

EPISTLES II

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Exposition of Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, I-II-III John

PHILIPPIANS

The following material is from Christian Training Center class notes taken by Mr. Jim Snelten (edited by RevC). Though I was not the teacher, it is my belief that the main portion of this material came from “**The Preacher’s Outline Sermon Bible**” distributed by NavPress and used by permission of Leadership Ministries Worldwide. I have included additional commentary of my own indicated by (RevC).

BEGIN LESSON 1

I. The Letter To The Philippians

A. Introduction

1. Author: Paul
2. Date written: between 60 and 63 AD
3. Written while in prison in Rome
4. Written to the bishop, deacons, and Christians of Philippi
5. Purpose
 - a. Prevent criticism against Epaphroditus
 - b. Thank the people for their gifts
 - c. Call the church to unity and harmony
 - d. Deal with false teachers (the Judiazers)

B. New Testament Background of Philippi (Acts 16:9 - 40)

1. Rome had kicked the Jews out of the city. Philippi may have followed suit. There was no temple in Philippi so Paul went out of town where people went to pray.
2. There was money and gold in Philippi. Lydia was selling purple, very rare and costly, a luxury item.
3. Paul was arrested. He was accused of being a Jew and creating a turmoil in the city.
 - a. After being beaten, Paul was put in stocks.
 - b. While praising God, an earthquake freed the prisoners. No one fled.
 - c. Seeing what happened, the jailer sought salvation.
4. The chief magistrate tries to release them but Paul plays hardball by telling them they are Roman citizens. The authorities are afraid of retribution by Rome. Paul later leaves the city as a sign of respect for authority.
5. The church at Philippi was a faithful supporter of Paul.

(Acts 18:2-5) And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them. {3} So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers. {4} And he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded both Jews and Greeks. {5} When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ.

(2 Cor 11:8-9) I robbed (was paid wages from) other churches, taking wages from them to minister to you. {9} And when I was present with you, and in need, I was a burden to no one, for what I lacked the brethren who

came from Macedonia supplied. And in everything I kept myself from being burdensome to you, and so I will keep myself.

(Phil 4:16-19) For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. {17} Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. {18} Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. {19} And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

C. Purpose and Plan of the Book

1. Express appreciation for the church of Philippi, confidence in their progress, and ambition for them.

(Phil 1:3-11) I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, {4} always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, {5} for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, {6} being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; {7} just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace. {8} For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ. {9} And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, {10} that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, {11} being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

END LESSON 1

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 1

1. **T or F The letter to the church of Philippi was written from a prison in Philippi.**
2. **In many of Paul's letters we find him coming against a group of people who taught that Christians needed to follow the law of Moses. These people were known as:**

- A. Epaphroditus**
- B. Judaizers**
- C. Mormons**
- D. None of the above**

- 3. T or F There was a large Jewish temple in Philippi where Paul repeatedly went to teach and pray.**
- 4. T or F While in Philippi Paul experienced a great earthquake in which many prisoners escaped from the local prison.**
- 5. T or F The church in Philippi financially supported Paul's ministry.**

BEGIN LESSON 2

- 2. To report on his circumstances.

(Phil 1:12-16) But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, { 13 } so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; { 14 } and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. { 15 } Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from good will: { 16 } The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains;

- 3. To exhort to unity, humility, and consistency. (Phil 1:27-30)
- 4. Inform of intentions to send Timothy and Epaphroditus. (Phil 2:19-30)
- 5. Warn against Judaizers. (Phil 3:1-14)

6. Warn against antinomianism. (Phil 3:15-4:1) The false teaching that since faith alone is necessary for salvation, one is free from the moral obligations of the law (Holman Bible Dictionary).
7. Appeal for reconciliation of Euodia and Syntyche.

(Phil 4:2-3) I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. {3} And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.

8. Admonish to joyfulness, prayerfulness, and pursuit of good. (Phil. 4:4-14)
9. Express gratitude for gift and send greetings. (Phil. 4:15-23)

II. The Marks Of God's People (1:1 - 30)

A. The Marks of a Healthy Church (1:1 - 2)

Phil 1:1-2 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 1:2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Greeting denotes Paul's role as a servant (doulos):
 - a. A slave was owned, totally possessed by their master.
 - b. A slave existed for their master and had no personal rights.

- c. A slave was at their master's disposal, any hour of the day.
 - d. A slave's will belonged to their master.
 - e. Being called by God as his slave (servant) is the highest position of honor.
2. A healthy church is full of true saints.
- a. Sanctified = holy, set apart as unto God.
 - b. Three stages of sanctification:
 - (I) **Positional** (initial) sanctification. We have been set apart unto God. It is our heavenly position in Christ.

(Heb 10:10) By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

(II) **Progressive** sanctification is the day to day working of God in us by the Holy Spirit whereby we are set apart from the world as holy vessels unto God.

(III) **Eternal** sanctification is that which will one day take place as we are brought into the eternal presence of God.

(Eph 5:27) that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

(1 John 3:2) Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

3. A healthy church has leaders that lead by example.

a. Bishops and deacons

(I) Bishop is an overseer, gives direction, exhorts, and is generally referred to as a preaching elder.

(Titus 1:7) For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,

(II) Deacon is spiritually minded and ministers to the earthly (practical) needs of the people.

END LESSON 2

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 2

1. **T or F Paul gave the church in Philippi a warning against “antinomianism”.**

2. **T or F “Antinomianism” is the belief that since salvation is by grace through faith alone, then we have no obligation to follow the moral codes of the law.**

3. **Which of the following is NOT true:**

A. **A slave was owned, totally possessed by their master.**

B. **A slave had no personal rights.**

C. **A slave was at the disposal of its master any hour of the day or night.**

D. **The only thing belonging to a slave was their will.**

4. **T or F Sanctified means holy, set apart unto God.**

5. **Which of the following is NOT one of the three stages of sanctification:**

A. **Temporal**

B. Positional

C. Progressive

D. Eternal

6. T or F A “Bishop” is an overseer who generally is responsible for spiritual needs, where as a “Deacon” is responsible for the practical needs of the people.

BEGIN LESSON 3

B. The Marks of Mature Believers (1:3 - 11)

Phil 1:3-11 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 1:4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, 1:5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: 1:7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace. 1:8 For God is my record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. 1:9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; 1:10 That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; 1:11 Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.

1. The mark of a thankful heart. (3)

(POSB) Paul did not stand alone in the world. He was not the only person living for God and sharing Christ. He belonged to a great family, a family of believers who constituted the family of God. They, too, were living for God and sharing Christ with a lost and needful world. Remember that Paul was in prison in Rome and that he was a great distance from the

Philippian believers. He did not have their presence; all he had was the memory of their time together. [(RevC) When we read Acts 16 we see that there were also events that were difficult trials for Paul including being arrested and beaten; yet he still was able to see how God used even those events to bring about good such as the salvation of the Philippian jailer! (RevC)] Sitting there in prison, remembering their love and care and support, his heart swelled up with thanksgiving for them, and he thanked God for them. (POSB)

2. The mark of prayer & joy. (4)

Prayer - (RevC) As we might expect from a spiritual leader, Paul indicates that he is “always” lifting others, and not just his own needs, before the throne of God. Note he wanted all the believers at Philippi to know they were included in his prayers every time he prayed. Most of us barely spend enough time to cover immediate family members yet Paul was constantly interceding for the needs of others. His prayers included “requests” on their behalf which is an indication of his awareness and care of their needs. This was something he did gladly with joy (joy is inner gladness & delight) and not as a religious duty or ordeal he had to go through to maintain right standing with God. God knows our heart and if our heart is not in our praying then perhaps that should indicate to us how desperate is our need to pray.

(Luke 18:1) And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought **always to pray**, and not to faint;

(Col 1:3) We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

(1 Th 1:2) We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.

3. The mark of fellowship. (5)

(RevC) The word “fellowship” (Gr. “koinonia”) means to have “joint participation” in the same things. To “hold the same things in common” between the fellowship partners. This is much different than our fellowship over a meal or at an event. Fellowship from a Christ centered perspective means to agree with or have the same likes and dislikes. Namely that we love righteousness and hate sin. Therefore, Christian fellowship cannot take place with those who care little for righteousness or whether something is sinful or not. We can’t have Christian fellowship if we are not ourselves in fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus, the mark of Christian fellowship is to hold in our hearts a love for the things of God and a distaste for the things of the world. (RevC)

(1 John 1:3-4) that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. {4} And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

4. The mark of confidence in God (6)

(POSB) There is the mark of confidence in God’s salvation. God will complete His good work in believers. **Confidence** and assurance are two of the striking traits of genuine believers. Believers know God, know Him personally. God’s Spirit actually lives within the heart and body of the believer (John 14:16-17; John 14:26; 1 Cor. 6:19-20; etc.). The Spirit of God actually bears witness with the spirit of the believer, that he is going to be redeemed someday—presented perfect before God. In fact, the presence of the Holy Spirit within the believer’s body is the very guarantee of the believer’s salvation (cp. 2 Cor. 1:22; 2 Cor. 5:5; Ephes. 1:14).

a. The believer has absolute confidence in the work of salvation or redemption which God has begun in his life. He has confidence through the presence of God's Spirit who dwells within him.

b. The work begun by God is a good work; that is, it is a work that revolutionizes or radically changes the life of the believer. No matter what kind of life a person was living, once God converts him, the new believer begins to live a good life : a life of... the fruit of the Spirit Gal. 5:22-23.

c. The good work is incomplete as long as the believer lives on this earth. He is never perfected, not while a man. There is always work for God to do; therefore, God is always working within the life of the believer to mature him more and more. God is always working to make the man more and more pure and more and more faithful in his service to the Lord Jesus.

d. The good work is to be completed when Jesus Christ returns to this earth. At that time, the believer will be transformed into a perfect man and given a perfect body. He will become a perfect man who will live in the new heavens and earth with Christ.

5. The mark of partnership. (7-8)

Note how closely bound together Paul and the church were.

- a.** They were partners in heart. Paul loved them as he loved himself; he held them ever so dear to his heart and they constantly filled his thoughts.
- b.** They were partners in the sufferings of Paul. This means...
 - that they were sympathizing with Paul in his imprisonment.
 - that they were sending hope to Paul while he was in prison.
 - that they had or were themselves suffering because of the gospel just as Paul was.

The point is this: the affection between Paul and the Philippians was so tender that their hearts went out to each other. What one experienced, the other felt, even the sufferings of each other.

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves” (**Romans 15:1**).

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ” (**Galatians 6:2**).

“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body” (**Hebrews 13:3**).

END LESSON 3

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 3

- 1. T or F In this lesson Paul gives several indications of a mature believer. A thankful heart was one of those.**
- 2. T or F Another indication of a mature believer was signs and wonders.**
- 3. T or F Another indication of a mature believer was a prosperous life with few difficulties.**
- 4. T or F The word “fellowship” when used in scripture simply means to meet with friends for a meal.**
- 5. T or F Unless a person has trusted Christ as Savior, he knows nothing of “the fellowship of the Gospel”.**
- 6. A mature believer has confidence toward God. Which of the following is the best answer?**
 - A. The believer has absolute confidence in the work of salvation.**
 - B. The work begun by God is a good work.**
 - C. The good work is incomplete as long as the believer lives on this earth.**
 - D. The good work is to be completed when Jesus Christ returns to this earth.**
 - E. All of the above**

BEGIN LESSON 4

- c. They were partners in the gospel. The Philippians had not given up the gospel, nor had they become silent or complacent in sharing the gospel. They were actively defending and proclaiming the truth of the gospel. The church and its members were busy for Christ—actively bearing witness to the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. They were taking the great commission of our Lord seriously.

“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (**Matthew 28:19-20**).

“And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (**Mark 16:15**).

“But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (**Acts 1:8**).

“Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God” (**2 Tim. 1:8**).

“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear” (**1 Peter 3:15**).

- d. They were partners in the grace of God (vs.7). Paul was expressing the wonderful grace of God—the favor and blessings of God. And the Philippian church was expressing the same grace. God was pouring the richest blessings upon both Paul and the church.

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19).

- e. (Vs. 8) They were partners with Christ. The word “bowels” (splanchnois) means tender mercies, compassion, deep affection. And note: it is the tenderness of Jesus Christ that Paul says he has for the Philippians. He longs for them with the very affection and tenderness of Christ Himself.

6. The mark of a growing and discerning love. (9-10)

Note this: love in the Bible never focuses upon good feelings. Feelings may and usually do come to the person who truly loves another person, but feelings are never the focus—not with true love. What then is the focus?

⇒ The focus of love is **knowledge**. If we truly love someone, we want to know that person. In fact, we want to know all we can about the person.

⇒ The force of love is **judgment** (aisthesei). The word means intelligence or discernment. If we truly love someone, we not only want to know a person but we want to learn all we can about the person. We want to gather all the intelligence and facts possible and discern them so that we can please the person.

Note that Paul wants (vs. 9) the **believer’s love to grow more and more**. The more we know about Christ and each other, the more our love for each other will grow.

There are three reasons why we need a love that grows more and more.

- a. **A growing love is needed to approve things that are excellent.** It is not enough just to know what is right and wrong. It is not enough just to do what is

right. Sometimes the choice is between the good and the excellent, the acceptable and the best. Only a growing love will stir us to choose the excellent and the best.

⇒ The more we love the Lord, the more we will choose the excellent and best for Him.

⇒ The more we love each other, the more we will choose the excellent and best for each other. A growing love will not want to do anything that would even come close to causing a person to stumble.

b. A growing love is needed to be sincere and pure.

The word sincere (eilikrineis) means to sift about through a sieve in order to make pure. Therefore, the word means pure, uncontaminated, not polluted, untainted. Note that we are to stay pure until the return of Christ. Only a growing love will keep our eyes focused upon Christ.

c. A growing love is needed to keep us from causing others to stumble. We must always guard against being an offense (aproskopi) or a stumblingblock to others. Note: we must be willing to choose the best and the excellent for the sake of others.. We must control everything we do, not slipping over into the questionable—sometimes not even doing the acceptable and good, but we must choose the best. Approve only the things that are excellent. Why?

⇒ To keep from causing a brother to stumble.

⇒ To offer up to the Lord the very best we can.

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me” **(Luke 9:23)**.

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye

transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (**Romans 12:1-2**).

“It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak” (**Romans 14:21**).

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (**1 Cor. 6:19-20**).

“Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth” (**1 Cor. 10:24**).

7. The mark of the fruits of righteousness. (11)

(WW) What is the “fruit” God wants to see from our lives?

- Certainly He wants the “fruit of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22-23),
- Christian character that glorifies God.
- Paul compares winning lost souls to Christ to bearing fruit (Rom. 1:13),
- he also names “holiness” as a spiritual fruit (Rom. 6:22).
- He exhorts us to be “fruitful in every good work” (Col. 1:10),
- the writer to the Hebrews reminds us that our praise is the “fruit of the lips” (Heb. 13:15).

The fruit tree does not make a great deal of noise when it produces its crop; it merely allows the life within to work in a natural way, and fruit is the result. “He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5).

The difference between spiritual fruit and human “religious activity” is that the fruit brings glory to Jesus Christ. Whenever we do anything in our own strength, we have a tendency to boast about it. True spiritual fruit is so beautiful and wonderful that no man can claim credit for it; the glory must go to God alone.

END LESSON 4

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 4

1. T or F In the last part of lesson 3 and the beginning of this lesson we see Paul speak of the “partnership” that he had with the Philippian church. Paul speaks of this partnership in 5 ways.

2. T or F As the Philippian church partnered with Paul they were also partnering with Jesus Christ. Today when we stand with or partner with another servant of Christ, we are also becoming a partner with Christ.

3. T or F We will know true love by the emotional response of positive feelings that we experience.

4. Which of the following is NOT a focus of true love:

- A. knowledge**
- B. feelings**
- C. judgment**
- D. understanding the facts**

5. Paul gives us three reasons why we need a love that grows more and more. Which of the following is NOT one of those?

- A. to approve things that are excellent**
- B. to be sincere and pure**
- C. to avoid divorce**
- D. to keep us from causing others to stumble**
- E. None of the above**

BEGIN LESSON 5

C. The Marks Of A Mature Witness (1:12 - 19)

- 1. Paul shares the gospel regardless of his circumstances. (12-14)**

Phil 1:12-14 But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel; **1:13** So that my bonds in Christ are manifest in all the palace, and in all other places; **1:14** And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

- a. As Paul witnessed to the believers,
 - (I) He did not grumble or complain.
 - (II) He did not question God and wonder why.
 - (III) He did not murmur, fall to pieces, or give up on God or his faith.
- b. Paul considered himself a prisoner of Christ.

(Acts 28:20) "For this reason therefore I have called for you, to see you and speak with you, because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain."

(Eph 6:20) for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

- (I) He spread the gospel through the Praetorian guards.
- (II) The gospel spread throughout the whole guard and the palace.

- c. (RevC) Why let our circumstances get us down? If we truly believe that God is working out His plan in our lives and that our steps are being ordered by God, then every difficult circumstance is nothing more than God bringing a new opportunity into our lives. Look through the book of Acts and see how often a seemingly bad situation led to something good as Peter and Paul submitted themselves to the leading of God. Every Time!!!!
- d. Paul spread the gospel by encouraging new believers to boldly share the Word.

(Acts 28:17-21) And it came to pass after three days that Paul called the leaders of the Jews together. So when they had come together, he said to them: "Men and brethren, though I have done nothing against our people or the customs of our fathers, yet I was delivered as a prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans, {18} "who, when they had examined me, wanted to let me go, because there was no cause for putting me to death. {19} "But when the Jews spoke against it, I was compelled to appeal to Caesar, not that I had anything of which to accuse my nation. {20} "For this reason therefore I have called for you, to see you and speak with you, because for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain." {21} Then they said to him, "We neither received letters from Judea concerning you, nor have any of the brethren who came reported or spoken any evil of you.

(Acts 28:30-31) Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, {31} preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.

2. He holds no personal jealousy nor desire for prestige. (15-18)

Phil 1:15-18 Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: **1:16** The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: **1:17** But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. **1:18** What

then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.

(RevC) It is easy to understand that envy and strife go together in much the same way as love and unity go together. Paul was always seeking to show love and bring people into a unified effort to promote the gospel. However, Paul uses the word “contention” in verse 16 to describe one type of motivation that was being used against his preaching. This word carries a meaning that is similar to when two politicians are running for the same office and are in “contention” (to canvas for office) trying to win votes to their side. Paul’s heart was to point or win people to follow Jesus not himself. Evidently at least one other individual though preaching the truth was more interested in winning people to follow his preaching and be opposed to Paul’s preaching. This type of “religious politics” is a disservice to the gospel and our Lord. Note: Paul’s motivation of heart is seen clearly in verse 18 where he basically says, “for whatever be the reason let the gospel be preached”. (RevC)

3. Paul passes the assurance of a happy ending (salvation). (19)

Phil 1:19 For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ,

(POSB) The point of the present verse is this: Paul is sure God will save and deliver him from

their criticism and opposition. He is sure of God's help and deliverance because of two things:

- a. There was the prayer of those who supported him—both those in Rome and those around the world who were praying for him daily. Note that he was writing to the Philippians, so he knew they would begin to pray for him immediately, and God answered their prayer. Therefore, he knew that God would deliver him from such antagonistic opposition because the Philippians were praying for him even if no one else was...

- b. ..The supply of the Holy Spirit would deliver him. Paul knew that the Holy Spirit would supply whatever he needed to get through his circumstances. No matter what our need is nor how great our need is, the Holy Spirit will deliver us. Strauss points out why the Holy Spirit has been given to believers, and Paul knew the reasons; therefore, he knew that he would be delivered. (POSB)

END LESSON 5

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 5

- 1. T or F Though Paul was a prisoner of Rome he considered himself to be a prisoner of Christ.**

- 2. T or F Our circumstances should reflect our standing before God. Good circumstances = good standing; bad circumstances = bad standing.**

- 3. T or F Envy and strife go together just as love and unity go together.**

- 4. T or F In Philippians 1:16 Paul uses the word “contention” which means “to canvass for office, to get people to support you.” Such**

contentious people are looking to gain a following for themselves not Christ.

5. T or F Paul is believed to have led many of the palace guards to faith in Christ during his imprisonment in Rome.

BEGIN LESSON 6

D. The Marks Of The Great Christian Believer (1:20 - 26)

Phil 1:20-26 According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. 1:22 But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. 1:23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: 1:24 Nevertheless to abide in the flesh is more needful for you. 1:25 And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith; 1:26 That your rejoicing may be more abundant in Jesus Christ for me by my coming to you again.

1. **One great expectation and hope to magnify Christ in His body. (20)**

(RevC) It is obvious not only from Paul's words but also in the way he lived his Christian life with boldness and with a singleness of desire to magnify Christ whether in living as an example before others or in death. His greatest desire was that others would witness the greatness of Christ as they, from a distance, examined Paul's life as he faced both trials and crisis situations. Just as looking through a telephoto lens on a camera allows you to make distance things come close so was Paul's desire to bring those who were far from Christ near to Christ. In much the same way that

looking through a microscope allows us to make small things look much bigger he wanted Christ to be magnified in the hearts of everyone. Here we are hundreds of years later and Paul's life is still doing both of those things! (RevC)

- a. Earnest expectations (vs.20) --focusing on one object alone, total concentration.
- b. Paul's expectation and hope (vs.20) was to magnify Christ in his body. He knew his weaknesses and resisted them.
- c. Paul did not want to be ashamed of anything (vs. 20).

2. **One great commitment to Christ in life and death. (21-26)**

- a. To live in Christ,

(RevC) Paul realized that he owed Christ a debt that he could never repay. He was no longer his own, he had been purchased through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. His love for his savior naturally caused him to want to be with his Lord. However, he also realized that, at this time, it was better for those he loved on earth that he remained. Therefore, his desire was that for as long as he would remain on earth that Christ would live through him and others would see Christ in him. (RevC)

- b. To die is gain.

(RevC) We can understand Paul's struggle between his desire to be with the Lord and his knowledge that there was still much to be done in the lives of those

he loved so dearly here on earth. Yet his attitude was submitted to whatever the Lord wanted most of him in finishing his course. His words to the elders in Ephesus as he left them for the last time show us this attitude:

Acts 20:22-24 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 20:23 Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 20:24 But none of these things move me, **neither count I my life dear unto myself**, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

(POSB) Paul, the great Christian believer has one great dilemma—to live or to depart and be with Christ. The word "depart" (*analousai*) is descriptive. It has a twofold meaning that speaks to the believer's heart.

1. It means to break up; to loosen as in breaking camp and loosening the ropes of the tent. It is the picture of breaking loose; packing up; and moving on to a new location. The same picture is true of the believer when he departs this life. He is not ceasing to exist; he is simply breaking loose and moving on to a new campsite, in fact, a perfect campsite.

2. It means to loosen the moorings of a ship, weigh anchor, and set sail for another port. Again, the believer does not cease to exist, he simply loosens the moorings of this life, pulls the anchor up, and sets sail for God's eternal presence.

Paul says that he is caught between two great desires:

⇒ One desire is to live a life of fruitful service for the Lord Jesus Christ.

⇒ The other desire is to depart and go on to be with Christ which is far better.

The natural mind wonders and questions how a person in his right mind could ever want to go ahead and die. The reason is simply answered: the genuine believer does not die; he never tastes death. He is transferred into the presence of Christ. Immediately—quicker than the blinking of an eye—the believer is transported into the perfect world of God which is named heaven. The believer is perfected—never again to experience pain, suffering, sin, corruption, infirmity, weakness, deformity, disappointment, fear, loss, or death. He will be perfected to work for Christ throughout the new heavens and earth, and he will serve and worship Christ for ever and ever. The promises of God to the believer are phenomenal; they just explode the human mind. It is for this reason that the believer can declare: "To die is gain." (POSB)

END LESSON 6

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 6

1. **T or F** Perhaps Paul's greatest hope was to magnify Christ in his body.
2. **T or F** Just as a telescope brings distant things closer to view, so does the faithful response of a believer going through a crisis to those who are outside the faith.
3. **T or F** Paul like many of us valued his life for his own sake, as he wanted to finish his course.
4. **T or F** The word "death" when used by soldiers meant to "take down your flag and move on."
5. To live for Paul:

- A. was better than death
- B. was Christ
- C. was important as no one else could do his ministry
- D. None of the above

BEGIN LESSON 7

E. The Mark of believers ready for battle (1:27 - 30)

Phil 1:27-30 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; 1:28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. 1:29 For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; 1:30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.

(WW) Paul is suggesting that we Christians are the citizens of heaven, and while we are on earth we ought to behave like heaven's citizens. He brings this concept up again in Philippians 3:20. It would be a very meaningful expression to the people in Philippi because Philippi was a Roman colony, and its citizens were actually Roman citizens, protected by Roman law. The church of Jesus Christ is a colony of heaven on earth! And we ought to behave like the citizens of heaven....

Paul now changes the illustration from politics to athletics. The word translated "**striving together**" (vs. 27) gives us our English word "athletics." Paul pictures the church as a team, and he reminds them that it is teamwork that wins victories.

Keep in mind that there was division in the church at Philippi. For one thing, two women were not getting along with each other (Phil. 4:2). Apparently the members of the fellowship were taking sides, as is often the case, and the resulting division was hindering the work of the church. The enemy is always happy to see internal divisions in a local ministry. "Divide

and conquer!” is his motto, and too often he has his way. It is only as believers stand together that they can overcome the wicked one.

Throughout this letter, Paul uses an interesting device to emphasize the importance of unity. In the Greek language, the prefix **sun-** means “with, together,” and when used with different words, strengthens the idea of unity. At least sixteen times, Paul uses this prefix in Philippians, and his readers could not have missed the message! In Philippians 1:27, the Greek word is **sunathleo**—“striving together as athletes.”

Paul gives us several encouragements that give us confidence in the battle.

First, these battles prove that we are saved (Phil. 1:29). We not only believe on Christ but also suffer for Christ. Paul calls this “the fellowship of His sufferings” (Phil. 3:10). For some reason, many new believers have the idea that trusting Christ means the end of their battles. In reality, it means the beginning of battles. “In the world ye shall have tribulation” (John 16:33). “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Tim. 3:12).

Secondly, the presence of conflict is a privilege; we suffer (vs. 29) “for His sake.” In fact, Paul tells us that this conflict is (vs. 29) “**for unto you it is given**” to us—it is a gift! If we were suffering for ourselves, it would be no privilege; but because we are suffering for and with Christ, it is a high and holy honor. After all, He suffered for us, and a willingness to suffer for Him is the very least we can do to show our love and gratitude.

A third encouragement is this: others are experiencing the same conflict (Phil. 1:30). Satan wants us to think we are alone in the battle, that our difficulties are unique, but such is not the case. Paul reminds the Philippians that he is going through the same difficulties they are experiencing hundreds of miles from Rome! A change in geography is usually no solution to spiritual problems, because human nature is the same wherever you go, and the enemy is everywhere. Knowing that my fellow believers are also sharing in the battle is an encouragement for me to keep going and to pray for them as I pray for myself.

The word “conflict” gives us our word “agony” (agonia), and is the same word that is used for Christ’s struggle in the Garden (Luke 22:44). As we face the enemy and depend on the Lord, He gives us all that we need for the battle. When the enemy sees our God-given confidence, it makes him fear.

III. Chapter 2 [From this point on Warren Wiersbe's commentary is the source of material unless otherwise indicated]

A. The Great Example (2:1 – 11 overview)

People can rob us of our joy. Paul was facing his problems with people at Rome (Phil. 1:15-18) as well as with people in Philippi, and it was the latter who concerned him the most. When Epaphroditus brought a generous gift from the church in Philippi, and good news of the church's concern for Paul, he also brought the bad news of a possible division in the church family. Apparently there was a double threat to the unity of the church; false teachers coming in from without (Phil. 3:1-3) and disagreeing members within (Phil. 4:1-3). What Euodia ("fragrance") and Syntyche ("fortunate") were debating about, Paul does not state.

Paul gives us four examples of the submissive mind: Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:1-11), Paul himself (Phil. 2:12-18), Timothy (Phil. 2:19-24), and Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25-30). Of course, the great Example is Jesus, and Paul begins with Him. Jesus Christ illustrates the four characteristics of the person with the submissive mind.

1. Consolation & comfort

Phil 2:1 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

(POSB) Consolation—Encouragement: there is the trait of consolation (paraklesis). The word means many things throughout Scripture; but in the present context it means encouragement, comfort, solace, exhortation, and strengthen-ing. Note that this trait is a characteristic of Christ Himself. The very beat of His Spirit is to encourage, comfort, and strengthen believers to be one in spirit and busy about the ministry of His church. Christ wants no murmuring, no grumbling, disturbance, or weakening of the unity within the church.

(Isa 40:1) "Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God.

(1 Th 5:11) Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.

2. Love.

a. Agape love; unselfish, sacrificial, loving even those unworthy of being loved. (RevC) This is the love that flows from God through the believer who is willing to be a vessel through which God can love others. This is not dependant on the emotions of the believer but on the willingness of the believer to submit to being used by God.

b. Scripture reference:

(John 13:34-35) "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. {35} "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

(John 15:12) "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

(1 Th 3:12) And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you,

(1 Pet 1:22) Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,

3. Holy Spirit - fellowship.

- a.** The Holy Spirit enters a person's heart to comfort, guide, teach, and equip to use as a witness.
- b.** The Holy Spirit creates a union attaching our lives together. Being of one accord means no rumors, no gossip, no cliques to disturb the fellowship.

Remember fellowship means “things held in common” or “joint participation”.

END LESSON 7

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 7

1. **T or F** There were no apparent problems among the members of the Philippian church.
2. **T or F** Paul reminds the church that they are responsible to work independently of each other, and come together on Sunday for prayer and fellowship.
3. In Philippians 1:27 Paul uses the Greek word, “sunathleo” which means:
 - A. Sun bathers
 - B. Sun worshippers
 - C. Striving together as athletes
 - D. None of the above
4. Which of the following is NOT true concerning Paul’s thoughts on battles:
 - A. Battles are a sign of God’s judgment
 - B. Battles prove we are saved
 - C. Battles are a privilege
 - D. None of the above
5. **T or F** The Philippian church was facing problems from both the outside and inside of the fellowship.

BEGIN LESSON 8

4. Compassion

- a. One of the forces that should drive us. We should have God heart of compassion for the lost. Paul is an example of compassion willing to give his own life if it meant the saving of others.
- b. Scripture reference:

(Psa 103:13) As a father pities his children, So the LORD pities those who fear Him.

(Rom 15:1) We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

(Gal 6:2) Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

(1 Pet 3:8) Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;

5. Joy.

Phil 2:2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

- a. A unified church brings joy.
- b. No joy when there is criticism, gossip, discord, etc.

6. Humility - lowliness of mind.

Phil 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

- a. Strife among believers is often because of those who want the honor, glory and recognition.

b. Scripture reference:

(Prov 3:30) Do not strive with a man without cause, If he has done you no harm.

(2 Tim 2:14) Remind them of these things, charging them before the Lord not to strive about words to no profit, to the ruin of the hearers.

c. The people of the church are to walk in a spirit of humility. Lowly and submissive. Not assertive.

- Denying self to help others. Humility leads to self evaluation.

7. Humility is a trait of controlling self interests. z

Phil 2:4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

a. (RevC) We are not to focus our attention on our own needs becoming “self-centered,” but rather are to consider the needs of others as more important than our own becoming “others-centered.” Dying to self is never easy but it is where the life that God lives begins!

b. Scripture reference:

(1 Cor 10:24) Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being.

(1 Cor 10:33) just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.

B. He Thinks of Others, Not Himself (Phil. 2:5-6)

Phil 2:5-6 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

(WW) The “mind” of Christ means the “attitude” Christ exhibited. “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:5, NIV). After all, outlook determines outcome. If the outlook is selfish, the actions will be divisive and destructive. James says the same thing (see James 4:1-10).

These verses in Philippians take us to eternity past. “Form of God” has nothing to do with shape or size. God is Spirit (John 4:24), and as such is not to be thought of in human terms. The word “form” means “the outward expression of the inward nature.” This means that in eternity past, Jesus Christ was God. In fact, Paul states that He was “equal with God.”

Certainly as God, Jesus Christ did not need anything! He had all the glory and praise of heaven. With the Father and the Spirit, He reigned over the universe. But Philippians 2:6 states an amazing fact: He did not consider His equality with God as **“robbery” or “something selfishly to be held on to.”** Jesus did not think of Himself; He thought of others. His outlook (or attitude) was that of unselfish concern for others. This is “the mind of Christ,” an attitude that says, “I cannot keep my privileges for myself, I must use them for others; and to do this, I will gladly lay them aside and pay whatever price is necessary.”

We expect unsaved people to be selfish and grasping, but we do not expect this of Christians, who have experienced the love of Christ and the fellowship of the Spirit (Phil. 2:1-2). More than twenty times in the New Testament, God instructs us how to live with “one another.” We are to:

- prefer one another (Rom. 12:10),
- edify one another (1 Thes. 5:11),
- bear each other’s burdens (Gal. 6:2).
- We should not judge one another (Rom. 14:13)
- admonish one another (Rom. 15:14).

Others is the key word in the vocabulary of the Christian who exercises the submissive mind.

C. HE SERVES (PHIL. 2:7)

Phil 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

(WW) Thinking of “others” in an abstract sense only is insufficient; we must get down to true service. Jesus thought of others and became a servant! Paul traces the steps in the humiliation of Christ:

- He emptied Himself, laying aside the independent use of His own attributes as God;
- He became a human, in a sinless physical body;
- He used that body to be a servant;
- He took that body to the cross and willingly died.

What grace! From heaven to earth, from glory to shame, from Master to servant, from life to death, “even the death of the cross!” He willingly humbled Himself that He might lift us up! Note that Paul uses the word “**form**” again in Philippians 2:7, “**the outward expression of the inward nature.**” Jesus did not pretend to be a servant; He was not an actor playing a role. He actually was a servant! This was the true expression of His innermost nature. He was the God-Man, Deity and humanity united in one, and He came as a servant.

(John 17:5) "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

(Heb 2:16-18) For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. { 17 } Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. { 18 } For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

(Heb 4:14-16) Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. { 15 } For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our

weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. {16}
Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

END LESSON 8

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 8

- 1. T or F Humility is a character trait that only leaders need possess. It carries the meaning of “lowliness of mind”.**
- 2. T or F Dying to “self” is never easy, but it is where the life that God lives begins!**
- 3. In Philippians 2:6 indicates that Jesus did not consider His equality with God as “robbery” meaning “something selfishly to be held on to.” This statement is an indication of :**
 - A. He was equal with God the Father & God the Holy Spirit**
 - B. His attitude and concern was for others and not Himself**
 - C. He was an example of the attitude all of His followers should possess**
 - D. All of the above**
- 4. _____ is the key word in the vocabulary of the Christian who exercises the submissive mind.**
 - A. Faith**
 - B. Love**
 - C. Others**
 - D. None of the above**
- 5. T or F The word “form” used in Philippians 2:7 means, “the outward expression of the inward nature”. Which shows us that Jesus did not pretend or act like a servant, He actually was a servant.**

BEGIN LESSON 9

D. HE SACRIFICES (PHIL. 2:8)

Phil 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

(WW) Many people are willing to serve others if it does not cost them anything. But if there is a price to pay, they suddenly lose interest. Jesus “became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:8). His was not the death of a martyr but the death of a Saviour.

The person with the submissive mind does not avoid sacrifice. He lives for the glory of God and the good of others; and if paying a price will honor Christ and help others, he is willing to do it. This was Paul’s attitude (Phil. 2:17), Timothy’s (Phil. 2:20), and also Epaphroditus’ (Phil. 2:30). Sacrifice and service go together if service is to be true Christian ministry.

The test of the submissive mind is not just how much we are willing to take in terms of suffering, but how much we are willing to give in terms of sacrifice. It is one of the paradoxes of the Christian life that the more we give, the more we receive; the more we sacrifice, the more God blesses.

(John 10:18) "No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This command I have received from My Father."

(John 14:31) "But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave Me commandment, so I do. Arise, let us go from here."

(Gal 3:13) Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),

(1 Pet 2:24) who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness; by whose stripes you were healed.

(1 Pet 3:18) For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit,

E. HE GLORIFIES GOD (PHIL. 2:9-11)

Phil 2:9-11 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: **2:10** That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; **2:11** And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This, of course, is the great goal of all that we do—to glorify God. God exalted Him and honored Him. Men gave Him names of ridicule and slander, but the Father gave Him a glorious name! Just as in His humiliation He was given the name “Jesus” (Matt. 1:21), so in His exaltation He was given the name “Lord” (Phil. 2:11; see Acts 2:32-36).

His exaltation included sovereign authority over all creatures in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. All will bow to Him (see Isa. 45:23). It is likely that “under the earth” refers to the lost, since God’s family is either in heaven or on earth (Eph. 3:14-15). One day all will bow before Him and confess that He is Lord.

F. The In’s and Out’s of Christian Living (2:12 - 18)

1. THERE IS A PURPOSE TO ACHIEVE (PHIL. 2:12, 14-16)

Phil 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

Phil 2:14 -16 Do all things without murmurings and disputings: **2:15** That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; **2:16** Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

(WW) “Work out your own salvation” (Phil. 2:12) does not suggest, “Work for your own salvation.” To begin with, Paul is writing to people who are already “saints” (Phil. 1:1), which means they have trusted Christ and have been set apart for Him. The verb “work out” carries the meaning of “**work to full completion,**” such as working out a problem in mathematics. In Paul’s day it was also used for “working a mine,” that is, getting out of

the mine all the valuable ore possible; or “working a field” so as to get the greatest harvest possible. The purpose God wants us to achieve is Christ-likeness, “to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom. 8:29). There are problems in life, but God will help us to “work them out.” Our lives have tremendous potential, like a mine or a field, and He wants to help us fulfill that potential. (RevC) Perhaps the idea here is: that we will go through problems which when approached correctly, will be used to conform us to the image of Christ. Thus we should desire to “get the most out of every problem” so we can learn and apply to our lives through our difficulty the character of Christ.

In Philippians 2:14-15, Paul contrasts the life of the believer with the lives of those who live in the world. Unsaved people complain and find fault, but Christians rejoice. Society around us is “twisted and distorted,” but the Christian stands straight because he measures his life by God’s Word, the perfect standard.

It is important to note that this purpose is achieved “in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation” (Phil. 2:15). Paul does not admonish us to retreat from the world and go into a spiritual isolation ward. It is only as we are confronted with the needs and problems of real life that we can begin to become more like Christ.

2. THERE IS A POWER TO RECEIVE (PHIL. 2:13)

Phil 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

(WW) The principle Paul lays down is this: God must work in us before He can work through us. This principle is seen at work throughout the Bible in the lives of men like Moses, David, the Apostles, and others. God had a special purpose for each man to fulfill, and each man was unique and not an imitation of somebody else. God is more interested in the workman than in the work. If the workman is what he ought to be, the work will be what it ought to be.

The power that works in us is the power of the Holy Spirit of God (John 14:16-17, 26; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 6:19-20). Our English word energy comes from the word translated “worketh” in Philippians 2:13. It is God’s divine energy at work in us and through us! The same Holy Spirit who empowered Christ when He was ministering on earth can empower us as well. But we

must recognize the fact that the energy of the flesh (Rom. 7:5) and of the devil (Eph. 2:2; 2 Thes. 2:7) are also at work. Because of the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, God's divine energy is available to us (Eph. 1:18-23).

3. JOY IN SUBMISSION (PHIL. 2:16-18)

Phil 2:16-18 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. 2:17 Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all. 2:18 For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.

(WW) Joy comes from submission. The world's philosophy is that joy comes from aggression: fight everybody to get what you want, and you will get it and be happy. The example of Jesus is proof enough that the world's philosophy is wrong. He never used a sword or any other weapon; yet He won the greatest battle in history—the battle against sin and death and hell. He defeated hatred by manifesting love; He overcame lies with truth. Because He surrendered He was victorious! And you and I must dare to believe His promise, “For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted” (Luke 14:11). “How happy are the humble-minded, for the kingdom of heaven is theirs” (Matt. 5:3, PH).

Joy is a present reality (Phil. 2:17-18), and it comes through sacrifice and service. It is remarkable that in two verses that discuss sacrifice, Paul uses the words joy and rejoice—and repeats them! Most people would associate sorrow with suffering, but Paul sees suffering and sacrifice as doorways to a deeper joy in Christ.

In Philippians 2:17, Paul is comparing his experience of sacrifice to that of the priest pouring out the drink offering (Num. 15:1-10). It was possible that Paul's trial would go against him and he would be executed. But this did not rob Paul of his joy. His death would be a willing sacrifice, a priestly ministry, on behalf of Christ and His church; and this would give him joy. “Sacrifice and service” are marks of the submissive mind (Phil. 2:7-8, 21-22, 30), and the submissive mind experiences joy even in the midst of suffering.

END LESSON 9

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 9

- 1. T or F** The person with the mind of Christ lives to glorify God, and for the good of others. He is willing to sacrifice to help others.
- 2. T or F** Only the living who have not accepted Christ as Savior will bow before Him upon His return; as believers have already done so in their hearts.
- 3. T or F** In Philippians 2:12 Paul states, “Work out your own salvation” which means that we must continue to do good works to maintain right standing with God.
- 4. T or F** Philippians 2:13 states, “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” This verse speaks to the fact that God does with us whatever he wants and we have no control over ourselves or decisions we make.
- 5. T or F** Paul shows us that in the Christian life real joy comes from submission, where as in the world one must fight and work to gain the things that they hope will give them joy.

BEGIN LESSON 10

G. A Priceless Pair (2:19 - 30)

(WW) In this paragraph, Paul is still discussing the submissive mind. He has given us a description of the submissive mind in the example of Jesus Christ (Phil. 2:1-11). He has explained the dynamics of the submissive mind in his own experience (Phil. 2:12-18). Now he introduces us to two of his helpers in the ministry, Timothy and Epaphroditus, and he does this for a reason. He knows that his readers will be prone to say, “It is impossible for us to follow such examples as Christ and Paul! After all, Jesus is the very Son of God, and Paul is a chosen apostle!” For this reason, Paul introduces us to two “ordinary saints,” men who were not apostles or spectacular miracle workers. He wants us to know that the submissive mind is not a luxury enjoyed by a chosen few; it is a necessity for Christian joy, and an opportunity for all believers.

H. The Example Of Timothy 2:19-24

1. Timothy was a young man who willingly served in second place.

(WW) Paul probably met Timothy on his first missionary journey, at which time, perhaps, the youth was converted (1 Cor. 4:17). Apparently, Timothy's mother and grandmother had been converted first (2 Tim. 1:3-5). He was the son of a Jewish mother and Gentile father, but Paul always considered the young man his own "dearly beloved son" in the faith (2 Tim. 1:2). When Paul returned to Derbe and Lystra while on his second journey, he enlisted young Timothy as one of his fellow laborers (Acts 16:1-4). In one sense, Timothy replaced John Mark, whom Paul had refused to take along on the journey because of Mark's previous abandonment of the cause (Acts 13:13; 15:36-41).

In Timothy's experience, we learn that the submissive mind is not something that suddenly, automatically appears in the life of the believer. Timothy had to develop and cultivate the "mind of Christ." It was not natural for him to be a servant; but, as he walked with the Lord and worked with Paul, he became the kind of servant that Paul could trust and God could bless. Notice the characteristics of this young man.

2. He had a servant's mind (vv. 19-21).

Phil 2:19-21 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. 2:20 For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state. 2:21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

(WW) To begin with, Timothy naturally cared for people and was concerned about their needs. He was not interested in "winning friends and influencing people"; he was genuinely interested in their physical and spiritual welfare. Paul was concerned about the church at Philippi and wanted to send someone to convey his concern and get the facts. There were certainly hundreds of Christians in Rome (Paul greets twenty-six of them by name in Rom. 16); yet not one of them was available to make the trip! "All

seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Phil. 2:21). In a very real sense, all of us live either in Philippians 1:21 or Philippians 2:21!

But Timothy had a natural concern for the welfare of others; he had a servant's mind. It is too bad that the believers in Rome were so engrossed in themselves and their own internal affairs (Phil. 1:15-16) that they had no time for the important work of the Lord. This is one of the tragedies of church problems; they divert time, energy, and concern away from the things that matter most.

3. He had a servant's training (v. 22).

Phil 2:22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

(WW) Paul did not add Timothy to his "team" the very day the boy was saved. Paul was too wise to make an error like that. He left him behind to become a part of the church fellowship in Derbe and Lystra, and it was in that fellowship that Timothy grew in spiritual matters and learned how to serve the Lord. When Paul returned to that area a few years later, he was happy to discover that young Timothy "was well reported of the brethren" (Acts 16:2). Years later, Paul would write to Timothy about the importance of permitting new converts to grow before thrusting them into important places of ministry (1 Tim. 3:6-7).

Paul gave him time to get his roots down, and then he enlisted the young man to work with him on his missionary tours. He taught Timothy the Word and permitted him to watch the apostle in his ministry (2 Tim. 3:10-17). This was the way Jesus trained His disciples. He gave personal instruction balanced by on-the-job experience. Experience without teaching can lead to discouragement, and teaching without experience can lead to spiritual deadness. It takes both.

4. He had a servant's reward (vv. 23-24).

Phil 2:23-24 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me. 2:24 But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.

(WW) Timothy knew the meaning of "sacrifice and service" (Phil. 2:17), but God rewarded him for his faithfulness. To begin with, Timothy had the joy of helping others. To be sure, there were hardships and difficulties, but

there were also victories and blessings. Because Timothy was a “good and faithful servant,” faithful over a few things, God rewarded him with “many things,” and he entered into the joy of the submissive mind (Matt. 25:21). He had the joy of serving with the great Apostle Paul and assisting him in some of his most difficult assignments

But perhaps the greatest reward God gave to Timothy was to choose him to be Paul’s replacement when the great apostle was called home (see 2 Tim. 4:1-11). Paul himself wanted to go to Philippi, but had had to send Timothy in his place. But, what an honor! Timothy was not only Paul’s son, and Paul’s servant, but he became Paul’s substitute! His name is held in high regard by Christians today, something that young Timothy never dreamed of when he was busy serving Christ.

5. Example of Epaphroditus. (2:25-30)

(WW) Paul was a “Hebrew of the Hebrews”; Timothy was part Jew and part Gentile (Acts 16:1); and Epaphroditus was a full Gentile as far as we know. He was the member of the Philippian church who risked his health and life to carry their missionary offering to the apostle in Rome (Phil. 4:18). His name means “charming”!

a. He was a balanced Christian (v. 25).

Phil 2:25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

(WW) Paul could not say enough about this man—“My brother, and companion in labor, and fellow-soldier.”

Epaphroditus was a balanced Christian! Balance is important in the Christian life. Some people emphasize “fellowship” so much that they forget the furtherance of the Gospel. Others are so involved in defending the “faith of the Gospel” that they neglect building fellowship with other believers. Epaphroditus did not fall into either of these traps. He was like Nehemiah, the man who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem with his sword in one hand and his trowel in the other (Neh. 4:17). You cannot build with a sword nor battle with a trowel! It takes both to get the Lord’s work accomplished.

b. He was a burdened Christian (vv. 26-27, 30).

Phil 2:26-27 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. **2:27** For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

Phil 2:30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

(WW) Like Timothy, Epaphroditus was concerned about others. To begin with, he was concerned about Paul. When he heard in Philippi that Paul was a prisoner in Rome, he volunteered to make that long, dangerous trip to Rome to stand at Paul's side and assist him. He carried the church's love gift with him, protecting it with his own life. Epaphroditus was not content simply to contribute to the offering. He gave himself to help carry the offering!

But this man was also burdened for his own home church. After arriving in Rome, he became very ill. In fact, he almost died. This delayed his return to Philippi, and the people there became concerned about him. But Epaphroditus was not burdened about himself; he was burdened over the people in Philippi because they were worried about him! This man lived in Philippians 1:21, not Philippians 2:21. Like Timothy, he had a natural concern for others. The phrase "full of heaviness" in Philippians 2:26 is the same description used of Christ in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:37). Like Christ, Epaphroditus knew the meaning of sacrifice and service (Phil. 2:30), which are two of the marks of the submissive mind.

END LESSON 10

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 10

- 1. T or F Paul speaks of Timothy and Epaphroditus as two examples of how the submissive mind of a Christian is a necessity for true Christian joy.**
- 2. T or F Epaphroditus is an example who in many ways exemplifies the mind of Christ. He sacrificed to serve Paul as Christ sacrificed to serve all those who would believe.**
- 3. T or F Timothy had the heart of a servant from the very beginning of his time with Paul.**

4. T or F Paul saw the excellent qualities in Timothy from the time he first accepted Christ, and placed Timothy into ministry almost immediately.

5. T or F Timothy was Paul's "son in the faith", Paul's servant in ministry together, and became Paul's substitute after Paul's death.

BEGIN LESSON 11

c. He was a blessed Christian (vv. 28-30).

Phil 2:28-30 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. 2:29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: 2:30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

(WW) Epaphroditus was a blessing to Paul. He stood with him in his prison experience and did not permit even his own sickness to hinder his service. But he was also a blessing to his own church. Paul admonishes the church to honor him because of his sacrifice and service. There is no contradiction between Philippians 2:7 ("made Himself of no reputation") and Philippians 2:29 ("hold such in reputation"). Christ "emptied Himself" in His gracious act of humiliation, and God exalted Him. Epaphroditus sacrificed himself with no thought of reward, and Paul encouraged the church to hold him in honor to the glory of God.

He was a blessing to Paul and to his own church, and he is also a blessing to us today! He proves to us that the joyful life is the life of sacrifice and service, that the submissive mind really does work. He and Timothy together encourage us to submit ourselves to the Lord, and to one another, in the Spirit of Christ. Christ is the Pattern we follow. Paul shows us the power (Phil. 4:12-19); and Timothy and Epaphroditus are the proof that this mind really works.

IV. The Pressing On Of The Christian Believer Chapter 3

A. The exhortation (vv. 1-3).

Phil 3:1-3 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe. 3:2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. 3:3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

(WW) Paul has warned the believers at Philippi before, but now he warns them again. “Look out for dogs! Look out for the workers of evil! Look out for the concision (mutilation or circumcision)! To whom is he referring in this triple warning? The Judaizers, whom we have studied in Acts and Galatians therefore we will not give a detailed history here other than to say that they are those who opposed Paul’s message of salvation by grace through faith alone. They sought to bring the Gentile converts to Christianity back into bondage to the law. Having failed in their opposition to Paul at Antioch and in the Jerusalem Conference (Acts 15), they followed him wherever he went and tried to steal his converts and his churches. The Epistle to the Galatians was written primarily to combat this false teaching. It is this group of “Judaizers” that Paul is referring to in Philippians 3:1-2. He uses three terms to describe them.

“Dogs.” The orthodox Jew would call the Gentile a “dog,” but here Paul calls orthodox Jews “dogs”! Paul is not just using names; he is comparing these false teachers to the dirty scavengers so contemptible to decent people. Like those dogs, these Judaizers snapped at Paul’s heels and followed him from place to place “barking” their false doctrines. They were troublemakers and carriers of dangerous infection.

“Evil workers.” These men taught that the sinner was saved by faith plus good works, especially the works of the Law. But Paul states that their “good works” are really evil works because they are performed by the flesh (old nature) and not the Spirit, and they glorify the workers and not Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8-10 and Titus 3:3-7 make it clear that nobody can be saved by doing good works, even religious works. A Christian’s good works are the result of his faith, not the basis for his salvation.

“The mutilation.” Here Paul uses a pun on the word “circumcision.” The word translated “circumcision” literally means “a mutilation.” The Judaizers taught that circumcision was essential to salvation (Acts 15:1; Gal. 6:12-18); but Paul states that circumcision of itself is only a mutilation, it was not necessary. The true Christian has experienced a spiritual circumcision in Christ (Col. 2:11), and does not need any fleshly operations. Circumcision, baptism, the Lord’s Supper, tithing, or any other religious

practice cannot save a person from his sins. Only faith in Jesus Christ can do that.

In contrast to the false Christians, Paul describes the **true Christians**, the “true circumcision” (see Rom. 2:25-29 for a parallel).

He worships God in the Spirit. He does not depend on his own good works which are only of the flesh (see John 4:19-24).

He boasts in Jesus Christ. People who depend on religion are usually boasting about what they have done. The true Christian has nothing of which to boast (Eph. 2:8-10). His boast is only in Christ! In Luke 18:9-14, Jesus gives a parable that describes these two opposite attitudes.

He has no confidence in the flesh. The popular religious philosophy of today is, “The Lord helps those who help themselves.” It was also popular in Paul’s day, and it is just as wrong today as it was then. (By “the flesh” Paul means “the old nature” that we received at birth.) The Bible has nothing good to say about “flesh,” and yet most people today depend entirely on what they themselves can do to please God. Flesh only corrupts God’s way on earth (Gen. 6:12). It profits nothing as far as spiritual life is concerned (John 6:63). It has nothing good in it (Rom. 7:18). No wonder we should put no confidence in the flesh!

B. The example (vv. 4-6).

Eph 3:4-6 Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 3:5 Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; 3:6 That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

(WW) Paul personally knew the futility of trying to attain salvation by means of good works. As a young student, he had sat at the feet of Gamaliel, the great rabbi (Acts 22:3). His career as a Jewish religious leader was a promising one (Gal. 1:13-14); and yet Paul gave it all up—to become a hated member of the “Christian sect” and a preacher of the Gospel!

In this intensely autobiographical section, Paul examines his own life and discovers that he is bankrupt!

- 1. Paul’s relationship to the nation.** He was born into a pure Hebrew family and entered into a covenantal relationship when he was circumcised. He was not a proselyte, nor was he descended

from Ishmael (Abraham's other son) or Esau (Isaac's other son). The Judaizers would understand Paul's reference to the tribe of Benjamin, because Benjamin and Joseph were Jacob's favorite sons. They were born to Rachel, Jacob's favorite wife. Israel's first king came from Benjamin, and this little tribe was faithful to David during the rebellion under Absalom. Paul's human heritage was something to be proud of! When measured by this standard, he passed with flying colors.

2. **Paul's relationship to the Law.** "As touching the Law, a Pharisee . . . touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless" (Phil. 3:5-6). To the Jews of Paul's day, a Pharisee had reached the very summit of religious experience, the highest ideal a Jew could ever hope to attain. If anybody was going to heaven, it was the Pharisee! He held to orthodox doctrine (see Acts 23:6-9) and tried to fulfill the religious duties faithfully (Luke 18:10-14). While we today are accustomed to use the word "Pharisee" as the equivalent of "hypocrite," this usage was not prevalent in Paul's day. Measured by the righteousness of the Law, Paul was blameless. He kept the Law and the traditions perfectly.
3. **Paul's relationship to Israel's enemies.** But it is not enough to believe the truth; a man must also oppose lies. Paul defended his orthodox faith by persecuting the followers of "that pretender," Jesus (Matt. 27:62-66). He assisted at the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:54-60), and after that he led the attack against the church in general (Acts 8:1-3). Even in later years, Paul admitted his role in persecuting the church (Acts 22:1-5; 26:1-11; see also 1 Tim. 1:12-16). Every Jew could boast of his own blood heritage (though he certainly could not take any credit for it). Some Jews could boast of their faithfulness to the Jewish religion. But Paul could boast of those things plus his zeal in persecuting the church.

At this point we might ask: "How could a sincere man like Saul of Tarsus be so wrong?" The answer is: he was using the wrong measuring stick! Like the rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-22) and the Pharisee in Christ's parable (Luke 18:10-14), Saul of Tarsus was looking at the outside and not the inside. **He was comparing himself with standards set by men, not by God.** As far as obeying outwardly the demands of the Law, Paul was a success, but he did not stop to consider the inward sins he was committing. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus makes it clear that there are sinful attitudes and appetites as well as sinful actions (Matt. 5:21-48).

When he looked at himself or looked at others, Saul of Tarsus considered himself to be righteous. But one day he saw himself as compared with Jesus Christ and realized he was bankrupt! It was then that he changed his evaluations and values, and abandoned “works righteousness” for the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

END LESSON 11

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 11

1. The man who served Paul even when he was sick, and who is another example of the joy that comes with the submissive mind of Christ was:

- A. Timothy**
- B. Titus**
- C. Epaphroditus**
- D. None of the above**

2. In the beginning of chapter 3 Paul gives the church at Philippi three warnings: Beware of dogs, evil workers, and the concision. Here he is speaking about the:

- A. Pharisees**
- B. Saducces**
- C. Cerinthians**
- D. Judaizers**

3. T or F The orthodox Jews would call a Gentile a “dog,” but here Paul calls the orthodox Jews “dogs”!

4. T or F Paul taught that circumcision was necessary for salvation.

5. Which of the following is necessary for true salvation:

- A. Circumcision**

- B. Water Baptism**
- C. The Lord's Supper**
- D. Tithing**
- E. Bible reading**
- F. All of the above**
- G. None of the above**

6. T or F When Paul compared himself to the standards of man, he found that he was righteous, but when he compared himself to Christ he realized he was bankrupt, as filthy rags with no righteousness.

BEGIN LESSON 12

C. Righteousness by Faith 3:7-11

1. Paul's losses (v. 7).

Phil 3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

(WW) To begin with, he lost whatever was gain to him personally apart from God. Certainly Paul had a great reputation as a scholar (Acts 26:24) and a religious leader. He was proud of his Jewish heritage and his religious achievements. All of these things were valuable to him; he could profit from them. He certainly had many friends who admired his zeal. But he measured these "treasures" against what Jesus Christ had to offer, and he realized that all he held dear was really nothing but "refuse" compared to what he had in Christ. His own "treasures" brought glory to him personally, but they did not bring glory to God.

This does not mean that Paul repudiated his rich heritage as an orthodox Jew. As you read his letters and follow his ministry in the Book of Acts, you see how he valued both his Jewish blood and his Roman citizenship. Becoming a Christian did not make him less a Jew. In fact, it made him a completed Jew, a true child of Abraham both spiritually and physically (Gal. 3:6-9).

2. Paul's gains (vv. 8-11).

Phil 3:8-11 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 3:9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 3:11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

(WW) Paul lost his religion and his reputation, but he gained far more than he lost.

The knowledge of Christ (v. 8). This means much more than knowledge about Christ, because Paul had that kind of historical information before he was saved. To “know Christ” means to have a personal relationship with Him through faith. It is this experience that Jesus mentions in John 17:3. Salvation is knowing Him in a personal way.

The righteousness of Christ (v. 9). Righteousness was the great goal of Paul's life when he was a Pharisee, but it was a **self-righteousness**, a **works righteousness**, that he never really could attain. But when Paul trusted Christ, he lost his own self-righteousness and gained the righteousness of Christ. The technical word for this transaction is **imputation** (read Rom. 4:1-8 carefully). It means “to put to one's account.” Paul looked at his own record and discovered that he was spiritually bankrupt. He looked at Christ's record and saw that He was perfect. When Paul trusted Christ, he saw God put Christ's righteousness to his own account! More than that, Paul discovered that his sins had been put on Christ's account on the cross (2 Cor. 5:21).

The fellowship of Christ (vv. 10-11). When he became a Christian, it was not the end for Paul, but the beginning. His experience with Christ was so tremendous that it transformed his life. And this experience continued in the years to follow. It was a personal experience (“That I may know Him”) as Paul walked with Christ, prayed, obeyed His will, and sought to glorify His name. When he was living under Law, all Paul had was a set of rules. But now he had a Friend, a Master, a constant Companion!

It was also a painful experience (“and the fellowship of His sufferings”). Paul knew that it was a privilege to suffer for Christ (Phil. 1:29-30). In fact,

suffering had been a part of his experience from the very beginning (Acts 9:16). As we grow in our knowledge of Christ and our experience of His power, we come under the attack of the enemy. Paul had been a persecutor at one time, but he learned what it means to be persecuted.

Yes, Paul gained far more than he lost. In fact, the gains were so thrilling that Paul considered all other “things” nothing but garbage in comparison

D. Let’s Win The Race! 3:12-16

In Philippians 3, Paul is giving us his spiritual biography, his past (Phil. 3:1-11), his present (Phil. 3:12-16), and his future (Phil. 3:17-21). We have already met Paul “the accountant” who discovered new values when he met Jesus Christ. In this section we meet Paul “the athlete” with his spiritual vigor, pressing toward the finish line in the Christian race. In the final section we will see Paul “the alien,” having his citizenship in heaven and looking for the coming of Jesus Christ.

1. DISSATISFACTION (PHIL. 3:12-13A)

Phil 3:12-13 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 3:13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

(WW) “Not as though I had already attained!” This is the statement of a Christian who never permitted himself to be satisfied with his spiritual attainments. Obviously, Paul was satisfied with Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:10), but he was not satisfied with his Christian life. A sanctified dissatisfaction is the first essential to progress in the Christian race.

Many Christians are self-satisfied because they compare their “running” with that of other Christians, usually those who are not making much progress. Had Paul compared himself with others, he would have been tempted to be proud and perhaps to let up a bit. But Paul did not compare himself with others; he compared himself with Jesus Christ! The dual use of the word “perfect” in Philippians 3:12 and 15 explains his thinking. He has not arrived yet at perfection (Phil. 3:12), but he is “perfect” [mature] (Phil. 3:15), and one mark of this maturity is the knowledge that he is not perfect! The mature Christian honestly evaluates himself and strives to do better.

2. DEVOTION & DIRECTION (PHIL. 3:13)

Phil 3:13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

(WW) “One thing” is a phrase that is important to the Christian life.

- “One thing thou lackest,” said Jesus to the self-righteous rich young ruler (**Mark 10:21**).
- “One thing is needful,” He explained to busy Martha when she criticized her sister (**Luke 10:42**).
- “One thing I know!” exclaimed the man who had received his sight by the power of Christ (**John 9:25**).
- “One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after!” testified the psalmist (**Ps. 27:4**).

Too many Christians are too involved in “many things,” when the secret of progress is to concentrate on “one thing.” The believer must devote himself to “running the Christian race.” No athlete succeeds by doing everything; he succeeds by specializing. There are those few athletes who seem proficient in many sports, but they are the exception. The winners are those who concentrate, who keep their eyes on the goal and let nothing distract them. They are devoted entirely to their calling. Like Nehemiah the wall-building governor, they reply to the distracting invitations, “I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down!” (Neh. 6:3) “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways” (James 1:8). Concentration is the secret of power.

The unsaved person is controlled by the past, but the Christian running the race looks toward the future. Imagine what would happen on the race course if the runners started looking behind them! It is bad enough for a plowman to look back (Luke 9:62), but for a runner to do so means a possible collision and serious injury.

The believer should be future-oriented, “**forgetting those things which are behind.**” Please keep in mind that in Bible terminology, “to forget” does not mean “to fail to remember.” “To forget” in the Bible **means “no longer to be influenced by or affected by.”** When God promises, “And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb. 10:17), He is not suggesting that He will conveniently have a bad memory! This is impossible with God.

What God is saying is, “I will no longer hold their sins against them. Their sins can no longer affect their standing with Me or influence My attitude toward them.”

We cannot change the past, but we can change the meaning of the past. There were things in Paul’s past that could have been weights to hold him back (1 Tim. 1:12-17), but they became inspirations to speed him ahead. The events did not change, but his understanding of them changed.

A good example of this principle is Joseph (Gen. 45:1-15). When he met his brothers the second time and revealed himself to them, he held no grudge against them. To be sure, they had mistreated him, but he saw the past from God’s point of view. As a result he was unable to hold anything against his brothers. Joseph knew that God had a plan for his life—a race for him to run—and in fulfilling that plan and looking ahead, he broke the power of the past.

Too many Christians are shackled by regrets of the past. They are trying to run the race by looking backward! No wonder they stumble and fall and get in the way of other Christians! Some Christian runners are being distracted by the successes of the past, not the failures; and this is just as bad. “The things which are behind” must be set aside and “the things which are before” must take their place.

END LESSON 12

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 12

- 1. T or F The trouble with Paul’s earthy treasurers were that they brought glory to himself, but not to God.**
- 2. T or F When we speak of having the “knowledge” of Christ that leads to salvation we are talking about the same kind of knowledge as when a person knows who is the head of their government.**
- 3. T or F When we gain the righteousness of Christ through salvation this transaction is called “imputation” and means “to put to one’s account.”**
- 4. T or F A mature Christian will compare himself to Christ and see that he continues to fall short and strives to do better.**
- 5. T or F Paul admonishes us to “forget those things which are behind.” To “forget” means not to remember it any more.**

BEGIN LESSON 13

3. DETERMINATION (PHIL. 3:14)

Phil 3:14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

(WW) “I press!” This same verb is translated “I follow after” in Philippians 3:12, and it carries the idea of **intense endeavor**. The Greeks used it to describe a hunter eagerly pursuing his prey. A man does not become a winning athlete by listening to lectures, watching movies, reading books, or cheering at the games. He becomes a winning athlete by getting into the game and determining to win! The same zeal that Paul employed when he persecuted the church (Phil. 3:6), he displayed in serving Christ.

The Christian runner with the spiritual mind realizes that God must work in him if he is going to win the race (Phil. 2:12-13). “Without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). God works in us that He might work through us. As we apply ourselves to the things of the spiritual life, God is able to mature us and strengthen us for the race. “Exercise thyself rather unto godliness!” (1 Tim. 4:7-8) Some Christians are so busy “dying to self” that they never come back to life again to run the race! And others are so sure they can make it on their own that they never stop to read the Word, pray, or ask for the power of the Lord.

Toward what goal is the runner pressing with such spiritual determination? **“The prize of the high [upward] calling of God in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 3:14)**. When he reaches the goal he will receive the reward! He is saying that just as the athlete is rewarded for his performance, so the faithful believer will be crowned when Jesus Christ returns. The important thing is that we reach the goal He has established for us. No matter how successful we may be in the eyes of men, we cannot be rewarded unless we “take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of [us]” (Phil. 3:12, NIV).

4. DISCIPLINE (PHIL. 3:15-16)

Phil 3:15-16 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this

unto you. 3:16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

(WW) It is not enough to run hard and win the race; the runner must also obey the rules. In the Greek games, the judges were very strict about this. Any infringement of the rules disqualified the athlete. He did not lose his citizenship (though he disgraced it), but he did lose his privilege to participate and win a prize. In Philippians 3:15-16, Paul emphasizes the importance of the Christian remembering the “spiritual rules” laid down in the Word.

“Any man who enters an athletic contest practices rigid self-control in training” (Phil. 3:25, WMS). If the athlete breaks training, he is disqualified; if he breaks the rules of the game, he is disqualified. “No contestant in the games is crowned, unless he competes according to the rules” (2 Tim. 2:5, WMS). The issue is not what he thinks or what the spectators think but what the judges say. One day each Christian will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ (Rom. 14:10-12). The Greek word for “**judgment seat**” is **bema**, the very same word used to describe the place where the Olympic judges gave out the prizes! If we have disciplined ourselves to obey the rules, we shall receive a prize.

E. Living In The Future Tense 3:17-21

Phil 3:17-21 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. 3:18 (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 3:19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) 3:20 For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: 3:21 Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

(WW) These tears are not for himself ; they are shed because of others. Because Paul has the spiritual mind, he is heartbroken over the way some professed Christians are living, people who “mind earthly things.”

While we cannot be sure, it is likely that Philippians 3:18-19 describe the Judaizers and their followers. Certainly Paul is writing about professed

Christians and not people outside the church. The Judaizers were the “enemies of the cross of Christ” in that they added the Law of Moses to the work of redemption that Christ wrought on the cross. Their obedience to the Old Testament dietary laws would make (vs. 19) a “**god**” **out of their belly** (see Col. 2:20-23); and their emphasis on circumcision would amount to glorying in that about which they ought to be ashamed (see Gal. 6:12-15). They were holding on to earthly rituals and beliefs that God had given to Israel, and they were opposing the heavenly blessings that the Christian has in Christ (Eph. 1:3; 2:6; Col. 3:1-3).

The spiritually minded believer is not attracted by the “things” of this world. He makes his decisions on the basis of eternal values and not the passing fads of society. “**For our citizenship is in heaven**” (Phil. 3:20, NASB). The Greek word translated “conversation” or “citizenship” is the word from which we get the English word “politics.” It has to do with one’s behavior as a citizen of a nation. Paul is encouraging us to have the spiritual mind, and he does this by pointing out the characteristics of the Christian whose citizenship is in heaven. Just as Philippi was a colony of Rome on foreign soil, so the church is a “colony of heaven” on earth.

V. You Don’t Have To Worry! Chapter 4

1. Exhortations to believers 4:1-5

Phil 4:1-5 Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved. **4:2** I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord. **4:3** And I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow labourers, whose names are in the book of life. **4:4** Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. **4:5** Let your moderation be known unto all men. **The Lord is at hand.**

(WW) If anybody had an excuse for worrying, it was the Apostle Paul. His beloved Christian friends at Philippi were disagreeing with one another, and he was not there to help them. We have no idea what Euodia and Syntyche were disputing about, but whatever it was, it was bringing division into the church. Along with the potential division at Philippi, Paul had to face division among the believers at Rome (Phil. 1:14-17). Added to these burdens was the possibility of his own death! Yes, Paul had a good excuse to

worry—but he did not! Instead, he took time to explain to us the secret of victory over worry.

What is worry? The Greek word translated “**anxious**” (**careful**) in Philippians 4:6 means “**to be pulled in different directions.**” Our hopes pull us in one direction; our fears pull us the opposite direction; and we are pulled apart! The Old English root from which we get our word “worry” means “to strangle.” If you have ever really worried, you know how it does strangle a person! In fact, worry has definite physical consequences: headaches, neck pains, ulcers, even back pains. Worry affects our thinking, our digestion, and even our coordination.

From the spiritual point of view, worry is wrong thinking (the mind) and wrong feeling (the heart) about circumstances, people, and things. Worry is the greatest thief of joy. It is not enough for us, however, to tell ourselves to “quit worrying” because that will never capture the thief. Worry is an “inside job,” and it takes more than good intentions to get the victory. The antidote to worry is the secure mind: “And the peace of God . . . shall keep [garrison, guard like a soldier] your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7). When you have the secure mind, the peace of God guards you (Phil. 4:7) and the God of peace guides you (Phil. 4:9). With that kind of protection—why worry?

If we are to conquer worry and experience the secure mind, we must meet the conditions that God has laid down. There are three: right praying (Phil. 4:6-7), right thinking (Phil. 4:8), and right living (Phil. 4:9).

END LESSON 13

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 13

- 1. T or F Paul compared himself, and his determination to serve Christ to be much like an athlete who trains hard to win the prize.**
- 2. T or F In Paul’s teaching and his comparison of Christian service to an athletic contest, it was not as important for us to follow the rules as it was to win the prize.**
- 3. The Greek word that means, “judgment seat” is:**
 - A. Phileo**
 - B. Bema**

C. Exchromia

D. None of the above

4. **T or F** In Philippians 3:18 Paul speaks of his “weeping” concerning those whom he saw as “enemies of the cross.” These were those who professed to be Christians, but in actuality were enemies of the cross.

5. **T or F** There evidently was a dispute between two women in the church at Philippi, and this disagreement was causing division in the church. Paul encouraged the eldership to put these women out of the fellowship until they resolved their dispute.

BEGIN LESSON 14

2. RIGHT PRAYING (PHIL. 4:6-7)

Phil 4:6-7 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. **4:7** And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

(WW) Paul does not write, “Pray about it!” He is too wise to do that. He uses three different words to describe “right praying”: prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving. “Right praying” involves all three.

The word **prayer** is the general word for making requests known to the Lord. It carries the idea of adoration, devotion, and worship. Whenever we find ourselves worrying, our first action ought to be to get alone with God and worship Him. **Adoration** is what is needed. We must see the greatness and majesty of God! We must realize that He is big enough to solve our problems. Too often we rush into His presence and hastily tell Him our needs, when we ought to approach His throne calmly and in deepest reverence. The first step in “right praying” is adoration.

The second is **supplication**, an earnest sharing of our needs and problems. There is no place for halfhearted, insincere prayer! While we know we are not heard for our “much speaking” (Matt. 6:7-8), still we realize that our Father wants us to be earnest in our asking (Matt. 7:1-11). This is the way Jesus prayed in the Garden (Heb. 5:7), and while His closest

disciples were sleeping, Jesus was sweating great drops of blood!
Supplication is not a matter of carnal energy but of spiritual intensity (Rom. 15:30; Col. 4:12).

After adoration and supplication comes **appreciation**, giving thanks to God (see Eph. 5:20; Col. 3:15-17). Certainly the Father enjoys hearing His children say, “Thank You!” When Jesus healed ten lepers, only one of the ten returned to give thanks (Luke 17:11-19), and we wonder if the percentage is any higher today. We are eager to ask but slow to appreciate.

Paul counsels us to take “everything to God in prayer.” “Don’t worry about anything, but pray about everything!” is his **admonition**. We are prone to pray about the “big things” in life and forget to pray about the so-called “little things”—until they grow and become big things! Talking to God about everything that concerns us and Him is the first step toward victory over worry.

The result is that the “peace of God” guards the heart and the mind. You will remember that Paul was chained to a Roman soldier, guarded day and night. In like manner, “the peace of God” stands guard over the two areas that create worry—the heart (wrong feeling) and the mind (wrong thinking). When we give our hearts to Christ in salvation, we experience “peace with God” (Rom. 5:1); but the “peace of God” takes us a step farther into His blessings. This does not mean the absence of trials on the outside, but it does mean a quiet confidence within, regardless of circumstances, people, or things.

3. RIGHT THINKING (PHIL. 4:8)

Phil 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

(WW) Peace involves the heart and the mind. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee” (Isa. 26:3). Wrong thinking leads to wrong feeling, and before long the heart and mind are pulled apart and we are strangled by worry. We must realize that thoughts are real and powerful, even though they cannot be seen, weighed, or measured. We must bring “into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (2 Cor. 10:5).

a. Whatever is true.

A survey on worry indicated that only 8 percent of the things people worried about were legitimate matters of concern! The other 92 percent were either imaginary, never happened, or involved matters over which the people had no control anyway. Satan is the liar (John 8:44), and he wants to corrupt our minds with his lies (2 Cor. 11:3). “Yea, hath God said?” is the way he approaches us, just as he approached Eve (Gen. 3:1ff). The Holy Spirit controls our minds through truth (John 17:17; 1 John 5:6), but the devil tries to control them through lies.

b. Whatever is honest and just.

This means “worthy of respect and right.” There are many things that are not respectable, and Christians should not think about these things. This does not mean we hide our heads in the sand and avoid what is unpleasant and displeasing, but it does mean we do not focus our attention on dishonorable things and permit them to control our thoughts.

c. Whatever is pure, lovely, and of good report.

“Pure” probably refers to moral purity, since the people then, as now, were constantly attacked by temptations to sexual impurity (Eph. 4:17-24; 5:8-12). “Lovely” means “beautiful, attractive.” “Of good report” means “worth talking about, appealing.” The believer must major on the high and noble thoughts, not the base thoughts of this corrupt world.

d. Whatever possesses virtue and praise.

If it has virtue, it will motivate us to do better; and if it has praise, it is worth commending to others. No Christian can afford to waste “mind power” on thoughts that tear him down or that would tear others down if these thoughts were shared.

If you will compare this list to David’s description of the Word of God in Psalm 19:7-9, you will see a parallel. The Christian who fills his heart and mind with God’s Word will have a “built-in radar” for detecting wrong thoughts. “Great peace have they which love Thy Law” (Ps. 119:165). Right thinking is the result of daily meditation on the Word of God.

4. RIGHT LIVING (PHIL. 4:9)

Phil 4:9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you.

You cannot separate outward action and inward attitude. Sin always results in unrest (unless the conscience is seared), and purity ought to result in peace. Right living is a necessary condition for experiencing the peace of God.

Paul balances four activities: “learned and received” and “heard and seen.” It is one thing to learn a truth, but quite another to receive it inwardly and make it a part of our inner man (see 1 Thes. 2:13). Facts in the head are not enough; we must also have truths in the heart. In Paul’s ministry, he not only taught the Word but also lived it so that his listeners could see the truth in his life. Paul’s experience ought to be our experience. We must learn the Word, receive it, hear it, and do it. “But be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only” (James 1:22).

“The peace of God” is one test of whether or not we are in the will of God. “Let the peace that Christ can give keep on acting as umpire in your hearts” (Col. 3:15, WMS). If we are walking with the Lord, then the peace of God and the God of peace exercise their influence over our hearts. Whenever we disobey, we lose that peace and we know we have done something wrong. God’s peace is the “umpire” that calls us “out”!

END LESSON 14

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 14

1. Paul begins this lesson talking about the ingredients to the right way to pray. Which of the following is NOT one of those?

- A. with power**
- B. with adoration**
- C. with supplication**
- D. with appreciation**

2. Paul counsels us not to worry, but rather to:

- A. speak with your friends about the problems**
- B. get counsel from your pastor**
- C. pray about everything**

- D. do nothing and wait for it to pass**
- 3. Statistics show us that only 8% of the things people worry about are legitimate concerns. Paul realized the importance of what we allow our minds to think about, and gave admonition to think on all but one of the following:**
 - A. what is true**
 - B. honest and just**
 - C. what is pure, lovely and of good report**
 - D. what glorifies you**
 - E. what possess virtue and praise**
- 4. T or F You cannot separate outward action and inward attitude.**
- 5. T or F Right living is a necessary condition for experiencing wealth, and prosperity.**

BEGIN LESSON 15

E. The secret of Contentment 4:10-23

(WW) His personal references at the close of this letter indicate that he was not the victim of circumstances but the victor over circumstances: “I can accept all things” (Phil. 4:11); “I can do all things” (Phil. 4:13); “I have all things” (Phil. 4:18). Paul did not have to be pampered to be content; he found his contentment in the spiritual resources abundantly provided by Christ.

The verb “learned” means “learned by experience.” Paul’s spiritual contentment was not something he had immediately after he was saved. He had to go through many difficult experiences of life in order to learn how to be content. The word “content” actually means “contained.” It is a description of the man whose resources are within him so that he does not have to depend on substitutes without.

1. THE OVERRULING PROVIDENCE OF GOD (PHIL. 4:10)

Phil 4:10 But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.

(WW) The Word of God clearly teaches the providential workings of God in nature and in the lives of His people. The word “providence” comes from two Latin words: pro, meaning “before,” and video, meaning “to see.” **God’s providence simply means that God sees to it beforehand.** It does not mean that God simply knows beforehand, because providence involves much more. It is the working of God in advance to arrange circumstances and situations for the fulfilling of His purposes.

The familiar story of Joseph and his brothers illustrates the meaning of providence (Gen. 37-50). “God did send me before you to preserve life!” said Joseph (Gen. 45:5). “But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good” (Gen. 50:20). This is the providence of God: His hand ruling and overruling in the affairs of life. Paul experienced this divine providence in his life and ministry, and he was able to write, “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28). God in His providence had caused the church at Philippi to become concerned about Paul’s needs, and it came at the very time Paul needed their love most! They had been concerned, but they had lacked the opportunity to help. Many Christians today have the opportunities, but they lack the concern!

Life is not a series of accidents; it is a series of appointments. “I will guide thee with Mine eye” (Ps. 32:8). Abraham called God “Jehovah-Jireh,” meaning “the Lord will see to it” (Gen. 22:14). “And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them” (John 10:4). This is the providence of God, a wonderful source of contentment.

2. THE UNFAILING POWER OF GOD (PHIL. 4:11-13)

Phil 4:11-13 Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. 4:12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 4:13 I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

(WW) Paul is quick to let his friends know that he is not complaining! His happiness does not depend on circumstances or things; his joy comes from something deeper, something apart from either poverty or prosperity. Most of us have learned how to “be abased,” because when difficulties come we immediately run to the Lord! But few have learned how “to abound.” Prosperity has done more damage to believers than has adversity. “I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing” (Rev. 3:17).

The word “instructed” in Philippians 4:12 is not the same as “learned” in Philippians 4:11. **“Instructed” means “initiated into the secret.”** This word was used by the pagan religions with reference to their “inner secrets.” Through trial and testing, Paul was “initiated” into the wonderful secret of contentment in spite of poverty or prosperity. “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (Phil. 4:13). It was the power of Christ within him that gave him spiritual contentment.

Jesus teaches this lesson in the sermon on the vine and branches in John 15. He is the Vine; we are the branches. A branch is good only for bearing fruit; otherwise you may as well burn it. The branch does not bear fruit through its own self-effort, but by drawing on the life of the Vine. “Without Me, ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). As the believer maintains his communion with Christ, the power of God is there to see him through. “I am self-sufficient in Christ’s sufficiency” (Phil. 4:13, AMP).

3. THE UNCHANGING PROMISE OF GOD (PHIL. 4:14-20)

Phil 4:14-20 Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. 4:15 Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. 4:16 For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. 4:17 Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. 4:18 But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 4:20 Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

(WW) Paul thanks the church at Philippi for their generous gift. He compares their giving to three very familiar things.

a. A budding tree (4:10).

The word “**flourished**” carries the idea of a flower or tree budding or blossoming. Often we go through “winter seasons” spiritually, but then the spring arrives and there is new life and blessing. The tree itself is not picked up and moved; the circumstances are not changed. The difference is the new life within.

b. An investment (vv. 14-17).

Paul looked on their missionary gift as an investment that would pay them rich spiritual dividends. The church entered into an arrangement of “giving and receiving”; the church gave materially to Paul, and received spiritually from the Lord. The Lord keeps the books and will never fail to pay one spiritual dividend! That church is poor that fails to share materially with others.

c. A sacrifice (v. 18).

Paul looked on their gift as a spiritual sacrifice, laid on the altar to the glory of God. There are such things as “spiritual sacrifices” in the Christian life (see 1 Peter 2:5). Here, Paul sees the Philippian believers as priests, giving their offering as a sacrifice to the Lord. In the light of Malachi 1:6-14, we need to present the very finest that we have to the Lord.

But Paul does not see this gift as simply coming from Philippi. He sees it as the supply of his need from heaven. Paul’s trust was in the Lord.

Contentment comes from adequate resources. Our resources are the providence of God, the power of God, and the promises of God. These resources made Paul sufficient for every demand of life, and they can make us sufficient too.

4. Final Greetings 4:21-23

Paul shares final greetings from Rome to those in Philippi. It is interesting that he mentions the saints in Caesar’s household as Paul must have witnessed to many during his imprisonment seeing many come to Christ. Always sharing, seeing every situation as an opportunity to glorify Christ.

END LESSON 15

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 15

1. **T or F** Paul experienced “contentment” immediately after his salvation which enabled him to serve God with joy and peace.
2. **T or F** When we talk about the “providence of God” we are speaking about how God sees to things beforehand to fulfill his purposes.
3. **T or F** It was the power of Christ within Paul that gave him spiritual contentment.
4. Paul compares the gift brought from the church by Epaphroditus to three things. Which of the following is NOT one of those:
 - A. a budding tree
 - B. an investment
 - C. a sacrifice
 - D. a promise
 - E. None of the above
5. **T or F** According to Paul there were believers who were among the household of the Roman Caesar.

BEGIN LESSON 16

COLOSSIANS

Class Notes by Jim Snelten edited by RevC with additional commentary added. Unless otherwise indicated the material is from the Preacher’s Outline Sermon Bible Commentary distributed by NavPress.

I. Overview of the Book of Colossians

- A. Author: Paul; Date Written: About 60 - 63 AD
- B. Written to: Believers in Colossi, a city in Asia Minor while Paul was imprisoned in Rome.
- C. Purpose:
To combat wrong teaching (heresies) in the church and to show that believers have everything they need in Christ. The heresies included **Syncretism** (combining ideas from other philosophies and religions), **Gnosticism** (having special knowledge), **Cerinthism** (clear distinction between the human and divine Christ) and **Docetism** (Christ was not human).
- D. Key Verse:
(Col 2:9-10) For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.
- E. Key People:
Paul, Timothy, Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Epaphras

II. The Foundation Of The Believer's Life (1:1 - 11)

- A. The Great Beliefs Of A Great Christian
 - 1. **Life has but one profession; the will of God.**

(Col 1:1) Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

- a. Two things are stressed:

(I) What Paul did was by the will of God. That is, his profession and work was exactly what God wanted him to do. Paul did not choose his life's work, for he did not want to make a mistake; he did not want to waste his life. He did not want to come up to the end of his life and be reckoned a failure by God. To Paul there was but one work or profession: the job God wanted him to do. The

profession he wanted did not matter; only God's will for his life mattered.

(II) Paul was chosen to be a minister and specifically an apostle; one sent forth to share the message of God with others. The word apostle (apostolos) means a person who is especially sent to go among men as an ambassador or messenger. The key thought is this:

- ⇒ He is sent forth by God. He does not go forth on his own nor by the authority of other men. His profession and authority are both of God.
- ⇒ He is the messenger of God. In fact, his very call or profession exists only to deliver the message of God. He has no right to proclaim his own message and thoughts nor the message and thoughts of others.

2. Life has but one essential relationship; brotherhood.

- a. A cherished ability is knowing how to properly relate to people. Paul treated Timothy not as a fellow worker but as a brother. In 1:2 he even calls the Colossian believers his brothers. Here Paul stresses the importance of developing relationships. All the relationships of life are important and have their place in the welfare of society, but there is one relationship that is essential: that of brotherhood. A man does not walk as a solitary figure upon this earth. He walks among people—people just like himself. Thus, a man who walks aloof does not understand life. Brotherly relationships are essential. Paul knew this: wherever he went, he initiated and nourished relationships.
- b. Walk as equal brothers. No pride, envy, criticism, grumbling, judging, censoring, or self-seeking.

3. Life has two levels of spiritual maturity.

(Col 1:2) To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

- (I) The reference here to “saints” may refer to those who are “carnal believers” since Paul makes a distinction between “saints” and “faithful brethren”. The saints may refer to those who have set their life apart to follow Jesus but are not fully following Him. We must keep in mind that heart felt belief is required for salvation (Rom 10:9-10).
- (II) Faithful believers who have set their lives apart and continued on, continually growing in faithfulness.
- (III) Scriptural references:

(Mat 7:21) "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

(Mat 7:24-27) "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: {25} "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. {26} "But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: {27} "and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

(Mat 12:50) "For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

(John 14:21) "He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."

4. Life has two basic spiritual needs.
 - a. Grace & Peace
 - b. If a man possesses God's grace and peace, he possesses all the inner strength and confidence that are needed to overcome and to walk joyfully in the world, regardless of circumstances.

END LESSON 16

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 16

Match the following false beliefs to their correct meaning:

1. Syncretism _C_	A. Christ was not human
2. Gnosticism _D_	B. distinction between human & divine
3. Cerinthism _B_	C. combining other philosophies & religions

4. Docetism __A__	D. having special knowledge
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5. **T or F** Paul after consideration of everything he could do with his life chose to serve the Living God.

6. **T or F** Paul felt strongly that there was one type of relationship that was essential in life and that was “brotherhood”.

7. **T or F** From Paul’s statement in Colossians 1:2 we see that he may have been differentiating between “carnal believers” and true followers of God.

BEGIN LESSON 17

B. The Great Pillars Of The Christian Life (1:3-8)

Col 1:3-8 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 1:4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, 1:5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; 1:6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth: 1:7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; 1:8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

1. **The great pillars are good reasons for giving thanks to God. (vs. 3)**

The pillars are the very supports that hold together the lives of believers. The Colossian believers could not exist as a church without the foundational support of the pillars.

2. The great pillars of the Christian life are faith and love. (vs. 4)

(1 John 3:23) And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.

- a. The **faith** is faith in Christ Jesus. The great pillar of faith is faith in a particular person: the person of Christ Jesus our Lord. What is there about Jesus Christ that makes faith in Him so superior to faith in other great leaders or to faith in the great qualities of human life? Stated as simply as possible, Jesus Christ brings us in touch with God and makes it possible for God to adopt us as sons and daughters.
- b. The **love** is not a natural love, but that which believers hold for one another and is based on the love of Jesus Christ, a supernatural love stirred by the Holy Spirit. The love that Jesus has for His own lives in us by the Holy Spirit. It is only natural to a believer to have a special sense of love for fellow believers.

3. The great pillars have one great basis, the believer's hope. (vs. 5)

This is our hope of being raised from the dead, the Lord's return, being with Him forever, and receiving our glorious inheritance. This is a heavenly promise which will be fulfilled in each of us who believe.

4. The believers hope has one great source, the gospel and the Word of God. (vs. 5)

The believer's hope has one great source: the gospel, that is, the Word of God. Note that both "the Word" and "the gospel" are mentioned in Col. 1:5. It is the Word of God that reveals the great hope for man. Man cannot find hope—not a permanent or eternal hope, not a hope that lasts forever—anyplace else. The only lasting hope ever offered to man is found in the Word of God—in the glorious message of its gospel (good news).

- a. The gospel or the Word is truth. (vs. 5)
- b. The gospel or the Word is for individuals. (vs. 6) "unto you"
- c. The gospel or the Word is for the world. (vs. 6)
- d. The gospel or the Word produces fruit (vs. 6)

(John 15:2-3) "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit. {3} "You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

(Rom 1:13) Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles.

- e. The gospel or the Word comes by hearing. (vs. 6)

(Rom 10:17) So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

- f. The gospel or the Word is the message of God's grace. (vs. 6)
- g. The gospel or the Word is shared by men. (vs. 7)
- h. The gospel or the Word results in love. (vs. 8)

(Rom 5:5) Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

(Gal 5:22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

C. The Great Request Of Prayer (1:9-11)

Col 1:9-11 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; **1:10** That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; **1:11** Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

1. Be filled with the knowledge of God's will. (vs. 9)

We are to be filled with the knowledge of God's will. **It is not enough to just know God's will; we are to be filled with the knowledge of His will.** The will of God is to permeate our very being. Nothing is to flow through us nor out of us that is not of God's will. But note: what is being talked about is not God's will for a particular thing nor for a few things. What is being talked about is the whole scope of life. God's will involves all of life, everything we do every moment of every day. The will of God involves what we do, say, and even think. Simply stated, we are to live and move and have our being in the will of God.

This is accomplished by giving ourselves to studying God's word until it fills our being and then through prayer we can trust God's leading and providential working in our daily lives.

END LESSON 17

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 17

- 1. T or F Faith and power are the two great pillars of the Christian life.**
- 2. T or F The believer's hope has one great source which is love.**
- 3. T or F Colossians 1:9 tells us to be filled with the knowledge of God's will. This simply means that we who believe should know the will of God for our lives.**
- 4. T or F The pillar of "faith" is our faith in the person of Jesus Christ.**

BEGIN LESSON 18

- 2. Walk worthy of Christ. Live out the will of God. vs. 10**

(Gal 1:10) For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ.

- a. It is not enough to know God's will.
- b. It is not enough to possess wisdom: to possess the basic principles of life.
- c. It is not even enough to possess understanding: to have the ability to apply the basic principles of life to everyday living.

Knowing something and having the ability to do something are very important, but they involve only head knowledge. **The critical point is putting what we know into practice.** We are to live out the will of God; we are to practice and do the will of God. Knowing the will of God is of no value until we have committed our lives to do it.

- The word “walk” (peripatesai) means that we set our lives—our behavior and conduct—after Christ.
- The word “worthy” (axios) means to have the weight of or to weigh as much as something else (Wuest, Ephesians and Colossians, Vol.1, p.176).

This means an amazing thing: our walk is to weigh as much as the walk of Christ. Our conduct is to conform to the will of God as much as the conduct of Christ. We are to live a life just as worthy as the life of Christ. The will of God is to control our behavior as much as it did the behavior of Christ.

- Christ is the pattern, and we are the copy. The copy is to be just like the pattern (Wuest).

How is such a walk possible? There is only one way. We must be totally committed to do two things.

- Vs. 10 We must be fruitful in every good work; that is, we must do every good work. Note the word “every.” Everything that God says is to be done. Dealing with God is just like dealing with anyone. No person is pleased when we do only half of what he says. To please anyone we have to

do all that he says. How much more true with God! If we are to please Him, we must do every good work that we are given to do and we must do it fruitfully, bearing as much fruit as possible.

- Vs. 10 We must grow in the knowledge of God. Note a critical question: How do we get to know God—how do we gain a personal knowledge and relationship with God?

We do not know God just because we know about God. Just knowing the Word of God does not mean that we know God Himself—not in a personal and intimate way. Note exactly what the verse says: “that ye might walk worthy of the Lord...increasing in the knowledge of God.” The way we get to know God is the same way we get to know anyone. We walk with them: associate, fellowship, and share with them. So it is with God, and the more we walk with Him, the more we increase in the knowledge of Him. As we walk with Him we will experience Vs. 11.

III. The Pre-Eminent Christ (1:12 - 23)

This is one of the greatest passages of Scripture ever written. Its importance cannot be overstressed. It is a passage that reveals the supremacy of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is supreme, above all both in His Person and in His work. Who He is and what He has done for man can never be matched. This is the purpose of this great passage, a passage that covers so much in twelve brief verses: to show to the world just who Jesus Christ is and what He has done.

A. God And Man: What God Has Done For Man

1. God has given us an inheritance. (1:12)

Col 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

- a. We have been made qualified or made fit to receive an inheritance. Man is not qualified or fit to receive

anything from God, especially an inheritance, not in his present sinful and corruptible state. If he is to ever receive an inheritance from God, he first has to be made fit and acceptable to God. Note: this is exactly what Scripture says: God has made us fit. It does not yet say what He did to make us fit; it simply declares that God has fitted us to receive an inheritance from Him.

- b.** We share the inheritance with all other saints in light. Believers are called the light of the world. God is Light; therefore, when a person turns his life over to God, he is turning his life over to Light. He is to live and move and have his being in light, that is, in God. He is to walk in the light of God Himself, so much so that he, the believer, is called the light of the world. This is what is meant by “saints in light.” They are people who have committed their lives to walk in the light of God. Therefore, they are saints, persons set apart in the light of God.

- c.** God has given believers an inheritance.

(I) We are heirs of eternal life.

(Titus 3:7) that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

(II) We are heirs of salvation.

(Heb 1:14) Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?

(III) We are heirs of the promises made to Abraham.

Inherit the world and be a citizen of a nation of great people.

(Rom 4:13) For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

(IV) We are heirs of glory.

(Rom 8:17) and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

(V) We are heirs of righteousness.

(Heb 11:7) By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.

(VI) We are heirs of the grace of life.

(1 Pet 3:7) Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

END LESSON 18

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 18

- 1. T or F Knowing and having the ability to do something is of little value unless we put what we know into practice.**
- 2. T or F The Greek word for “walk” is “peripatesai” means how we set our lives, behavior and conduct.**

3. **T or F Our Christian walk is to copy the pattern of Christ in everything.**
4. **T or F If we are to truly know God, then we must walk with Him in constant fellowship seeking to do His will in everything.**
5. **T or F God has “made us fit” to receive an inheritance.**

BEGIN LESSON 19

(VII) We are heirs of God's very special favor.

(Eph 1:11-12) In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, { 12 } that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

(Eph 1:14) who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

(VIII) We are heirs of the reward of the inheritance and all that it includes.

(Col 1:12) giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

(Col 3:24) knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.

(IX) We are heirs of the eternal inheritance.

(Heb 9:15) And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.

(X) We are heirs of an immortal and perfected body that shall be given us when Christ returns.

(1 Cor 15:50-54) Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. {51} Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed; {52} in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. {53} For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. {54} So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

(1 Pet 1:3-4) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, {4} to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

2. Vs. 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son.

The power of darkness:

- It is a kingdom that cannot be seen by men. Yet natural man stumbles around in this kingdom not realizing he is enslaved to it.
- Note that it is God Himself who has delivered us from darkness. The word “**delivered**” (erusatō) means to rescue or snatch from darkness. A person lost in pitch black darkness is hopeless unless someone rescues him. And note: he cannot be rescued by those who are lost in the same darkness as he is. No person who is in

the world of darkness has light, or else he would use the light to get out of the darkness. This is the very reason God had to rescue man. He alone is light; therefore, He alone could reach down and snatch man from the darkness.

(Mat 6:23) "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

(John 1:4-5) In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. {5} And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

(John 3:19) "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

(Rom 13:12) The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

(2 Cor 3:14) But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ.

(2 Cor 4:4) whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

(Eph 4:18) having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;

(1 John 2:11) But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

3. God has redeemed us, even forgiven our sins. (1:14)

Col 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

(Dake Bible) To deliver from Satan and his power and kingdom of sin, sickness, and depravity to be placed under the government of the Son of God's love. This transfer is made possible by redemption through the blood of Christ.

(POSB) God has redeemed us and forgiven [(forgiven means "to send away" or "to cancel a debt")] our sins. The word "redemption" (*apolutrōsin*) is one of the great words of the Bible. It conveys the idea of deliverance or setting a man free by paying a ransom. For example, a prisoner of war or a kidnapped person is ransomed or redeemed; or a convicted criminal is freed from the penalty of death. In every case the man is powerless to free himself. He cannot pay the penalty demanded to liberate himself from his situation or bondage. Note several significant facts.

- Man has been captivated or kidnapped by several forces.
 - The force of sin. All men sin and cannot help but sin. Man is sold under sin. Sin has captivated him (**Romans 3:23**; **Romans 7:14**).
 - The force of corruption and death. The whole creation is corrupt (**Romans 8:21**). Everything wastes away; it deteriorates, decays, ages, and eventually dies. Corruption and death have captivated man. (Cp. **1 Cor. 15:42, 50**; **Galatians 6:8**; **2 Peter 1:4**; **2 Peter 2:12, 19.**)

- The force of Satan. All unbelievers are under the power and influence of Satan. He has blinded their minds to the gospel (**2 Cor. 4:4**). He works in the children of disobedience (**Ephes. 2:2**). They are captivated by him (**1 John 5:19**).
- Three key ideas are included in the concept of redemption.
 - Man needs to be liberated, delivered, and set free.
 - Man is unable to liberate himself. He has no energy, no power, no ability to free himself.
 - God has redeemed man by the blood of His Son Jesus Christ. God Himself has paid the ransom for man's release—the ransom of a life for a life. God gave His own Son so that man might be set free. Man has been redeemed through the blood of Jesus Christ (cp. **Leviticus 17:11**; **Matthew 20:28**; **Romans 3:24**; **1 Cor. 6:20**; **1 Cor. 7:23**; **Col. 1:14**; **1 Tim. 2:5-6**; **Hebrews 9:15**; **1 Peter 1:18f**; **2 Peter 2:1**; **Rev. 5:9**; **Rev. 14:3-4**). This is extremely important to note: when a man truly calls upon the Lord to save him, God buys him right out of the marketplace of this corruptible life (**Romans 10:13**). God redeems him once for all, purchases and removes him from further sale. He is redeemed eternally (cp. **Galatians 3:13**; **Galatians 4:5**; **Col. 4:5**).
- God redeems man because of the riches of His grace. He loves man with an unbelievable love—a love so great that it spurs Him to do whatever is necessary to save man.

(See Leviticus 17:11; Matthew 20:28; Romans 3:24; 1 Cor. 6:20, 7:23; Ephes. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Hebrews 9:15; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 2 Peter 2:1; Rev. 5:9, 14:3-4). (POSB)

END LESSON 19

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 19

1. **T or F** Paul says that God has delivered us from darkness. The Greek word “erusato” means to “rescue or snatch from”. God as rescued the believer from the darkness.
2. **T or F** Some who are in the darkness have light.
3. **T or F** To redeem means to pay a ransom.
4. **T or F** Forgiveness means “to send away” or “to cancel a debt”. Christ has both set us free and paid every debt so we cannot again be forced into slavery.
5. **T or F** Our salvation is depends on only one person—ourselves.

BEGIN LESSON 20

B. God And Christ, Part I: The Person Of Christ

Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God. (1:15)

Col 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

(POSB) **1:15** This Scripture is one of the most important passages ever written. It does two very significant things.

⇒ It destroys false teaching and false thoughts about God and Jesus Christ.

⇒ It reveals exactly who God and Jesus Christ are.

This was the very purpose of Paul. False teaching had seeped into the Colossian church, false teaching that attacked Jesus Christ. It was called Gnosticism. This was one of the major reasons the pastor of the Colossian church (Epaphras) had visited Paul: to get Paul's advice in dealing with the heresy...

...Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God. The word "image" (*eikōn*) means the exact image, the very person of God.

⇒ It means that Jesus Christ was the very *representation of God—God in every respect*. Wuest quotes Lightfoot as saying that "image" means a mark or figure burned or stamped on (something)...a precise reproduction in every respect.

⇒ It means that Jesus Christ was the perfect manifestation or revelation of God. God is invisible or unseen, but Jesus Christ reveals God to the world. He reveals God as the exact image, as the perfect representation of God.

...God loves and cares so much for man that He has shown man exactly who He is and what He is like and the way to reach Him. Jesus Christ alone is the image of God, the Supreme Person of the universe. He alone is the Mediator between God and Man. God is as close as Jesus Christ is. **(See John 14:6; I Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6)**

...The conclusion is forceful: Jesus Christ is the express image, the exact representation, the

perfect manifestation, the very Person of God Himself. There is no other person who can bring us near God and no other life-style to follow in reaching God. Jesus Christ is the Sovereign Majesty of the universe who came to earth as God to save men. (**See 2Cor. 5:19-21; I Tim. 3:16**)

Jesus Christ is above all things. The word "firstborn" does not mean that Jesus Christ was the first created being of the universe. It means *priority, superiority, preeminence, supremacy*. It means that He existed before all creation as the Supreme Being of the universe. All creation is His heritage. (**See John 10:30, 14:9-10; 2 Cor. 4:4; Phil. 2:6; Hebrews 1:3**) (POSB)

(John 10:30) "I and My Father are one."

(John 14:9-10) Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? {10} "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.

(2 Cor 4:4) whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.

(Phil 2:6) who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

(Heb 1:3) who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

C. God And Christ, Part II: Christ The Creator (1:16-17)

Col 1:16-17 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

1. Jesus Christ created all things. Vs. 16

He brought the universe into existence. Jesus Christ was before all things in time. Before the first thing was ever created, Jesus Christ was already there. He is not a created being; He is the Creator. There was nothing existing in the universe when He created. Before the beginning of time, before the universe ever existed, He was there. He is eternal.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (**John 1:1**).

“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (**John 8:58**).

“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (**John 17:5**).

Jesus Christ is before all things in importance, supremacy, and preeminence. Nothing is superior to Him. He alone is the Sovereign Majesty of the universe. He alone stands before all as Supreme; all else—every single thing—stands under Him owing their existence, worship, and service to Him.

2. Christ created all things for himself. Vs. 16

Everything exists in Him, for Him, and through Him. Jesus Christ is the Sphere in which they exist, the Agent through which they came into being, and the One for whom they were made.

Paul's use of three different prepositions is one way of refuting the philosophy of the false teachers. For centuries, the Greek philosophers had taught that everything needed **a primary cause, an instrumental cause, and a final cause.** The primary cause is **the plan**, the instrumental cause **the power**, and the final cause **the purpose.** When it comes to Creation, Jesus Christ is the primary cause (He planned it), the instrumental cause (He produced it), and the final cause (He did it for the purpose of His own pleasure).

(Rom 11:36) For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

(Heb 1:2) has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

(Heb 2:10) For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

3. Christ is before all things. Vs. 17

(POSB) Jesus Christ is before all things. This is a critical point; it means two things.

Jesus Christ was before all things in time. Before the first thing was ever created, Jesus Christ was already there. He is not a created being; He is the Creator. There was nothing existing in the universe when He created.

Before the beginning of time, before the universe ever existed, He was there. He alone is eternal. **(See Psalm 90:2; Provb. 8:23; John 1:1, 8:58, 17:5; Rev. 22:13)**

Jesus Christ is before all things in importance, supremacy, and preeminence. Nothing is superior to Him. He alone is the Sovereign Majesty of the universe. He alone stands before all as Supreme; all else—every single thing—stands under Him owing their existence, worship, and service to Him. **(See Romans 9:5; Col. 1:15, 1:17)** (POSB)

(Prov 8:23) I have been established from everlasting, From the beginning, before there was ever an earth.

(John 1:1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

(John 8:58) Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

(John 17:5) "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

END LESSON 20

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 20

- 1. T or F In Colossians 1:15 Christ is referred to as the “firstborn” which refers to his being first of his kind in time.**
- 2. T or F Jesus is a created being whom God the Father created for the purpose of redeeming man from sin.**
- 3. T or F Jesus was in existence prior to anything that was created.**
- 4. T or F Jesus is before all things in importance, supremacy, and preeminence.**

5. T or F Greek philosophers had taught that everything needed three things: a primary cause, an instrumental cause, and a final cause. Jesus Christ planned the creation, produced the creation, and did so for His own pleasure.

BEGIN LESSON 21

D. Christ Is The Head Of The Church (1:18)

Col 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

There are many images of the church in the New Testament, and the body is one of the most important (Rom. 12:4ff; 1 Cor. 12:14; Eph. 4:8-16). No denomination or local assembly can claim to be “the body of Christ,” for that body is composed of all true believers. When a person trusts Christ, he is immediately baptized by the Holy Spirit into this body (1 Cor. 12:12-13). The baptism of the Spirit is not a post-conversion experience—for it occurs the instant a person believes in Jesus Christ.

Each Christian is a member of this spiritual body, and Jesus Christ is the Head. In Greek usage, the word **head** meant “source” and “origin” as well as “leader, ruler.” Jesus Christ is the Source of the church, His body, and the Leader. Paul called Him “**the Beginning**” which tells us that Jesus Christ has priority in time as far as His church is concerned. The term beginning can be translated “originator.”

No believer on earth is the head of the church. This position is reserved exclusively for Jesus Christ. Various religious leaders may have founded churches, or denominations; but only Jesus Christ is the Founder of the church which is His body. This church is composed of all true believers, and it was born at Pentecost.

The fact that there is “one body” in this world (Eph. 4:4) does not eliminate or minimize the need for local bodies of believers. The fact that I belong to the universal church does not release me from my responsibilities to the local church. I cannot minister to the whole church, but I can strengthen and build the church by ministering to God’s people in a local assembly.

Jesus Christ is the Head of the church, and the Beginning of the church; and He is also **the Firstborn from the dead**. We saw this word firstborn in Colossians 1:15. Paul did not say that Jesus was the first person to be raised from the dead, for He was not. But He is the most important of all who have been raised from the dead; for without His resurrection, there could be no resurrection for others, (**RevC**) and He is the only one raised from the dead to everlasting life. Thus He is the “firstborn from the dead”. (**RevC**)

(POSB) This is the most common description of Christ and the church: the picture of the human body with Christ as the Head and the church as His body. When the church is called the body of Christ at least three ideas are pictured...

- ...There is the idea of life, of the most vital connection and relationship. A body cannot live apart from the head and a head cannot live apart from the body. Both the head and body are necessary for there to be life...
- ...There is the idea of activity and its source. It is the body that acts, but it is the head that tells the body to act...
- ...There is the idea of control. The head is to rule and reign over the body. The body is to be controlled by the head. The body is not to act apart from the head...

(See Eph. 1:22, 4:15, 5:23; Col. 2:19)

Jesus Christ is the beginning of the church. The word "beginning" (*archē*) has a twofold idea:

- ✓ "Beginning" means creative power. When something first begins, it is created or brought into being by some person or thing greater than itself. Jesus Christ was the Person who gave birth to the church. He is greater than the church; therefore, He had the power to create the church and bring it into existence...
- ✓ "Beginning" means *first in time*. Jesus Christ was the first Person of the church. He began the church; therefore, He was the first member, the great and glorious Founder of the

church. All others who come into the church follow Him.

Jesus Christ was the first to arise from the dead. There are three ways that the resurrection of Christ and the church are closely related.

- ❖ The resurrection of Christ is the very reason the church exists. If Jesus Christ had not arisen from the dead, there would be no church...
- ❖ The resurrection of Christ and the life of the church means there is a new life available for people. When Christ was raised from the dead, His body and life were entirely different from His former body and life. He had a changed body and life; He was raised to live a new life, to live face to face with God forever. So, it is with the church. The church is to be a picture of the resurrected and changed life of Christ. The church is to be entirely different from the world; to be separated from the world and given over completely to God; to live its life as though it is face to face with God...
- ❖ The resurrection of Christ is the power by which the church is to live. The resurrection of Christ proves there is unlimited, enormous power available for living and conquering all the foes of life, even the foes of death and judgment... **(See Acts 26:22-23; Romans 4:25, 10:9; 1 Cor. 15:4; Eph. 1:19-20; 1 Peter 1:3)**

Jesus Christ is supreme in all things... Jesus Christ is the preeminent Person in the universe because He died and arose again for man's salvation. It is because Christ was perfectly obedient to God the Father in dying and being raised from the dead that God the Father has made God the Son preeminent in all things...

Jesus Christ is to have the preeminence in all things: He is the Person who came to earth to suffer and die. He is One who has loved and given Himself for the church. He is the One who died to

establish the church (**Ephes. 5:25**). Therefore, God has made Christ the preeminent and supreme Majesty of the universe... (See **Mark 16:19; Eph. 1:20, 1:22; Phil 2:9; Rev. 5:12, 1:11; Acts 2:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; John 3:31; Romans 14:9; Heb. 1:4, 3:3, 1 Peter 3:22**) (POSB)

E. He Is the Beloved of the Father (Col. 1:19)
Col 1:19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;

(RevC) I recently became a father to my son Daniel Joseph, and I must admit that it does my heart joy to hear people say that he looks like his father. Though he is now only 5 weeks old he is already beginning to manifest some character traits of his father. Most of them are positive but there is one his “impatience” that his mother keeps reminding is of his father not his mother. Even in that, I can’t help but find a sense of pleasure in knowing he is so much like his father. Thus, I can understand how “it pleased The Father that in him (Jesus Christ) should all fullness dwell”.

“All fullness” comes from the Greek word “pleroma” which means the “sum total” of all that God the Father is resides in Jesus Christ. We might say that Jesus is the exact expression of all that the Father is as all that the Father is resides in Jesus Christ. The meaning is unmistakable in that Jesus is God in every way possessing all the divine nature of the Father. This “fullness” gave The Father pleasure.

To further emphasis the point, Paul states that this fullness “dwelt” (dwell) in Jesus Christ. The word “dwell” is the Greek word “katoikeo” meaning to make permanent or to be permanently at home. All the fullness of God resides permanently in Jesus Christ and

is at home in doing so. When something is “at home” we have the sense that it is in its rightful place, where it should be. The (POSB) says it this way: “All the fulness of God was *at home* in Christ before He came to earth, *at home* in Him while He was on earth, and shall continue to be *at home* within Him throughout all eternity. Jesus Christ is God, the Son of God who possesses the perfect nature of God the Father in all His Being and attributes.”

Logically, The Father would not permanently give His fullness to a created being making the creation equal to the creator. From this we know that Jesus was not a created being but is very God who manifested in the flesh. Now, by our faith in Jesus Christ as God we receive of that very fullness according to **John 1:16 And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.** How is this possible? **“For in Him (Jesus Christ) dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9).** When we receive Jesus Christ by faith, we receive His Holy Spirit, the very nature and expression of who Jesus is. (RevC)

F. Christ, The Reconciler Of All Things (1:20-23)

1. Col 1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

(POSB) Man can now be reconciled to God because of Christ. It is an astounding passage, for it reveals that God has not only reconciled man to Himself, but He has reconciled the whole universe—all of creation—to

Himself. And not only this, He has reconciled all things to Himself, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.

This is one of the great verses of Scripture, but it is a shocker, an eye-opener. It seems to be teaching universal salvation, that is, that everything in heaven and earth has been saved through the blood of Christ. This, of course, could not be what Paul meant, for it is not what the rest of Scripture teaches. Note three significant facts.

- ❖ Man is not at *peace with God*. Note the word "*with*." Peace *with* God refers to man's relationship with God. Man does not know God personally; he is not near God nor close to God. He often questions the very existence of God, and even if he believes that God exists, he knows little if anything about talking and sharing with God. Instead of sensing *peace with God*, he senses separation from God, as though God is out in space someplace, far away from the earth... The point is this: man has a need, a great need for peace with God. God has met that need by reconciling all men to Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ.
- ❖ There is the means of reconciliation: the blood of the cross. How does the *blood of the cross* reconcile us to God?... The cross was the place where criminals were executed. This means that Jesus Christ died as an unjust criminal, yet He was not a criminal. He did not deserve to die, for He had broken no law. He was not upon the cross because He deserved to die; He was not there because of His own sins. Therefore, He

was bound to be dying for someone else. He was the Just dying for the unjust.

This is very significant. If the Just died for the sins of the unjust, then the unjust is no longer guilty of sin. He is freed from the charge of being a sinner: he is no longer considered unjust; he is considered just. How? By faith. When a person truly believes that the Just Christ died for his unjust sins, God counts it so. God takes the person's faith and *accepts it as his identification with Christ*. Being freed from the charge of sin, the person becomes acceptable to God. The person is reconciled and brought near God by Christ dying for his unjust sins. **(See 1 Peter 3:18)**

The blood of Christ is tied to the blood of animal sacrifices in the Old Testament. Down through the centuries God had told man that sin was serious, very serious—a matter worthy of death. It was sin that separated man from God. Therefore, man either had to die for his sins or else someone else who was innocent and without transgression had to be sacrificed for him. That Someone, of course, had to be God Himself, for no one else is innocent and perfect. But it was not yet time for God to come to earth in the person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; the fulness of time had not yet come. Man had not yet learned the awfulness of sin and the great price that God would be paying in sacrificing His Son for man.

Animal sacrifice was one of the ways God was going to teach these truths to man. A man was to believe that the animal was sacrificed for him. If he truly believed, then God accepted the animal sacrifice as bearing his sins. This, of course, meant the man was

freed from the charge of sin. He was thereby reconciled and made acceptable to God by the blood that was shed.

The point is this: the shed blood of Christ is the supreme sacrifice. The perfect blood of God's own Son has now been sacrificed for man's sins. Therefore, the sacrifice of animals find their fulfillment in Christ. If a man believes that the blood of Christ (His life) was sacrificed for his sins, then God accepts his faith as the fact. God credits the believer's faith as the death of Christ. The believer is identified with the death of Christ, as having already died. Therefore, he never again has to die. He is reconciled and brought near God by the blood or sacrifice of Christ. **(See 1 Peter 2:24)**

- ❖ There is the result of the death of Christ. All things are reconciled to God, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. As stated earlier, this does not mean universal salvation. Scripture does not teach that every person shall be reconciled to God... The next verse and point make it clear that only true believers are reconciled to God...

The door of reconciliation with God is now open, and man is to enter and live with God forever. God has done all He can: He has made it possible for man to draw near Him through reconciliation. It is up to man to draw near. God has done His part; man must now do his part. Man must now turn to God through faith in the blood of Christ.

The reconciliation of "all things" includes all of creation, the world itself. The earth was created for

man, to be his place of residence; therefore, creation shall be redeemed even as man shall be redeemed. There shall be a new heaven and a new earth even as there shall be a new man that lives eternally.

(See Romans 8:21-23; 2 Peter 3:10-13) (POSB)

(RevC) This means the earth which is under the curse has been reconciled, the curse will be lifted, and the earth restored to its fullness in Christ. Man activates Christ's work of reconciliation in his life, when he accepts Christ as Savior. Reconciliation is part of what I receive in salvation. Universal reconciliation is NOT the same as universal salvation. The idea of "universal salvation of all mankind" is "Universalism" the false teaching that someday all people even those who reject Jesus Christ will receive salvation. Paul taught that salvation was an individual matter, involving the humble acknowledgment of our sin, and heart felt belief in the sacrifice of Christ as the atonement for our sin. (RevC)

2. **Col 1:21 And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled**

(RevC) These Gentiles in Colossae were "alienated", separated, and estranged from God because of their trust in false gods who were powerless to deliver them from their sin. Paul calls them "enemies" meaning that they were actively hostile in their actions and beliefs toward God.

They followed the imaginations of their sinful rituals and religious practices that only further separated them from the one true living God and savior. Keep in mind that Paul states in **Romans 8:7** that the “carnal mind” (that of an unbeliever) is enmity (separated) against God.” **Romans 1:18-25** declares that they (as we) were without excuse before God as all creation speaks of the divine Creator. (RevC)

END LESSON 21

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 21

- 1. T or F The “body of Christ” on earth is composed of all true believers in Christ who have salvation no matter where they are on the earth.**
- 2. T or F The “body of Christ” has as its head the pastors and elders who lead the individual fellowships.**
- 3. T or F Paul states that Jesus is the “firstborn from the dead”. This means that he is the first to be resurrected from the dead.**
- 4. T or F In Colossians 1:18 Paul says that Christ is to have “preeminence” in all things. This word is not used anywhere else in the New Testament. It means that Christ is to have first place, to be above all.**
- 5. T or F Universal reconciliation is the same thing as universal salvation.**

BEGIN LESSON 22

- 3. Col 1:22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:**

(RevC) That Jesus had a physical body that suffered and died on the cross is something that the Gnostics, false teachers denied. They actively taught against the incarnation (God in human flesh & blood) saying that Jesus was only an illusion or spirit and did not possess a real human body. We see John combat such teaching in **I John 1:1-3** where he emphasizes:

- ¹ **That which was from the beginning** (Jesus as creator, himself uncreated), **which we have heard** (still ringing in our ears), **which we have seen** (to perceive what I see) **with our eyes, which we have looked upon** (to see with discernment), **and our hands have handled** (to touch in a way as to examine), **of the Word of life;**
² **(For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested** (to reveal what was not revealed=the life that God is) **unto us;)**
³ **That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.**

John is declaring that Jesus was not an illusion as they were there with Him hearing His words, understanding what they were seeing, able to discern the truth, and even touched Him being able to feel that He was real. **(See also I Peter 2:24; Colossians 1:20-23)** (RevC)

(POSB) God has reconciled those who were alienated and were enemies of God. This verse shows that Paul was not thinking about universal salvation. He is addressing believers, those who

truly believe that the blood of Jesus Christ has reconciled them to God...

Believers had been *alienated* (*apēllotriōmenous*) from God. The word means estranged, alienated, and separated because of dislike; it means to be unattached because of indifferent and unfriendly feelings...

Believers had been *enemies* (*echthrous*) of God. The word means hostile, hateful, and rebellious...

Note where rebellion takes place: in the mind and in the thoughts. A man thinks about doing something and he knows it is against God's will and Word. But the thought is planted in his mind, and he harbors the thought. It is the thought, the mind that leads to wicked works. And any behavior or act that is not in accordance with God's will is rebellion.

[(RevC) Man was an enemy, he was alienated, separated, from God and headed for an eternity in hell because of his sin nature which God could have no part or fellowship with. (RevC)]

God had one great purpose in reconciliation—to present the believer perfect before Him.

This is the reason for the death of Christ. Three things are essential for us to be allowed to stand before God.

- We must be holy (*hagios*): separated, set apart, and consecrated to God.

- We must also be "unblameable" (*amōmous*): without blemish, without spot, faultless, without any defect whatsoever. [(RevC) remember that Old Testament sacrifices had to be “without blemish” before they were acceptable to God. In the same way Jesus had to take upon flesh and live a blameless life before God and mankind in order to satisfy the righteous wrath of God toward sin as Jesus became “sin” on the cross bearing the sin of all mankind so that those who would trust in His sacrifice might become partakers of His righteousness and thus stand before the Father holy, blameless, and unproveable (free of any accusation against us). The believer is reconciled (made acceptable to God) in Jesus Christ. (See Eph. 1:4) (RevC)]
- We must also be "unproveable" (*aneglētous*): beyond reproach, blameless, unchargeable.

Imagine standing before God holy, unblameable, and beyond reproach. This is God's one great purpose in reconciliation: to present us perfect before Him. (POSB)

4. **Col 1:23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;**

“The hope of the Gospel” means that blessed hope of our Lord’s return (Titus 2:13). Paul had already mentioned this hope: “The hope which is laid up for you in heaven” (Col. 1:5). Later in the chapter, he called it “the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27).

All of God's children will one day be with Christ in heaven (John 17:24). In fact, so secure is our future that Paul stated that we have already been glorified! (Rom. 8:30) All we are waiting for is the revelation of this glory when Jesus Christ returns (Rom. 8:17-19).

Paul used an architectural image in this verse—a house, firmly set on the foundation. The town of Colossae was located in a region known for earthquakes, and the word translated “**moved away**” can mean “earthquake stricken.” Paul was saying, “If you are truly saved, and built on the solid foundation, Jesus Christ, then you will continue in the faith and nothing will move you. You have heard the Gospel and trusted Jesus Christ, and He has saved you.”

In other words, we are not saved by continuing in the faith. But we continue in the faith and thus prove that we are saved.

IV. Chapter 1:24-29

A. Paul's rejoicing (v. 24).

Col 1:24 Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:

(RevC) Paul did not suffer as an evil doer, although many who did not agree with Paul's teaching likely thought evil of Paul. Rather his suffering had to do with his testimony for Jesus. Thus, Paul saw such sufferings as an opportunity to share in “the fellowship of His sufferings” (**Phil. 3:10**). In this Paul found joy.

Peter spoke to believers admonishing them not to put themselves in positions where they suffered for wrongs, they committed but rather as Christians when called upon to suffer

for the sake of the gospel to do so unashamedly and glorify God **I Peter 4:15-16.**

Notice also that Paul's sufferings were real in that they were not just emotional or feelings of stress but were actual physical in nature. Few today have to suffer for the cause of Christ in their physical bodies but perhaps that day is coming as we draw ever closer to His glorious return. Paul also suffered because of his love for the Gentiles and for the church; which is the body of Christ on earth. It made little difference to Paul why he was called upon to suffer as long as it moved the gospel message forward and glorified God. (RevC)

(RevC) An important understanding concerns what is meant by "fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ..." One might think that something was not completed in the sufferings of Christ for our salvation. That most assuredly is not what is meant here. The work that Christ went to the cross to accomplish was completed. However, as He suffered to procure salvation for all who believe, it is our task to suffer for the sake of spreading the message of the gospel to the world He died to save.

END LESSON 22

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 22

- 1. T or F The words "holy and saint" are closely related expressing the idea of being set apart, being devoted to God.**
- 2. Like the Old Testament temple sacrifices the word "unblameable" carries the meaning:**
 - A. free from accusation**
 - B. without blemish**
 - C. holy**
 - D. righteous**

3. The “hope of the Gospel” is:

- A. our Lord’s return**
- B. the hope of salvation**
- C. the hope of healing**
- D. the hope of forgiveness**

4. T or F When we suffer for the cause of Christ or the spreading of the gospel, we are sharing in the sufferings of Christ “the fellowship of His sufferings.”

5. T or F Colossians 1:24 indicates that there was something not completed in the suffering of Christ on the cross that is ours to complete.

BEGIN LESSON 23

B. Paul’s responsibility (vv. 25-27).

Col 1:25-27 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; **1:26** Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: **1:27** To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

- 1. (POSB)** Note a most significant fact. The word **dispensation** (*oikonomian*) refers to the steward who oversees the household and property of the owner. The minister is the steward of God, the person chosen to oversee the house or church of God. This fact is... God has actually chosen some persons to oversee His affairs for Him.

Paul was made a minister by God. Paul was a minister because God had called him to be a minister... Paul was

chosen to fulfil the Word of God, that is, to make the Word of God fully known. (See **1 Cor. 4:1-2**)

2. ...The word "mystery" means secret, some "sacred secret" that God was not able to reveal to the world until man had been prepared to receive it. What is the mystery that God has kept secret, but now has been revealed? It is twofold; it has two parts to its revelation.
 - a. First, the mystery is that Christ actually lives within the believer. It is the truth of the *Indwelling Christ*—that Christ actually lives within the hearts and lives of believers and that His presence is their guarantee of living forever in glory. (See **John 14:16-18**) Second, the mystery of God is that Christ will live within any person, no matter who they are—God is no respecter of persons.

Note the exact words of this passage:

"The glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you."

It is *in the Gentiles* that Christ dwells; that is, He dwells within anyone who opens his heart and life to Him. When God sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to die for men, God showed the world that He loves every person equally. He does not favor anyone—not one person—much less a class or nation of people.

There is one other thing that needs to be noted: Christ in you, the *hope of glory*. Man's only hope of ever entering and living in glory is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ must be living in the heart of a person when he dies if the person is to be allowed to enter glory. The guarantee of glory is the presence of Christ and His Spirit within the heart. (POSB)

(RevC) The saints of the Old Testament did not understand how the Messiah could reign as King and yet suffer. The prophets recorded both. This mystery, Paul was now able to declare to the Gentiles and to those Jews with ears to hear. Perhaps even more difficult for the Jews to understand is how both Jew and Gentile could become one! Yet such is the nature of the Body of Christ, The Church where there is neither male nor female, Gentile or Jew, bond or free but all have been made one in and by Jesus Christ. (RevC)

(RevC) When the church is completed, and He has dealt with Israel as a nation (Acts 15:12-18) He will return and take His people to heaven (1 Thes. 4:13-18) and establish His kingdom on earth.

We who have grown up in somewhat Christian surroundings have a tendency to take all of this for granted. But think of the excitement this message must have generated in a church composed of new believers who had no background in the church. Once they were outside the covenants of God, but now they were members of His family. Once they were living in spiritual ignorance and death, but now they were alive and sharing in the riches of God's wisdom in Christ. Once they had no hope, but now they had a glorious hope because Christ now lived within. (RevC)

C. Paul's instruction (1:28-29).

Col 1:28-29 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ
Jesus: 1:29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

(RevC) The "Whom" that Paul is referring to is naturally Jesus Christ the topic of the message that Paul

was given to share. In many religions there are rules, codes of conduct, morals to uphold, laws to keep, principles to follow, ideas to grasp, and theories to understand. However, for the disciple of Jesus Christ who is called to the work of the ministry there is only one topic of discussion and that is the person of Jesus Christ. It is important to realize that we as Christians do not bow down to idols made of wood, stone, or any other substance but we worship the one true living God. We do not worship a theory or lofty principle we worship a living person, the Savior of all who trust in Him.

Paul also realized the responsibility to warn those not in the faith of the consequences of rejecting the person of Jesus Christ or to adhering to the false teachings of those who had any gospel other than Jesus Christ. **(See Mark 16:15, 2Cor. 4:5; 2Tim. 4:2; Eph. 5:11; 1Thes. 5:14; Ezek: 3:18, 33:9)**

Paul's desire was to impart wisdom (the right use of knowledge) and truth that all men could be presented faultless in Jesus Christ being made perfect, complete, and mature by the presence of Christ in every believer. **(See Matt. 5:48; Eph. 4:13; Heb. 6:1)**

Another important lesson from this passage is that Paul responded to this calling on his life by the working of the presence of Christ in him. He knew better than to rely on his own wisdom or strength but rather relied on the working of God in him and through him by the Holy Spirit. (RevC)

(POSB) The word "labor" (*kopiaō*) means to toil and to struggle in labor and work to the point of exhaustion, fatigue, and pain. It is the picture of an athlete struggling, agonizing, and pushing himself well beyond his capacity in order to achieve his objective. This is the call of God to the minister: to labor and work just as diligently as Paul and as the most dedicated athlete.

The word "working" (*energeia*) means energy and efficiency, and is only used of superhuman power (Wuest, *Ephesians and Colossians*, Vol.1, p.195). In this case, it is the power of Christ. When the minister has gone as far as he can, Christ steps in and infuses energy and power into his body—an energy and power that works in him mightily. (POSB)

V. Colossians Chapter 2

A. 2:1-3 Paul striving for the church

Col 2:1-3 For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; 2:2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; 2:3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

1. **In verse 1 we can see Paul's heart for the believers at Colosse.** We can sense his prayer for them and strong desire to fellowship with those he already knew and those new converts he had not yet met. This held true for the church at Laodicea as well. The Laodicean church was near Colosse.

2. **In verse 2 Paul gives us evidences of spiritual maturity.**

(POSB) a mature people have hearts that are strong, confident, and assured. The word "comforted" (*paraklēthōsin*) means to be strong, strengthened, established and braced (Vincent. *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol.3, p.482). It means to be encouraged...

The point is this: the answer to a strong, confident, assured heart is love—being knit together in love with others. This is the task of the church and its believers: to love each other—to build love among themselves—to build love among everyone, not neglecting, overlooking, or ignoring a single person. When our hearts are knit together in love, then the hearts of every believer will be strong, encouraged, braced, assured, confident, and comforted...

...Once a person approaches God through Jesus Christ, God places His Spirit within the person's heart. And God's Spirit infuses strength, both assurance and confidence, within the believer's heart. God's Spirit gives absolute assurance that we truly know God and are adopted as His dear sons and daughters. We know with absolute assurance that what we believe about God is accurate. The Spirit of God instills that confidence within our hearts. (See **Romans 8:15-16; 2Cor. 1:22; Gal. 4:4-6; 1John 3:24, 4:13**)

...Note the words "understanding" and "acknowledgement." When a person understands and acknowledges Jesus Christ, then it is that he gains "full assurance" of God. He gains "full

assurance" that his knowledge of God is accurate. Common sense tells us this fact: if we could be absolutely sure that our knowledge of God is accurate, then our hearts would be strong. And this is the glorious declaration of Scripture: we can be sure. In fact, we can have full assurance of understanding—through Jesus Christ—for Jesus Christ Himself is the revealed secret of God. Jesus Christ is the revelation of God, our assurance and confidence of God. **(See 1Thes.1:5; 2Tim. 1:12; Heb. 10:22; 1John 4:13, 5:10-13) (POSB)**

3. **(RevC)** note (vs. 3) these treasures are hidden in Christ. They are available to the believer who is in Christ, but hidden from the world outside of Christ. We can and should realize these treasures as we study the Word of God and grow in Christ.

Knowledge as stated above is the ability to grasp the truth, but grasping does not mean we can discern what to do with it, understanding is the ability to know what this truth means to me, and wisdom is the ability to apply the truth in the right way. (RevC)

END LESSON 23

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 23

1. **T or F Paul felt he had been given a “dispensation” by God for ministry to the Gentiles. This was a choice that Paul freely made to share Christ with the Gentiles.**
2. **T or F Paul’s message to the Gentiles was what he called a “mystery”. A mystery is a “sacred secret,” hidden in the past but revealed to Paul by the Holy Spirit.**
3. **T or F Wisdom is defined as “the right use of knowledge”.**

4. **T or F** The goal in all preaching, warning, and teaching is to present every believer complete and mature in Christ.

5. **T or F** Knowledge is the ability to grasp the truth, understanding is the ability to know what truth means to me, and wisdom is the ability to apply the truth in the right way.

BEGIN LESSON 24

B. Keep Making Spiritual Progress (Col. 2:4-7)

(RevC) In this next passage we see Paul encourage believers to stay on track in their walk with the Lord. He speaks of their steadfastness in faith and need to walk in Him remaining rooted and built up in Christ. Paul's words remind us of **Hebrews 6:1** **“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,”** in both statements is the encouragement to continue to move forward in our Christian walk and testimony moving ever forward unto perfection. Naturally, this encouragement is also a warning not to become lazy or dis-interested in our Christian experience. Much like the warning Paul gives in **2Cor. 13:5** where he says **“Examine yourselves to see if you are in the faith; put your own selves to the proof...”** Either we are moving forward in our relationship with Christ or we are slipping away, there is no safe middle ground—thus we need to keep moving forward to perfection in Christ. (RevC)

Col 2:4-7 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. **2:5** For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. **2:6** As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: **2:7** Rooted and built up in him, and

stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

1. **The need for progress (v. 4).**

a. **(POSB)** The word "beguile" (*paralogizētai*) means to mislead, delude, deceive, cheat, seduce, and lead someone astray. Note how the seduction takes place: by "enticing words" (*pithanologia*), that is, by words that are persuasive, appealing, eloquent, flowery, and attractive. Believers can be seduced by the persuasive and eloquent words of false teaching.

b. Therefore, when some idea, position, philosophy, religion, doctrine, or belief is presented in a reasonable and eloquent fashion, people are persuaded. They are beguiled, deceived, and led astray from Christ

c. The argument can be against any of the major teachings of Scripture. If they are persuasive enough, some persons are led astray. They begin to question the truth and to wonder and doubt. Note the words "**this I say.**" The very reason Paul has proclaimed that all wisdom and knowledge exist in Christ is to protect believers against false teaching. Believers are to know that all truth is in Christ, and they are to seek all truth in Christ.

(See Romans 16:17-18; 2Cor. 11:13-15; Eph. 4:14; Titus 1:10; 1John 2:18-19, 4:2-3; 2John 7) (POSB)

2. The nature of progress (vv. 5-7).

a. (POSB) (vs. 5) A mature people maintain discipline—order and steadfastness.

⇒ The word "**order**" (*taxin*) means to maintain military discipline, array, and arrangement; to hold a solid front (The Amplified New Testament); to hold the military line unbroken and intact (A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament, Vol.4, p.489*).

⇒ The word "steadfastness" (*stereōma*) means to stand fast and persevere; to be immovable, steady, and unyielding; to never crack, give in, or back up. This, too, is a military word. A.T. Robertson says that it is "the solid part of the line which can and does stand the attack" of the seduction.

b. Note that the believers of the Colossian church were being attacked by false teaching even as Paul was writing to them. But they were responding like a victorious army. They were maintaining their discipline and holding their order and standing fast. Note also the importance of the minister's encouragement: Paul says that he was with them *in spirit*, joying and watching them gain the victory over the false teachers. (See **1 Cor. 15:58; Galatians 5:1; Ephes. 4:14; Phil. 1:27, 4:1; 2 Thes. 2:15; 1 Peter 5:8-9; 2 Peter 3:17**).

c. **(2:6-7)** A mature people walk in the Lord. This means at least two things. **First**, believers walk just as they have received Christ—by faith... They have nothing within themselves to earn, merit, deserve, or make God accept them. They can do nothing, and they can possess nothing that will secure the approval of God. The believer's only acceptance before God is Christ, trusting the righteousness and death of Christ... **(See 2Cor. 5:7; 1John 1:7)**

Second, believers received Christ as *Christ Jesus the Lord*. That is, when believers received Him, they accepted Him as the true Messiah and Lord from heaven; they accepted Him as the *Lord of their lives*. Therefore, believers are to walk before Him as Lord; they are to continue walking and serving Him as the Lord of their lives. **(See Romans 6:4; Gal. 5:16; Eph. 4:1, 5:2, 15; 1John 2:6)**

d. There are three things in particular the believer is to do.

1) The believer is to be rooted and built up in Christ. There are two pictures in this statement.

⇒ The picture of being rooted is that of a tree. The believer is to be like a towering tree that has its roots deeply planted in the ground. The ground provides strength against wind and storms and nourishment for life. The believer is to draw his nourishment and strength from Christ.

⇒ The picture of being built or constructed is that of a building. Jesus Christ is the foundation for life, the only sure foundation. Therefore, the mature believer is a person who has built his life upon Christ.

The point to note is this: the emphasis upon a strong attachment and a flow of nourishment and life from Christ to the believer. That is, the believer is to walk in a continuous, unbroken communion and fellowship with Christ. His life and mind are to focus upon Christ without interruption, drawing all nourishment and strength from Him. This is critical, for there is no other *permanent* nourishment or strength—not that lasts forever and imparts eternal life to the human soul. (See **Matt. 7:24-26; 1Cor. 3:11; 1Tim.6:19; 2Tim. 2:19**)

2) The believer is to walk established in the faith just as he has been taught. The word "**established**" means to be firm, stable, holding fast and not letting go. This shows the utter necessity for strong teachers in the church. When believers have strong teachers, they are to learn all they can about the faith and hold fast to it. They are not to let it go... Mature believers are established in the faith, and they are to stand fast in the faith just as they have been taught. (See **Romans 16:25; Col. 2:7; 2Thes. 2:16-17; Heb. 13:9; Psalms 40:2, 112:8**)

3) The believer is to walk overflowing with thanksgiving. Christ Jesus the Lord has done so

much for the believer—so much that flows on and on, never ceasing, not even for one moment of any day. Therefore, the believer is to learn to walk in an unbroken spirit of thanksgiving—a thanksgiving that overflows in praise to the Lord moment by moment throughout the day. (See **Phil. 4:4, 6; 1Thes. 5:18; Heb. 13:15**) (POSB)

C. Watch Out for Spiritual Perils (Col. 2:8-10)

Col 2:8-10 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 2:9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 2:10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

1. (POSB) (vs. 8) beware of worldly philosophy. The word "**beware**" (*blepete*) means to take heed, look out, guard yourself. Why? "Lest any man spoil you through philosophy." The word "**spoil**" (*estai sulagōgōn*) means to lead into captivity or slavery.

Believers must, therefore, beware and guard against worldly philosophies and ideas lest they become ensnared and enslaved. What is meant by *worldly philosophy*? Paul tells us exactly what he means.

- a. Worldly philosophy is philosophy that follows the very same traditions that men have followed down through the ages.
- b. Worldly philosophy is philosophy that searches for reality by using the rudiments or elementary knowledge of this world. The word "**rudiments**" (*stoicheia*) means...the elementary principles...

Worldly philosophy uses only human knowledge and worldly tradition to search for the reality and truth of the world and life. The only source worldly philosophy uses is the world and its elements or materials.

- c. Worldly philosophy is philosophy that deals only with the elements and materials of this world (universe). Men have always tried to find the answers to life and the world within the world itself.
- d. The point to see is this: worldly philosophy tries to find the answers to these questions *only in the world* (universe). Worldly philosophy looks only at the elements or materials of this world and seeks the answers to life. The consequence is tragic, for everything in the world—every element of it—passes away. Therefore, if a philosophy bases itself upon the elements of the world, there is no *permanent answer or solution* to life. (See **Romans 1:22; 1Cor. 3:19-20; James 3:15; Isa. 29:14, 47:10-11; Jer. 4:22, Ezek. 28:4-5; Psalm 2:1**)
- e. Man is just totally incapable of penetrating or moving over into the spiritual world or spiritual dimension. He cannot know the spiritual world because he and his world are physical and material (corruptible and dishonorable, weak and natural, mortal and dying).

This means a critical point: there is only one-way man can ever know the spiritual world and dimension. The spiritual world must *reveal* itself to the physical world. God must reveal Himself to

man. This is exactly what God has done in Christ...(POSB)

- 2. (POSB) (Vs. 9-10)** Jesus Christ is the Source of reality and truth, the very presence of God Himself. Note: reality and truth—the answers to the world and life—are not found in a philosophy nor in human ideas. They are found in a Person, the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Think for a moment: if a Person (God) really created the world, then the answer to life and creation (truth and reality) are bound to be wrapped up in Him, not in the world He made. He is the Source to understanding the world; the world is not the source to understanding Him. True, we can look at the world and learn some things about God, but not all that we need to know. For example, the world cannot tell us how to conquer evil and death, not perfectly. Therefore, if we seek the truth only in the world, we are left short and incomplete and unfulfilled and in error. Thus, we must seek truth and the answer to all things in the Person who made all things. He alone knows the whole story.

The glorious message of the gospel and of this passage is that God does exist. He truly exists, and He has revealed Himself in Christ. Christ is the revelation of God, of truth and reality, of life itself in all its origin, purpose, meaning, and destiny. **Note three wonderful truths.**

- a. Christ is the fulness of God. Christ is God Himself who came to earth. Note verse 9: **"In**

Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead."

All that God is dwells in Christ.

⇒ Christ is God in an absolute, full, and perfect sense.

Jesus Christ has the full nature and being of God just as God the Father has the full nature of God...

God the Father and God the Son have the same being and nature, that of God. The word

"fulness" (*pleroma*) means that not a single part of God's nature is lacking in the nature of Christ.

The word **"dwells"** (*katoikei*) means to be at home, to be permanently settled and present. This tells us...

- that the fulness of God has always dwelt in Christ, even before He came to earth (**John 1:1, 18; John 17:5, 24; Phil. 2:6**).
- that the fulness of God dwelt in Christ when Christ was walking upon earth in a human body (**John 1:14, 18; 1 John 1:1-3**). [(RevC)
It is important to remember that Jesus possessed a human body both before and after the resurrection. He wanted his disciples to know that his body was real; even after the resurrection it was so telling doubting Thomas to touch him and see that his body was real **John 20:27**. He was not a spirit or ghost as the false teachers would have us believe.
(RevC)]
- that the fulness of God was not just a temporary gift to Christ.

What does all this mean to us in practical day to day living? It means two wonderful things.

- First, God is not far off in outer space someplace. God is not unconcerned with the

world... God is interested and concerned with the world—so much so that He has come to earth to show how vitally concerned He is.

- God is love, not evil. Only a God of evil would leave man in the dark where he would have to grope and grasp and stumble about in order to find God. A God of love would reveal Himself and show man...the way to God, the truth of God, man, and his world, the life that man is to live (**John 14:6**).
(See **John 12:45, 14:7, 9, 16:15; Col. 2:9; 1Tim. 3:16; Heb. 1:3**)

b. Believers are complete in Christ. The word **"complete"** (*peplērōmenoi*) means to be made full. The Greek actually says, **"In Him you are full."** When a person truly believes and partakes of Christ, he receives the fulness of Christ. Just what is the fulness of Christ which believers receive? Scripture describes it in several ways.

1) Believers receive wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30).

⇒ *Wisdom* means that we understand God, the world, and man: the origin, purpose, and end of creation.

⇒ *Righteousness* means that we understand the evil in the world, both sin and death and that we

know the only way to attain righteousness is through Christ.

- ⇒ *Sanctification* means that we have set our lives apart unto God to live for Him and to serve Him.
- ⇒ *Redemption* means that we have been saved from corruption and death and given eternal life.

2) Believers receive the fulness of Christ's nature. The divine nature of God is actually placed in believers and they become new creatures in Christ. (**See 2 Peter 1:4; 2Cor. 5:1; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10**)

3) Believers receive fulness of life now. From the time believers receive Christ, they should lack nothing. If a believer ever lacks anything—any fulness of life—it is because he has taken his eyes off Christ and has slipped away. When dealing with day to day living...

- the believer receives an abundance of life. (**John 10:10**)
- the believer receives fulness of joy. (**John 15:11**)
- the believer receives all the necessities of life including food, clothing, and shelter (**Matthew 6:24-34**).
- the believer receives the fulness of God's Spirit, of God Himself. (**Gal. 5:22-23; Eph. 3:19, 5:18**)

4) Believers receive the fulness of life eternal. (**John 3:15-16, 17:3; Gal. 6:8**)

5) Believers receive the fulness of the knowledge of God's will. (Col. 1:9)

3. Christ is the Head of all principality and power; that is, no rule, authority, or power stands between God and man. Nothing, absolutely nothing, stands between God (ultimate Truth and Reality) and man...

The explanation and fate of man and his world are found in Jesus Christ and in Him alone. He is the only Intermediary between God and man. Man can approach God only through Christ. No one else—person or force—can present us to God and make us acceptable to God. God accepts only those persons who come to Him by Christ. (See John 3:16, 31, 6:68, 8:24, 14:6; Acts 4:12; 1Cor. 3:11) (POSB)

END LESSON 24

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 24

1. **T or F** In this lesson Paul explains his concern that believers not be led astray by lies and deceit. To avoid this Paul encourages us to be steadfast in our faith and walk in Christ.
2. **T or F** Paul encourages us to be “rooted” meaning that we should not be moved around by every new wind that comes along. He would want us to stay where we are planted and grow in strength and stability able to help others.
3. **T or F** In Colossians 2:8 Paul uses the word “spoil”, the Greek term “sulagogeō” meaning to become rotten.
4. **T or F** In 2:10 Paul says that “you are complete in Him.” This means that we have the fullness of Christ permanently.

5. T or F After the resurrection the body of Christ was no longer human but spirit.

BEGIN LESSON 25

D. Draw your spiritual provisions -Christ Versus False Religion (2:11-15)

Col 2:11-15 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 2:12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; 2:15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

1. Circumcised in Him (v. 11).

(POSB) A false religion is any religion not based upon God's love and Jesus Christ. For God has so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life (**John 3:16**; **Romans 5:8**).

...Any religion that *focuses upon anything* other than God's love and God's Son is not of God—not of the only living and true God. It is a false religion.

The problem of false religion had seeped into the Colossian church. Some were teaching that a ritual was necessary for salvation, the ritual of circumcision. This Scripture gives us an excellent discussion of a false religion that stresses ritual over God's love and God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some in the Colossian church were stressing the ritual of circumcision. They said that a man had to be circumcised to be saved, that God would not accept him unless he was circumcised. Giving his heart and life to Jesus Christ was not enough. Even if he trusted Christ and gave all he was and had, God would not accept him unless he was circumcised. There was a reason for this belief. Circumcision was the ritual of faith to the Jews. It symbolized two things.

- ⇒ First, circumcision symbolized the faith of a man and his family in God. When a man trusted God, he was circumcised as a sign or testimony of his faith in God. His circumcision declared to the world that he and his family were going to follow God.
- ⇒ Second, circumcision also symbolized the cutting away of the "body of sins" that were in the flesh. When the foreskin was cut off and removed it was a picture of sin—the whole body or package of sin—being cut off and removed from the man.

This was the true picture of circumcision; what God had intended until Christ came. Very simply, a man was to trust God, surrendering his heart and

life to God; then, as a sign or symbol of his faith, he was to be circumcised. But what happened was exactly what happens so often with spiritual things: man, corrupted God's purpose for circumcision. Man began to say that a person became acceptable to God...not because he trusted God, but because he was circumcised.

No matter how much a man trusted God, he was not acceptable to God unless he was circumcised. Circumcision was his badge of being admitted into God's presence, and without it, he could not gain entrance into God's presence.

The parallel with other false teachings is clearly seen. Down through the centuries, some have stressed that a person could not be saved—no matter how much he believed and gave his life to Christ—unless he...

- joined the church.
- was confirmed.
- was baptized.
- kept the law.

False teachings and religions have always tended to *add* to Christ in order to be saved. A person could believe and trust Christ with his whole heart, surrendering all he was and everything he had to Christ, but that was not enough. The person had to do something else in order to make himself acceptable to God. (**See Romans 2:28, 10:2-4; 2Tim. 3:5; Isa. 29:13; Hosea 6:6; 1Sam. 15:22; Psalm 51:16-17**)

The true religion stresses Christ and Christ alone. Real religion is spiritual, not physical; and it is wrought by Christ, not by the hands of men... Real religion is undergoing the circumcision of Christ, letting Christ cut away the body of sins out of our flesh.

When Jesus Christ died, He died *for our sins*. That is, He bore the guilt and punishment for our sins. He hung upon the cross...

- as the guilty sinner for us: in our place, in our stead, as our substitute.
- as the Person who would bear the judgment and punishment of sin *for us*.

Therefore, when we really believe and trust Christ—that He died for us—God removes our sin from us. He cuts away both the sin and the guilt and throws it away. This means a most wonderful thing: we stand before God without sin. Imagine standing before God sinless, completely and totally forgiven—accepted by God as perfect. But never forget why: it is because of Christ and Christ alone, not a ritual nor any other man-made or religious thing. We are acceptable to God because of Christ, His dear Son, and not because of anything else. True religion is not Christ *plus something else*; true religion is *Christ alone*. Christ alone can cut away sin. True circumcision—true religion...

- is the "circumcision made *without hands*."
- is "putting off the *body of sins* of the flesh by the *circumcision of Christ*." (See **Romans 6:6, 13:14; Col. 2:11, 3:5**) (POSB)

2. **Alive in Him (vv. 12-13).**

2:12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

- a. **(POSB)** Real religion is being baptized and raised with Christ.

"But I have a baptism to be baptized with [death]; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke 12:50).

Commentators are split over the meaning.

However, the meaning of the passage is the same no matter which interpretation is held. When a person believes in Christ, really believes, God takes his belief and...

- counts the person as having been buried with Christ in the baptism of His death.
- counts the person as having been raised with Christ when He arose.

When a person is baptized, the same message is proclaimed. The act of baptism proclaims to the world that the person has trusted Christ, His death and resurrection. Therefore...

- when the person is placed *under the water*, he is declaring that God counts him as buried with Christ.
- when he is raised up from the water, he is declaring that God counts him as risen with Christ.

The point to see is that the whole religious act is based upon and focused upon Christ—what Christ has done. Christ is the one who died and rose again. Therefore, it is Christ that man *believes in and trusts*, not the ritual of baptism. Christ alone can save: only His death can stand for the death of man; only His resurrection can stand for the resurrection of man. (See **Romans 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:12; 1Peter 3:21**)

- b. Real religion is an operation of God and an operation of God alone. The word "operation" (*energeias*) means energy, power, working. God has to perform the operation or work upon a person if the person is to be acceptable to God. No person can operate upon any other person and make him acceptable to God. God alone has the ability and power to make a person acceptable to Him.

The resurrection of Christ proves that God has the power to do what He declares. He has the power to count us as being in Christ and the power to raise us up from the dead. The proof is that He has already raised up one Person, Christ Jesus. And look at who He was: The Person who was bearing all the sins of the world. The guilt and punishment for every sin ever committed was being borne by Him. If God would and could raise Him up, He can and will raise us up—if we will only believe and trust His Son.

True religion is the religion that is of God, of His operation. True religion is the religion that is created by the energy, power, working, and operation of God. True religion is of God and of

God alone. (See Gen. 15:6; Acts 13:39; Romans 3:23-24, 4:3, 5:1, 9, 6:7, 8:33; 1Cor. 6:11; Gal. 2:16, 3:6, 3:24; Phil. 3:9) (POSB)

3. Free from the Law in Him (v. 14).

2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

- a. (POSB) Man's concept of the law is twofold.
- ⇒ Some men see the law as a list of rules that God has led great religious men to write down in either the Bible or other religious books.
 - ⇒ Other men see the laws of God as unwritten laws that are rooted in the nature of man and the world. Man just instinctively senses what is right and wrong and he is to live as his instinct tells him (cp. **Romans 2:14-15**).

Man, just senses the handwriting of laws against him—laws that condemn him when he goes contrary to what they say or what he senses. Note the word "handwriting" (*cheirographon*). It actually means a legal note or debt, what Barclay calls *a charge list* or a list of charges against man (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.170). The point is this: man senses the list of charges against him. And he should sense the wrong he has done, for it is his violation of God's law that condemns him to eternal death. Only as he senses and acknowledges his transgressions will he ever turn to God to save him.

- b. Christ stands opposed to man's idea of the law. It is true, man shall face God *in his own righteousness*

and be judged by the law. If that is the way he chooses to face God, he will be allowed to stand before God in his own righteousness. Man can claim *a righteousness by law*. In fact, there are only two ways to face God, and law or self-righteousness is one of the ways. But note: no person can ever be acceptable to a *perfect*, sinless God unless the person is perfect and sinless. And no honest and thinking person is going to claim to be perfect and sinless. Therefore, no person will ever be acceptable to God by law or self-righteousness. However, this is the glorious message of this verse. God has provided a way for the law and the list of charges against us to be removed. That way is Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ has taken the law or list of charges against us and nailed them to His cross. This means two things.

- Christ "took the law out of the way" for man. How? Christ kept and fulfilled the law perfectly. He lived a sinless life as a Man upon earth. By so doing He became the standard or the higher law for man. Man is now to look to Jesus Christ and follow Him as the standard of life. The law is set aside out of the way. Christ has now fulfilled the law and become the standard for men.
- Christ "nailed the law to the cross." That is, Christ bore the judgment and punishment passed down by the law upon man. Christ took the judgment of the law upon man and paid the penalty Himself. How was He able to do this? By keeping the law perfectly. In obeying the law perfectly Christ became the Pattern and Ideal for

all men. As the Ideal Man, He embraced and covered all men. It is His righteousness that is the *ideal righteousness*; therefore, His righteousness covers all men. It is His death that is the *ideal death* or the ideal bearing of judgment; therefore, His death covers all men. It is His life that is the *ideal life*; therefore, His life covers all men.

When a person trusts Jesus Christ as his Savior, God removes the list of charges against the person. How? By Christ—by the cross of Christ. When Christ died upon the cross, He actually bore the guilt and condemnation of the charges for the person. Therefore, the person stands guiltless and sinless before God—all because Christ took the list of the charges and nailed them to the cross with Him when He died. (See **Matt. 5:17; Romans 8:3; Gal. 3:13, 4:4-5**)
(POSB)

4. Victorious in Him (v. 15).

2:15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

(POSB) The point to see is this: The Bible declares without hesitation or equivocation that there are other forces within the universe. In fact, the Bible teaches that there is at least one other world in another dimension of being—another dimension other than the physical dimension. That world is the spiritual dimension of being. And there are living beings in that dimension, both

good and bad, just as there are good and bad beings or men in this world.

The glorious declaration of this verse (**Col. 2:15**) is that Christ has spoiled all principalities and powers, no matter who they are or what their force or energy is. The word "spoiled" (apekdusamenos) means to disarm and strip the evil forces of all their power.

Barclay describes the scene well:

"[The evil forces] were hostile, malicious, malignant to men. Jesus conquered them forever. He stripped them: the word that is used is the word for stripping the weapons and the armour from a defeated foe. Once and for all Jesus broke their power. He put them to open shame and led them captive in His triumphant train. The picture is the picture of the triumph of a Roman general. When a Roman general had won a really notable triumph, he was allowed to march his victorious armies through the streets of Rome, and behind him there followed the wretched company of the kings and the leaders and the peoples he had vanquished and conquered. They were openly branded as his victims and his spoils. Paul thinks of Jesus as a triumphant conqueror, enjoying a kind of cosmic triumph; and in His triumphal procession are the powers of evil, beaten forever, for everyone to see" (The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, p.172)...

...The point of this verse is to declare that Christ has defeated Satan and his evil spirits—all the forces and energies, power and principalities of the universe. Christ has triumphed over Satan and

his evil forces, broken their power and destroyed their works.
Christ has triumphed over evil... (See **Heb. 2:14-15; Col. 1:13-14; John 12:31-33; 1John 3:8**) (POSB)

END LESSON 25

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 25

- 1. T or F Circumcision was a physical act with no spiritual significance.**
- 2. T or F In the New Testament the word “baptize” has both a literal and figurative meaning. Literal meaning “to dip or immerse”, and figurative meaning “to be identified with.”**
- 3. T or F Paul uses the term baptize here in the figurative sense. We have been identified with Christ, when He died, we died; when He was buried, we were buried in Him; when He arose, we arose in Him.**
- 4. T or F The Law given to Moses was dealt with on the cross of Christ. In a sense it was “nailed” there to the cross that we would no longer be under its dominion.**
- 5. T or F In this lesson we find that there were 5 great victories that Jesus won on the cross.**

BEGIN LESSON 26

E. (POSB) Christ versus rules & ritualism Colossians 2:16-23

- 1. “Let no man judge you...” (Col. 2:16-17)**

Col 2:16-17 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 2:17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

- a. Christ versus rules and ritualism. Every thinking person knows that we have to have rules and laws**

in order to live a controlled and just life. But when we adopt a rule, at some point we fail to keep it... This means something of critical importance: we can never approach God and become acceptable to God through rules or laws or rituals or through anything else we might undertake by our own efforts. Why? Because God is perfect, and to approach God we have to be perfect. But this is the very problem of human life: we are already imperfect and can never be perfect because we have already failed. How then can we ever become acceptable to God whose very nature demands perfection? There is only one way:.. We have to trust that God loves us enough to provide a way that He can count and consider us perfect. We are not perfect, so we have to believe that He will provide a way for us to be credited or imputed with perfection. This is the glorious gospel of His Son, Jesus Christ... [(RevC) When we trust in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the atonement for our sin, (RevC)] then God counts our trust in His dear Son as righteousness. When we focus upon God's Son, that is, honor Christ with our trust and our lives, God honors us for honoring His Son. God honors us by counting us righteous and perfect *in the righteousness of Christ*. (POSB)

- b. (RevC) Why should these Gentile believes in Colossae who were never under the law of God to start with, as the law was given to Israel not to the Gentiles. Now be so willing to come under the bondage to the law. Though Paul had never been to Colosse he was very familiar with the work and all that was taking place. Paul's letter was to encourage them to remain steadfast in the freedom

of the teachings they had previously received by faith and not be moved away from the truth of the gospel they had received.

He was also dealing with a similar situation with the Galatians where he wrote in **Galatians 1:6-9** **“I marvel that ye are soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel”**... Then in **Gal. 5:1** he states, **“Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.”** False teachers were again trying to mix the gospel of faith with the works of the flesh. By doing so they were discounting the work of Christ on the cross and making man in part responsible for earning his salvation.

The Judaizers, false teachers who wanted a mix of law and grace for salvation were teaching what foods were lawful to be eaten or needed to be abstained from. Anytime we add some requirement other than faith in the atonement of Christ for our sin, we negate the work of the cross. Jesus also dealt with this subject in **Matthew 15** where he made it clear that it was not what went into a person’s mouth that defiled the person, but what came out of his mouth because what came out of his mouth proceeded from the heart of the person.

In like manner the false teachers were trying to bring these Gentiles under the bondage of keeping the holydays, rituals, and sabbaths that were given

to the Jews in the Old Testament. Some have said that “Sunday is the Christian Sabbath” but this is not true as Sunday is the day of the Lord’s resurrection or “The Lord’s Day” the first day of the new week. Though there is much we can learn from the law that was given to the Jews as it serves as a schoolmaster to show us our sin and need for Jesus, it also shows us how to live uprightly before God and our fellow man but it cannot save us only faith in Jesus and the grace of God can do that.

Legalism is a bondage from which Christ has made us free. Our only need is to live for Christ, stand fast in the faith that has made us free, and walk each day with the presence of the Holy Spirit working in and through us. (RevC)

c. The blessing of grace (v. 17).

(POSB) Note: rules and rituals were shadows that were used by God before Christ came. They were used by God to teach men that nothing could provide real life, not the real substance of life that satisfies and gives absolute assurance of living forever with God. Rules and rituals never satisfy the human heart, not permanently. Only the presence of God living within the human heart can satisfy man. This is where Christ comes in: Christ dwells within the lives of believers, actually lives within the bodies of believers in the person of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the believer experiences the satisfaction and assurance of being acceptable to God and of living forever with God.

The point is this: no rule and no ritual can give life and assurance to man. Rules and rituals are only inanimate, lifeless objects. But not Christ. He is a living Person who can relate and infuse the very life and assurance of God into the heart of a person. Rules and rituals may point us toward God, but they are not the real substance of life. Christ is the real substance of life—the only substance, body, and life that can bring us to God and present us as acceptable to God. (See **Romans 3:21-22, 10:3-4, 14:17; 1Cor. 8:8, Col. 2:20; 2Tim. 3:5; Heb. 9:9-14**) (POSB)

2. **“Let No Man Beguile You of Your Reward” (Col. 2:18-19)**

Col 2:18-19 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 2:19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

(**POSB**) Christ versus spiritism. Note the word "beguile" (*katabrabeuetō*). It means to rob; to defraud; to cheat a person out of his reward. It is possible for believers to be cheated out of their reward by false teachers. How? By following those who teach that there is another approach to God other than Christ. Christ is God's appointed way to approach Him, and there is no other way.

The false approach to God now being discussed is spiritism, the worship of God through angels or spirits and visions. Again, the Colossian church had

been heavily influenced by the Gnostic teaching of intermediaries or mediators between God and man. [(RevC) Why should any Christian need an intermediary to approach God? On the day of His sacrifice the veil between the Holy of Holies and man was rent from top to bottom as God made an announcement that no longer did man need a priest to intercede for him as we are admonished now to come **“...boldly before the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need.”** Heb. 4:16 also Eph. 3:12. We now have access to the very throne of God every time we come to God in prayer. Often man looks at his imperfection in the flesh and feels unworthy to come before God, and thus may feel the need for someone to intercede but be it not so! God knew our imperfections before he saved us, in such times we need even more to come before His throne with confidence that He wants me there and there I will find grace and help in my need. We don't need angels or other spirits to intermediate for us, we just need to make our request known before the living God who loves us and died for us to show us how great His love is. (RevC)]

Note the words **"intruding into those things which he hath not seen."** This is a reference to visions, seeing into the spiritual realm, into a world other than the physical world. Some of the believers were claiming all kinds of visions—visions of spiritual beings and of angels. And, as so often happens when people have deep spiritual experiences, the Colossians began to focus upon the visions and angels whom they claimed were

appearing to them: they focused upon the spirits instead of Christ.

A person who approaches God through visions and spirits is claiming that he is unworthy to approach God himself. He needs others to appear before God for him. But note: this is false humility, for the person claims to have visions of angels or spirits which other people do not have. Some in the Colossian church were claiming that they possessed special gifts and that they had experienced special visions, yet they were unworthy of such experiences. There was a voluntary (self-imposed) air of humility about them that really came across as being more spiritual than other believers. Paul says that they were deceived, and that they were in danger of losing their reward. They were "puffed up" by a fleshly mind.

No spirit—no angel or vision—can do what Christ can do. Christ alone has access into God's presence in *behalf of man*. Christ alone stands before God as the representative or *Head of man*. No other person or being can stand before God in behalf of men. Why? Because the body has only one head, not two... A body has only one head. And God's people are a body of people—a body of people who live under the *will and control of the Head* who is Christ. (POSB)

END LESSON 26

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 26

1. T or F Paul was surprised that the Gentile Christians were now open to the message of the Judaizers and willing to come under the Jewish law.

2. **T or F** Paul was dealing with the problem of the Judaizers both in Colessae and Galatia.
3. **T or F** It is absolutely correct to refer to Sunday as “the Christian Sabbath”.
4. **T or F** A Christian who fails to obey God’s directions, loses his salvation and approval of the Lord.
5. **T or F** Often false religions have special initiation ceremonies that are necessary to get into the presence of their god. This is not so in Christianity as Christ has made it possible for us to come boldly before our Heavenly Father.

BEGIN LESSON 27

3. “Why be subject to ordinances?” (Col. 2:20-23)

Col 2:20-23 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 2:21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 2:22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? 2:23 Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

(RevC) Very possibly Paul was dealing with a group of believers who were practicing asceticism which is the practice of self-denial in an effort to purify or cleanse the body and become more spiritual. From the Greek word “askesis” originally meaning “to train” or “to exercise” such as an athlete would do. However, this was also taken to the extreme in an effort to become more spiritual a practice well beyond fasting and even involved punishing the body, denial of normal pleasures of life or material satisfaction. In verse 21 we see Paul elude to “touch not, taste not; handle not..” each statement could be applied both to ascetic practices or legalism. Often

ascetic practices are tied to a strict adherence to the law. Either way this practice is something that Paul comes against. (RevC)

- a. **(POSB) (v. 20)** believers are dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world. Remember that the word "**rudiments**" (*stoicheiōn*) means two things and Christ saves us from both...

Rudiments means crude notions of men about the universe—that is, about God, reality, and truth. It is man's ideas and philosophies; their elementary or rudimentary teachings; their ABC understanding of God and the universe, reality, and truth. When men think of God, they come up with all kinds of ways and laws to reach Him and to secure His approval and acceptance. However, there are three basic problems with man's approach to God.

- First, we cannot keep rules and laws—not in a perfect sense... Therefore, we are not acceptable to Him; we are automatically rejected because of our imperfection. Imperfection cannot live in the presence of a perfect God. This is the first problem with trying to keep rules and laws in order to be good.
- Second, once we have broken a rule or law, we stand guilty before God. Therefore, we must be judged, condemned, and punished for having broken the law...
- Third, we die; we do not live forever. And there is no law or force on this earth that can give us the energy and power to live forever... Rules and laws only condemn us when we break them. They have no power to save us from death nor to give us eternal life. Because of this,

rules and laws cannot be the way to approach God.

Note the verse: "if ye be *dead with Christ* from the rudiments of the world." The death of Christ is the way God has established for us to approach Him. A person is...

- to repent and turn from the rudiments of the world, that is, from man's approaches to God.
- to believe that God loves the world, that He is not far off, leaving man in the dark having to grope and grasp after the truth and God.
- to believe that God's Son died for him, bearing his punishment and death.

If Christ has done this for us, then we are free from having to seek after God through rules and laws and angels and spirits and through the forces and energies of the universe. How? By believing in Christ...When we believe in Christ, we are accepted by God in the righteousness of Christ. And being accepted by God, we are freed from having to use any other approach to reach Him. Christ has freed us from all other approaches.

- b. (vs. 21-22) Some in the Colossian church were returning to the rules and regulations of men as to how to please God. They returned to the idea...that man can please God by controlling the defilement and weaknesses of the flesh—that man can secure God's approval by presenting a clean and pure body to God. Therefore, they began to come up with all the rules necessary to eat the right foods and to take care of their bodies and to live a clean life. Note how

simply Paul puts it: they were saying "**touch not; taste not; handle not.**"

There is no question, discipline and control and a clean body are wise; and every person should develop the healthiest and most moral body he can. But this is not what makes us acceptable to God. This approach to God has two critical flaws.

⇒ First, a person can have the healthiest and most pure body in the world, but that person is still imperfect and still dies. Health and morality, no matter how undiseased and pure, do not keep us from aging and dying. We are still corruptible and are still going the way of all flesh—the way of death and separation from God.

⇒ Second, the approach to God by rules and discipline forces us to focus upon the rules instead of Christ. We have to keep our minds upon the rules or else we break them before we know it. Contrary to pleasing God, this displeases God. God wants our lives focused upon His Son Jesus Christ.

The point is this: the philosophies and ideas of men enslave us: they force us to commit our lives to them and to focus upon them, and then they leave us enslaved to the bondage of death. Man-made ideas do not free us; they can carry us no higher than the man who made up the idea, and that height is not a height at all. It is a depth, the depth of death to which all men go.

The question is this: If you are dead with Christ and never have to die again—if you are in union with

Christ—if you are already acceptable to God...why then are you still trying to become acceptable to God? Your task is not to become acceptable to God. Your task is to focus upon God's Son, Christ, who has given you so much in His death and resurrection. **(See Matt. 7:6; Matt. 7:21 cp 1John 3:23; John 6:29, 8:34; Romans 6:16, 7:23, 14:17; 1Cor. 8:8; Heb. 9:10-14; 2Peter 2:19; 1John 3:23).**

c. **(vs 23)** the most that man can come up with in saving himself is a religion of works which is nothing more than a religion of pride. Note: Scripture admits that man can have a worldly wisdom and a strong will. The rules and ideas of man "show wisdom in *will worship*," that is, in self-made worship. Men are very capable in...

- thinking
- reasoning
- intelligence
- controlling
- disciplining
- acting

...No matter how wise and how much man controls his body and life—no matter what kind of values and morality he follows; no matter what kind of self-made religion he worships—man still sins and still dies. He is still unacceptable to God. **(See Luke 11:39-40; Romans 1:22; 1Cor. 3:19; 2Cor. 1:12; James 3:15; Psalm 49:13, 53:1; Provb. 14:9, 28:26; Isa. 29:14; Jer. 4:22)**

The only true humility is to confess total inadequacy—total depravity—and the utter necessity for God Himself to save us. When God saves us, we can be saved by no higher person, and we are saved by no merit or work of our own. Therefore, God and

God alone is praised, not us. True humility is focusing totally upon God as the Savior of the world and never seeing man as having any part in salvation. As Paul says: there is no **"honor to the satisfying of the flesh"**—not in true humility and salvation. (See **Luke 18:10-14; John 9:41; 2Cor. 10:12; 1Joh. 3:20; Rev. 3:17; Job 9:20, 33:9; Provb. 20:6, 30:12; Jer. 2:35**). (POSB)

VI. The Believer's New Life Colossians Chapter 3

(POSB) ...This is one of the great passages of Scripture, a passage that believers often turn to in seeking a deeper and more committed walk with the Lord. It is the basis of the believer's new life. (POSB)

(RevC) The Christian seeking a deeper more committed walk with the Lord stood in stark contrast to the normal pagan worshipper of that day. The false religions of that day placed little or no requirement of practicing or walking out in daily life any sense of morality or right conduct. A worshipper could come before an idol, present his sacrifice and leave with no compulsion to change his sinful behavior. What he said he believed did not translate to personal action or conduct.

Christianity changed how a believer's worship was to translate into his/her everyday life and code of conduct. Knowing that we are "in Christ" and that He is in the believer by the presence of the Holy Spirit was to have a direct influence on daily living. With Christ as our example we are to walk as He walked, practice the behavior that He practiced demonstrating such character traits as compassion, forgiveness, giving, and love for

one another. No longer could a true believer and follower of Christ continue to live in sin. (RevC)

A. “...Seek those things which are above...” (Col. 3:1-4)

Col 3:1-4 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 3:2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3:3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. 3:4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

1. Identification with Christ (v. 1-2).

(**POSB**)...When a person believes, really surrenders his life to Christ, God forgives the person's sins and accepts Him *in Christ*. God actually *identifies the person* with Christ in His death and resurrection. God begins to *consider the person* as having died and risen with Christ. The new believer was not bodily present when Christ died and arose, but God considers the believer to have been there. God reckons, credits, and counts it so. (See **Romans 8:11; Eph. 2:1-6; Col. 2:13, 3:1**)

Note the meaning of the charge: "**seek those things which are above.**" The meaning is clearly and pointedly explained in two statements:

- ⇒ First, seek those things above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. That is, seek heavenly things, the things of heaven.
- ⇒ Second, set your "**affection**" (*phroneite*), your mind on things above and not on things on the earth. The word "**affection**" means mind; to set and focus your

mind constantly upon heavenly things, not upon earthly things.

Very simply, the things of Christ and of heaven are to consume the believer's life and mind... (See **Romans 8:5-6, 12:2; 2Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 4:22-24**)

...It is His resurrection that allows us to be "*risen with Christ*." Remember: we actually take part and participate in the resurrection of Christ. This is a *positional relationship* to God. ...When we accept Christ, God places us in Christ positionally. He begins to see us *in Christ, already seated in the heavenlies and perfected forever* (cp. [Ephes. 2:4-7](#)). It is because of this glorious position which God has given us that we should seek the things of Christ and of heaven. (POSB)

(RevC) We are to set our affection (our heart) on the things which are above and not on earthly things. We must remember we are pilgrims just passing through and this is not our home. We have a heavenly home and a treasure laid up for us in heaven, therefore why care for the things of this life which will soon pass away as they are not eternal. Our affection should be set on what is of eternal value. (RevC)

2. The believer died with Christ (v. 3a).

(POSB) Note the two reasons why we are to seek the things of Christ and of heaven: because we are dead, and our lives are *hid with Christ* in God.

- a. The believer is dead. He is not actually dead; he still lives upon earth. But God counts the believer dead in the death of Christ. When Christ died, the believer died—right along with Christ *in God's mind*. God

counts it so, and whatever God counts so, it is a fact. Therefore, the believer is actually dead in God's mind. This means a significant fact: a dead man cannot sin, for a dead man no longer lives for this earth. He lives for the next world.

Christ not only died for us (substitution), but we died with Him (identification). Christ not only died for sin, bearing its penalty; but He died unto sin, breaking its power. Because we are “in Christ” through the work of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:13), we died with Christ. This means that we can have victory over the old sin nature that wants to control us. “How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” (Rom. 6:2)

3. The believer hidden in Christ (v. 3b).

The believer is *hid with Christ*. What does this mean? It means that God counts the believer *hid* in the resurrection and life of Christ. When Christ arose, He arose to a new life, not to His *old life*. He had just died to the old life once for all. Therefore, when the believer is said to be *hid* in Christ, it means that God counts the believer risen with Christ. God counts the believer as risen to a new life. God sees the believer *hid* in Christ day by day. God sees him walking *in* Christ and in Christ's righteousness. And because he is in Christ, the believer sets his mind upon things above, upon the things of Christ and of heaven. He sets his mind and life upon things that please Christ. (POSB)

(RevC) It is important to remember that Christ's death was necessary because of the need to satisfy the wrath

of God against sin. He bore the penalty of sin for each of us on the cross and by doing so broke the power of sin over us, freeing us to walk in newness of life.
(RevC)

END LESSON 27

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 27

1. **T or F** “Asceticism” is the practice of self-indulgence, feasting on whatever you want for the purpose of gaining spiritual contentment.
2. **T or F** The desire to sanctify the soul by disciplining the body, is a heresy that Paul came against.
3. **T or F** It does little good if Christians declare and defend the truth, but fail to demonstrate it in their lives.
4. **T or F** In Paul’s day pagan religions had great influence over how a person lived their lives, causing their followers to live moral lives.
5. **T or F** Christ not only died for sin, bearing its penalty; but He died unto sin, breaking its power.
6. **T or F** The Christian life is a “hidden life” as far as the world is concerned.

BEGIN LESSON 28

4. We live in Christ (v. 4a).

Colossians 3:4 When Christ, *who is our life*, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

(RevC) 1John 5:12 “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

Often people fail to realize that “Christ is our life” and that the life He gives is not some magical mysterious substance or spirit, but rather is the person, Jesus Christ. Before Christ we were all dead in trespasses and sin condemned by our sinful nature. However, now in Christ we are more alive than at any previous time as we have the very life that Christ is within every believer. We are counted by the Father to be dead to sin and alive in Christ Jesus. (RevC)

5. We are glorified in Christ (v. 4b).

(RevC) Every believer and follower of Jesus Christ is already positionally seated with Him in Glory. However, there is a day coming according to **1Thess. 4:13-18** when Christ shall come for His own and the dead in Christ will rise first then we who are alive and remain on the earth will be caught up together to meet Him in the air. And so, shall we ever be with the Lord. This passage indicates that Christ will come in His glory and raise us up to be with Him in glory. (See **Phil. 3:21; 2Tim. 2:10; 1Peter 5:1**) (RevC)

B. Slay the Earthly (Col. 3:5-9)

Col 3:5-9 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 3:6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: 3:7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. 3:8 But now ye also put off all these;

anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 3:9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

1.(POSB) The word "**mortify**" means to put to death or to act as though the body is dead. The believer is to take the various parts of his body and put them to death in so far as sin is concerned. How does a believer do this? He considers his body to be *hid in the death of Christ*. He acts as though his body is dead with Christ. And remember: a dead man cannot sin; a dead man can do nothing. Therefore, the believer is dead to sin.

...A person wants to live for God; therefore, he looks at his body and at sin. The only way he can possibly conquer sin is to treat his body as dead to sin or to consider sin as dead to his body. The person has to live as though his body has no part in sin, and sin has no part in his body. But note: this life is possible only in Christ. Christ alone—through the Holy Spirit—can work within the human heart and give it the energy and power to conquer sin *permanently and eternally*. Some men can discipline themselves to overcome some sin, but *not all sin, not permanently and not eternally*. This can be done only through Christ. There is an enormous difference between human discipline and godly control, and that difference is Jesus Christ.

2. What sins are to be mortified or put to death? The Bible is very specific, for there are some very specific sins which tend to enslave the human body. In fact, note the term "children of disobedience" (**Col. 3:6**). These particular sins are not only terrible *acts of disobedience to God*, they are sins that can enslave the human body so much that they make a *child of disobedience* out of a person. They cause a person to actually become a

child of disobedience. What are the sins that enslave the human body so much?

- a. There is the sin of *fornication* (*porneia*) a broad word including all forms of immoral and sexual acts. It is pre-marital sex and adultery; it is abnormal sex, all kinds of sexual vice. **(See 1Cor. 6:18; Eph. 5:3; 1Thess. 4:3)**

- b. There is the sin of *uncleanness* (*akatharsia*) moral impurity; doing things that dirty, pollute, and soil life. **(See Romans 1:24, 6:19)**

- c. There is the sin of *inordinate affection* (*pathos*): passion, craving, strong desire, intense arousal, a driving lust. It is, of course, a desire and craving for the wrong things such as the second and third helping of food, alcohol, drugs, nudity, pornography, suggestive and filthy literature, illicit affairs, extra-marital sex, etc. **(See Matt. 5:28-29; Romans 1:26-27; Gal. 5:16-17, 24; 2Tim. 2:22)**

- d. There is *evil concupiscence* (*epithumian kakēn*): evil desire, a yearning and an aching for all kinds of evil. It is that within a person that pulls him to desire, grasp, grab, and take hold of all forms of evil that give pleasure to the body and its members. It is that which drives the man to...
 - look and look
 - feel and feel
 - touch and touch
 - listen and listen
 - smell and smell
 - seek and seek **(See 1Thess. 4:5; James 1:14-15); 1Peter 2:11)**

- e. There is *covetousness (pleonexian)*: craving, grasping, grabbing, desiring to have something. It is desiring to have something when it is not needed; it is desiring more than what we need and more than what we should have [*(RevC) never being satisfied (RevC)*]. Note that covetousness is idolatry. If a person looks at something so much that he covets it, he has set it up as a god which he pursues with the energy and effort of his mind and body.
(See **Exodus 20:17; Jer. 6:13; Ezek. 33:31; Micah 2:2; Hab. 2:9; Luke 12:15; Col. 3:5; 1Tim. 6:10**)
3. (3:8-9) The second demand is also violent—strip off the sins that enslave the emotions and tongue. The picture is that of putting off or stripping off clothes. There are six sins that are to be stripped off. Note: all six have to do with either deep-seated emotions or else the tongue—reactions and feelings against another person.
- a. There is the sin of *anger (orgen)*:
 - b. There is the sin of *wrath (thumon)*: bursts of anger; indignation; a violent, explosive temper; quick-tempered explosive reactions that arise from stirred and boiling emotions. But it is anger which fades away just as quickly as it arose. It is not anger that lasts. (See **James 1:19-20; Provb. 29:22**)
 - c. There is the sin of *malice (kakian)*: deep-seated feelings against a person, hatred that lasts on and on, intense and long-lasting bitterness against a person. (See **1Cor. 5:8, 14:20; Eph. 4:31; 1Peter 2:1**)
 - d. There is the sin of *blasphemy (blasphemia)*: speech that slanders, insults, hurts, injures, and shows contempt. It is railing at someone. [*(RevC) Blasphemy is also what is known as the “unpardonable sin” which when done against any other member of the divine trinity can be forgiven, but can not be forgiven, if done against the Holy Spirit of God.*

(RevC)] (See Acts 13:45, 18:6; 1Tim.1:20; James 2:6-7; Rev. 13:1, 16:11)

- e. There is the sin of *filthy communication (aischrologian)* using the mouth in obscene, shameful, foul, polluted, base, immoral conduct and conversation. (See Romans 6:19; Eph. 5:4; James 1:21; 2Peter 2:9-10)
- f. There is the sin of *lying (pseudesthe)*: The word lying means that which is false. It is untruthfulness, deception, misrepresentation, exaggeration. (See Exodus 20:16; Matt. 15:19; John 8:44; Rev. 21:27, 22:15; 2Thess. 2:9; 1John 2:21, 27) (POSB)

END LESSON 28

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 28

1. **T or F** Eternal life is that heavenly substance that God imparts to we who believe in Christ.
2. **T or F** The word “mortify” means “put to death”.
3. **T or F** The covetous person is never satisfied with what he has, and he is usually envious of what other people have.
4. **T or F** Covetousness is a form of idolatry.
5. **T or F** Blasphemy is a term that can describe speech that slanders others, as well as being the unpardonable sin when done toward the Holy Spirit.

BEGIN LESSON 29

C. Put on the New Man (Col. 3:10-11)

Col 3:10-11 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: 3:11

Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

(POSB) There are three strong reasons as to why we are to strip off the sins of the emotions and tongue.

1. We have put off the *old man*...the "old man" refers to what a man is *before he accepts Christ*. It is the *very nature of man*, the *natural*, corruptible seed which is passed on from generation to generation and leads to death. It is what is called the nature of Adam.
2. We have put on the *new man*... When a person believes in the love of God, God responds by loving him so much that He makes a permanent man out of him, a new man...**[(RevC)** "*permanent*" indicates a "*once-for-all*" time action by God on behalf of the believer. In this new man almost, all human distinctions are done away with as we become as one in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, in the Greek language there are two words that are used for the word "new" they are: "*Neos*" meaning new in relation to time; and "*Kainos*" meaning new in quality. Both of these terms relate to the action of God whereby He creates new life (the permanent action of God whereby we become a new creation) within the believer. That new life is then in the process of being renewed (*Kainos*) each day as he becomes more and more like Christ. **(RevC)]**
3. We are all *one body* in Christ (**Col. 3:11**). Christ has made it possible for us to be adopted as children, sons and daughters, of God. We are all—everyone of us—children of God. We belong to the same family—the family of God. Therefore, there is no place for reacting against each other, no place for...

- anger • blasphemous,
- wrath insulting,
- malice hurting talk
- lying • filthy talk

Note how Scripture covers everything that could possibly cause feelings and divisions between us:

- ⇒ race and birth (Greek nor Jew)
- ⇒ religion and ritual (circumcision nor uncircumcision)
- ⇒ education and culture (Barbarian nor Scythian)
[(RevC) The Greek people considered anyone who was not a fellow Greek to be a Barbarian, and the Scythian people to be the worst or lowest of all people (RevC)]
- ⇒ social class and wealth and property (bond and free) (POSB)

[(RevC) all such distinctions are done away with in Christ, as we are made one in Him. In the USA everyone is said to be “equal” before the law, but often we see that is not the reality. However, in Christ there is equality before The Righteous Judge to the extent that there is neither male or female as in God’s eyes sexuality has nothing to do with righteousness—in His courtroom He is no respecter of persons. (RevC)]

D. Put on as the elect of God Colossians 3:12-17

Col 3:12-17 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 3:13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 3:14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 3:17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

(POSB) Once a person has accepted Christ he has a new life. As seen in the former passage, the believer is to strip off the clothing of his old life, for the garments of his old life are unbecoming to his new life. Now, there are some garments that the believer is to put on, some garments that are becoming to his new life in Christ. (POSB)

(RevC) In this section Paul gives several reasons to encourage believers to walk in newness of life.

Among those are:

- They are the “elect” of God meaning they were chosen
- They are “holy” meaning they have been set apart or separated from their former way of living
- They are “beloved” of God – God loves them
- Christ has “forgiven” them and now they are to forgive

Because of these 4 things that God has done for them, they are now to “put on” a new way of living and let their actions, their new way of living glorify God.

(RevC)

1. New Life Clothing (Col. 3:12-14)

(POSB) The clothing of the elect. Believers are the "elect of God." They are the persons whom God has chosen to be His holy and beloved people.

⇒ Believers have been elected to be *holy*. The word "holy" (*hagios*) means separated or set apart. God called believers out of the world and away from the old life it offered, the old life of sin and death. He called believers to be separated and set apart unto Himself and the new life He offers, the new life of righteousness and eternity.

⇒ Believers have been elected to be the *beloved* of God. God has called believers to turn away from the old life that showed hatred toward God, the old life that rejected, rebelled, ignored, denied, and was constantly cursing in the face of God. God has called believers to be the beloved of God, the persons who receive His love in Christ Jesus and who allow Him to shower His love upon them.

The point is this: the elect of God, holy and beloved, are those who have really believed and trusted Jesus Christ as their Savior. It is these persons, the believers, who now have a *new life* in Christ. Therefore, this passage is for the believer. Note one other thing: the command "put on" (*enduō*). This is the picture of putting on clothing; the believer is to *clothe the new man*. The new man must not be left naked; he must be clothed. What are the garments to be put on? There are **eight** garments of clothing for the new man:

END LESSON 29

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 29

1. **T or F** The Greek verbs translated “put off” and “put on” (Col. 3:9-10) indicate a once-for-all action.

Match the Greek terms with the correct meaning:

2. neos _B_ A. new in quality

3. kainos _A_ B. new in time

C. new in knowledge

D. new in relationship

4. **T or F** In Christ almost all human distinctions disappear.

5. Paul gave 4 motives to encourage us to walk in newness of life.

Which of the following is NOT one of those:

A. God chose them

B. God set them apart

C. God loves them

D. God has blessed them

E. God has forgiven them

BEGIN LESSON 30

a. **(POSB) Mercy**: the believer must put on the garment of mercy. Mercy (*oiktirmou*) means compassion, pity, tenderheartedness. God has had so much mercy upon us, the one thing we should do is to show mercy to others. (See Isa. 58:7; Acts 20:35; Heb. 13:3)

b. **Kindness**: the believer must put on the garment of *kindness*. It is being good, useful and helpful, gentle and sweet, considerate and gracious

through all situations no matter the circumstances. [(RevC) One good example of kindness from the scripture is that of David's treatment of Mephibosheth, the deformed son of Jonathan, the son of King Saul. **2Samuel 9:1** "and David said, Is there yet any who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"(RevC)]

- c. **Humility**: the believer must put on the garment of *humility*. *to offer* oneself as lowly and submissive; *to walk* in a spirit of lowliness; *to present* oneself as lowly and low-lying in mind (*tapeinos*); to be of low degree and low rank; not to be highminded, proud, haughty, arrogant, or assertive. Note: a humble person may have a high position, power, wealth, fame, and much more; but he carries himself in a spirit of lowliness and submission. He denies himself for the sake of Christ and in order to help others putting others first.

- d. **Meekness**: the believer must put on the garment of *meekness*. (*prautēs*): it means to be gentle, tender, humble, mild, considerate, but strongly so. Meekness has the strength to control and discipline [power under control], and it does so at the right time. Meekness has *a humble state of mind*. But this does not mean the person is weak, cowardly, and bowing. The meek person simply loves people and loves peace; therefore, he walks humbly among men regardless of their status and circumstance in life.

- e. **Longsuffering or Patience**: the believer must put on the garment of *longsuffering*. (*makrothumia*): patience, bearing and suffering a long time [(RevC) long-tempered being able to control ones emotions regardless of the situation (RevC)], perseverance, being constant, steadfast, and enduring. Long-suffering never gives in; it is never broken no matter what attacks it.
- f. **Forbearance**: the believer must put on the garment of *forbearing* or *forbearance*. Forbearing (*anechomenoi*) means to hold back; [*or to hold up*] to put up with; to refrain; to bear with; to control. ...Any person can be looked at and have his flaws and weaknesses picked out. But note: this is not what the Scripture says to do. The Scripture says that the believer is to put on the clothing of forbearance. The believer is to forbear the flaws of others. He is to put up with and bear with the weaknesses of other believers. (See **Romans 15:1; Gal. 6:2; Eph. 4:1-2**)
- g. **Forgiveness**: the believer must put on the garment of *forgiveness*; he must be forgiving (*charizomenoi*). The word means to be gracious to a person; to pardon him for some wrong done against us. Note: a quarrel or some difference has taken place. A person has hurt us and brought pain to us. But no matter what they have done, we are to have a forgiving spirit clothing us. We are to be so clothed with the spirit of forgiveness that no difference or quarrel can shake us. [(RevC) Such action is required otherwise we give feelings of malice opportunity to take root in our hearts (RevC)].

Note why: because Christ has forgiven us. No matter how much wrong a person has done against us, it cannot match the wrong we have done against Christ. Yet, Christ has forgiven us. Therefore, we are to forgive those who have done wrong against us—no matter how great the wrong is. (See **Mark 11:25; Luke 6:35-36, 17:4; Eph. 4:32**)

- h. **Love:** above all, the believer is to put on the garment of *love (agapēn)*. Note that love is to be **the main garment** of the believer's new life. It is called the *bond of perfection*; that is, love binds all the clothing or great qualities of the believer's life together. (See **Romans 5:6, 8, 10; Mark 12:29-31; 1Cor. 13:13**) (POSB)

E. The Peace of God (Col. 3:15)

Col 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

1. (POSB) **Peace:** first, the believer is to have a heart ruled by God's peace. He is to let the peace of Christ rule in all things and differences. The best Greek texts read the "peace of Christ" instead of the "peace of God." The word "peace" (*eirēnē*) means to be bound, joined, and weaved together. It means to be assured, confident, and secure in the love and care of God. It means to know that God will take care of us no matter the problem or circumstance. It means to be absolutely assured that God will allow nothing to swamp or defeat us.

2. But note the critical point: this peace is the peace of Christ, and He alone possesses it. Therefore, a person can experience true peace only as he comes to know Christ. Only Christ can bring real peace to the human heart, the kind of peace that brings deliverance and the assurance of deliverance to the human soul. Three significant things are pointed out about the peace of Christ.

- The choice is up the believer: the believer does not automatically experience the peace of Christ. He is supposed to, but he may not. This is a command, which means it demands obedience. The word "rule" (*brabeueto*) means to be or to act as an umpire. Peace is to be the umpire, the deciding factor in all situations, circumstances, and situations of life.

⇒ Matthew Henry words it well: "Let this peace rule in your heart—prevail and govern there...as an umpire [let it] decide all matters of difference among you" (*Matthew Henry's Commentary*, Vol.5, p.764).

⇒ William Barclay pointedly says: "Let the peace of God...be the decider [umpire] of all things within your heart" (*The Letters to the Phillipians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.190).

The point is this: the believer must make a choice—the decision is his whether he lets the peace of Christ rule or not. Scripture commands it, but the believer has to be willing to let the umpire of peace rule. He has to be willing to lay aside all the differences and circumstances—to be willing to give up differences and let Christ handle them through the rule of His peace. **(See John 14:27, 16:33; Romans 5:1; Eph. 2:14; Isa. 26:3, 48:18)**

- The reason why believers are to let the peace of Christ rule is clearly stated: we are called to be *in one body*. We are not called to be *in two bodies*, but in one. Any believer who stands *out there* in another body is not a genuine believer. There is only one body of Christ, only one body of believers, only one church. This means something significant: believers are to act as one. They are to live and behave as one body, as a body of people in union with each other. How? By letting the peace of Christ rule in their hearts. Peace is to be the deciding factor, the umpire in all relationships between believers.

Too often some person becomes a troublemaker, a person who stirs up trouble within the body of Christ, the church. The person accepts the umpire of difference instead of the umpire of peace. He lets differences rule within his heart instead of Christ and His peace. This is the reason for the exhortation. The exhortation is needed. Some persons desperately need to hear the challenge and demand of God: *Let the peace of God rule in your hearts...for you are called to live as one body in peace.* (See **Psalm 34:14; Eph. 2:14; Col. 3:15; 1Peter 3:11; Romans 14:17**)

- c. Believers are to respond to the demand for peace with thankfulness. Believers should always thank Christ for His peace...
 - the peace He has brought to their own hearts personally.
 - the peace He has brought to all men who trust Him.

- the peace He has brought within His body, the church.
- the glorious privilege which all men have to know His peace. (See Eph. 5:20-21; Phil. 4:6-7; Col. 1:20) (POSB)

F. The Word of Christ (Col. 3:16)

Col 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

(POSB) **The Word**: The believer is to have a heart rich with the Word of Christ. He is to let the Word of Christ dwell in his heart. Throughout Scripture this is the only time "the Word of God" is referred to as "the Word of Christ." The emphasis of Colossians is Christ; therefore, the Word of God becomes the *Word of Christ* in this great book. (Cp. 2 Cor. 2:17, 4:2; 1 Thes. 1:8, 2:13, 4:15; 2 Thes. 3:1)

Three significant points are made about the Word of Christ.

1. The choice is up to the believer: the Word of Christ does not naturally dwell within the believer's heart. The word "dwell" (*enoikeitō*) means to be at home or to make a home; to abide or dwell within. The believer must make room within his heart for the Word of Christ. He must let the Word of Christ enter his heart and make a home within his heart. He must let the Word of Christ dwell and abide in his heart. The believer must clean out all the old furnishings of his

heart and let the Word of Christ settle down as the permanent resident within his heart.

Note the word "richly." It is important, for the Word of Christ must be allowed to dwell *richly* within our hearts. The believer is not to be satisfied with just a meager visit by the Word of Christ. He is to let the Word of Christ dwell richly within Him. The Word of Christ must be allowed to furnish the believer's heart with all the wealth of its commandments and promises, instructions and warnings. (**Deut. 6:6, 11:18; Psalm 119:11; Col. 3:16; John 15::; 2Tim. 2:15, 3:16; 1Peter 2:2-3**)

2. The reason why believers are to let the Word of Christ dwell within them is clearly stated: believers are to teach and admonish one another in all *wisdom*. This is the believer's task, the very reason God has not yet taken us home to heaven: to teach and admonish one another. By teaching is meant the instruction of the Word and by admonition is meant the warning of Scripture. But how can we teach and admonish others if we do not...
 - know the Word of Christ?
 - let the Word of Christ dwell in us?

The answer is obvious: we can't. And note another fact: it is not enough to know the Word of Christ. We must be living the Word of Christ. Knowing the Word and not living it is hypocrisy. Our very lives must be the home, the dwelling place for the Word of Christ. When people look at us, they must immediately see that our lives are indwelt by the Word of Christ.

Something else should be pointed out as well. We can teach and admonish others in forbearance and not in wisdom. Worldly philosophy and teachings about reality and truth, God and the universe are only the crude notions of men. The truth and wisdom of life are found in the *Word of Christ and in the Word of Christ alone*. (See **1Tim. 4:11; 2Tim. 2:24; Deut. 6:6-7; Ezek. 44:23**)

There is a way to tell whether or not the Word of Christ dwells in us: Are we teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord? As we walk throughout the day... (See **Deut. 6:6-7, 11:19-20; 1Cor. 14:15; Col. 3:16; Psalm 95:1**) (POSB)

END LESSON 30

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 30

Match the following terms with the correct statement:

1. Tender mercies _A_	A. compassion toward one another
2. Kindness _C_	B. thinks of others first
3. Humbleness of mind _B_	C. David's treatment of Mephibosheth
4. Meekness _E_	D. long-temper
5. Long-suffering _D_	E. power under control

Match the following terms with the correct statement:

6. Forbearance __D__	A. a must to avoid feelings of malice
7. Forgiveness __A__	B. the “umpire” in our hearts
8. Love __C__	C. most important Christian virtue
9. Peace __B__	D. to hold up or to hold back

BEGIN LESSON 31

G. The Name of Christ (Col. 3:17)

Col 3:17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

(RevC) Keep in mind that Paul was a Roman prisoner when these words were written. The very knowledge of his situation makes these words even more important to us who confess Christ as our savior.

The scripture admonishes us that whatever we do whether it is done by spoken word or by action everything should be done in Christ’s name. That means that before we speak or do anything, we should ask ourselves will this honor and glorify my Savior? The name of Christ to the Christian is of great honor and importance for the use of the name points to a

particular person and reflects upon that name accordingly. When the name Christian was first used it was meant to degrade and dishonor those who professed to follow Jesus Christ. However, later it became a title of respect and honor when worn by a committed follower. The title Christian is only mentioned **3** times in all of the New Testament: **Acts 11:26, 26:28;** and **1Peter 4:16.**

It is interesting that through out the Old Testament we find that names were often chosen because of the meaning associated with the name—thus names were important. Today names are often chosen due to popularity, or out of respect for a family member with little regard to the meaning associated with the name. Finding the meaning of one’s name can be quite revealing. For example, my formal first name is “Richard” which means “strong ruler”. I find that fitting as my temperament is of one more inclined to be a leader rather than a follower which has played out through most of my life and not always by choice. If you are not aware of the meaning of your name, I encourage you to look it up.

For the believer, his life is hidden in Christ thus everything we say or do should manifest Christ we depend on the presence of Christ in us for our very being: **Acts 17:28 “for in him we live, and move, and have our being;...”** Additionally it is through that name that we have access to our Father in heaven. The Preacher’s Outline and Sermon Bible states, **(POSB)** “The believer is to do all *in the name of the Lord Jesus*. What does this mean? It means that the believer knows something: the name of Christ is the

only name that God accepts in His presence. Therefore, the only persons He accepts are those persons who come to Him in the name of Christ. There is no other name given among men whereby men may be saved. Therefore, the believer approaches God "in the name of Jesus Christ," that is, by surrendering his life to Christ and by living for Christ. This is the reason the believer does not dare speak or act outside the name of Christ." (POSB)

Furthermore, what so ever we do is to be done with "Thanksgiving" a word that Paul uses **6** times in Colossians (**Col. 1:3, 12; 2:7; 3:15, 17; 4:2**) again the **(POSB)** God the Father has become the believer's Father by Christ and only by Christ. Therefore, the believer is constantly thanking God the Father. But note: even in thanksgiving, the believer still approaches God only by Christ. As important as thanking and praising God is, a person still has to approach God by Christ. God will accept no person apart from Christ, not even to offer thanksgiving and praise. (See **Eph. 5:20, 1Cor. 10:31-32, Col. 3:23**) (POSB)

H. A Family Affair Colossians 3:18-4:1

(RevC) It has been said, "as goes the family, so goes the nation". The family unit is critical to the future of our nation, and this foundational unit digresses from the purpose God intended so will the fabric of our nation deteriorate and become vulnerable to the attack of outside forces. Destruction that originates within the home is one of many signs of the time of the end. In this passage Paul addresses all members of the family unit, husbands, wives, children,

and servants as to the need for each one to live for Christ.
(RevC)

1. WIVES SUBMIT HUSBANDS LOVE: LOVE AND SUBMISSION (COL. 3:18-19)

Col 3:18-19 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

- a. Christian wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands. This is the only fitting or right thing to do. Scripture pulls no punches: it tells the wife exactly what the Lord expects. The husband's turn comes in a moment, but for now the Lord's will for the wife is covered. His will involves two striking points.

First, Christian wives are to submit themselves to their husbands. The word "submit" (*hupotassesthe*) means to subdue and subject in obedience.

⇒ Vine points out that the word is primarily a military term meaning to rank under (*An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1940.)

⇒ Robertson says that the word has a military air and that the word is the same kind of obedience that a citizen is to give to the government (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, [Vol.4, p.506](#)).

In modern society this is strong; in fact, it is too strong for many. Many reject the idea of woman's subjection as archaic, outdated, and old-fashioned. Some even react in anger and hostility against the Word of God and those who preach the duty of wives.

Are they right? Has Scripture gone too far in declaring that wives should be subject to their husbands? Has God made a mistake within the order of the family? To the Christian, the answer is no. The problem is not in what God has said, but in our *understanding of what He has said* or in our rebellion against what He wills...

What God means by subjection is order, cooperation, relationship, partnership—the way a husband and wife are to walk together throughout life. Everybody of people—even when the body is only two persons—must have a leader who takes the lead in plowing through the wilderness of the world and its trials and temptations and difficulties. Between the two, wife and husband, one of them has to be the primary leader. God's order for the two is that the husband take the lead.

Second, Christian wives must submit because it is the only fitting thing to do. The word "fitting" (*anēken*) means the right thing to do. Why is it the only fitting and right thing to do? Not because the husband is superior, and the wife is inferior as a human being. The reason is because the wife is *in the Lord*. She has surrendered her life to live in the Lord and to love and follow Him and to witness for Him by *living just as He says to live*. Therefore, when the Lord says that it is His will for her to submit to her husband, she submits. She submits because the Lord tells her that submission is the way He wants her to live with her husband. **(See 1Cor. 7:10; Eph. 5:22; Col. 3:18; 1Tim. 3:11; Titus 2:4; 1Peter 3:1; Provb. 3:27)**

- b. Christian husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them. This command destroys all opposition and reaction to the command of subjection given to the wives. How?

The word "love" is not only the love of affection and feelings, but the *agapē love* of God Himself. The Christian husband is to love his wife just as much and in the same way that God has loved us. *Agapē love* is...

- a selfless and unselfish love.
- a giving and sacrificial love.
- a love of the will as well as of the heart.
- a love of commitment as well as of affection.
- a love that works for the highest good of the wife.

Very practically, the husband does not seek to have his wife fill his needs, desires, comfort, and interests; but he seeks to meet, nurture, and nourish all these for his wife. It is God's will for the husband to totally sacrifice himself for his wife. And note: he is to do it without bitterness... A husband is to love sacrificially even if the wife does not deserve to be loved and is utterly unworthy of being loved. Husbands are to obey Christ regardless. It is the will of Christ. **(See Eph. 5:25; 1Peter 3:7; Gen. 2:24; Provb. 5:18)** (POSB)

2. PARENTS / CHILDREN AND OBEDIENCE (Col. 3:20-21)

Col 3:20-21 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. 3:21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

THIS PASSAGE IS NEARLY IDENTICAL TO EPHESIANS 6.

(POSB) Children: children obey your parents in all things. The word "obey" (*hupakouete*) means to heed, hearken, comply, and follow the directions or instructions of some guide. When parents guide and direct a child, the child is to obey. And note: he is to obey "*in all things*."... Scripture is talking about the normal day to day instructions and guidance which parents give to children. Children are to obey their

parents *in all instructions...*

When the child becomes an adult, he will have demands made upon him, some of which will be unjust and unfair. He will have to obey the demands in order to survive in this corruptible world. It is up to the Christian children to learn to obey and follow instructions now—while they are still at home. They are to use the instruction of their parents as the training ground for the future—for their adulthood. The more obedient the child, the more disciplined and controlled and prepared he will be to face life when he goes out to face the world.

Note one other point: the child's obedience pleases the Lord. The Lord has one primary objective for the child: to prepare him to be the most balanced and productive adult he can be. Therefore, when the child obeys his parent, the Lord sees the child being disciplined and controlled; He sees the child preparing himself to become a strong adult. Therefore, the child's obedience pleases the Lord. **(See Mark 7:10; Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20; Provb. 1:8, 6:20, 7:1, 10:1, 20:11, 23:22)**
(POSB)

3. SERVANTS OBEY & MASTERS GIVE (COL. 3:22-4:1)

Col 3:22-25 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: 3:23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 3:24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. 3:25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. Col 4:1 Masters, give unto

your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

(POSB) This passage is almost identical with the passage in Ephesians ([Ephes. 6:5-9](#)). It deals with the critical subject of the world's economy: slave and master, labor and management, employee and employer, workman and supervisor. It points out in no uncertain terms that the answer to the basic problems of the workplace is spiritual, not economic. Note that the discussion concerns slaves and their masters, but the instructions are applicable to every generation of workmen, no matter their status.

The workman is to obey; that is, he is to follow the instructions of the person over him. Note that he is to obey "in all things." In the workplace there is to be no instruction that is not to be obeyed. This, of course, does not mean he is to obey orders that are contrary to the teaching of the Lord and damaging to His people and creation. However, it does mean that the Christian workman is to do what he is told to do when he has been given the privilege of a job, the privilege...

- to earn a livelihood and provide for himself and his family.
- to serve humanity through providing some needed product or service.
- to earn enough to help meet the desperate needs of the world and to carry the gospel to the world.

The attitude of the Christian workman is that the energy and effort he puts into his job is important to the Lord. Therefore, the Lord spells out several clear and unmistakable instructions for the Christian workman:

- a. The Christian workman is not to work with eyeservice, as a man-pleaser; that is, he is not to work only when the boss is watching or standing around. The Christian workman is to work diligently all the time...

The Christian workman should never do the average—never do just what he has been instructed. The Christian workman should always be the best at his job, going beyond the call of duty. (See **John 12:43; Provb. 29:25**)

- b. The Christian workman is to work as the servant of Christ doing the will of God *from his heart*. "From the heart" (*ek psuchēs*) means with interest and energy. It is the opposite of routineness and listlessness, of having no energy or heart for the work. The Christian workman must always remember this: even if the boss is not looking, Christ sees what kind of work he is doing. Therefore, he must work as though he is working for Christ.
- c. The Christian workman is to work fearing the Lord. This is to be the very mark of the Christian workman. It is to be his fear and reverence for the Lord that stands out to those working around him. Every man is to be judged for what he does upon this earth, judged for the kind of things he does and judged for how diligently he did the good things.
- d. The Christian workman is to work heartily—as to the Lord and not to men. The word "heartily" (*ek psuchēs*) means *out of the soul*. The Christian workman's labor is to arise out of his soul, from the innermost part of his being. He is not working for the men of this earth, but for the Lord. He is working for the deepest reason possible, for a reason that arises out of his very soul: the Lord Jesus Christ has told him to work and to work diligently. The Lord Jesus is his Lord;

therefore, the Christian workman does what his Lord says.

- e. The employer or manager is to be just and fair (equal) with the employee. There is to be just and fair treatment in...
- wages
 - work assignments
 - production and goals
 - expectations and demands
 - promotion

The reason is as clearly stated as it could be: the manager or employer has a Master in heaven. The Lord God sees everything management does, and He holds management accountable for every act. [(RevC) The idea that a master needed to show concern for the slave or to treat them as something more than a “thing” would have been a very different way of thinking for a Roman master in Paul’s day. To treat them fairly or kindly would mean a whole new mind set as to how they fit within the family unit. (RevC)] (See **Eph.6:9; Col. 4:1; Lev. 19:13; Deut. 24:15; Job 31:13; Jer. 22:13; Malachi 3:5**)

END LESSON 31

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 31

- 1. T or F The word “Christian” is found only 11 times in the entire New Testament.**
- 2. T or F The word “Christian” was at first a term of contempt, but later became a name of honor.**
- 3. Six times in Colossians Paul uses this word. Remembering that Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter makes this word all that much more meaningful. What is the word:**

- A. Love
 - B. Fellowship
 - C. Thanksgiving
 - D. Rejoicing
4. **T or F** The breakdown of the “home” is a sign of the end times.
 5. **T or F** Paul stated that a woman is to submit to her husband because the husband esteemed as more important.
 6. **T or F** Servants were to serve their masters in the same manner that they would serve the Lord.
 7. **T or F** Paul admonished Christian masters to treat their servants with fairness and honesty, which would have been a new concept to Roman masters who saw their servants as “things” or “property”.

BEGIN LESSON 32

VII. The cost of a witness for Christ Colossians Chapter 4

A. Continue Praying (Col. 4:2-3a)

Col 4:2-3 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; 4:3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:

The Believer’s duty to pray: **(POSB)** the first duty of the believer is to pray and continue in prayer. Four important instructions are given—instructions that desperately need to be heeded.

1. First, *continue steadfastly in prayer*. The word "continue" (*proskartereite*) means to be constant, persevering, and unwearied in prayer. It means to be in constant and

unbroken prayer—to be in constant and unbroken fellowship and communion with God. It means to walk and breathe prayer—to live and move and have our being in prayer...

How is this possible? When we have so many duties and affairs that demand our attention, how can we continue and walk in unbroken prayer? What Scripture means is that we...

- develop an *attitude of prayer*.
- walk in a *spirit of prayer*.
- take a mental break from our work and spend a moment *in prayer*.
- *pray always* when our minds are not upon some duty.
- *arise early* and pray before daily activities begin. Spend a worship time with God in prayer. Make this a continued practice.
- *pray before going to bed*. Spend... time in prayer before going to bed. Make this a continued practice.

...The vast majority of us waste minute after minute every hour in useless daydreaming and wandering thoughts—wasting precious time that could be spent in prayer. If we would learn to captivate these minutes for prayer, we would discover what it is to walk and live in prayer. Note a critical fact: this is the duty of the believer. It is not something God can do for us. We are the ones who have to discipline ourselves to pray. (**See 2 Cor. 10:5; Matt. 7:7; John 16:24; Phil. 4:6; Col. 4:2; James 5:13; 1Chron. 16:11**)

2. Second, *watch in prayer*. The word "watch" (*grēgorountes*) means to stay awake, be alert, be sleepless, be active, concentrate. It means to fight against distractions, drowsiness, sluggishness, wandering thoughts, and useless

daydreaming. It means to discipline our minds and control our thoughts in prayer. Being very honest, this is a problem that afflicts every believer sometime. Overwork, tiredness, pressure, strain—an innumerable list of things can make it very difficult to concentrate in prayer. This is the very reason Paul stresses the need to watch in prayer. But note: vigilance in prayer is the duty of the believer. Again, it is not something that God does for us. We are responsible for watching and concentrating. We are the ones who are to discipline our minds and control our thoughts. **(See Matt. 26:40-41; Luke 18:1, 21:36)**

3. Third, pray with thanksgiving. When someone does something for us, we thank that person. The One Person who has done more for us than anyone else is God. Therefore, we are to thank Him. In fact, God continues to bless and help us; His hand is constantly upon our lives, looking after and caring for us; therefore, we should continually thank Him. Our praise should be lifted up to Him all through the day as we go about our daily affairs. An hour should never pass when we have not praised and thanked God several times. We should never forget His Son—that He actually took our sins upon Himself and bore the judgment and punishment of them for us. This alone should continually fill our hearts with thanksgiving and praise. **(See 1Cor. 15:57, 6:20; 2Cor. 9:15; Eph. 5:20; 1Thes. 5:18; Heb. 13:15; 1Pet. 2:9; 1Chron. 16:8; Psalm 9:11, 50:14, 67:3, 68:19, 92:1)**
4. Fourth, pray for others, in particular for their ministry. **[To have purpose; a reason for your prayer]**. Be an intercessor for God's ministers. Remember Paul was in prison, but note that for which he requested prayer.

B. “as I ought to speak” (Col. 4:3b-4)

Col 4:3-4 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: 4:4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

1. (POSB) William Barclay points out that Paul could have asked that the church pray for his release, for a *not guilty verdict* in his upcoming trial (he was not guilty), or for a peaceful end to his life (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*, p.198f). But this is not what he requested. He requested prayer for his ministry. He wanted the believers praying that God would give him...
 - opportunity for witnessing—for sharing the mystery or salvation of Christ.
 - boldness in witnessing (Col. 3:4).

We must always remember that prayer is one of the laws of the universe. Granted, it is a law that is denied by most and ignored by others. Even those who understand it to be one of God's laws often neglect it. Nevertheless, God has established the spiritual law that He works in response to prayer. Whether we believe it or not, God clearly says that prayer is a law of the universe. Prayer is the law by which He works and moves in behalf of men and their world. Therefore, if we want the blessings of God upon our lives and ministries—if we want the work of God going forth in power and bearing fruit, we must pray for the ministers of the gospel. We must learn to intercede in prayer. (See James 4:1-3; Matt. 21:22; John 15:7; Psalm 91:15; Jer. 33:3) (POSB)

2. **(RevC)** You might be asking how could Paul as a prisoner of Rome chained to a member of Caesar's Praetorian Guards still hope to see his ministry continue to present him opportunity to witness for Christ and to have boldness in his witness? Imagine a Roman guard chained to the Apostle Paul for hours as Paul was confined to his living quarters. It would only be a matter of a few minutes before the guard realized that it was he, not Paul who was the prisoner. Paul had a captive audience with which to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:12-13 gives us indication that as a result of Paul's imprisonment there were new Christians throughout Caesar's palace even to the extent of Caesar's very household! **Philippians 4:22**. Paul faithfully continued to share the Word of God with all who would listen undoubtedly coupled with prayer that the Word of God would fall upon hearing ears and give him reason to rejoice in Christ and his bonds. The Word of God must always be a part of our prayers **Acts 6:4**.
(RevC)

C. **Witnessing to the Lost (Col. 4:5-6)**

Col 4:5-6 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. 4:6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

(POSB) Walk wisely before people who are without Christ, redeeming the time. Note two significant points.

1. The phrase "*them that are without*" refers to the unbelievers of the world, those who are walking

through life without Christ and God... Scripture paints a sharp contrast between unbelievers who are without Christ and believers who are within Christ. (See **Eph. 4:12-13**)

2. Believers are to walk in wisdom toward those who are without Christ, redeeming or making the best use of their time... And note: we redeem the time; that is, we seek to grasp every moment to live for Christ before the lost of the world. We always look for opportunities to do good and to let our light shine before men. We try to figure out how to make opportunity to bear witness by the way we live. (See **Romans 6:4; Gal. 5:16 Eph. 4:1, 5:2, 15; Col. 2:6; 1John 1:7, 2:6**)
3. Speak always with grace, answering and sharing what it is that makes your life different. What an expectation God has of us: to be living a life so different and righteous that men ask us what it is that makes us different... When we are walking among unbelievers, we are to guard our speech and conversation. We are...
 - to make sure that we speak with grace (*en chariti*), that is, with kindness, courtesy, and graciousness.
 - to season our conversation with salt; that is, we are to flavor and turn the conversation to tasteful and enjoyable subjects and away from corruptible and tasteless subjects. [(RevC) Salt not only seasons our food but it is also a preservative that keeps things from spoiling, and a purifier when poured on a festering wound. I feel like Paul was trying to say that we have to use wisdom in our witness for Christ with those who are without Christ. There are times when we need to season what is being said with the Word of God to keep things on the right path, there are other times when we need to speak the Word of God and then let it have time to do its work, and finally there are times

when we need to pour on the salt to purify what is being discussed and separate what is unclean from that which is pure. We are the salt that God has placed in an unclean world, lets be so wisely. (RevC)]

What happens when this is done is striking: unbelievers will begin to notice our lives and conversation—that we are different in a good and wholesome way. And some will ask us what it is that gives us such peace and security and assurance in life. Then it is that we have a unique opportunity to witness. (See **Matt. 5:37; Col. 4:6; 2Tim. 1:13; Titus 2:8; James 3:2; 1Peter 3:15**) (POSB)

D. Beloved Brothers (Col. 4:7-9)

Col 4:7-9 All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord: 4:8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts; 4:9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.

1. (POSB) **Tychicus** was a native of Asia. He was a companion of Paul who often travelled with him (**Acts 20:4**).
 - ⇒ He was commissioned by Paul as a messenger to various churches (**Ephes. 6:21f; Col. 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:12; Titus 3:12**).
 - ⇒ He was entrusted to deliver the letters of Paul to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon (**Ephes. 6:21-22; Col. 4:7-8**).
 - ⇒ He was sent on a special mission to Ephesus (**2 Tim. 4:12**).

⇒ He was to be sent to Crete for the purpose of relieving Titus (**Titus 3:12**).

⇒ He was called not only Paul's beloved brother and faithful minister, but also his fellow-slave (**Col. 4:7**).

[(**RevC**) It is very likely that Tychicus was with Paul during his imprisonment (house arrest) in Rome and was then sent to bring word of his situation to the church in Colosse. (**RevC**)]

2. **Onesimus**: the believer who sought to correct his past and make it right. Onesimus was the runaway slave talked about in the Epistle to Philemon. Onesimus had fled from Colosse to Rome. Note what Paul says about him.
 - a. He was a faithful and beloved brother. He had been led to the Lord either by Paul or some other believer in Rome. In either case, Paul knew Onesimus and knew him well. Paul was able to declare...that he was faithful to the Lord. He obeyed the Lord and kept His commandments and faithfully walked in Him day by day and bore testimony to His saving grace. He was also a beloved brother, a brother in the Lord, who was held so dearly by other Christian believers that he was known as a *beloved brother*.
 - b. He was so faithful to Christ and so beloved that he was now "one of you." Remember: he was a slave and some in the Colosse church were wealthy property owners who owned slaves. This is a significant point. There are to be no social distinctions in the Lord's church. The poorest person is to be as welcomed and loved as the richest person.
 - c. He was returning to Colosse with Tychicus. Why? Because he had broken the law by running away from his master, Philemon, and he wanted to make things right. He had been converted and God had forgiven him all his

sins. He wanted Philemon to forgive him as well. (See **Matt. 5:23-25; Mark 11:25; Col. 3:13**) (POSB)

END LESSON 32

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 32

1. Paul mentions 4 things that are important concerning prayer. Which of the following is NOT one of those:

- A. we must pray faithfully not just occasionally**
- B. we must pray loudly**
- C. we must be watchful as we pray for answers**
- D. we must pray with thanksgiving**
- E. we must pray with purpose**

2. T or F We should never separate the Word of God from prayer.

3. T or F Paul prayed to be released from prison so his ministry could move forward.

4. T or F Paul wanted us to season our speech with “salt” so the words would last longer.

5. T or F Tychicus was a fellow apostle and friend of Paul who assisted Paul when he was in prison in Rome.

BEGIN LESSON 33

A. Paul always thinking of others

(RevC) It is interesting to note that Paul’s concern for others is evident in almost all of his letters. He finishes most of his letters greeting or remembering individuals whom he counted a friends and co-laborers in the gospel with more than 100 individuals mention in his writings. This practice of closing a letter with a

personal greeting was very common and necessary when you realize that they did not see each other often and there was no easy way to communicate with one another. Therefore, letters were often sent to one party with the intention of relating messages to others in that area. (RevC)

B. Those who stayed the course (Col. 4:10-11)

Col 4:10-11 Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;) 4:11 And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

Col 4:14a Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

1. Aristarchus (v. 10a).

(POSB) Aristarchus: the believer who stood as a companion in trials. Scripture says the following about Aristarchus:

- ⇒ He was a member of the Thessalonian church, a citizen of Thessalonica (**Acts 19:29; Acts 20:4**).
- ⇒ He was one of the believers attacked by the violent mob in Ephesus. The citizens were rioting against Christianity because so many people were being converted that it was cutting into the sale of idols made to the goddess Diana. The fact that Aristarchus was one of the believers attacked and dragged before the mob shows that he was a leader and spokesman for Christ (**Acts 19:29**).
- ⇒ He went with Paul to minister in Asia (**Acts 20:4**).

⇒ He is seen travelling with Paul to Rome after Paul had been arrested and was being transferred to Rome as a prisoner (**Acts 27:2**).

⇒ He is seen as a fellow prisoner with Paul in Rome while Paul was awaiting trial on the charge of treason. Apparently he too was being charged with the same crime (**Col. 4:10; Philemon 24**).

The point is that he was a *real companion*, a companion who stood by the side of his fellow believers through thick and thin. He would never think of deserting his dear friends or the Lord, no matter how difficult the task or terrible the trial. He would face imprisonment and suffer death before he would be a turncoat. He was a good man to have around when facing trials, for he would stand by your side. (**See Gal. 6:2; Heb. 13:3**) (POSB)

2. **John Mark (v. 10b).**

(POSB) **John Mark:** John Mark had a godly mother (**Acts 12:12**). It seems that her home was the center of the Christian church (**Acts 12:12**). In fact, her home may have been the Upper Room which Jesus used for the Last Supper (**Luke 22:10f**) and for Pentecost (**Acts 1:13**). John Mark was related to Barnabas (**Col. 4:10**) and was a disciple of Paul and Barnabas (**Acts 12:25**). As a young man and disciple something happened that caused his faith to weaken, and he forsook Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (**Acts 13:13; Acts 15:38**). However, he later recommitted his life to missionary service and became so staunch in his commitment that he was willing to let Paul and Barnabas argue over his seriousness and divide their team efforts over him (**Acts**

15:36-40). Scripture is silent about what happened after this. Mark is seen only as a man who had redeemed himself in the eyes of Paul (**Col. 4:10; Philemon 1:24; 2 Tim. 4:11**). And Peter said Mark was serving with him (**1 Peter 5:13**). When writing to the churches of Asia Minor, Peter sent his special greetings from Mark. This points toward the churches knowing Mark personally. Mark apparently joined Peter on his missionary journeys. This is significant, for it means that much of what is in Mark's gospel probably comes from what Peter had told him. The Gospel of Mark, which Mark wrote, was probably the preaching material of Peter... John Mark also may have been the man carrying the pitcher of water as a sign for the disciples to approach him in order to secure a room for the Passover (**Luke 22:10f**). He was probably the young man who fled the scene of Jesus' arrest (**Mark 14:51-52**). (POSB)

3. **Jesus Justus (v. 11).**

(POSB) **Jesus Justus**: the Jewish believer who turned from religion to Christ. Note the word "circumcision": this means that he was a circumcised Jew who lived in Rome. Jews, of course, were strict religionists. Most of the Jews in Rome rejected Christ and turned a cold shoulder to Paul and his preaching of Christ (cp. **Acts 28:17-29**). But there were some who turned from religion to Christ (**Acts 28:24**). Justus was one, and he apparently became so strong in the Lord that he became a close companion of Paul, close enough for Paul to mention him to the Colossians.

Note: Paul says that all believers mentioned so far are Jewish believers, believers who had turned from religion to Christ. They were now working with Paul and other

believers—working for the kingdom of God. Note that Paul also says that they had ministered to him personally and were a comfort to him while he was in prison.
(POSB)

4. A man of prayer (Col. 4:12-13)

Col 4:12-13 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. 4:13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis.

(POSB) Epaphras: the believer who fervently prayed and worked hard for the believers of his church.

- ⇒ He was the "*minister*" & founder of the Colossian church (**Col. 1:7**).
- ⇒ He was "*a faithful minister* of Christ" (**Col. 1:7**).
- ⇒ He was "*a servant of Christ*" (**Col. 4:12**).
- ⇒ He was a "*fellow servant*" who was held ever so dearly to Paul's heart (**Col. 1:7**).
- ⇒ He was so committed and dedicated to Christ that Paul called him "my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus" (**Philemon 23**).
- ⇒ He was a believer who fervently labored and toiled in prayer for his dear people in Colosse (**Col. 4:12**). He prayed in particular for one thing: that they might be perfect and complete in all the will of God; that is, that they might *know* the complete or full will of God and do it perfectly. (See **Eph. 6:18; Col. 4:2; 1Chron. 16:11**)

END LESSON 33

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 33

1. **T or F Paul was a friendly man who had over 100 different Christians associated with him in his writings.**

Match the following with the correct statement:

2. Aristarchus _C_	A. we know very little about
3. John Mark _D_	B. founded the church at Colossae
4. Jesus "Justus" _A_	C. a voluntary prisoner
5. Luke _E_	D. left and returned home
6. Epaphras _B_	E. only Gentile writer

BEGIN LESSON 34

Epaphras was a minister who worked hard for his own church and for all the churches that surrounded him (**Col. 4:13**, Laodicea and Hieropolis). He prayed and prayed much, but he also worked much—so much that his labor was even a testimony to the great minister Paul and he remained faithful to the gospel and to Paul even sharing his time in prison. (POSB)

6. **The beloved physician & the man who turned away (Col. 4:14)**

Col 4:14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

a. **(POSB) Luke:** The early church fathers held Luke to be the author of both the Gospel of Luke and

Acts: Irenaeus (about A.D. 130-200); Clement of Alexandria (about A.D. 150-215); Origen (about A.D. 185-254); and Tertullian (about A.D. 160-200)....

A study of both books bears evidence that Luke is the author. The writer was evidently a physician. Greek medical terms are used. An analysis of the Gospel and Acts together shows the same style and language. There is also a clear understanding of the Roman and Greek world of the first century. The content of the two books shows a strong unity. There is a stress upon the resurrection, the Holy Spirit, the person of Christ, and the ministry to the Gentiles.

There is also enormous evidence that the writer of Acts was an acquaintance of Paul. This is clearly seen in the "we" section of Acts. In three sections of Acts there is a remarkable switch from "they" and "he" to "we." The "we" sections give a first-hand account (**Acts 16:10-17**; **Acts 20:5-21:18**; **Acts 27:1-28:16**).

- Luke is first seen with Paul at Troas. He switches from using "he" and "they" to "we." Luke joined Paul on his journey to Philippi, and evidently remained in Philippi until Paul returned from Jerusalem (**Acts 16:10**).
- Luke later went to Jerusalem with Paul when Paul was arrested (**Acts 20:5-21:15**).
- Luke is seen with Paul again while Paul was a prisoner in Caesarea. He also accompanied Paul the prisoner to Rome (**Acts 27:1-28:15**).

- Paul calls Luke "the beloved physician" (**Col. 4:14**; **Philemon 24**). A physician who was endeared to the hearts of believers. Apparently, his medical treatment of believers was diligent, compassionate, warm, and personal. He had an effective ministry for Christ among the believers.
 - Luke is the last one to remain with Paul in his imprisonment (**2 Tim. 2:11**).
- b. Demas:** he was a man who turned away from Christ back to the world. His life is written in tragedy—a life that serves as a warning to other believers—a life that shows the utter necessity of walking in Christ daily. At first, he is seen as a fellow laborer (**Philemon 24**). Later he is just a name, with no comment at all—perhaps suggesting the detection of some loss of spirit and energy in the work for the Lord (**Col. 4:14**). Finally, he is Demas who "loved this present world" and forsook the Lord's work (**2 Tim. 4:10**). (POSB)

VIII. Final Greetings (**Col. 4:15-18**)

Col 4:15-18 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. 4:16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. 4:17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. 4:18 The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.

- A. (POSB) Nymphas:** the believer who kept an open house and opened his home to the church. [(RevC) *Note that*

some translations have Nympha indicating that this possibly was a woman. (RevC)] Note that Nymphas lived in Laodicea and Paul knew about him and his great testimony for Christ. He was so committed to Christ that he had opened his home to all the believers in the city, allowing them to use his home as the meeting place for the church. Remember: the early church had no buildings; therefore they met in the homes of believers for joint worship and fellowship.

B. Archippus: the believer who was given a special task and needed encouragement. What was the ministry or task assigned to Archippus? We do not know. There is only one other mention of him and that is where Paul calls him his fellow soldier (**Philemon 2**). Whatever it was it must have been a task equal to the thrust of a military patrol. Military commitment and discipline must have been demanded. This is certainly understandable as the minister launches out to carry the gospel to a lost and ungodly world. Whatever the case with Archippus, he needed to be encouraged; he needed to *take heed and complete* his ministry. (POSB)

(RevC) It is quite possible the Archippus was connected to the family of Philemon, perhaps even the son of Philemon from **Philemon 2**. Apphia would likely have been the wife of Philemon. We know of **Col. 4:17** that Archippus was called to the work of the ministry and may well have been the pastor of the church meeting in the home of Philemon. None of this is known for sure but it does seem likely.

From Paul's words to Archippus in Col. 4:17 we get the feeling that he may well have been facing some

discouragement and needed to be encouraged. Paul's words seem to me to be more of an admonishment like telling him to "man up" and get to work remembering that you are called. All pastors go through times of challenge when it seems like no one is with you which can digress into a "pity me" mindset, if we are not careful to remember that, if we are called then God is with us and will see us through all challenges, if we remain faithful to our call. Undoubtedly Paul's words were meant to remind Archippus that he was called of God, and that calling is a gift that was given to him as a trusted steward by God Himself. Thus, he needed only to be faithful to do his best and trust God for all the rest. (RevC)

C. (POSB) Paul: the believer who was faithful to the point of suffering imprisonment and possible martyrdom. Paul signs the letter himself. Remember: his wrists were chained so he had to have a secretary write the letter while he dictated it. He simply closes by saying.

⇒ "Remember my bonds"—imprisonment; that is, pray for me.

⇒ "Grace be with you"—the favor and blessings of God—all of which we do not deserve but which He pours out upon us anyway. (POSB)

(RevC) Paul's signature at the end of his letters by his own hand along with the issue of grace to those reading and to whom it was sent became a mark of authenticity or trademark of his. This was one way that readers knew the letter though penned by a helper was truly Paul's words. (RevC)

END LESSON 34

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 34

1. **T or F** Epaphras forsook Paul, and apparently was never reclaimed.
2. **T or F** Nymphas or Nympha may have been a woman who held a Christian fellowship in his/her house.
3. **T or F** Ministry is something we do for God, because He saved us.
4. **T or F** There were two “trademarks” that a letter was from Paul. They were: his signature, and a statement extending “grace” to the readers.

BEGIN LESSON 35

PHILEMON

I. THE BOOK OF PHILEMON

A. Paul’s shortest letter.

Believed to be written at the same time as Colossians and Ephesians and delivered by Tychicus & Onesimus, who also delivered the others. Believed to be written during Paul’s first imprisonment.

(POSB) Philemon was so committed to Christ that he was counted "beloved" by Paul himself. And even more than this, Paul calls him "dearly beloved"—a brother in the Lord who was held ever so close to the heart of Paul. But even this is not all that Paul said. Note the striking title that Paul used for himself: "Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ." This is a most unusual opening for Paul's letters. He usually opened his letters

by establishing his apostleship, saying that he was "Paul, the apostle of Jesus Christ." Philemon must have been a dear friend of Paul's, a friend who recognized God's call to Paul, a friend who loved and supported Paul so much that Paul did not have to establish his call to the ministry for Philemon...

He was working so faithfully for Christ that Paul could acknowledge his labor and count him as a fellow-laborer, as working as diligently as Paul himself in the cause of Christ...(POSB)

(RevC) With the close relationship between Paul and Philemon it is easy to see the dilemma that Paul now finds himself having led the run-a-way slave and thief Onesimus to faith in Christ. Paul, knowing that the law indicated that a master of a rebellious slave had the authority to put the slave to death, and certainly from Philemon's perspective Onesimus was at the least a rebellious slave. Yet to deepen Paul's dilemma Onesimus had in some way proved valuable to Paul and had become his brother in Christ. To send him back to Philemon or keep him as a fellow laborer in the work God had called Paul to? That is the question. (RevC)

1. Time Frame is around AD 60
2. Synopsis of the whole book: centers around Philemon & Onesimus.
 - a. Philemon is a wealthy person who lives in Colossi.
 - b. The church meets at his house
 - c. Onesimus is the slave of Philemon
 - d. Onesimus stole from Philemon and ran away; He ran to Rome and met Paul. Paul brought him to the Lord, and he was saved.
 - e. In this book we see the practical application of “Forgiveness”

B. Phile 1:1-3 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellowlabourer, 1:2 And to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in thy house: 1:3 Grace to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul sends his greetings and reminding Philemon of his situation.

1. Many believe that Apphia is Philemon’s wife and Archippus is possibly his son.

(POSB) Philemon was so committed to Christ that he rooted his family in Christ. Apphia was apparently the wife of Philemon and Archippus the son of Philemon. Note that Archippus is addressed as a fellowsoldier of Paul. This must mean that at

some point in his life he had actually served with Paul on some mission campaign. He was apparently the pastor of the Colossian church ([Col. 4:17](#)). (POSB)

2. In all 13 letters Paul writes, he always opens with Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. **(RevC)** It is not without significance that Paul's opening words in this letter are somewhat uncharacteristic to his normal way of greeting those to whom he is writing. With only a couple exceptions Paul usually opened with a declaration that he was an "Apostle of Jesus Christ" perhaps to establish his credentials in the mind of the reader.

However, in this letter we see that his relationship with Philemon is so close that there is no need to establish his credentials. The bond between these two men is unmistakable in the words: "**Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow laborer**". These men were both brothers in Christ and laborers together in the work God had called them to. (RevC)

(POSB) Philemon, as the husband and father, had rooted his family in Christ and led them to serve Christ. He had even supported his son's call and decision to serve Christ in the ministry. He was so committed to Christ that he took his responsibility to be the spiritual head of the family seriously—very seriously. And from all evidence, his wife supported him in his call to be the spiritual head of the family. (POSB)

C. Phile 1:4-7 I thank my God, making mention of thee always in my prayers, 1:5 Hearing of thy love and faith, which thou hast toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all saints; 1:6 That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus. 1:7 For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, because the bowels of the saints are refreshed by thee, brother.

(POSB) Note that Paul says, "I thank God" for you. Imagine having a testimony so strong in the Lord that Paul would thank God for you! That was Philemon...

Simply stated, Paul is asking God to help Philemon to *share his faith more and more effectively*. Note that "every good thing" is said to be in Philemon. It is those good things that Paul prays for others to acknowledge and desire in their own lives. What are those good things? They would, no doubt, be the fruit of the Spirit.

Note the love of Philemon. He was apparently a man who loved everyone and proved it by helping others. He was a man of compassion and grace who was committed to help those who had need. He refreshed them. (POSB)

D. Phile 1:8-9 Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, 1:9 Yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ.

Paul is saying that though he could be very bold in Christ to command Philemon concerning what action was fitting, yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you - being such a one as Paul, the aged (approximately 60 yrs. old) , and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ - Even though Paul could order Philemon to forgive, he is not going to do that, he ask Philemon to do what he needs to do in love.

E. Phile 1:10 I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:

(RevC) History tells us that there were millions of slaves within the Roman Empire and to their owners they were little more than property for which they had paid a price, a price that was not cheap even by today's standards. An average slave would cost nearly two years' worth of a day laborers wages and if the slave was educated or had special skills they could cost as much as 10 times that amount.

However, if a slave were to run away the master could register his identity and if caught the person who had possession could bargain with the original owner to gain the rights to ownership of the slave. Another option for the original owner would be to have the slave executed.

No doubt Onesimus was guilty of running away, and theft. Paul's intercession for him is quite tactful in that though he felt he had the right to demand Philemon to do the right thing he did not wish to exercise that right but rather sought to encourage Philemon to look beyond his situation and look at the man who is now

his brother in Christ. Some commentators say that Paul had also led Philemon to faith in Christ based on vs. 19 where Paul indicates that Philemon is indebted to him, "...thou owest unto me even thine own self besides." It is a possibility, but the debt that Philemon owed to Paul could have been the result of many things not financial and thus I do not hold to that reasoning. (RevC)

(POSB) Onesimus was a changed man, a man who had been "begotten," that is, born again. Paul had led Onesimus to the Lord. Remember that Paul was in prison. How then did Paul come in contact with Onesimus?... When Onesimus reached Rome, he had most likely run across some Christian believers, and they had befriended him and introduced him to Paul. Paul then led him to Christ.

Note that Paul pulled no punches. He readily admitted the wrong that Onesimus had done: he had been unprofitable, that is, useless. The idea is absolutely of no use, just good for nothing. But now he was profitable. He had accepted Christ and he was of the greatest use to Philemon and to Paul for the kingdom of Christ. (POSB)

F. Phile 1:11 Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me:

(RevC) Certainly Onesimus could be classified as "unprofitable" in that he was rebellious, and likely disrespectful toward his owner though Philemon was a Christian and likely treated his slaves in a very positive manner. The fact that Onesimus took something of

value from Philemon adds to his diminishing value. We are not told what was taken or its value but whatever it was it would seem likely that it was of enough value to sustain him for some period of time while in Rome.

His acceptance of Jesus as his Savior changed everything. The man had changed in so much as he was willing to make restitution for his theft and do what he could to right his wrong. Now he was valuable to both Paul and Philemon. All because of what Christ had done in his heart! It is also interesting to note that the name Philemon means “affectionate” as one who is kindhearted while the name Onesimus means “profitable”. Now more than ever Onesimus wanted to live up to his name sake. (RevC)

G. Phile 1:12-14 Whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels: 1:13 Whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: 1:14 But without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.

Now Paul is sending him back to you and telling Philemon how special Onesimus has been to him. Paul did not want to do anything without your consent. Paul wants Philemon to make a decision on his own and not forced.

H. Phile 1:15-16 For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that thou shouldest receive him for ever; 1:16 Not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much more unto thee, both in the flesh, and in the Lord?

(POSB) A Christian believer is to make restitution, to right whatever wrong he has done—in so far as it is humanly possible. No Christian should ever try to escape from making restitution, from righting whatever wrong he has done. The very cause of Christ upon earth is morality and justice—to make the earth as good a place as possible—to teach and charge as many people as possible to live righteous and godly lives—to sweep the earth with the glorious gospel of love and care and the duty of one another to love and care for each other. If believers shirk their duty to right their own personal wrongs, then of what value is their Christianity? This is the reason Onesimus was returning to Philemon—the reason Paul was sending him back despite the fact that he himself desperately needed Onesimus.

He had been changed by the hand of God, that is, under the providence of God. Paul tells Philemon that Onesimus had left for just a brief time *so that* he could return forever. God was overlooking and overruling the whole event for the sake of Onesimus' salvation. Philemon was now able to be associated with Onesimus forever. The implication is that both shall live forever with Christ, worshipping and serving Christ throughout all eternity.

He had been changed from a slave to a brother—a dearly "beloved brother." Note what Paul says: Onesimus had left as a slave, but he...

- was now above a slave.
- was now a beloved brother.
- was now of great value to Paul.
- was now of much more value to Philemon. (POSB)

END LESSON 35

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 35

1. **T or F** Philemon was a runaway slave whom Paul was returning to his owner.
2. **T or F** A slave who was caught after stealing from its master could be executed.
3. **T or F** This story gives us a practical example of Christian "restitution."
4. **T or F** Paul had won Philemon to faith in Christ.
5. **T or F** The common price to purchase a slave as a laborer was equal to one year's wages.
6. **T or F** The name Onesimus means "affectionate" while the name Philemon means "profitable".

BEGIN LESSON 36

- I. **Phile 1:17-18** **If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. 1:18** **If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account;**

- 1.(POSB) Onesimus was to be received and trusted as much as Paul himself. Paul makes an astounding

request. He asked Philemon to receive a slave who was a lawless thief just as he would receive himself. Most people would not even want to be seen with a slave or a lawless thief, much less be to be known as a partner or brother to one. But Paul boldly stepped forward and asked that Onesimus, the slave and thief, be received as a partner and brother. And note how sincere Paul was.

- a. Paul said that he would personally pay whatever money or goods Onesimus had stolen. Why should Philemon accept this? Because Philemon should always remember the debt he owed for his salvation. Paul had led him to Christ; therefore, Philemon owed his very life to Paul (**Philemon 19**). [(RevC) Granted that the scripture seems to indicate the possibility that Paul led Philemon to faith in Christ; however, as Paul does not openly declare that is the case and as there could be other acts of kindness or reasons for Philemon to be indebted to Paul in such a way I caution saying this in such a factual manner. (RevC)]
- b. Paul said that he would be filled with joy and refreshed if Philemon would receive Onesimus as a partner and brother in the Lord (**Philemon 20**).
- c. Paul said that he had great confidence that Philemon would grant the request and even go beyond and do more (**Philemon 21**).

2. The one thing that people need above all else is to be received. [(RevC) The word “receive” that Paul uses in vs. 17 carries the meaning “to receive into one’s family circle.” In much the same way that Christ receives us into His family making us brothers and sisters in Christ regardless of our past, status, wealth,

or any other qualifier. We are received by Christ and accepted as the beloved. (RevC)] No matter how low or base, useless and unprofitable, sinful and derelict, crippled and diseased, ugly and unattractive, unapproachable and distasteful—a person needs to be received and brought into the fellowship of Christ and believers. For too long, the church and believers have shunned and shut out the lowly. Christ loves and longs for every human being—man, woman and child—to be reached for Him.

We must always remember: we are debtors to Christ and to the world, every man, woman, and child. Christ has saved us and given us the fellowship with Himself and God the Father and with one another. Therefore, we are spiritual debtors to all. (See **Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; Romans 1:14-15; 1Cor. 4:7, 6:20; 2Cor. 8:9; 1John 3:16**) (POSB)

J. Phile 1:19 I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it: albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me even thine own self besides.

1.(POSB) Paul said that he would personally pay whatever money or goods Onesimus had stolen. Why should Philemon accept this? Because Philemon should always remember the debt he owed for his salvation. Paul had led him to Christ; therefore, Philemon owed his very life to Paul (**Philemon 19**). (POSB)

2.(RevC) Granted that the scripture seems to indicate the possibility that Paul led Philemon to faith in Christ;

however, as Paul does not openly declare that is the case and as there could be other acts of kindness or reasons for Philemon to be indebted to Paul in such a way, I caution saying this in such a factual manner. (RevC)

K. Phile 1:20-21 Yea, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my bowels in the Lord. 1:21 Having confidence in thy obedience I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.

1.(POSB) Paul said that he would be filled with joy and refreshed if Philemon would receive Onesimus as a partner and brother in the Lord (**Philemon 20**). [(RevC) With all the slavery that was part of the culture of the time it is interesting that Paul says nothing against owning another person or slavery. He does have words for how slaves should conduct themselves and how masters should treat their slaves but nothing negative concerning the practice. However, what we do often speaks much louder than our words and Paul by example brings a slave & thief to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ and then asks his friends to receive him as they would Paul. (RevC)

Paul said that he had great confidence that Philemon would grant the request and even go beyond and do more (**Philemon 21**).

2. The one thing that people need above all else is to be received. [(RevC) The word “receive” that Paul uses in vs. 17 carries the meaning “to receive into one’s

family circle.” In much the same way that Christ receives us into His family making us brothers and sisters in Christ regardless of our past, status, wealth, or any other qualifier. We are received by Christ and accepted as the beloved. (RevC)] No matter how low or base, useless and unprofitable, sinful and derelict, crippled and diseased, ugly and unattractive, unapproachable and distasteful—a person needs to be received and brought into the fellowship of Christ and believers. For too long, the church and believers have shunned and shut out the lowly. Christ loves and longs for every human being—man, woman and child—to be reached for Him.

We must always remember: we are debtors to Christ and to the world, every man, woman, and child. Christ has saved us and given us the fellowship with Himself and God the Father and with one another. Therefore, we are spiritual debtors to all. (See **Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; Romans 1:14-15; 1Cor. 4:7, 6:20; 2Cor. 8:9; 1John 3:16**) (POSB)

Paul says refresh my heart, I am confident that you will do the correct thing. Also, I hope to visit with you soon.

- L. **Phile 1:22-25 1:22 But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you. 1:23 There salute thee Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus; 1:24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers. 1:25 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.**

(POSB) As was his usual custom, Paul closed his letter by sending greetings to and from various believers. These closings are always of significant interest as they give us a meaningful glimpse into the lives of some of the believers of the early church—brothers and sisters whom we shall soon meet face to face in heaven and fellowship with. We shall all serve our Lord together for eternity.

Paul is the first believer seen. The point being stressed is his eternal optimism. He was in prison, yet he believed unreservedly that he could be freed by the prayers of his dear friends. What an impact prayer has. God answers prayer; this is His promise. The problem is that we do not take God at His word: we do not pray. The friends of Paul prayed, and Paul was apparently released from prison. (POSB)

I JOHN

Notes on this book are from RevC's teaching in Christian Training Center.

I. INTRODUCTION: I JOHN

M. Outline:

1. Chapters 1-2 deal with our **fellowship**
2. Chapters 3-5 deal with our **sonship**

N. Date

Written between 90-95 AD. Nearly 60 yrs. after crucifixion.

O. Purpose

1. Written to combat the **Cerinthian Gnostics** who believed they had a higher knowledge than the Bible.

They taught that:

- a. Joseph & Mary had Jesus naturally - she was not a virgin
 - b. Jesus became righteous & wise
 - c. The Christ from heaven **descended** in the form of a dove and entered Jesus at his baptism
 - d. The Christ departed Jesus before the cross
 - e. Christ therefore had no humanity only seemed to be human - he was an illusion
2. Also written to prove the humanity of Christ assuming his deity which was shown in the gospel of John

P. Keywords:

1. "**Little Children**" used 9 times - **intimacy** of our relationship with God as "little born ones"
2. "**to know**" used 9 times to combat Gnostics who's name comes from a form of the Greek word "**gnosis**" meaning "**to know**"
3. "**Love**" used 46 times. With the exception of Song of Solomon, this book is felt to be the most intimate of God's word. It is God's love letter to His "little children".

II. I John Chapter 1

- A. I John 1:1 **That which was from the beginning [1], which we have heard [2], which we have seen [3] with our eyes, which we have looked upon [4], and our hands have handled [5], of the Word of life [6];**

Here his focus is to present the humanity of Christ in order to combat the teaching of the Gnostics. He goes to considerable length in his description in the 1st verse to present Christ as a real being and not some illusion which the Gnostics believed.

1. [1] "**BEGINNING**": - the term is used to profess that Jesus is the Christ who always was and is-without beginning. It ties Jesus to John 1: 1-3 as Christ the Word, Creator, Himself **uncreated**.
2. [2] "**HEARD**": - that which is still ringing in our ears. As if the things they had heard Christ say had just been said. Such was their impact, though it had been many years by the time this epistle was written.
3. [3] "**SEEN**": - Gr. "horno" to perceive what I see. The idea is that they not only saw him as when we see something with our eyes but it went beyond mere sight to actual perception of what they were seeing. Their sight had discernment and understanding that this was no illusion as the Gnostics claimed.
4. [4] "**UPON**": "looked upon" - Gr. "theaomi" meaning to behold as one does when going to the theatre. To see with discernment that brought a sense of "awe".

5. **[5] "HANDLED** : Gr. pselaphao - meaning here to "touch & explore or examine". They had been with him and touched him knowing that he was every bit a man as they were, though without sin. This again was to combat the Gnostics who said the Christ was an illusion.

6. **[6] "LIFE"**: "Word of life" – This "Jesus" that John has known is tied to the Word that is life itself. His reference is to John 1: 1, 4, & 14.

END LESSON 36

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 36

1. **T or F Paul instructs Philemon to receive Onesimus as he would receive Paul. This is very similar to the same way that Father God receives His Son.**

2. **T or F The word “receive” in vs. 17 means “to receive into one’s family circle.” Thus Onesimus, a slave, was to be welcomed into his master’s family.**

3. **T or F The debt owed to Philemon by Onesimus’ theft was to be settled by Onesimus upon his arrival in Colossae.**

4. **T or F Chapters 1-2 of I John deal with our “sonship” while chapters 3-5 deal with our “fellowship”.**

5. **T or F I John was written to combat the Cerinthian Gnostics who believed they had higher knowledge than the Bible.**

6. **T or F One of the main teachings of the Gnostics was that Jesus had no real humanity and was only an illusion.**

7. **T or F The key word in I John would be “to know”.**

Match the following terms from I John 1:1 with the correct statement:

8. Beginning _D__	A. true perception
9. Heard _E__	B. touch & examine
10. Seen _A__	C. awe
11. Looked upon _C__	D. uncreated
12. Handled _B__	E. ringing in our ears

BEGIN LESSON 37

- B. I John 1:2 For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;**

'**MANIFESTED**':- Gr. Phaneroo = to reveal to man what was heretofore not revealed. The very life that God is. Jesus came to reveal God to us. Thus he laid aside his glory and took on flesh that we could see the heart of God. The laying aside of his glory is "**kenosis**" - meaning to empty. He emptied himself of his glory and took: **on flesh**, as a humble servant, in the likeness of men (Phil. 2:6-8). We also know that Jesus declared that when we saw him we saw the Father as he and the Father were one. John 14:9 & John 10:30.

- C. I John 1:3 That which we have seen. and heard declare we unto you [1], that ye also may have fellowship[2] with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.**

1. [1] **"YOU"**: "unto you" - this letter was written to many believers who had never met Jesus when he walked the earth. They were just like us today.
2. [2] **"FELLOWSHIP"** - it was John's desire to show us the meaning of true fellowship. We can only have fellowship if we are in fellowship with the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Fellowship is the Gr. **"koinonia"** meaning to have **"joint participation"**. That is **to hold the same things in common** between parties in fellowship. Thus to be in fellowship with our Father we must have the same likes and dislikes. Namely that we love righteousness and hate sin.

D. I John 1:4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

1. **"FULL"**: There can be no true joy in the life of a believer if he is not in fellowship with God. Sin separates us from fellowship and joy. The word "joy" is used some 63 times in the NT. This "joy" is not the joy the world gives but comes from the sense that all is well which we receive when in fellowship with our Father.

E. I John 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

Vs.5-10 were written to combat the Nicolaitans, a sect that professed Christianity but believed they did not have to follow the law of God or attempt to live righteous lives. They continued in sin and said they had fellowship with God.

F. I John 1:6 If we say^[1] that we have fellowship with him, and walk^[2] in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

1. [1] **"SAY"**: How can we say we have fellowship with light while we walk in darkness? Light always dispels darkness. The two cannot occupy the same space. 2 Cor. 6:14
2. [2] **"WALK"**: - is our habitual behavior. That which we do most all the time. The **occasional** sin interrupts our fellowship but does not change our relationship. In the same way my fellowship is broken with my children when they choose to disobey me yet they are still my children. Once they confess the wrong and correct the situation our fellowship is restored.

G. I John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

"SIN": I believe this refers to the cleansing power of the blood of Christ to cover those sins which we commit while in fellowship with God prior to the conviction of the Holy Spirit revealing these acts as sin. New believers may sin without realizing a particular act is sinful. Once the Holy Spirit reproves us of the act then we are responsible to obey and confess our sin if it re-occurs.

H. I John 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1. **"SIN"**: here is **"sin nature"**. This was written to refute the **Antinomians** who believed they were perfect, above sin. We still have the sin nature present yet Christ has broken its hold over us. We can now choose to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16) and overcome the pull of the sin nature. Sin_nature has to do with the root problem not just the manifestations. We can liken our sin nature to a “weed” which has a bloom above the ground and a root deep into the ground. If we want to eradicate the weed it is not

enough to cut it off at ground level as it will simply grow another bloom because of the root still being in the ground. The root is liken to our sin nature (the root of the problem) while our acts of sin are like the bloom. We cannot solve our problem by simply dealing with the bloom we must find a solution to the root problem. Our solution is Jesus Christ! He died to “take away” our sin nature, our root problem. For those who are “in Christ” **our heavenly record** shows our root problem has been taken away and there is now **no record** that we ever had such a problem! Praise the Lord this is our justification. JUST AS IF I NEVER SINNED!

2. Though my heavenly record shows no sin problem, because God has **declared** me justified I still have the old nature in me which wars against my spirit who wants to follow after Christ. Thus until I am delivered from this body of sin, I must fight the battle of sins in my life. Fortunately, I can do so knowing I have already won the war through my standing in Christ though I may lose a few battles along the way. When I fail to yield to the power of the Holy Spirit in me, and give place to sin in my life, I can come before my Father in heaven and confess my sins knowing that I have an advocate 2:1 who will go before the Father on my behalf and show that my record is forever clean because His blood paid the price for my sin in full. Because I have faith in His Son it honors my Father who therefore through His abundant grace and mercy forgives me.
3. One other vital point for us to remember is that acts of sin break our fellowship with God but do not break relationship. We are still His children though “disobedient children”. It is the same principle with my own children when they were growing up. If they disobeyed me our fellowship was not restored until they confessed their disobedience and corrected the situation. After that we could fellowship together, but throughout it all they were

still my children, nothing changed in their relationship to me. I was their father, and they were my children.

I. I John 1: 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1. **"CONFESS"**: Confession restores fellowship. True confession involves:
 - a. Agree with God in all aspects of the sin act. In other words call it what it is and nothing less.
 - b. Hate the sin. How can we truly confess our sin and think to restore our fellowship with God when we don't feel the same way he does about our sin.
 - c. We should feel a sense of guilt because of our sin. This is the convicting power of the Holy Spirit.
 - d. Have a sense of contrition - humility. Much like a dog cowers and puts his tail between his legs when he is before his master and knows he has done wrong.
 - e. Determination to put it out of our life and never do it again. This is repentance - walking in the opposite direction from.

J. I John 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

"SINNED": Rom. 3:23 No one is perfect outside of Jesus Christ. If we begin to think ourselves to be above sin we are in danger of quenching the voice of the Holy Spirit and our conscience within.

END LESSON 37

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 37

1. **T or F** The word “manifested” means “to reveal to man what was previously not revealed.”
2. **T or F** The word “kenosis” means to fill or fill up.
3. **T or F** This letter was written to many believers who like us today had never met or see Jesus.
4. The Greek word “koinonia” means: (as always choose the best answer)
 - A. Fellowship
 - B. Joint Participation
 - C. to hold the same things in common
 - D. All of the above
5. Nicolaitians were a sect that:
 - A. professed Christianity
 - B. did not follow the law of God
 - C. did not attempt to live righteously
 - D. sinned and professed fellowship with God
 - E. All of the above
6. **T or F** “Walk” has to do with our habitual behavior.
7. **T or F** Antinomians believed they were without sin.
8. **T or F** “Sin” in I John 1:8 is a reference to our “sin nature” not our acts of sin.
9. **T or F** Acts of sin break both fellowship and relationship with God.
10. **T or F** To “confess” our sin means that we agree with God concerning all aspects of our sin.

BEGIN LESSON 38

III. I John Chapter 2

A. I John 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not[1]. And if any man sin, we have an advocate[2] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

1. [1] **"SIN NOT"**: written to combat believers who felt it was easier to sin and ask for forgiveness than to fight the battle against temptation
2. [2] **"ADVOCATE"**: Gr. "parakletos" = one called to your side - Jesus acts as our attorney before the Father representing us as his blood paid for our transgression

B. I John 2:2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

"PROPITIATION": Gr. "Hilasmos" = mercy seat the meeting place between sinful man and a holy righteous God. Jesus is our propitiation, our mediator who stands between us and the father satisfying through his shed blood the wrath of God for my sin. See Lev. 16:11-19 and also Heb. 9:5

C. I John 2:3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

vs. 3-11 present several test of a believer:

TEST ONE: if we keep his commandments – a true believer will be habitually keeping his commandments (1:6). A Christian cannot practice sin.

D. I John 2:4-5 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 2:5

But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

TEST TWO: if we keep his word – our walk with Christ will cause His word to grow in us and as it does His love will be perfected in us. Our relationship with Him becomes more personal.

E. I John 2:6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk[1], even as he walked.

TEST THREE: if we walk as he walked – If we are walking in Christ our walk should show evidence of it. The key to walking as He walked is abiding in Him.

F. I John 2:7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

1. "BRETHREN": beloved ones

2. **TEST FOUR: if we keep the old commandment** - love one another I John 3:11. We must keep in mind that the Christian life void of love is as sounding brass 1 Cor. 13:1-8a.

G. I John 2:8 Again, a new commandment I make unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past and the true light now shineth.

TEST FIVE: if we keep the new commandment - same as old with greater responsibility as Christ has shown us the example. We have experienced His love and grace in our lives which puts us under greater responsibility to love others (John 15:12).

H. I John 2:9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

1. "HE: 2 classes of men in this verse:
 - a. those in fellowship with God
 - b. those not in fellowship
2. We can't be in fellowship if we have some problem with our brothers in Christ. Matt. 5:23-24

I. I John 2:10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light and there is no occasion of stumbling in him.

TEST SIX: if we love our brothers – the love here is “agape,” which is a supernatural love which has as its source God. We become the vessels through which God is able to love those He brings into our lives. This is a love that has nothing to do with emotion but rather is a choice to love.

J. I John 2:11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

1. "**HATETH**": One cannot manifest the love that God is, if, it is not in him. 1:6 We cannot give out of what is not in us.

- a. Hatred places us in bondage to the person we hate. It actually gives them power over our life whether they realize it or not.
- b. Hatred brings us into a position of blindness as we cannot see clearly because hatred clouds our emotions and we can't see the truth.

K. I John 2:12-13 I write unto you, little children[1], because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake [2]. 2:13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

1. **"LITTLE CHILDREN"**: little born ones
2. **"FOR HIS NAME'S SAKE"**: because of the cross and all that Jesus is to us
3. **"FATHERS"**: 3 stages of Christian growth
 - a. Fathers == those who have had much fellowship with God - like John
 - b. Young men = overcomers, they enjoy a life in victory through walking in the Spirit they have fought battles and grown in the Lord
 - c. Little children = they know the Father through Christ but need instruction

L. I John 2:14-15 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known_him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one. 2:15 Love[1] not the world [2], neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

1. [1] **"LOVE"**: What we have affection for
2. [2] **"WORLD"**: Gr. "kosmos" = social order – here it refers to anything that is a part of society that pulls us away from God such as materialism. We can't serve two masters Matt. 6:24 if we are serving Christ we should expect a battle from the world and sense the world's hatred toward our kind John 15:18

END LESSON 38

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 38

Match the following terms with the appropriate statements:

1. Sin Not _B_	A. mercy seat
2. Parakletos _C_	B. easier to sin and ask for forgiveness
3. Propitiation _A_	C. one called to your side
4. Test Three _D_	D. walk as He walked
5. Brethren _E_	E. beloved ones

Match the following terms with the appropriate statements:

6. Agape _D_	A. world
7. Hatred _C_	B. little born ones
8. Children _B_	C. in bondage to another
9. Kosmos _A_	D. its source is God

BEGIN LESSON 39

M. I John 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh[1], and the lust[2] of the eyes, and the pride of life[3], is not of the Father, but is of the world.

1. [1] **"FLESH"**: Gr. "sark" - evil nature, not the body (which is neutral) in this usage. The body does not have evil desire except when controlled by the evil nature.
2. [2] **"LUST"**: a passionate craving can be good or evil depending on the object to which it is directed. We can have a passionate craving for serving the Lord which can be a good thing.
3. [3] **"PRIDE OF LIFE"**: self-glory seeking. We should be reminded of John 5:44 where Jesus questions our salvation if we seek the honor of man and not that of God.

N. I John 2:17-18 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof- but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. 2:18 Little children, it is the last time[1]: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists[2]; whereby we know that it is the last time.

1. [1] **"LAST TIME"**: this a "kind" of time not a period of time. We have been living in a time of preparation for the Lord's return since he left. This is a time when the bride makes herself ready for his return.
2. [2] **"ANTICHRISTS"**: those who pretend to do the work or be in Christ who are really not of us.

O. I John 2:19-20 They went out from us, but they were not of us[1]; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest[2] that they were not all of us. 2:20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

1. [1] **"WERE NOT OF US"**: they professed with their lips but did not possess the Christ. Profession is not enough we must commit our lives to Christ from our heart.
2. [2] **"MANIFEST"**: some leave that we would know who they really are so as not to be deceived by them
3. **"UNCTION"**: Chrisma - anointing – the Holy Spirit taking residence in us to teach us see vs.27

OT priest were anointed **for service** and it was done outwardly – oil poured over them. Now the anointing comes from within us - I Cor. 6:19-20 as the Holy Spirit dwells in us. The Holy Spirit gives us power to serve Christ.

P. I John 2:21-22 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. 2:22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus[1] is the Christ[2]? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.

1. [1] **"JESUS"**: The word **"saved"** is a translation of the Hebrew word **yasha**, the root of the name Joshua which, in turn, is an abbreviation of **Jehoshua** meaning Jehovah saves. **Joshua** is the Hebrew form of Jesus, and Christ was named Jesus, "for he shall save his people from their sins" Matt. 1:21
2. [2] **"CHRIST"**: Christ = **Christos** which means **anointed**, the Gr. form of the Hebrew Messiah and is the official name of our Lord, as "Jesus" is his human name. The name or title of Christ connects him with the entire OT as the coming Prophet (Deut. 18:15-19), Priest (Ps. 110:4), and King (2 Sam. 7:12-13). As they were normally anointed with oil, Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit

Matt. 3:16 thus becoming officially identified as the Christ
- the Messiah of the OT.

Q. I John 2:23-24 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. 2:24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

See John 10:30 I and my father are one. John 14:9 he that hath seen me hath seen the father.

This was spoken against those who denied that Jesus was very God and very man.

"**IF**": conditional statement speaking of "loving one another".

R. I John 2:25-27 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. 2:26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. 2:27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

We are not at the mercy of men teachers. The Holy Spirit will bear witness to our spirit that this is truth. We should always submit what we hear to the scrutiny of the Holy Spirit and God's Word.

S. I John 2:28-29 And now, little children, abide [1] in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming. 2:29 If ye know

that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth[2] righteousness is born[3] of him.

1. [1]"**ABIDE**": we are to abide so that no matter when Christ comes we will be ready and not be ashamed. If we are abiding our heart will be right with God and thus we will have confidence toward his coming. (see 3:21)
2. [2] "**DOETH**": practices - habitual behavior
3. [3] "**BORN**": here in verse 29 the emphasis shifts from fellowship in Chapters 1&2 to "sonship" in chapters. 3-5

IV. I John Chapter 3

A. I John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love [1] the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, 'because it knew [2] him not.

1. Here in chapter three the emphasis shifts from "fellowship" to "sonship" In:
 - a. vs. 1 we see - what we are
 - b. vs.2 we see - what we shall be
 - c. vs. 3 we see - what we should be
2. [1] "**LOVE**": It is unlike any love that we should ever know. We are the objects of his affection. Rom. 5:7-8 tells us that "while we were yet sinners Christ died for us". This is almost too hard to imagine. That someone would love us so much to give himself for us while we were enemies. Not only did he offer himself for us but in the process provided a way for us to become "sons" of God and co-heirs to the Kingdom of God in Christ.
Rom. 8:14-17

3. [2] **"KNEW"**: The world has not experienced Christ and therefore they don't know him nor do they know we who are his. There is a separation that we should recognize if we are in Christ. We are in the world but not of the world (John 15:19, 17:14,16). We are pilgrims in a strange land. Like Abraham we "look for a city whose builder is God" (Heb. 11: 10).

B. I John 3:2-3 Beloved, now are we the sons of God [1], and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3:3 And every man that hath this hope[2] in him purifieth[3] himself, even as he is pure.

1. [1] **"SONS OF GOD"** born children - as we have been born into the family of God whereby we cry "Abba Father" Rom. 8:15. We are the adopted sons of God a work of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Adoption. When we are adopted we enter the family as "adult sons" with access to the full inheritance of Christ as we are co-heirs. It is the working of the Holy Spirit that brings us to God.
2. [2] **"HOPE"**: - that of being like our Lord in a glorified body. No longer subject to the laws of the earth, made a spiritual tabernacle. No more pain, sorrow, tears, temptation or sin. Free from all lust of the flesh! PTL!!!!
3. [3] **"PURIFIETH"**: As followers of Christ we should keep ourselves clean not out of fear that God would punish us but that our actions would grieve him. Illustration of the girl who's boyfriend was pressuring her to have sexual relationship with him. She was uncooperative about the matter to which he raised the accusation that she was afraid of what her father would do to her. She replied that she was more concerned about what it would do to her father.

It is our faith in Christ that places us in him and he is us. Thus we are pure as he is pure. Man cannot purify himself without Christ as all are guilty under the law. Without Christ we can do nothing! John 15:5

END LESSON 39

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 39

Match the words on the left with the best statement on the right:

1. Lust C	A. a “kind” of time
2. Love E	B. evil nature – “sark”
3. Flesh B	C. passionate craving, good or bad
4. Pride of Life F	D. pretend to do the work of Christ
5. Last Time A	E. we are the objects of His affection
6. Antichrists D	F. self-glory seeking

Match the words on the left with the best statement on the right:

7. Were not of us A	A. did not possess the Christ
8. Manifest C	B. we cry Abba Father
9. Unction E	C. leave so we would know who they really are
10. Jesus F	D. anointed
11. Christ D	E. Chrisma - anointing

12. Sons of God **B**___

F. Joshua is the Hebrew form

BEGIN LESSON 40

C. I John 3:4 Whosoever committeth[1] sin[2] transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

1. [1] "**COMMITTETH**": here has the meaning of "practices"
2. [2] "**SIN**": is putting our will at variance to the will of God. Sin is rebellion! I Sam. 15:23
3. James 1: 13-15 shows four stages of Sin:
 - a. Desire (emotions)
 - b. Deception (mind)
 - c. Disobedience (will)
 - d. Death (body & spirit)

I Cor. 10: 13 no temptation also Titus 2:14 we are a peculiar people

D. I John 3:5-6 And ye know that he was manifested to take away [1] our sins; and in him is no sin. 3:6 Whosoever abideth [2] in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

1. Two reasons why Christ came:
 - a. vs. 5 - to take away our sin
 - b. vs. 8 - to destroy the works of the devil

2. [1] **"TAKE AWAY"**: 2 Cor. 5:17 we are new creations in Christ. Phil. 3:13-14. The O.T. sacrifices for sin merely covered over sin but Jesus came to "take away" our sin.

3. [2] **"ABIDETH"**: means to be in fellowship with God. A believer does not practice sin. We cannot possibly abide in God and be practicing sin.

E. I John 3:7-8 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness [1] is righteous, even as he is righteous. 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy [2] the works of the devil.

1. [1] **"DOETH RIGHTEOUSNESS"**: We can only do true righteousness by being in Christ. Rom. 10:3 shows us that we cannot establish our own righteousness (self-righteousness) through some vain attempt at keeping the law. The only way we can know righteousness is to come into the righteousness of Christ Rom. 10: 10

2. [2] **"DESTROY"**: means to loosen us from

F. I John 3:9-10 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit[1] sin; for his seed[2] remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 3:10 In this the children of God are manifest [3], and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

1. [1] "**COMMIT**": keep in mind the word "commit" has to do with "practicing"
2. [2] "**HIS SEED**": The very presence of the life of God, the divine life substance, in the believer causes him to hate sin and not practice it. Good to read Romans chapters 6,7, and 8.
3. key verse of this chapter
4. [3] "**MANIFEST**": Because His seed is in us (vs. 9) which keeps us from practicing sin, we know we are of God. Because we practice righteousness not sin, and demonstrate love for our brethren.

G. I John 3:11-12 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. 3:12 Not as Cain[1], who was of that wicked one[2], and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

1. [1] "**CAIN**": Cain is a type of the world. The world breeds death. Whatever is not of God is of the world. God is life and whatsoever is outside of God is of the world and can only bring death.
2. [2] "**WICKED ONE**": Cain belonged to the devil. Either we belong to God or to the devil. Why does the world hate believers? Because their works are evil and the believers' righteous.

H. I John 3:13-14 Marvel not[1], my brethren, if the world[2] hate you. 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because [3] we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

1. [1] **"MARVEL NOT"**: Why should we be surprised when the world hates us or persecutes us. If they persecuted the Lord of Glory why should we be exempt? The fact that we are persecuted testifies to the presence of Christ in our lives.
2. [2] **"WORLD"**: kosmos = social system Satan is the god of this world 2 Cor. 4:4. He will try to keep us from loving one another. He knows that he can keep us from doing the will of God if there are bad feelings in our hearts for our brothers in Christ.
3. [3] **"BECAUSE"**: Just as John shared in 2:9-11 we cannot say we have a heart that is right with God, if we are at odds with our brothers in Christ. Remember, to the best of our ability we are to "live at peace with all men". This should especially be true in the household of faith.

I. I John 3:15 Whosoever hateth [1] his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him. 3:16 Hereby[2] perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought[3] to lay down our lives for the brethren.

1. [1] **"HATETH"**: hate == murder; as it puts to death God's love. God's word is that we love our enemies! Matt. 5:43-48. If we fail to love our brothers because of hatred (dislike) for our brothers we put to death the working of God's love in & through our lives. In that sense we become a murderer because we have put to death the love of God in our hearts.
2. [2] **"HEREBY"**: When we ask God for feelings of love, he will most likely place us in the position where we should sacrifice for someone else. Remember love gives,

and love cures. It cures those who give it and it cures those who receive it.

3. [3] **"OUGHT"**: We need to lay aside our perceived "rights" and esteem others as more important than ourselves Phil. 2:3. We should also keep in mind that we have been crucified with Christ Gal. 2:20, and therefore a dead person has no rights.

J. I John 3:17-18 But whoso hath this world's good [1], and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? 3:18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed [2] and in truth.

1. [1]**"WHOSO HATH THIS WORLD'S GOOD"**: If we have been blessed of God and see another in need it will be our desire to respond when we see a brother in need. Note the emphasis seems to be to those in the family of God as a priority for benevolence.
2. [2]**"DEED"**: Faith moves us to take action, and without faith it is impossible to please God. Thus God expects us to take action.

K. I John 3:19-21 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. 3:20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater [1] then our heart, and knoweth all things. 3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not then have we confidence toward God [2].

1. **"GREATER"**: God already knows our heart, even before we do.

2. **"CONFIDENCE"**: If we have no knowledge of sin in our lives then we can come boldly before the throne of grace. Confidence has to do with boldness.

END LESSON 40

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 40

Match the words on the left with the best statement on the right:

1. Committeth _E_	A. cannot establish on your own
2. Sin _C_	B. to be in fellowship with God
3. Abideth _B_	C. rebellion
4. Righteousness _A_	D. to loosen us from
5. Destroy _D_	E. practices

Match the words on the left with the best statement on the right:

6. His seed _D_	A. moved to action
7. Cain _B_	B. a type of the world
8. World _C_	C. kosmos
9. Hateth _E_	D. divine life substance
10. Deed _A_	E. puts to death God's love

BEGIN LESSON 41

L. I John 3:22 And whatsoever we ask[1], we receive[2] of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

1. **"ASK"**: ask = continued asking until one receives an answer
2. **"RECEIVE"**: Receiving is tied to:
 - a. asking (a continuous action until we get an answer, remember there are battles being fought in the spirit realm because of our prayers)
 - b. walking in obedience (see three things in verse 23-24)
 - (I) vs. 23 we should believe on the name of Jesus
 - (II) vs. 23 we should love one another
 - (III) vs. 24 we should keep his commandments
 - c. asking according to his will 5:14-15
 - d. not for our own lust James 4:3 Keep in mind that the sum of the commandments is Faith and Action. We are to believe on Jesus and demonstrate that faith by loving one another. James 2:17

M. I John 3:23-24 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

Here we see 4 evidences that we are in Christ and He is in us.

- That we believe on the name Jesus Christ. This implies believing in all that His name represents, see comments on 2:22.
- That we love one another – note this is a command not a request.
- That we keep His commandments. This is not a burden as we shall see in 5:3.
- The Holy Spirit's presence in our lives: Rom. 8:16 the Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are a child of God.

V. I John Chapter 4

A. I John 4:1-2 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits[1] whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 4:2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth [2] that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

1. **"SPIRITS"**: They were to stop believing everything they heard, but to put it to the test hoping to prove it was of God but also realizing there were many false teachers.
2. **"CONFESSETH"**: meaning to be in total agreement with all that the name "Jesus Christ" implies. see note 2:22

B. I John 4:3-4 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

"HE": Holy Spirit - 1 Cor. 6:19-20 We overcome by the power and presence of the Holy Spirit. The presence and power of the Holy Spirit is released as we yield to His will.

The spirit of antichrist will try to convince us that Jesus Christ is something other than God. Of such we should beware!

C. I John 4:5 They are of the world: therefore speak [1] they of the world, and the world heareth them. 4:6 We are of God: he that knoweth God [2] heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

1. **"SPEAK"**: "out of the world as a source they speak" - world here meaning "kosmos" social order or society. It is like the blind leading the blind - they are in darkness and don't know where they are going. Those who are of the world will hear them and follow them.
2. **"KNOWETH GOD"**: means to habitually practice the presence of God to clearly recognize Him. We should set our minds and heart on God each morning so that as we walk through our day we are keenly aware of His presence. Taking time to talk to Him as we would anyone else who is vital to our lives. I once knew a man (Rev. Guy Walsh) who often spoke out loud to the Lord as he walked through his day. At times it would seem like they were carrying on a conversation though with my natural ears I could only hear one side of the conversation. This man practiced the presence of the Lord like no one else I have ever met, and as a result their relationship was as real as any here on earth. He has since gone on to be with the Lord, but I doubt there was any interruption in their conversation! He continues to be an inspiration to my own walk with God.

Those who are of God will hear those with the Word of God. The world cannot understand the things of God, and therefore does not hear those who are of God.

D. I John 4:7-8 Beloved, let us love one another [1]: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love [2].

1. **"LOVE ONE ANOTHER"**: "let us be habitually loving one another"—This is a constant theme for John because he knows how important it is for us as believers.
2. **" GOD IS LOVE"**: God as to His nature is love. In other words, God is a loving God. Not everything we call love is God. Man's view of love is often distorted by his desire and emotion.

E. I John 4:9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent [1] his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him[2]. 4:10 Herein is love[3], not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation[4] for our sins.

1. **"SENT"**: "to send an envoy on commission with certain credentials to perform certain duties = Jesus was sent by the will of the Father to sacrifice his life for mine. It is hard to imagine what must have gone through the heart of Father as He watched His Son suffer and die for His enemies. I have often considered how difficult it must have been for Abraham to obey God's command to sacrifice Isaac. I would willingly offer my own life in exchange for my child, but have often wondered if I had the strength of faith found in Abraham that would enable me to sacrifice my child. Abraham had heard clearly from his God, and there was no discussion of the matter. It was either obey, and give Him the preeminence He

commands, or Abraham could put his will in the place of preeminence. Making Isaac an idol that he would prefer over God. Thankfully, Abraham's faith was strong enough to prove worthy of the test. Though it is hard for us to comprehend the suffering of Christ on the cross, and I would not wish to take anything from it, but imagine the heart of Father God as He poured out His wrath on His innocent Son so our sin could be taken away. Such is the depth of their love for you and me! Remember also that the Holy Spirit was resident in Christ as He suffered. As the spikes were driven into the flesh of Christ they were driven into the Holy Spirit and certainly the heart of our Father. Each suffering because of their love for us that we could have life!

2. **"HIM"**: Note that the only way to God, and the life that God is, is through Jesus Christ. Acts 4:12, John 14:6
3. **"LOVE"**: here is the true nature of God's love - sacrificial
4. **"PROPITIATION"**: see 2:2 note has to do with Christ being the meeting place of a holy God and sinful man - the mercy seat

F. I John 4:11-12 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought [1] also to love one another. 4:12 No man hath seen God [2] at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

1. **"OUGHT"**: this is our obligation - to walk as he walked demonstrating love
2. **"SEEN GOD"**: "God no one ever has yet seen" - here it refers to his nature or essence - no one has beheld him in

all his glory and deity which helps to explain the following OT passages:

- a. No man shall see God's face and live Ex. 33:20;
- b. Gen. 32:30, Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face and I liveth." Also Moses in Ex. 33:11-23

END LESSON 41

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 41

1. **T or F** In this lesson we see the importance of asking God for the things we need. Also we learned that asking is to be done continually until an answer is received.
2. **T or F** The sum of the commandments is Faith and Love.
3. **T or F** Believers are to "test" the spirits to see if they are of God.
4. **T or F** Those who truly "know" God will habitually practice the presence of God and clearly recognize Him.
5. **T or F** When the scripture says, "God is love" it means that God is a loving God, and that it is His nature to love.
6. **T or F** The term "manifest" has to do with Christ being the meeting place of a holy God and sinful man—the mercy seat.

BEGIN LESSON 42

G. I John 4:13-15 Hereby know[1] we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit[2]. 4:14 And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour [3] of the world. 4:15 Whosoever shall confess [4] that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

1. **"KNOW"**: Gr. is "ginosko" to know by experience

2. **"SPIRIT"**: Rom. 8:14-18 the Holy Spirit of adoption also 1 Cor. 6:19-20 "your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit" and the Holy Spirit as the Comforter John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7 We know that we are in Christ and He is in us by the presence of His Holy Spirit who dwells in us.
3. **"SAVIOUR"**: To say that Christ was the savior was treason against the Roman Emperor who was also called savior.
4. [4] **"CONFESS"**: to agree with God and to hold as a continued attitude of heart

H. I John 4:16-17 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. 4:17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgement: because as he is, so are we in this world.

1. 17-21 deal with our love for the Father, and His love being perfected in us. Also in 5:1-3
2. **"BOLDNESS"**: Gr. "parresia" freedom of speech but with proper reverence for God

I. I John 4:18-19 There is no fear[1] in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect[2] in love. 4:19 We love him, because he[3] first loved us.

1. **"FEAR"**: God has not given us the spirit of fear: Rom. 8:15 & 2 Tim. 1:7
2. **"PERFECT"** When God's love is made perfect in us we will have no need to fear God's judgment or loss of

reward. Additionally as we comprehend the depth of God's love and care we will realize that we are safe in his hands. Though we be cast into the lion's den or the fiery furnace the presence of our God will be with us.

3. **"HE"**: Our capacity to love is because he first loved us.
Rom. 5:8

J. I John 4:20-21 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 4:21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

"IF": warning against pretense. Note this is a re-occurring theme in the epistle concerning hating our brother 2:9-11; 3:14-16. Vs. 20 & 21 re-affirm that we are to love our brothers with the love that God is!

VI. I John Chapter 5

A. I John 5:1-2 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

"KEEP": Gr. 'tereo' means to attend to carefully

B. I John 5:3-4 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous [1]. 5:4 For Whatsoever is born of God overcometh [2] the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

1. **"GRIEVOUS"**: also translated "burdensome". We should desire to do them thus they are not a burden. It is not a burden because there has been a change of heart in us. Before I was saved my heart was set against the commands of God, and thus His commands were a burden I did not want to deal with. However, after being saved I have had a change of heart, and now I wish to obey God and delight in doing so, therefore His commandments are no longer seen to me as a burden. This is one way we show the love of God in that we delight in doing his commandments.
2. **"OVERCOMETH"**: Gr. "nikao" to carry off the victory. It implies a constant battle being continuously won. Our acting in faith allows us to overcome. Faith is the victory!

C. I John 5:5-6 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? 5:6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

"WATER": Water here has to do with the baptism of Christ Matt. 3:15. His victory for us was secured by His identification with the Father & Holy Spirit, and the sacrifice of His blood.

D. I John 5:7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

This verse is generally agreed to have been inserted and has no manuscript authority

E. I John 5:8-10 And there are three [1] that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these

three agree in one. 5:9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater [2]: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. 5:10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness[3] in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

1. **"THREE"**: These three all bare witness that Jesus is the Christ. Bearing witness to His humanity and sonship. (Dake Bible): The Holy Spirit descending upon Jesus at His water baptism. The water through His own identification with His death, burial, and resurrection at His baptism in water. The blood as His side was pierced and He shed His blood for our redemption (John 19:34).
2. **"GREATER"**: Surely the witness of God is greater than the witness of man whom we usually accept. John 8:17-18
3. **"WITNESS"**: That witness is the presence of the Holy Spirit. Rom. 8:16

F. I John 5:11-13 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 5:12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know[1] that ye have eternal life, and[2] that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

1. **"KNOW"**: Not only can we have eternal life by believing but we can know we have it. "know" here is Gr. "oida" meaning absolute knowledge beyond any doubt
2. **"AND"**: from this point on verse 13 does not appear in most early manuscripts and like verse 7. Neither verse presents any thought that is contrary to truth, but are

simply not found in some of the early manuscripts and therefore are questioned by some teachers.

G. I John 5:14 And this is the confidence[1] that we have in him, that, if we ask[2] anything according to his will, he heareth us:

1. **"CONFIDENCE"**: Gr. "parresia" cheerful courage, boldness but with proper reverence
2. **"ASK"**: Gr. "aieto" meaning continuous asking

H. I John 5:15 And if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask[1], we know[2] that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

1. **"ASK"**: Gr. "aieto" continuous
2. **"KNOW"**: Gr. "oida" absolute knowledge - no doubt. So the question may be asked, if I ask according to God's will why do I have to keep asking? Dan. 10: 11- 13 we see Daniel prayed and from the day he first prayed the Lord heard and sent the answer but the messenger had to fight against the powers of darkness who do not want to see our prayers answered. His continual prayer brought the angel reinforcements in the form of another angel, Michael, to help him defeat the enemy of God's answer to prayer. James 4:3 also warns us that there are times when we do not get our request because we ask for the wrong reasons, thus we should always pray for God's will in every situation.

END LESSON 42

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 42

1. **T or F** “Know” in 4:13 is the Greek word, “ginosko” meaning to know as in memory or intelligence.
2. **T or F** “Boldness” in the day of judgment gives us freedom of speech before God, but we must also maintain “reverence” for God in our speech.
3. **We are to love one another:**
 - A. as best we can
 - B. when others love us
 - C. with the love that God is
 - D. when we have feelings of love
4. **The commandments of God are not grievous or a burden:**
 - A. because there are only a few
 - B. because anyone can do them
 - C. because we should desire to do them
 - D. None of the above
5. **T or F** In 5:13 the word “know” is the Greek word “ginosko” meaning to have knowledge by intelligence or memory.

BEGIN LESSON 43

- I. **I John 5:16 If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.**

"DEATH": I believe this would be to deny Jesus Christ - see Matt. 12:31 To deny Christ is to dishonor the work and person of the Holy Spirit. There is also a fate worse than denying

Christ: 2 Peter 2:20-21; and Heb. 6:4-6, 10:26, 10:38-39. To have tasted salvation and then willfully reject the savior places a person in a state worse than if they had never know Christ. There is no more sacrifice left for such a person. Nothing left to pray for as John states. Some have said that the love of God will cause that person to be saved in the end. To those I would remind them that it is not God who rejected the person but the person who rejected his savior. God's love is shown to the world but salvation is only for those who abide in Christ.

J. I John 5:17-18 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death. 5:18 We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth[1] not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth[2] him not.

1. **“know”** Gr. "oida" absolute knowledge
2. **“SINNETH”**: present tense== continuous action – the believer does not practice sin
3. **“TOUCHETH”**: means to "lay hold of" as we keep ourselves in God the devil cannot lay hold to overcome us

K. I John 5:19-21 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness [1]. 5:20 And we know [2] that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. 5:21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols [3]. Amen.

1. **"WICKEDNESS"**: the world lies under the power of the wicked one
2. **"KNOW"**: Gr. "oida" absolute knowledge
3. **"IDOLS"**: an idol is anything that we would place before God

II JOHN

I. THE BOOK OF 2 JOHN (Commentary by POSB)

A. Two theories concerning to whom this was written:

(**POSB**) This is a soft and tender exhortation to a Christian mother and her children. It is a beautiful exhortation, yet it is a strong challenge. The elect lady is taken by some to refer to a church and by others to refer to a particular lady in the local church. After looking at all the arguments for both positions, it seems far more natural to take the address as referring to a dear lady who loved the Lord with all her heart. There is a possibility that she had written John about the problem of false teaching that had infiltrated the church. Remember: there were no church buildings in that day and time; therefore, believers met in the homes of committed members. There is a good possibility that the church met in the home of this dear lady (cp. [2 John 10](#)). Whatever the case, John was writing her as a dear friend and warning her against the false teaching...

(POSB)

I. Vs. 1-3 2 John 1:1-3 (KJV) The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth; ² For the truth's sake, which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever. ³ Grace be with you, mercy, and peace, from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

1. (POSB) She was elect. *Elect* (*eklektē*) means to be chosen by God. It means to be one of God's *holy and beloved* followers. This is exactly what Paul said about believers: he said they were the "elect of God, holy and beloved." This dear mother was chosen by God to be one of His elect, one of His *holy and beloved* followers.

She was elected to be holy. The word "holy" (*hagios*) means separated or set apart. God had called this dear mother out of the world and away from the old life that it offered, the old life of sin and death. She was elected to be holy, to have nothing to do with the worldly pleasures and possessions of the world. She was to be separated and set apart unto God Himself and the new life He offers, the new life of righteousness and eternity.

...She was elected to be *holy and beloved* before Him; to receive His love in Christ Jesus and to allow Him to shower His love upon her and her children. She was elected to follow God with all her heart and life; elected to live a holy life, a life as one of God's beloved children. (See **Romans 12:1-2; 2Cor. 6:17-18; Eph.**

5:11; Col. 3:12; Titus 1:1; 1Peter 1:2; 1John 2:15-16)

2. She lived in truth and love with other believers. This is a declaration of fact not a prayer. John says that the grace, mercy, and peace of God and of Christ are with believers. There is no question about it: a true believer knows the grace, mercy, and peace of God and of Christ. The idea is this: believers know the *fulness of God and of Christ* in truth and love. God and Christ flood their hearts and lives with all the fulness of life—with grace, mercy, and peace.
 - a. **Grace** means the undeserved and unmerited favor and blessings of God; the depth and richness of the heart and mind of God; the kindness and love that dwells within the very nature of God. God's grace covers all of life.
 - b. **Mercy** means feelings of pity, compassion, affection, and kindness. It is a desire to succor; to tenderly draw unto oneself and to care for. Two things are essential in order to have mercy: seeing a need and being able to meet that need. God sees our need and feels for us (**Ephes. 2:1-3**)... Mercy arises from a heart of love: God has mercy upon us because He loves us. His mercy has been demonstrated in two great ways:
 - ⇒ God has withheld His judgment from us— withheld it even when we deserve it.
 - ⇒ God has provided a way for us to be saved through the Lord Jesus Christ.

When Jesus Christ died, He died for our sins. He took our sins upon Himself and bore the judgment of

sin for us. Therefore, if we trust Christ as our Savior, God *does not count* sin against us. Instead, He *counts the righteousness* of Christ for us. We become acceptable to God through the righteousness of Christ. The great mercy of God is this:

- ⇒ He allowed Christ, His very own Son, to die for us. He actually allowed His own Son to bear the punishment of our sins for us.
- ⇒ He loves us so much that He will forgive our sins if we will only trust Christ.

The point is this: the true believer is a person upon whom God and Christ have poured out their mercy. It is not that believers *are going to* experience the mercy of God, they have *already received* the mercy of God. (See **Eph. 2:4-5; Titus 3:4-5**)

- c. **Peace** means to be bound, joined, and weaved together. It means to be assured, confident, and secure in the love and care of God... A person can experience true peace only as he comes to know Jesus Christ. Only Christ can bring peace to the human heart, the kind of peace that brings deliverance and assurance to the human soul. (See **John 14:27, 16:33; Romans 5:1, 8:6; Gal. 5:22-23; Psalm 4:8**)

Note one other significant point: Jesus Christ is said to be the Son of the Father. This is a clear declaration that Jesus Christ is God, that He possesses the very nature of God the Father. Note also that grace, mercy, and peace come from Jesus Christ as well as from the Father. The Son is said to be equal with the Father. (POSB)

C. Vs. 4-6 2 John 1:4-6 (KJV) I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father. ⁵ And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. ⁶ And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

A. (POSB) vs. 4: She had children who walked in truth. Remember John is some distance away from this dear friend of his, so far away that he is writing instead of visiting her. Note that some of her children had been in the city where John was, and John had seen them and noted that they were walking in Christ. In fact, John says they were a dynamic testimony of the truth. They were walking in Christ, walking just as we have been commanded to walk, walking just as the Word of God says we are to walk... (See **Luke 9:23; Romans 12:2; 2Cor. 5:17; Col. 2:6; 2Tim. 2:3-4; 1John 2:6, 15-16**)

B. vs. 5 The word "beseech" (*eroto*). It means to urge, beseech, beg, and entreat. It has the idea of urgency and necessity. What John is now saying is urgent; it is an absolute necessity. What is it? Love—we must love one another. Love is not an option for believers: believers must love one another.

Love is not a new commandment. It is the old commandment, the very same commandment that we had from the beginning. Note how John immediately brings up the subject of love. This tells us something: the dear friend of John was having problems with some people. Some people were mistreating her Lord and her. We know from the next passage that there were some false teachers who wanted to teach in her church or else they wanted to use her house for some purpose...

Apparently, she had refused to grant the request, and as a result, she was being criticized. Whatever the case was, she had actually refused to open her home to some false teachers or else John was instructing her not to welcome them (cp. **2 John 7-11**). In either case, the dear lady was under attack by some in the church.

Now note John's exhortation to her: love them. "We must love one another. No matter what they say about you; no matter how they mistreat you; no matter how they hurt you—love them."

The point is this: love is the very first commandment that man ever received from God, and it is the very first commandment that we ever received from Christ. It is even the first commandment that we receive when we become a believer. Love is the first commandment of the church itself.

⇒ God had said from the beginning that we are to love our neighbor.

"Love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the LORD"
(Leviticus 19:18).

⇒ Jesus Christ proclaimed that love would be the distinctive mark of His followers, the very mark that would show the world that a person was a true follower of His.

"By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).

...He instructs this dear friend to love those who mistreated her. How? How can we possibly love those who mistreat us? There is only one way: we must love as God loves. We must possess the love of God within our hearts and lives.

C. vs. 6

Note the phrase: "*This is love.*" Love is obedience, that is, the only way we can show that we love God is by doing what pleases Him. When we love someone, we want to do things that please him or her... The same is true with us and God. If we love God, we do those things that please Him. We keep His commandments. What is His commandment? "This is the commandment"—the *great commandment*—the commandment that you have heard from the beginning: "that you should walk in [love]." How does a believer walk in love? He walks upon earth just like Jesus Christ walked: he loves everyone. **1 Cor. 13:4-7** This great passage gives the very behavior that is to characterize the believer, the very way the believer is to live among others. [(RevC) You might be asking, "How can God require or "command" us to love others, especially those we don't like or want to be around?" The answer lies in the fact that loving others is a "choice" that we make. It is a choice because each of us has the ability

to choose to treat others as Christ has treated us. Agape love has as its source the very being of Christ in us by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the choice to obey God's command is within us we only need to release God to have His way through us and then act on the basis of what would Jesus do in this situation? (RevC)]

Love "suffers long" (*makrothumei*): is patient with people. The word always refers to being patient with people, not with circumstances (William Barclay. *The Letters to the Corinthians*. "The Daily Study Bible." Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1954, p.133).

...Love suffers a long, long time without resentment, anger, or seeking revenge. Love controls itself in order to win the person and to help him to live, work, and serve as he should.

...The point is well made: the dear friend of John was to walk in love no matter how others treated her. She was to love even as God's Son had loved when He was upon earth. So are we. (POSB)

D. Vs. 7-9 2 John 1:7-9 (KJV) For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist. ⁸ Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward. ⁹ Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

1. (POSB) A deceiver is an imposter, a person who claims to be a follower of Christ, but he is not—not really. He

does not live like Christ taught us to live, and he does not believe the truth about Christ. He lives and teaches something entirely different than what Christ lived and taught. Note three significant facts.

There are many deceivers in the world. There were many in the days of John and the elect lady, and there have been many ever since. Deceivers are in every area of society—in our factories and plants, schools and universities, clubs and recreational halls, offices and businesses, and even in our churches and religious societies.

2. A deceiver is a person who denies that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. That is, he denies that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

⇒ He *denies the deity* of Jesus Christ: that He is the Son of God who came *out of (ek)* heaven, out from the spiritual world and dimension into this world; who came through the womb of a virgin as the God-Man to save the world.

⇒ He *denies that Jesus Christ is the sinless Son of God* who lived a perfect and righteous life and thereby secured the ideal and perfect righteousness for man.

⇒ He *denies the death and resurrection* of Jesus Christ: that He died as the sacrifice for man's sins and that He arose from the dead to conquer death for man.

⇒ He *denies the Lordship* of Jesus Christ: that He is truly the Son of God seated at the right hand of God as the Lord and God of the universe.

⇒ He *denies the return of Jesus Christ to earth*: that He is coming again to execute judgment upon the earth.

3. The deceiver is called an antichrist; that is, he is a forerunner of the antichrist. [(RevC) The deceiver is an “antichrist” because he denies that Jesus is God in the

flesh. (RevC)] (See Matt. 7:15-23; 2Cor. 11:13-15; 1Tim. 1:7, 4:1-2, 6:3-5; 2Tim. 4:3-4; 2Peter 2:1) (POSB)

E. Vs. 10-13 2 John 1:10-13 (KJV) If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: ¹¹ For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. ¹² Having many things to write unto you, I would not write with paper and ink: but I trust to come unto you, and speak face to face, that our joy may be full. ¹³ The children of thy elect sister greet thee. Amen.

(POSB) Do not receive a deceiver or false teacher nor wish him well. Remember: most churches of that day and time met in the homes of prominent members (cp. [Romans 16:5](#); [Col. 4:15](#)). It is likely that the church was meeting in the home of this dear lady and her children. If not, then she had apparently refused to provide room and board or to welcome some false teachers into her home. The charge is strong, and its meaning is perfectly clear. False teachers are not to be allowed in the church nor in our homes. There is no greater danger to a church or a home than the threat of false teachers. False teachers doom the souls of people, shut them off from Christ. And any person who is shut off from Christ is not acceptable to God. Therefore, the church and the members of our families must be protected at all costs from false teachers. Note: we are not to encourage the false teacher at all; not to welcome him nor to bid him "God speed." If we encourage him, God counts us as a participant in his evil deeds. (See Matt. 7:6, 15-23; 2Cor. 6:17-18; Gal. 1:6-9; Eph. 5:11)

Note that the elect lady had a sister. The final words are greetings from the children of the sister. This is significant: it shows how the gospel had spread throughout the whole family. First one sister was reached for Christ, then the other sister, and then the children of both families. When we surrender our lives to Jesus Christ, our duty is to do all we can to reach our families for Christ, all our brothers and sisters and their families.

John had much that needed to be said to this dear lady and her children. But it would be better to say it to them face to face. Therefore, John planned a trip to visit her and the other believers in the area. (POSB)

END LESSON 43

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 43

- 1. T or F There is a fate worse than denying Christ as savior.**
- 2. T or F “Know” in 5:18 is from the Greek word, “oida” meaning absolute knowledge.**
- 3. T or F II John was likely written to a woman who had a Christian fellowship meeting in her house. The letter is a warning.**
- 4. T or F When Jesus referred to himself as the “Son of God” He was making it clear that He claimed equality with God.**
- 5. T or F Christian love can be commanded in the sense that it does not rely on our emotions, but rather a willingness to treat others the same way that God treats us.**
- 6. T or F Someone who denies that Jesus is God in the flesh is an “antichrist”.**
- 7. T or F It doesn’t matter what someone teaches when they ask to stay in your home. You should extend hospitality to anyone who says they serve God regardless.**

BEGIN LESSON 44

III JOHN

I. THE BOOK OF 3 JOHN (Commentary by POSB)

(POSB) Leadership within the church is critical. Church leaders are chosen to lead people to Jesus Christ. Therefore, how leaders live and behave is of critical importance: their lives affect the lives of the whole church. Their behavior often determines the growth of believers and whether or not the church has a dynamic ministry for Christ. This is what the letter of 3 John is all about, leadership within the church. Three leaders are seen, two were godly men and one was a troublemaker. The first leader was Gaius. He is a picture of the spiritual and beloved leader, a man who took the lead within the church by reaching out and helping all those who needed help. (POSB)

A. Scripture Study Vs. 1-2 3 John 1:1-2 (KJV) The elder unto the well beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth. ² Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.

(POSB) **Gaius**: he was well-beloved. Note that John calls Gaius *beloved* four times (**3 John 1, 2, 5, 11**). Gaius was dear to the heart of John. He was deeply loved... Apparently, they were close friends, but the main reason for their close bond was Christ. Gaius had trusted Jesus Christ as his Savior and was faithful to the call God had given him. He was a leader in the church and he did his job well. He lived for

Christ and performed his functions for the sake of Christ and the church.

B. Vs. 3-4 3 John 1:3-4 (KJV) For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. ⁴ I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.

Gaius, the church leader, had a strong testimony among the believers of the church. Some of the believers had visited the city where John was and shared the testimony of Gaius with John. What they shared was this: Gaius *walked in the truth*. This means that he walked in the truth of Jesus Christ and in the truth of God's Word.

C. Vs. 5-8 3 John 1:5-8 (KJV) Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; ⁶ Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well: ⁷ Because that for his name's sake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. ⁸ We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth.

Gaius helped Christian believers and strangers. This tells us why John was writing to Gaius and the church. There were some in the church who did not like the idea of travelling ministers visiting and holding meetings in their church. They were opposed to any kind of minister or ministry that was not settled within the church itself. They did not, therefore, want the travelling evangelists, missionaries, prophets, and teachers preaching and teaching in their church. They saw no use for their ministry. They felt...

- that believers could learn all they needed to know from their own ministers and from others in the settled ministry.

- that they did not need help in reaching out to the lost.
- that they could carry out the mission of Christ without the help of travelling ministers.

Gaius was doing all he could to help the travelling ministers. He was opening his home and supporting them—so much so that he had a strong testimony in the ministry of hospitality. Note that he even opened his home to strangers in order to reach and grow them in Christ.

Gaius is to continue to receive and support the travelling ministers (**3 John 6b**). Note: it is said that this is exactly what God Himself would do. (See **Romans 12:13; 1Tim. 3:2, 5:9-10; Titus 1:8; Heb. 13:2; 1Peter 4:9**) (POSB)

D. (POSB) Vs. 9-10 3 John 1:9-10 (KJV) I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. ¹⁰ Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church.

There was the divisive church leader, a man called Diotrephes. All we know is what is said here, for this is the only time he is mentioned in Scripture... We can tell that he was a prominent leader in the church. Note: he had enough authority to reject John's letter, and remember John was not only an apostle, but one of the three closest apostles to Christ (**3 John 9**). He also had enough authority to stop travelling ministers from holding meetings in the church, ministers such as evangelists, teachers, and prophets (**3 John 10**). He even

had the authority to force people out of the church (**3 John 10**).... Imagine! After his death, the major thing remembered about him is that he was the person who caused division in the church.

Diotrephes, the divisive leader, rejected ministerial leadership. Note: John had written some previous letter to the church. Again, remember that this is John the apostle, one of the men who had walked with Jesus Himself. But this did not matter to this divisive leader. He rejected John's authority as a minister of God. In fact, he totally rejected the minister's authority. He would not even allow John's letter to be read before the church. This is the very reason John has addressed this letter to Gaius. Diotrephes had destroyed John's former letter to the church; therefore, this time John sends the letter to Gaius, who is another leader in the church.

Diotrephes criticized, talked about, and censored the minister. And note: he used malicious words; he was bitter and divisive against the minister John. He went about *overflowing with talk* and rattling on about the matter, talking against and letting the members know that he opposed the minister. (See **Phil. 2:3-4; Matt. 12:36; Eph. 4:31; James 3:6, 4:11; 1 Peter 2:1; Provb. 10:18**)

This is what always happens when a divisive leader stirs up trouble within a church. This is the reason why a divisive leader must always be disciplined. Note: John says that he will deal with Diotrephes when he visits the church (**3 John 9**). The idea is that he, as the minister of God, is going to lead the church to discipline him. Jesus Christ instructs us how to handle discipline in the church, and no doubt, this is what John meant. (See **Matt. 18:15-17; Luke 17:1-3; 1Tim.**

5:20; 2Tim. 4:2; Titus 1:13, 2:15, 3:10;) (POSB)

E. Vs. 11-14 3 John 1:11-14 (KJV) Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God. ¹²

Demetrius hath good report of all *men*, and of the truth itself: yea, and we *also* bear record; and ye know that our record is true. ¹³ I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee: ¹⁴ But I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face. Peace *be* to thee. *Our* friends salute thee. Greet the friends by name.

1. (POSB) Diotrefes was not to be followed. This is a strong warning issued by the minister John: do not follow that which is evil but follow that which is good. A divisive leader is not to be followed. He may be a leader—he may be the first leader in the church, but he is not to be followed if he is divisive and bucking against the authority of the minister and other leaders of the church. No matter who he is, no matter what his position, his leadership is to be rejected if he begins to sow seeds of divisiveness. His evil is not to be followed. Note why. The reason is shocking: a divisive person does evil, and the person who does evil is not born of God. (See **Romans 12:9; 1Thess. 5:22; Heb. 12:14-15, 13:16; 1Peter 3:11; 1John 5:17; Psalm 34:14**)

2. **Demetrius:** there is the godly leader who stands in the truth. Who is Demetrius? What is said here in this verse is all we know.

He could be a leader in the church who stood toe to toe with Diotrefes. If so, then John is telling Gaius to lead the church in supporting him.

Most likely he is the minister and messenger John is sending to the church to deliver this third letter of John, a minister who is to help straighten out the division in the church.

Whatever the case, Demetrius stands as a dynamic example of a godly leader, of just what a leader in the church should be. Note three strong facts about him.

- a. Demetrius had a strong testimony among all believers. Few leaders have a dynamic testimony among all, but this church leader did. He was held in the highest esteem by God's people. They respected him every so highly.
- b. Demetrius had a strong testimony for walking in the truth.
- c. Demetrius was highly esteemed by other leaders. Note: John says we also bear record to the testimony of Demetrius, and then he strongly affirms the fact: he declares that his own testimony is trustworthy. What he is saying about the character of Demetrius is true. Demetrius is a godly servant of the Lord no matter what any divisive leader says. This emphasis points rather strongly toward Demetrius being one of the travelling evangelists or teachers serving with John. There is a possibility that he was one of those who had been opposed by Diotrephes and not allowed to teach in the church.

Whatever the case, Demetrius is a dynamic example of what church leaders should be. Note that he is not a cowardly man. He is willing to personally deliver the letter of 3 John to Gaius and the church and to deal with the problems of the division.

3. The problem in the church was severe, so severe that John planned to visit the church and to visit it soon. He would write no more. He had much to say to Gaius and the believers, but he needed to say it face to face, not in a letter. Note the minister's closing remarks:
- He wishes *peace* upon them; this was the very thing Gaius and the church needed.
 - He sends greetings from mutual friends: this was saying to Gaius and the believers that they were not being rejected by other churches and believers. They were not being frowned upon because they were unable to handle the division and to discipline the divisive leader.
 - He asks Gaius to greet his friends by name for him. (POSB)

END OF LESSON 44

QUIZ QUESTIONS FOR LESSON 44

1. **T or F** III John was written to home fellowship group.
2. **T or F** Gaius was a fellow apostle who knew John well.
3. **T or F** Gaius allowed John to stay in his home, but refused others he did not know as well.
4. **T or F** John, Gaius, and Diotrephes were best of friends who cooperated in every aspect of John's ministry.
5. **T or F** Diotrephes unlike Gaius received other preachers and teachers who were friends of John, as long as they knew John they were welcome in his home.
6. **T or F** Demetrius was another of John's friends who had a "good report" and was an example to others.

LESSON 45 IS THE FINAL EXAM