

## Colossians

Colossians 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." I often wonder who is preeminent in our ministry efforts. Much of the time we receive the credit for teaching, witnessing or serving well. I am afraid we too regularly want it that way, and actually work for the purpose of receiving the glory. While this is a human reaction, it is neither appropriate nor right. We need to concentrate on making Christ the primary recipient of credit for all good that is done in His name. This will not come to us easily, as we may actually have to make an effort to reduce our own visibility so He can be seen in our actions. In the end Christ will have all the glory, but we need to work daily at assuring we get none of the praise that is due only to Him.

Colossians 2:6-7 - "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." How many of us really abound in what we have been taught? Many have sat under the preaching and teaching of God's word our entire lives, but have never embraced much of what we know God requires in His word. It seems we have such a simple task; to hear and understand what the Bible teaches - then to live our lives in accordance with those principles. While the theory is elementary, daily practice can be difficult. We really must make certain that we are keeping in mind those things which the Spirit has taught us. Consistency is a theme that runs throughout scripture, and it is repeated because God understands our inconsistency. Wake up in the morning ready to live what you have been taught, and rely on that knowledge when you are confronted with situations that challenge.

Colossians 2:8 - "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." We beware many things these days, including driving without a seatbelt, biking without a helmet, and undercooking beef. These aren't bad things to beware; I just fear we do less than beware some of the more dangerous things. I find more and more Christians willing to open themselves up to philosophies and traditions that would destroy their Christian witness. Men come bringing false gospels, false doctrines and worldly ideas and we listen without using the Bible as a filter. Instead of fearing their "spoiling" words, we fear what others will think if we call their message wrong. Look to those men who point you to Christ in an honest, Biblical fashion. Be truly wary of those that bring a new fad, an amazing new formula, or a wonderful new idea. It is not likely that these men offer anything that resembles Biblical truth.

Colossians 3:1-2 - "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Our affection seems to be a difficult thing to measure, although a quick examination can tell us a lot about where our affections lie. What do we spend the bulk of our time doing? On what do we spend the majority of our finances? If we had unlimited resources, what would we spend our days doing? These questions bring to mind activities and objects on which we place affection. We need to be very serious about placing the things of God above everything else. If we spend the bulk of our time at a job we enjoy, are we willing to give it up to serve the Lord? This is not to say God is asking us to release it, but we do need to know if we really would, upon His leading, even if it meant a period of financial struggle. Look at where you place your affection today, and get serious about where Christ stands. If He is anywhere but at the top, you'll need to begin a process of change.

Colossians 4:6 - "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." I can say without reservation that I speak with grace often; but do I speak with grace always? The Bible makes so many statements about our consistent obedience to Christ, and many of these statements include words like "always", "all" and "every". It is clear that our behavior, in this case our speech, should at all times reflect Christ. We seem to rather believe that some situations require a more graceful manner of speaking than others, and will adjust our speech for the moment. Home is a place of less graceful speech I find, although this should obviously not be the case. Our words should be chosen carefully in all situations, and a good rule of thumb is an old one: think before you speak. Keeping these principles in mind could help us avoid so very many serious problems.