

Colossians: Your Freedom in Christ

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COLOSSIANS 2

This Week's Core

Competency: Peace

"I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others."

Don't worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.

And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:6-7)

Using This Study

① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage.

② EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

③ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.

Introduction

Jim Bruton tells the story of how, as a boy, he and a young friend would grab their home-made sling shots and try to shoot down B-26 airplanes as they flew over his house. You see, he lived near an air force base where the pilots would make frequent training runs. As the low vibration of the engine approached they would secure their backyard vantage point and wait. At just the right moment, they would each launch a stone and expectantly listen for a pling that might indicate that they had made a direct hit. At their age, they did not truly grasp the impossibility of what they were trying to do. Not only were the planes hopelessly out of range, the small stones that they flung skyward would barely have been capable of scratching the paint.

Colossians 1:22 tells us that through Christ's death, those who believe were reconciled to God and presented holy, faultless, and blameless before God. When, by self-effort or human tradition, a person tries to reach the standard that Christ fully achieved for us at the cross, it is as if we are hurling the stone of self-effort into the air and believing we will hit an orbiting space shuttle.

The gospel of Christ stands apart. It has a wisdom of its own. It does not depend on clever arguments or human performance. It depends on Christ alone. Only Christ can break the power of sin. Only He can present us holy, faultless, and blameless before God the Father. He did it fully and effectively on the cross.

This Week

As you study this week, allow your spiritual roots to soak in the truth of what Christ accomplished for you on the cross. Delight yourself in the Lord and let him renew your perspective. Rest in His abundant grace and ask Him to work in you through you to accomplish His purposes.

① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the passage.

Read Colossians 2

1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you, for those in Laodicea, and for all who have not seen me in person.

2 I want their hearts to be encouraged and joined together in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery—Christ.

3 All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him.

4 I am saying this so that no one will deceive you with persuasive arguments.

5 For I may be absent in body, but I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see how well ordered you are and the strength of your faith in Christ.

6 Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in Him,

7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, overflowing with gratitude.

8 Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elemental forces of the world, and not based on Christ.

9 For the entire fullness of God's nature dwells bodily in Christ,

10 and you have been filled by Him, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

11 You were also circumcised in Him with a circumcision not done with hands, by putting off the body of flesh, in the circumcision of the Messiah.

12 Having been buried with Him in baptism, you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

13 And when you were dead in trespasses and in

the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive with Him and forgave us all our trespasses.

14 He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the cross.

15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and disgraced them publicly; He triumphed over them by Him.

16 Therefore, don't let anyone judge you in regard to food and drink or in the matter of a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day.

17 These are a shadow of what was to come; the substance is the Messiah.

18 Let no one disqualify you, insisting on ascetic practices and the worship of angels, claiming access to a visionary realm and inflated without cause by his unspiritual mind.

19 He doesn't hold on to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and tendons, develops with growth from God.

20 If you died with the Messiah to the elemental forces of this world, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations:

21 "Don't handle, don't taste, don't touch"?

22 All these regulations refer to what is destroyed by being used up; they are commands and doctrines of men.

23 Although these have a reputation of wisdom by promoting ascetic practices, humility, and severe treatment of the body, they are not of any value in curbing self-indulgence.

② EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN?

In verses 1-5, "so that..." is used 2 times. What follows gives us a good idea of Paul's underlying reasons for writing to the Colossians. In your own words, state Paul's two concerns.

2. Paul then adds “Therefore....” Please explain the exhortations in verses 6-7 more fully:

a) Walk in Him (c.f. Galatians 5:16, 18, 2 John 1:6)

b) Rooted in Him

- Look up the word “root” in the dictionary and use the definitions to help explain what Paul meant.)

- In what practical ways can a believer draw life giving strength from Christ?

c) Built up in Him (Ephesians 2:20-22)

d) Established in the faith-

- “Established” comes from a legal term that means “confirmed.” Connect this with faith as defined in Hebrew 11:1.

- How might your life confirm or testify to your faith, which is invisible?

- Let’s consider the opposite question. Is there any way that your life may fail to confirm your faith?

e) Overflowing with gratitude

- Verses 9-15 give us reasons to be grateful! List all of Christ’s work and note the completeness of it.

- Pick one thing from the above list for which you are particularly grateful and explain why.

3. From the outside, it can be difficult to tell the difference between living by faith and legalism. What is the difference? Complete the chart below to help clarify.

| | (Religious) Legalism | Faith |
|---|---|--|
| Goal of living this way | <i>¹Earn God's favor ²Creating specific requirements, outside of scripture, as means of qualification in the local church</i> | <i>¹Believing Christ's death sufficient for reconciliation by presenting me holy, blameless before God ²Living to please God</i> |
| Example from this passage | | |
| Power &/or control for living this way | | |
| Results (in my life AND in the lives of those who observe me) | | |
| Why this is appealing | | |
| Examples of ways that I experience this in my life | | |

4. In light of the fact that Paul warns against all types of legalism, what place, do “spiritual disciplines” such as prayer, personal Bible study, and fasting have in the life of the faith-filled believer?

③ EMBRACE His Word

Why does this MATTER to me?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage:

In one statement, write what God wants you to KNOW...

In one statement, write how God wants you to FEEL...

In one statement, write what God wants you to DO...

Sermon Notes

30 CORE Competencies

10 Core Beliefs

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation by Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 Core Practices

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33* I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I live life with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 Core Virtues

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ