1 Corinthians 15:58

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

In studying the armor in Ephesians, one commentator said:

Did you notice that there's no armor for the back?
(source unknown)

In other words, we stand steadfast, we face the enemy and we don't retreat. God did not design any armor for us to do that.

“Steadfastness” immediately makes me think of three people in the Bible:

JOSEPH in the way he handled the circumstances in Egypt.

DANIEL purposed in his heart in Babylon and served that administration for at least 75 years—the two administrations.

JESUS CHRIST Himself who endured every contradiction of sinners against Himself. But Tetelestai! He finished the work He was called to perform.

“For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the spirit,”

Notice in these 5 verses that Christ is mentioned FIVE TIMES. He is the central focus.

Is it weird to be sensitive to the Spirit of God when we pray?
To lay a burden on our hearts or to give us a peace?

Scripture says “the work of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of it quietness and assurance.” (Isaiah 32:17)

Isaiah 30:21

Thine ear shall hear a word behind thee saying, this is the way walk ye in it, when you turn to the right hand, when you turn to the left.

Have you had a burden when you’re praying and you pick up the phone and call the person?

Invariably the timing of the call is so incredible when the Spirit of God lays a burden on your heart when you’re praying. Be obedient immediately and grab the phone and call and watch the blessing that’s going to come from that.

“in my spirit, [I’m] rejoicing and beholding your orderly manner [of life].”

Now TWO KEY VERSES—6 and 7.

v. 6 In like manner, therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, be living (walking around) in Him,

“In like manner, therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, be living (walking around) in Him,”

Here’s the first “in Him.”

“(walking around) in Him” means conducting your daily life. It’s in the PRESENT TENSE. This is on a daily and regular basis.

“as you have received Christ”

How did we receive Him? By faith.

By faith we’re “walking around in Him,” sensitive to the counselor and advice that He gives. We are living in Christ.

This is a COMMAND from the pen of the apostle. Our future success in withstanding false teaching is going to be as we receive Christ Jesus the Lord, to allow the Spirit of God to guide us into all truth and to continue to abide in Jesus Christ.

Richard Halverson was the chaplain of the United States Senate at one time. He left the pastorate to do that. Listen to what he says:

God give us men, who have learned to walk with Christ a step at a time, a moment at a time and who never faint. Men who cannot be overcome because they walk hand in hand, lock-step with the Lord of glory. This is the answer to the splendid frontier that challenges Christians in the mid-twentieth century.

(source unknown)

Whatever century we’re in, he has said it well.

“as you received Christ” so continue to walk in Him.

Spurgeon put it this way:

If Christ be Christ and if God be God, let us give our whole hearts to Him.

(source unknown)

He concludes verse 6 by saying:

“be living”—that’s a **COMMAND—PRESENT TENSE—**keeping doing it.

“(walking around) in Him,”

All that means is **TOTAL COMMITMENT**. Not our life but His life being lived out in and through us because of our closeness of relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Christ is not only active in our **CONVERSION**, He’s also active in our **CONDUCT**.

There are going to be **THREE PICTURES** he uses here:

1. “**WALKING,**”
2. “**ROOTED,**” and
3. “**BUILT UP.**”

We'll see part of that when we get to verse 7.

Harry Ironside says on this passage:

(Lectures on the Epistle to the Colossians by H. A. Ironside)

May we prove our loyalty to Him, not only by confessing a true Christ with our lips but by giving Him the supreme place in our lives!

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That's what we were talking about. The difference and the distance between the two. He's saying it so plain and clear.

It's to WALK in submission to the Lord Jesus.

MacArthur says it in just one sentence:

To walk in Christ is to live a life patterned after His.
(source unknown)

That's the desire of the Spirit of God to make us Christlike.

Earl Radmacher wrote this about Colossians 2:6 and 7:

(Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary edited by Earl D. Radmacher, Th.D., Ronald B. Allen, Th.D., and H. Wayne House, Th.D., J.D)

2:6, 7 Just as the Colossian believers had begun with Christ, so Paul encourages them to continue in their **walk** with Him. Paul uses four words to describe the Colossians' walk with Christ. The tense of the word translated **rooted** denotes a complete action; [and I'll get to that in just a minute] the believers *have been* rooted in Christ. The next three words, **built up, established, and abounding**, are in the present tense, showing the continual growth that should characterize every Christian's walk with Christ.
pp. 1564-5

Charles Swindoll says the same thing:

(Embraced by the Spirit: The Untold Blessings of Intimacy with God by Charles R. Swindoll)

Colossians 2:6 explains it like this: "As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him." As you have received Christ (that's the key that gets you inside), so walk in Him (that's the fuel, the Spirit of God engaging your life in an authentic manner).

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Isobel Kuhn had this to say, when talking about the Lisu people in central China:

(Stones of Fire by Isobel Kuhn)

That new tune to *Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah* was so winsome, it tied itself to your heartstrings and pulled [on it] a

little.

*Care and doubting, gloom and sorrow,
Fear and shame are mine no more;
Faith knows naught of dark tomorrow,
For my Saviour goes before . . .*

p. 8

There's something special about being with people and hear them express the in-living Christ in something so beautiful. She said they were naturally harmonious. It was a beautiful part.

Marcus Rainsford says:

(Our Lord Prays For His Own: Thoughts on John 17 by Marcus Rainsford)

A main part of our sanctification here on earth, is carried on, and perfected, in learning our sinfulness, experiencing our nothingness, and realizing our corruption, our misery, and our ruin.

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Andrew Murray said:

(199 Treasures of Wisdom on Talking with God compiled from the writings of Andrew Murray)

There is nothing more worth living for than this—to satisfy

God in His longing for human fellowship and love.
(Quote 197)

Can you take one more on this in-living Christ?

(Take My Heart, O God: Riches from the Greatest Christian Women Writers of All Times by Sarah Young)

The true test of walking in the spirit will not be the way we act, but the way we react to the daily frustrations of life.

—BEVERLY LAHAYE

(June 18)

That takes us back to the woman with the yellow light in front of her. It's how we REACT, it's how we ACT. Because we can fake it when we act and we're under control. She says:

(Take My Heart, O God: Riches from the Greatest Christian Women Writers of All Times by Sarah Young)

When we can anticipate problems, plan for events, and manage our time, it's easy to be on our best behavior. But oh, those other times. Those pesky irritations and annoyances that pop up when we're least prepared for them. A traffic jam, a ringing telephone, a too-long line at the checkout, a misplaced purse, or something that doesn't go our way. If we'd been able to prepare, we might have known how to act. Instead, we react to these situations with complaints, mutterings, impatience, and anger.

Acts *and* reactions tell the story of our walk with God. What is God revealing to you today about your walk with him? Is there something he wants you to repent of, change, learn, or make right? What a comfort it is that the Holy Spirit helps as we pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and try again to deal with the daily frustrations of life!

(June 18)

Verse 7 is our other KEY VERSE.

v. 7 having been rooted and continually being built up in Him, and being established in the faith, even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

“having been rooted and continually being built up in Him,”—there’s your IN HIM again—“and being established in the faith, even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”

That word “rooted” is different from the other three words. It’s in the PERFECT TENSE. It’s something that’s happened in the past that continues to have ramifications in the present. It’s the PERFECT WORD to describe the salvation experience.

“having been rooted”

It’s in the PASSIVE which means he is not activating in the rooting. God is acting in the rooting. We are ROOTED IN CHRIST by faith when we receive Him as Savior and we begin living in Christ.

There are lots of verses on “rooted.”

ROOTING and FRUITING.

Ephesians 3:17

And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts, living within you as you trust in Him. May your roots go down deep into the soil of God’s marvelous love.

Psalm 1:3

He is like a tree planted by the streams of water,
who yields its fruit in its season...

Jeremiah 17:7-8

But blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that spreads out its roots by the river. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green.

Psalm 92:12

The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,
they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon.

Isaiah 61:3

...They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the

Lord for the display of His splendor.

A tree has to go down before it goes up. Without an adequate root system, the first storm that comes, the tree goes “plop.”

It’s important that we talk about the rooting process with young believers. Instead we spend all of our time on fruit and not anything on the root!

We’re so concerned that everybody is involved in evangelism and sharing their faith. That’s wonderful. We have to do that. That comes but it comes more effectively, more beautifully and more wonderfully if you’re rooted in Christ and you’re dependent upon the Spirit to produce His fruit.

The root has to drink the water of life and then the fruit will be an automatic byproduct.

“and continually to be built up in Him,”

How are we “built up in Him?”

Oswald Chambers had this to say:

You have no idea of where or how God is going to engineer your future circumstances, and no knowledge of what stress and strain is going to be placed on you either at home or abroad. And if you waste your time in over-activity, instead of being immersed in the great fundamental truths of God’s redemption, then you will snap when the stress and strain

[does] come. But if this time of soaking before God is being spent in getting rooted and grounded in Him, which may appear to be impractical, then you will remain true to Him whatever happens.
(source unknown)

“rooted...in Him” and then “built up in Him.”

What does that mean?

Philippians 1:6

For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ.

This is something that is going to go on continually. We’re never going to arrive but we’ll see it in glory.

“living,”

“rooted,” and

“being built up in Him.”

“established in the faith”—“abounding in thanksgiving.”

We’re POSITIVE. We’re AFFIRMING. We’re THANKFUL, GRATEFUL and have JOY in expressing it.

In her book *The Treasures of Fanny Crosby*, Fanny Crosby

says this as she's reflecting on the fruitfulness of her life:

(The Treasures of Fanny Crosby by Fanny Crosby)

If I were given a little time in which to do it, I could take down from the shelves of my memory hundreds if not thousands of hymns that I have written in the sixty years during which I have been praising my Redeemer through this medium of song.

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What a treasure to take to the grave, to take to glory. Sixty years of faithfully writing hymns. If you've ever sung any of those hymns, you're fully aware of how amazing those words are.

There are people in life who let the adversity put them in a position of fruitfulness by being rooted in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This book has the best answer to anybody who has cancer. It's by Paul D. Wolfe who was diagnosed with cancer not long after he got married. Listen to what he says:

(My God Is True!: Lessons Learned Along Cancer's Dark Road by Paul D. Wolfe)

Now, what is the upshot of all of this? There are two upshots: one general, and one specific.

The general upshot is this: God is ultimately in charge of

the course of my life. I am not.

The specific upshot is this: when cancer comes, it comes because God appointed it. It comes as a part of his sovereign plan for life in this cursed world, not as an exception to that plan. I may not understand *how* he brought it, but I know full well *that* he brought it.

Naturally Christy and I were not anticipating that God was going to impress these lessons upon us in the way that he did. It was a hard way. If, as the saying goes, there is nothing quite like the prospect of being hanged to focus on man's mind, then there is nothing quite like being told you have cancer to take you to the spiritual woodshed for some much-needed remedial instruction.

As Christy put it so aptly in the days just after my diagnosis, we had to face the fact that the story of our life together was not necessarily going to proceed according to the 'script' that we had authored for ourselves.

pp. 23-24

Is that good truth or is that good truth?

Two KEY VERSES: Living in Christ.

As you receive Christ Jesus as Lord, be living or walking around in Him. "Rooted" in Him, "continually being built up in Him...established in the faith" and "abounding in thanksgiving."

This should cause passionate excitement in your life and you're going to change. There's going to be something different

about you. You might realize that you're treading water. Maybe you've gotten distracted. The Lord knows there are so many things out there to do.

Then he concludes it with a WARNING.

v. 8 Be on your guard lest there shall be someone who carries you off [from the truth] through his philosophy and empty deceit, which is according to the traditions of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

“Be on your guard lest there shall be someone who carries you off [from the truth] through his philosophy and empty deceit, which is according to the traditions of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, and not according to Christ.”

As he finishes, he comes back with a NEGATIVE COMMAND.

“Be on your guard lest there shall be someone.”

There is someone there we know—“who carries you.”

PRESENT TENSE—“off [from the truth].”

And they're going to do it “through his philosophy and empty deceit, which is according to the traditions of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, and not according to

Christ.”

He’s going to talk more about that in the next passage by giving the warning and spelling out some of the ramifications.

Oswald Chambers says:

“The greatest philosophy ever produced does not come within a thousand leagues of the fathomless profundity of our Lord’s statements, e.g., ‘Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.’”

(source unknown)

We conclude with thirteen lessons.

LESSON #1: Because in Christ there are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, the apostle Paul recognizes Christ was everything. He was truly the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.

LESSON #2: The challenge of the Christian life is just the same as it is in marriage. And that is, to develop an in-depth relationship that will change our lives.

LESSON #3: In Christ, in Christ alone, are all the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Don’t get fooled by those who would say that it resides somewhere else.

LESSON #4: Paul commands the Philippian saints in Philippians 2:12-13: “So then, my beloved, just as you have

always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure” (NASB).

LESSON #5: One of the toughest assignments in the Christian life, as you begin to move toward maturity, is to remain faithful and to go on living in Christ and to separate truth from error.

LESSON #6: “Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15 NASB).

LESSON #7: Paul challenges the Colossians in Colossians 2:6 “In like manner, therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord be living (walking around) in Him” (DAV).

LESSON #8: “God give us men, who have learned to walk with Christ a step at a time, a moment at a time and who never faint.” (Richard Halverson)

LESSON #9: Every thought, every word, every deed, not my will but yours be done. Not my life, but your life, being lived out in me.

LESSON #10: Paul gives three pictures here in what it means to be remaining steadfast in the faith: (1) walking; (2) rooted; and (3) built up.

LESSON #11: Psalm 92:12: “The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.”

LESSON #12: A tree has to grow down before it can grow up. The roots must go deep so the tree can stand the storms.

LESSON #13: Are you living, rooted, and being built up in Jesus Christ?

Living in Christ, rooted in Christ and built up in Christ.

C.H. Spurgeon must have had an incredible passion when he preached. In some of his sermons and in their final conclusions he is so passionate about people doing something with the truth they’ve been taught. He says this:

I leave this sermon with God’s people, but I cannot help adding that I do earnestly pray that all of you may receive Christ Jesus the Lord. Oh, come to Him to-night! He is willing that you should have Him, and every soul that wills to have Christ may have Him; for “the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” Amen, and Amen.

(source unknown)

We probably all have family members who don’t know the Savior. We’re burdened and concerned and we’re praying for them. Accept the challenge of beginning to live in Christ and watch the Spirit of God begin to provide the opportunities.

(Life is Like Licking Honey Off a Thorn: Reflections on Living Wisely in this World of Pain and Joy by Susan Lenzkes)

*Lord Jesus,
In this world You walked
a balanced way,
sinless among sinners—
giving Yourself away
without coming apart—
living before the Father in
humble confidence—
shouting Your holiness in
whispers of love—
pushing through the agony to
the joy set before You.
Oh, how I need Your grace to
walk as You did,
ever poised and balanced with
one foot on earth,
the other in heaven.*

p. 22

She concludes it and says her pastor sent her an encouraging note and he signed it:

(Life is Like Licking Honey Off a Thorn: Reflections on Living Wisely in this World of Pain and Joy by Susan Lenzkes)

... “In a tsunami of His shalom.” I loved it! Shalom is God’s

sweet greeting of peace, and my pastor friend..., had just sent me an absolute tidal wave of it!

p. 47

We can do that too.

Father, thank You for the presence of Your Spirit working and applying truth to our hearts together as we have studied what Paul is concerned about in Colosse. If he were alive today he'd be overly concerned about our distractions and by the things that keep us from getting serious about turning our ship around. We pray that each of us will recognize that spiritual growth is a daily thing and that we have opportunities every day to grow up in the Lord Jesus. Father we pray that You will hasten the process in our lives as we're faithful to be diligent and daily in Your Word. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A Practical Study of EPHESIANS

HEAVEN'S PLAN for Life on Earth

“What It’s Like Living According to God’s Plan”

Key verse 3:11b — “*Christ is all and in all.*”

STUDY NUMBER FIVE – LIVING IN CHRIST – COLOSSIANS 2:4-8

KEY VERSES 2:6, 7

v. 4 This I am saying, in order that no one may be deceiving you by plausible [but false] arguments.

v. 5 For though I am absent in my flesh, yet I am with you in my spirit, rejoicing and beholding your orderly manner and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

v. 6 In like manner, therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, be living (walking around) in Him,

v. 7 having been rooted and continually being built up in Him, and being established in the faith, even as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

v. 8 Be on your guard lest there shall be someone who carries you off [from the truth] through his philosophy and empty deceit, which is according to the traditions of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Colossians 2:4-8 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. Why is he making the statement that he is making, according to verse 4?

3. What is the apostle doing, according to verse 5?

4. What are they commanded to do in verse 6?

5. Explain how a person is “rooted,” “built up,” and “established in the faith.”

6. How does one abound in thanksgiving?

7. What is the warning given in verse 8?

8. Can you cite an illustration of what is being described in verse 8?

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

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