

Epistle of Paul to the Colossians VIII

(Chapters 3-4)

How to Conduct Your Life

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Colossians 3:17: “And *in* everything—whatever you do in word... [in speech or written communication] ...or in deed—*do* all in *the* name of *the* Lord Jesus... [our Master and Ruler] ...giving thanks to God and *the* Father by Him.” We’re going to take this particular section and amplify it quite a little bit.

The most important thing that we need to realize is that Christianity is not ‘a religion,’ though it is defined as a ‘religion’ by people in the world; though it is defined sometimes by us as ‘a religion’ in comparison to other religions. So, in that particular sense it is a religion inasmuch as people think of religion as when you are worshipping God or when you are studying His Word and things like this.

True Christianity is more than a religion. It’s just like this, Colossians 3:17: “And *in* everything—whatever you do in word or in deed—*do* all in *the* name of *the* Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and *the* Father by Him.”

That’s just another way of expressing Mark 12:30: “And you shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart...”

What we’re doing here in understanding about Christianity, as we have heard in the past: it is a *way of life!* It is a way of life that gives us direction in everything that we do. In other words, when we say ‘Amen’ at the end of Sabbath services, that does not end our responsibility; nor have we fulfilled our responsibility to God by just being a warm body someplace on the Sabbath, because we know it’s the Sabbath Day. *It is a whole way of life* and it involves:

- everything we think
- everything we do
- our whole attitude toward every minute of every day

That’s why Jesus said—and this is the great and overall and first primary commandment, v 30: “‘And you shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This *is the* first commandment... [we know the rest of it] ...And *the* second *is* like this...” (vs 30-31)—and so forth.

In Colossians 1:27 we see the way that this is possible. It’s not possible for people in the world

to do this, because they don’t have the Spirit of God and they don’t have Christ in them. So, it makes it much, much more difficult for them. But here is the whole premise; the whole thing concerning the book of Colossians. We’re just going to take the very last bit of it, which is *Christ in you the hope of glory*. That’s the whole focus of this book: ***Christ in You!*** If Christ is *in* you, with the Spirit of God, then you can:

- *love* God
- *serve* God
- *worship* God

—with everything you do, whether it’s in word or deed, or in speech and communication—

- *give thanks and praise* to God the Father

This is *how we glorify God*. This is how God works through us and in us and develops the character of Christ that He wants us to have.

So, this is what we are going to carry forward on past this physical life into the Kingdom of God and by the power of the resurrection from the dead. It involves a whole *way of life*.

I’m going to give you a little bit of an assignment here that you can do in studying the Epistles of Paul. I want you to survey the Epistles of Paul and I want you to look at all of the sections in almost every epistle, giving instruction on this day-to-day ***how we love God and serve Him and do everything to glorify Him!***

Let’s see exactly what I’m saying here, because Rom. 12 is that part of the book of Romans that gives us the day-to-day:

- the instructions on how to get along with each other
- the instructions on how to grow and overcome

Notice how it starts out in Romans 12:1: “I exhort you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God...” He is entreating, beseeching. Notice, it’s not with the *whips* of God. It’s the ***mercies of God***.

“...to present your bodies **a living sacrifice...**” (v 1)—in *whatever you do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus!* We’re ***a living sacrifice!***

“...Holy...” We’re Holy because of the

Holy Spirit that God has given to us. We're Holy because we're sanctified in Christ; we are sanctified in the Father; we're sanctified by His Word of Truth.

"...and well-pleasing... [acceptable] ...to God, which is your [reasonable] spiritual service" (v 1).

Then he goes on to explain how we do this, v 2: "Do not conform yourselves to this world..." Oh, that the Churches of God would understand that! Right now the biggest problem we have within the Churches of God is that they are trying to be:

- conformed to this world
- accepted by this world
- thought well of in the world

Well, if you're going to serve Christ, Jesus said that *the world will hate you*. Don't be surprised at that! So, we should not try and be:

- accepted by the world
- conformed to the world
- adapt our whole lifestyle to the world

Along those lines let's understand something that was just announced in one of the major Churches of God which is that the Passover should no longer be called *the Passover* but it should be called *the Lord's Supper*. **That, brethren, is conforming to the world!** God says don't be conformed to the world. Every other so-called Christian religion in the world calls what they do in their counterfeit Passover 'the Lord's Supper' or the Eucharist. So, if a Church of God does that **they are conforming to the world!**

But here's what we need to do on an individual basis, and on a collective basis, and on a church basis:

"...but be you transformed... [and 'transformed' means *to be changed in a process*]: ...**by the renewing of your mind** in order that you may prove what *is* well-pleasing and good, and the perfect will of God" (v 2).

Notice how Paul always gives this kind of introduction; very similar to what he did back in Col. 3:17. In Rom. 12:1-2 is how he sets the stage for the whole rest of the chapter; that we are to have our minds renewed. That is, obviously, with the Spirit of God. We are to be constantly proving 'what is good and what is acceptable and the perfect will of God.'

Verse 3: "For I say through the grace that was given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think ..." Would that would be the motto of all the ministers in the Churches of God. Remember, the

Apostle Paul had certainly the right attitude on that, and he said **there is nothing that you didn't receive**. That is true! The more I think on that, and the longer I really let it dwell in my mind, the more I realize that there isn't a single thing that we didn't receive of God!

The problem is in the situation that the whole structure that has been in the Church that we're familiar with, has always been one of comparison, one of who is of this rank or that rank, or whatever it may be, and then they get to thinking more highly of themselves than they ought. How did Paul think of himself? *He said, 'I'm the least of all the saints, and that I should be called an apostle. I am the sinner. I persecuted the Church!'* So, the Apostle Paul set us the example in that.

"...but to think with sound-mindedness... [properly] ...as God has divided to each one a measure of faith. For even as we have many members in one body... [that is the whole church] ...but all members do not have the same function... [office, the function and participation in the body] ...likewise, we, being many, are one body in Christ, and each one members of one another" (vs 3-5).

This is always important for us to remember because ministers, deacons *and* members *are all brethren together in Christ!* If we keep that in mind:

- then we're not going to get over-lordship
- then we're not going to create a hierarchy
- then we're not going to have the things that separate each other within the Church

It's quite a shame, and I've experienced this, and you've experienced it: you've gone to attend Sabbath services in a congregation and the church is divided. You have this group over here and this group over here and this group over here and some people are included and some people are excluded. The reason being is that they're making a difference one with another, and they are really not understanding that God has called us all into one body and we are all brethren.

There are some differences, v 6: "But each one has different gifts according to the grace that is given to us..." Notice how these gifts come. **They come by the "...grace that is given to us..."**

Again, whatever we have we have *received*. It is not something to say, 'Well, this person has this; and this person has this great personality and all this sort of thing, therefore, he ought to be thus an such.' Well, every time I've seen that done, where men are ordained and hands laid on them for whatever reason, and they are looking at the physical things, **they collapse spiritually somewhere down the road.**

Whatever we have it's "...according 'to the grace that is given to us—whether prophecy... [inspired preaching or teaching] ...*let us prophesy*... [can also mean prophecy, too.] ...**according to the measure**...[proportion] ...**of faith**" (v 6).

What this does, this helps us to really understand that whatever the grace is, whatever the gift is, whatever is done, *it's according to faith!* And then:

- it must be exercised in the spirit
- it must be exercised in faith
- it must be exercised with the humility that God wants us to have

Verse 7: "Or service... [ministry or deaconing—Greek: 'diakonos'] ...*let us tend* to service; or the one who is teaching, *let him tend* to teaching... [concentrate on that] ...or the one who is encouraging, *let him tend* to encouragement..." (vs 7-8)—to exhort, to help, to uplift, to bring the body of Christ, through the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, into the perfection that God wants it to be.

"...the one who is giving, *let it be* with generosity..." (v 8)—liberally; and that has got to be from the heart as God motivates and inspires the person to do it.

"...the one who is taking the lead... [oversees] ...*let it be* with diligence; the one who is showing mercy, *let it be* with cheerfulness" (v 8). That's a challenge— isn't it? We go to God and we beg for mercy for us; and if someone asks mercy back from us again, sometimes we don't do it that way. So, "...*let it be* with cheerfulness."

Verse 9: "*Let love be* without hypocrisy [dissimulation]..." Now, there's a whole lesson to learn; there's a whole challenge. In other words, you don't hate someone in your heart and put on a pretense and dissimulate and pretend that you like and love someone. That's what Judas Iscariot did; and he came and betrayed Jesus with a kiss, which is the greatest hypocrisy and dissimulation if there ever was one.

"...abhorring that which is evil *and* cleaving to that which is good. *Be* kindly affectioned toward one another in brotherly love. *Let* each esteem the other more highly than himself" (vs 9-10)—preferring one another. These are almost like New Testament proverbs:

- they are short
- they are quick
- they're right to the point
- they have meaning
- they have practical, everyday applications in what we should be doing

Verse 11: "Be not slack in business. *Be* fervent in spirit. *Be* timely in serving." This is one way to overcome the blahs. You be fervent in spirit and realize that whatever you're doing is serving God. Just like we learned here in Col. 3:17.

Verse 12: "*Be* rejoicing in hope. *Be* patient in tribulation... [that's a difficult thing] ...*Be* steadfastly continuing in prayer." We're going to cover a little bit more about prayer when we come to Col. 4; but 'continuing *instant* in prayer' means that whenever you have a situation—regardless of what it may be; during the day or whatever—that you be *instant to pray to God for help*:

- to thank Him
- to love Him
- to pray for someone who needs help

Too many times we sort of avoid praying the way we ought to because when we pray we want to do it up really right. Well, you just remember: 'continuing instant in prayer.' You don't have to wait until you're the best; you don't have to wait until you're in the mood. You ***pray whenever it's needed!***

Verse 13: "Contribute to the needs of the saints, *and* strive to be hospitable. Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse" (vs 13-14). That is a tremendous challenge to do! That's the exact opposite of this world! They curse their enemy and bless themselves!

The Apostle Paul really understood this, because he was persecuting the Church, causing true Christians to be murdered and executed before he was called. And now—after being called, and after being an apostle and serving the Gentiles—he was hated wherever he went by those Jews who wanted to cling to Judaism. So, he understood it! It is the most difficult thing to bless when you are cursed.

Verse 14: "Bless those who persecute you; bless, and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (vs 14-15).

I tell you, these things are all qualities that flow from the Spirit of God. Too many times the congregations of God are what I would call 'uptight.' You walk in and the minister's all dressed out with his suit and his tie and he's very formal and he's very rigid, and the people are very rigid. It would be nice to see someone like that once and a while just really have some compassion and just do what it says here.

Verse 15: "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." That ties in with Phil. 2, where it is that we are to have 'bowels of compassion and mercy one to another.' That's just

another way of expressing it.

“...*be* of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high ambitions; rather, be accommodating with those of low estate. Do not be wise in your own eyes” (vs 14-16).

There’s an awful lot here for us to learn. The wisdom of this world is just ‘filthy rags’ with God, it’s meaningless. We need the wisdom of God, and the *wisdom of God* is something that He gives; it’s not something that we have. It’s **according as the grace that has been given!**

Verse 17: “Do not render to anyone evil for evil...” We see that at the Superbowl. They’re going to be one against the other. It’s going to be war! It’s going to be ‘go get the quarterback and kill him’ and all this sort of thing. That’s the way of the world.

“...*but* be prepared to do what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, as much as is your part, be at peace with all men” (vs 17-18). Sometimes that is most difficult. You do the best you can, and then take it from there and put it in God’s hands.

Verse 19: “Beloved, do not avenge yourselves; rather, leave *this* to God’s wrath...” In other words, get out of the way; you don’t have to worry about doing it.

“...for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine!...” (v 19). I tell you, the best way and the most effective prayer that you can give toward a situation that you know falls into this, where there are difficulties and problems, you put it in God’s hands and you ask God to take care of it; and who knows, maybe that enemy of yours may even be called. You think about that!

Let’s put the shoe on the other foot for just a minute. What if you were one of the relatives that had your aunt or your uncle or brother, your sister, your father or mother arrested by Saul? The rabbi sent by the high priest to arrest and take true Christians and to have them executed and bound and put in prison? That’s the one who became the Apostle Paul. How many prayed and said, ‘Oh, God, that man is evil and rotten and no good, but please call him and convert him’? That would be a tough prayer. So, Paul is speaking from experience—isn’t he? *Yes, he is!*

“...I will recompense... [repay],’ says *the Lord.*” (v 19). The way that God repaid the Apostle Paul for what he did was to have him turn around and do just the opposite of what he was doing. Instead of killing and persecuting:

- he had to teach
- he had to preach

- he had to show them Christ
- he had to write the words of God

So, sometimes what we think is a good and a proper sentence and execution against someone, maybe God has something better in mind than we would think. ‘God is going to repay,’ says the Lord.

Verse 20: “Therefore, if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for in doing this you will be heaping coals of fire on his head.” In other words, if he truly stays your enemy after that, then God is going to take care of him; and God is going to take care him in the way that is right and proper, and *He’s going to rescue you.*

Verse 21: “**Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.**” That’s why Col. 3:17 is so important in everything that we do.

We’re going to see that this—Col. 3:18-25—is merely a parallel section in Eph. 5 & 6. We’ll come back and coordinate this with some of the other Scriptures as we go along.

Colossians 3:18 “**Wives**, submit yourselves to your own husbands... [having the type of conduct and attitude] ...as it is fitting in *the Lord.*”

Verse 19: “**Husbands**, love *your* wives... [with Godly Divine love, and with compassion, understanding and tenderness] ... and do not be bitter against them”—or oppressively demanding and with a heavy hand; or be rash, harsh, tyrannical or overbearing.

“**Children**, be obeying your parents, be in compliance in accord with their wishes because this is well pleasing to God. He accepts this behavior with pleasure and delight” (v 20).

Verse 21: “**Fathers**, do not provoke your children, lest they be discouraged”—and lose heart, or feel rejected and unwanted.

Verse 22: “**Servants** obey your fleshly masters in all things—not with eye service... [while you are under scrutiny or inspection] ...as pleasing men; but with singleness of heart, fearing God... [pleasing Him] ...And whatever you do, do heartily, as to the Lord and not to men; knowing that you shall receive from *the Lord* the recompense of the inheritance... [the spiritual inheritance from God] ...for you are serving Christ the Lord. But the one who does wrong shall receive *for* the wrong he has done, and there is no respect of persons” (vs 22-25)—partiality or favoritism.

Paul doesn’t pick on the wives first (v 18). I want you to understand that, because he also touches everything in relationship to the family: wives,

husband, children, fathers and servants. This parallels right along with Eph. 5, and we will see exactly how this is done.

Let's understand something concerning marriage, which is very important. *Marriage is a type of the relationship between Christ and the Church.* Therefore, as we live our lives as husbands and wives, it's very, very important that we understand that relationship; and we understand the foundation of the whole creation of male and female, and the whole relationship between the Church and Christ.

Here's how we do everything, Ephesians 5:20: "Giving thanks at all times for all things to God and the Father in *the* name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Notice how similar that is to Col. 3:17, and then he comes right along in the next verse talking about almost the same situation:

Verse 21: "Submit yourselves to one another in *the* fear of God.... [this is the Church overall] ...Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord" (vs 21-22).

I tell you, that is a tremendous jewel in the sight of God if that is done. If any man has a wife who does that, and he doesn't love her and is not kind and understanding to her, then God is going to take care of you! But here's the reason for it; it's not because women are lesser human beings. It's not that they are to be put down. It's not that they are 'second-class citizens' in the Kingdom of God—we understand that! But it's a matter of proper order. It's a matter that God has made things that way.

God has, by creation, v 23: "For the husband is *the* head of the wife, even as Christ *is the* Head of the Church... [which means then, there's no dispute] ...and **He is the Savior** of the Body.... [not the overlord, not the harsh handed] ... For even as the Church is subject to Christ, in the same way also *let* wives be *subject* to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your own wives..." (vs 23-25).

This is a tremendous and important thing that needs to be done; because too many men go around—because they're the head—saying, 'Well, I'm the head and you submit to me, and therefore, when you do everything will be fine.' Well, I tell you what, why don't you humble yourself and see if you can love your wife in the way that Christ loves you, and then you're going to see some things change I'm sure. I know a well-noted evangelist that used to brag from the pulpit that he would 'spank' his wife. Well now, that is not in the Bible. I think

that's in the book of 'rod-handed' chapter one and verse one in family relations: 'Thou shalt spank your wife.' *NONSENSE! NONSENSE!*

It says, v 25: "Husbands, love your own wives, in the same way that Christ also loved the Church, and **gave Himself for it.**" You go back and you study the life of Christ, and you study how He worked and served, and everything He did was for coming to the crucifixion, so that there would be the Church; because without that there wouldn't be the Church.

Verse 26: "So that He might sanctify it... [make it Holy] ...having cleansed *it* with the washing of water by *the* Word." That's why it's so important with the action of the Holy Spirit, which is a type of water with the Word of God that is in our minds, that constantly we are being cleaned, we're being washed, we're having our minds set in order by the Word of God. That's why the Sabbath is Holy. That's why the Holy Spirit is Holy. We come together on the Sabbath and we learn the Holy things of God by His Spirit.

- to *wash* us
- to *cleanse* us
- to *uplift* us
- to *encourage* us
- to *inspire* us
- to *strengthen* us

Verse 27—here's why Christ did it all: "That He might present it to Himself *as* the glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it might be Holy and without blame. In the same way, husbands are duty-bound to love their wives as their own bodies.... [you have an obligation to God] ... He who loves his wife loves himself; for no man has ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord *does* the Church" (vs 27-29). That's a tremendous thing for us, brethren:

- that God loves us
- He's nourishing us
- He's cherishing us
- He is creating that whole situation for being resurrected and being in the Kingdom of God
- being spirit beings
- being the Bride of Christ

Verse 30: "For we are members of His body—of His flesh and of His bones." When I read that several years ago, I was wondering: What does it mean 'of His flesh and of His bones'? The only thing I could figure out was this—and I think that this is correct—'of His flesh' is through the

crucifixion; because that pays for our sins; forgives our sin.

And ‘of His bones is that Christ is called ‘the second Adam.’ How was the wife of Adam made? From what was she made? *She was made from his rib!* Here we have an analogy between the first Adam and the second Adam. Just as the first Adam had his wife Eve created for him from one of his bones—his rib—so ***the Church is from the innermost being of Christ*** coming as it were from His bone. So, this becomes very important for us to understand, that Christ is creating the Church from the innermost part of His being. In other words, that’s how He loves the Church. He ***willingly*** gave Himself. He ***willingly*** provided Himself as the sacrifice for the Church—‘from His bones.’ We are to have that close relationship with Christ for all eternity.

Verse 31: “For this reason shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife; and the two shall be one flesh.”

Carl Franklin is doing some research on *The Lord is One*. But he’s discovered a very clever slight of hand, which is this: The Lord is one—*one* is an adjective. It is not a noun. It is not a not a cardinal number, being *one* as a noun. It is *one* as an adjective—which means that that helps us understand, in a more clearly defined Elohim, which is plural. So, just like this—it says right here: “...the two shall be one flesh”—that is a *descriptive* condition. That’s what they *will become*: one flesh. They’re still two separate individuals, but they become *one flesh*. That’s exactly how God is—God the Father and Jesus Christ—and that’s exactly how the Church and Jesus Christ will be.

Verse 32: “This is a great mystery; but I am speaking in respect to Christ and the Church. Nevertheless, let each one of you love his wife even as himself; and *let each* wife see that she reverence *her* husband” (vs 32-33).

Col. 3:18-19 has to do with husband/wife relations; and there are others you can put there: 1-Peter 3:1-7. It’s very interesting, where it say, and this is important for us to understand; important for us to realize that there is a tremendous thing concerning our lives and having prayers answered and so forth.

1-Peter 3:7: “Likewise, *you* husbands, dwell with *your wives* according to knowledge, as with a weaker vessel, giving them honor *as* women, and as joint heirs of *the* grace of life so that your prayers may not be cut off.”

In other words, if there is a situation where

there’s a lot of fighting and hassling and going back and forth and all this sort of thing, the prayers of both are going to be hindered. What good is it going to do to have a fight with each other and then run off and sanctimoniously pray to God and not repent and not confess your sins and not ask God to help you and help your wife or help your husband. Your prayers will be hindered. So, if you feel that there have been some difficulties with getting through with some of your prayers, well, maybe examine that area.

Colossians 3:20: “Children, obey *your* parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.” We have so many things in the world that are distracting and taking away our children. It’s happened to almost everyone. It’s because the way that the world is set. When you find a child who really has this kind of loving and obedient attitude it is really a jewel! Now, a lot of children may feel—because of their carnal nature—that this makes them less of a human being, because they have to obey their parents. But this is not so. It makes you a better person. It makes you stronger in the eyes of God because you do so.

Eph. 6:1 tells the reason why that this is important. Look at all the ways that the world is; you consider all the things for children and teenagers today. They’re ending their lives in suicide; drugs; rock music; and their so-called great idols that they follow, like Michael Jackson—nothing but a perverted wretch of a human being, who is part of this world and instrumentality of Satan the devil and not even worthy of consideration to watch or anything. We hope and pray that in God’s way and His time that He’s going to work these people and bring them to repentance and into the Kingdom of God, but maybe it’s not the time now. In the meantime, why should we take this evil and set it up as the idol and the guide for our living? Why not take God and His way and set that up as the true worship of God and the true way to live and the blessings of God?

That’s what Paul brings out in Ephesians 6:1: “Children, obey your parents in *the* Lord, for this is right.” That’s why it’s so important that parents not get all sanctimonious and conceited in their great authority as parents, and become overbearing and harsh against their children, which Paul warns against here.

Now then, he quotes the Scripture—v 2: “Honor your father and *your* mother, which is the first commandment with a promise, that it may be well with you, and *that* you may live long on the earth” (vs 2-3). That’s really something; think on that!

My son Stephen was in a car wreck. He was doing things that he shouldn't have been doing. He survived it and he is most thankful that he has survived it. His whole attitude and everything has changed because he could see that if just a couple of other little things would have happened, he would have been gone! He was out doing things that he knew that we would not approve of. But since he's 21 he can get out and do those things, and, of course, the society says the parents have no control. Well, we're thankful to God that He spared him. We're thankful that there was no lasting injury. We're thankful that he is turning his life around, and this is going to be a very important thing. That's why we need to really come to God and just ask Him to work with our children in His way, in His time, and to help bring them back to Him.

I think—in the Churches of God that we know of—we drove off many children. Oh, we tried to have the programs and activities for them; and that became a corrupted mass of politics, and even in some cases, near sexual orgies, and the parents were told to stay away. That doesn't work either. It's got to stay right within the family.

We had a whole way of childrearing where we spared the love and we wielded the axe, and we caused a lot of this that Paul says not to do.

Colossians 3:21: "Fathers, do not provoke... [irritating or frustrating] ...your children, lest they be discouraged"—lose heart or feel rejected or unwanted. And all of that goes back to the whole premise that a human being is born perfect.

No, a human being is not born perfect. A human being is born—as sweet and lovely as little children are, and infants and babies are—with the *law of sin and death* in them. Since it is in them you can't beat it out of them, you can do more by loving them to help them overcome it than you can by beating them.

But unfortunately, we had a whole way of childrearing, which was really not in compliance with what God teaches in the Bible. We put spanking first, beating first, depravation first, and we caused a lot of difficulties with our children. I'll be the first to admit that in trying to zealously follow along with what we were taught, I did a lot of things which v 21 says not to do. I just pray that God will help me and help them so that we can overcome the difficulties that have come along.

Ephesians 6:4: "And fathers, do not provoke your children; but bring them up in *the* nurture and admonition of *the* Lord." Notice, it says *nurture*: caring, helping, loving.

There needs to be discipline when there needs to be discipline; that's not to take that away. But I tell you what, if there was more *nurturing* and less beating, then children are going to be a whole lot better off. But you can't discount the discipline when it really needs to be. When it is—because you are nurturing and you are loving—then whatever discipline you have is going to be a whole lot more effective; and you end up having to correct less. Because if you "...bring them up in *the* nurture and admonition of *the* Lord," that's the way that it should be.

There are many Scriptures that we can tie in with this, so we'll go through and we'll read this section here and we'll tie in the Scriptures.

Colossians 3:22 "Servants, obey your fleshly masters in all things—not with eye service... [only while you are under scrutiny or inspection] ...as pleasing men..."

That is the whole premise of unions; you just do well while you're being watched. Unions have served some good; but on the other hand we have strife, we have all of one against the other and competition. Companies now are learning that you get along better if everyone is a part of it, and you don't oppress, you don't put down, and you don't provoke your employees. But when you all work together they're finding that works a whole lot better. That's just following a principle in the Bible; that is truth:

"...but with singleness of heart, fearing God" (v 22). So the whole purpose of v 22 is that **God knows!** God knows every hair on your head. He knows what you're doing. He knows what your thinking, and so forth. If you're doing it to please God, then you're surely going to please your boss, and you might even be surprised how well that will work.

Ephesians 6:5: "Servants, obey *your* masters according to *the* flesh with reverence and trembling, in singleness of heart, as unto Christ; not *merely* with eye service ..." (vs 5-6).

There's the politician. And if you work with a company that has their politicians; they go along and stroke the boss. Every time the boss comes around it's almost like a panting dog that hasn't had water for days and days, and here comes the boss. I've seen that in the ministry. Brethren, let me tell you something: in the ministry of the Church of God we are paying the price and reaping the harvest of what that kind of political eye-service and stroking in ranking and everything has reaped upon the Church.

“...as *do* pleasers of men; but as servants of Christ, **doing the will of God from the heart**. Do service with goodwill, *as* to the Lord, and not to men; knowing that whatever good each one has done, this shall he receive from the Lord, whether bond or free” (vs 6-8).

There are some very practical things for working, for doing as we ought to. Here again, it just re-iterates what we had in Eph. 6.

Colossians 3:23 “And whatever you do, do heartily...”—with zeal and motivation from within. That’s the whole thing of everything that we do. When you are motivated from within, when it comes truly from your heart, whether it is serving God or serving someone else, then it’s an entirely different matter. I tell you one thing: If you are motivated from within to do what God wants you to do, do you need a schedule? Do you need a list of priorities? *No, you don’t!*

I’ll never forget. We had a management class in the advanced classes there at Ambassador College, and they brought in a management fellow and he was an ‘expert.’ We had him for the whole day. We had him from nine till noon and then from one to four. So, we had him for six hours, and he went through and showed how what you need to do is to prioritize everything that you have. Make a list and then prioritize the list: A, B, C, D or 1, 2, 3, 4—whatever it may be. Then work on A or work on 1 and get that one done and then do B and get that one done, and then everyday kind of move everything up the line—and you get done what you need to get done. He went through and spent the whole day telling us how we can be the best managers in the world, etc., etc.

Then the last twenty minutes he said, ‘Now I want to tell you one thing: If you’re truly motivated from within, you don’t need any of these lists; you will automatically do it.’ You will automatically prioritize the things. The only reason you need a list is so that you can understand what you need to do and not forget it.

Isn’t that something! Isn’t that the way it is with Christianity. If you truly, from within, love God and serve Him:

- Do you need to be beaten to pray?
- Do you need to be beaten to keep the Sabbath?
- Do you need to be beaten to love your neighbor?
- Do you need to be beaten to love your wife?
- Do you need to be beaten to love God?

No! All the shouting and verbal abuse in the world isn’t going to change unless you do it from within!
That’s the whole point!

Verse 24: “knowing that you shall receive from *the* Lord the recompense of the inheritance...”—the spiritual inheritance from God.

All of these things relate to Christ in us, doing everything the way God wants us to, and these are some practical, everyday things that Paul has written down. Remember, go through and find the section that every one of the Epistles of Paul where he brings these day-to-day things:

- how to grow
- how to change
- how to overcome

—which you can call New Testament proverbs of daily living.

I want to give you some other Scriptures you can take down, and these are found in the Proverbs—this all has to do with being diligent; the hand of the diligent, and so forth: Prov. 10:4, 26; 12:24-25; 21:5.

Heb. 11:6 tells us how we need to operate our whole life—not only just as people would call, the religious part of their life; because we’ve seen there’s no such thing as the religious part of our life. It’s a way of living and it’s all tied to this one verse:

Hebrews 11:6: “Now **without faith it is impossible to please God...**” This is very important for us to understand when we realize that you can’t go out and do a work and compel God to accept that as accounting to spirituality:

- unless you do it *in faith*
- unless you do it because you’re motivated to *pleasing God*
- unless you do it because you’re motivated to *love God*

“...For it is mandatory *for* the one who comes to God to believe that He exists, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (v 6).

Now, when we have these things deep in our heart and our mind:

- then we will pray
- then we will study
- then we will do what the Apostle Paul says:

‘In whatever we do in word or deed, do it all in the name of God’—and serve God; realizing, as it says:

Colossians 3:25: “we don’t need to worry about the other person, because: “...the one who does wrong shall receive *for* the wrong he has done, and there is no respect of persons.”

Then he talks again to the masters, or those who had slaves, Colossians 4:1 “Masters, give that which *is* just and equal to your servants...” This whole thing of the depiction of slavery that they like to depict in the modern media today is not the kind of slavery that God intended. God intended that there would be people who would serve. They could be freed. There are provisions for freeing them. But some people:

- need to learn
- need to grow
- need to change
- need someone to lean on

so they could go indenture themselves to a person, to what would be called a *master*; and serve them.

If they had a program similar to that, they could sure solve a lot of problems today. Can you imagine how they could really change things if they would take some of these welfare recipients and say, ‘Okay, now we’re going to have such that if you promise you won’t have any anymore children—you’ve got these one or two or whatever it may be—and if you promise to get your life straightened around, instead of giving you welfare, we will let this family over here take care of you. You live with them; you help them; you serve them; you go to school; you learn; you change your life; you get it all worked around; and they’ll take care of you—instead of having the welfare department do it.

Now, don’t you think that that would work a whole lot better? Don’t you think it would work a whole lot better if we had a system where if someone, unfortunately, because of economic circumstances, lost their job, didn’t have a home—if you had it where there were homes where they could go, where they could live, where they could get their lives straightened around; where they could develop their skills; where they could have a nice place for their children and things like that? I think that would work a whole lot better than this so called great system of liberty we have today, because it’s not liberty. What happens? *It enslaves and chains every one of them to the government, and they become a slave of the government; they become a vassal of the government; and so forth.* They don’t have dignity; they’re not uplifted and taught the way they need to be. So, if we had this kind of society and system, it certainly would work a whole lot better as far as I’m concerned.

Verse 2: “Continue steadfastly in prayer, watching in it with thanksgiving...” Being alert and awake; not slackening up or falling asleep, and always be praying in an attitude of thanksgiving and grateful praise. I brought in certain things there.

Remember the disciples, when Jesus said, ‘Pray.’ What happened? *They fell asleep!* Always be alert! Awake!

If we’re really serving God in a way that we ought to; if we’re really loving God; then prayer will become something that you don’t have to beat yourself to do. And I remember years ago, they said, ‘Now, you’ve got to pray an hour a day.’ So, you get out there and you set the clock and you pray, and you pray, and you pray, and you repeat, and you pray, and you pray, and you think you’ll never get through that whole hour of prayer. Why? *Because you’re tying to do something spiritual by physical means!*

That’s why everything has to start out that you love God first; that you have faith in God first; and that you believe Christ first! And then your prayers will be a whole lot better! You won’t have any trouble worrying about being instant in prayer and constantly praying.

1-Thess. 5 is another one of these chapters where he’s got the daily living for the brethren to do; 1-Thessalonians 5:17: “Pray unceasingly.” That doesn’t mean that you go around like some of these Buddhists and you have prayer wheels that you spin, and every time it spins the prayers are wafting off to heaven. It means that *you never allow your prayers to be interrupted by your own activities.* In other words, that your own activities become so important that you neglect God. That’s what it means, *continuing in prayer and pray without ceasing.*

Let’s learn something very important: Not every prayer’s answer is *yes*. Not every answer is the one that you want, because maybe the one you want may not be what God wants you to have. God is going to give you what He’s going to give you. If your heart, your mind, your attitude please Him, then it will be right; then it will be fine; then it will be good.

Luke 11:1: “Now, it came to pass *that* as He was praying in a certain place, when He finished, one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us how to pray, as John also taught his disciples.’ And He said to them, ‘When you pray, say...’ (vs 1-2). Here is the outline prayer

“...Our Father Who *is* in heaven, hallowed be Your name...” (v 2)—when we focus in on

- the *righteousness* of God
- the *goodness* of God
- the *love* of God
- the *faith* of God
- the *greatness* of God
- His fantastic creation

The reason that He has us start our prayers this way is so that we get our minds off ourselves. Too many times when we start praying, our minds are not in gear to pray because they've been on the things that we have had our minds on.

I think it's very helpful, in many cases, to go ahead and turn to the Psalms. Maybe begin your prayers by reading a Psalm or two, so you get your mind on God. If you have to, just ask God to help you really get your mind on praying to Him, loving Him and serving Him, because His way is so fantastic, and He's given you His Spirit. All of that's included in this first part of *hallowing God's name*.

"...Your kingdom come..." (v 2). That doesn't necessarily mean it's going to come in the time you think; but for you—you have to keep your mind focused in on the Kingdom.

"...Your will be done..." (v 2). Too many times, in our prayers, we're going to God to try and make Him do *our will*. *NO!*

"...as in heaven, *so* also upon the earth" (v 2). Then we get to the things we need.

"...Give us our bread *as* needed day by day" (v 3). After we've seen the earthquakes out here, you know how important that is, because things can change from one day to the next. That's the way it needs to be in our lives. 'God, help us today. God, provide for us today.' And He will.

"And forgive us our sins, as we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us..." (v 4). God will also forgive us.

"...and lead us not into temptation..." (v 4). God never leads us into temptation. This means *don't let us be led into temptation*.

"...but rescue us from the evil one" (v 4). And there are plenty of things out in the world to tempt and to be led away. That's why we should pray in this particular way.

Then it shows in Matt. 6 that we are to close our prayers in the situation concerning the praise and honor and glory back to God. Take the outline prayer—either here in Luke 11 or in Matt. 6:12—and break those components of the prayer down: God's name, thanking God, loving God—all this sort of thing, and outline some of the Psalms. You're going to see that the Psalms follow exactly the outline that Jesus gave on how to pray.

I'm going to give you another assignment here, which is Dan. 9. You go through and you read how fervent in fasting and seeking God, confessing sin, that Daniel was, and the answer that he got. His prayer so inspired God, and the attitude there of just confessing his sins to God and the sins of the people

and the things that had happened to the Jews, to be carried away into Babylon, that God was inspired and motivated to bring in the prophecy of the coming of the Messiah. Now, that is something! Let's hope and pray that our prayers will be more like that.

Colossians 4:3: "*and* praying for us also, so that God may open to us a door... [provide the occasion and opportunity] ...to proclaim the message... [the good news of the Gospel] ...of the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned."

He needed the door of the prison opened, too. He was released from this imprisonment and apparently he went to Spain after this, and then came back and was arrested and crucified later. But we can pray the same thing.

I think, brethren, one of the most important things we need to do is this: How many ministers are out there, Protestants and also Churches of God, with what *they view* is the 'Ezekiel Message': you need to be the watchman on the wall and warn the people. As I mentioned to him, I said there have got to be at least a dozen Ezekiel's sitting out there on the wall. Where is the Ezekiel sitting on the wall to warn the people in the Church of God? There needs to be that. I'm not going to try and play Ezekiel. I don't want to be that. If you want to be Ezekiel, you go back and read what he went through. You think about that again, especially there in the first couple of chapters where he was told to mix up all this evil and abominable stuff and put it in human dung; and he said, 'O Lord God, not human dung!' And God said, 'All right, I'll let you substitute cow's dung. But you go eat this before the people, to let them know of their sins.' So, anyone who wants to be Ezekiel, try that on for size!

At least, brethren, what we can do is to help and serve and love the brethren and warn them and help them restore themselves back to God. The best way we can do that is to show them the love of God and what they've been missing by playing religion instead of really serving God.

Paul was in prison because of that, and he said, v 4: "I may make it manifest, as it is necessary for me to speak." Now, the parting words—and the rest of it is pretty much just admonitions, as we're going along; and, of course, he would write this being in prison, not knowing whether he would see them again or not—and all chances, he didn't.

Verse 5: "Walk... [conducting your lives and affairs] ... in wisdom toward those who are outside *the Church*, redeeming the time"—which so easily slips away. That's what we need to do:

redeem the time; while there is life, redeem the time! Buying back and rescuing the time!

As we have said before, it's kind of like Matt. 25, the church bazaar is opened. Go buy! Go sell! Go find those who are doing whatever God is inspiring them to do and then you make sure you get your life right with God, and be as the 'wise virgins'—not as the foolish.

Verse 6: "Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt... [with bits of wisdom and understanding]...that you may know how to answer each one." Now, there's a whole challenge! Sometimes we don't answer them the way we ought to.

Verse 7: "Tychicus, a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow servant in *the* Lord, will make known to you everything concerning me. I sent him to you for this very reason, that he might know your circumstances and might encourage your hearts; together with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They will make known to you all the things *that have taken place* here. Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, salutes you and Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you received instructions (if he comes to you, receive him)" (vs 7-10).

It's interesting that Mark was the scribe who probably helped finish compiling and writing all the books that we have in the New Testament. That's another whole topic, but I'll just mention it here in passing.

Verse 11: "And Jesus *who is* called Justus; who are *all* of *the* circumcision. They *are my* only fellow workers for the Kingdom of God who have been a consolation to me"—otherwise I would have felt deserted and abandoned. In other words, he's saying these are the ones who came to him while he was in prison, otherwise he would have just had no comfort or encouragement at all.

Verse 12: "Epaphras... [Epaphras was the minister there in Colossi] ...a servant of Christ who *is* from among you, salutes you. He is always striving for you in *his* prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

This also shows us, again, how we need to be praying. Again, it shows that if your prayers are from the heart, that's how you're going to be praying.

Brethren, that's my prayer for you. And I look out and I see all the brethren of God who have been beat upon and everything with playing religion, and authority, and everything that has happened to them. We ought to have that kind of prayer and

concern for them. And I hope that this book: *Lord, What Shall I Do?* is really going to be helpful for them; because it's going to give them some clear things to think about. One thing I don't do in there: I don't say 'come and join us'—because I know that they have to choose God *first*. I hope and pray that they choose God first. Now, they may not be able to be with us. That would be nice if they could, but it just may not happen. If we can help them into the Kingdom of God, that's what we ought to do; because it's not a matter of numbers and it's not a matter of money; it's a matter of serving God and that's the way that it needs to be.

"...He is always striving for you in *his* prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" (v 12). There is the perfect goal to shoot for!

Verse 13: "For I bear witness to him that he has much zeal for you, and *for* those in Laodicea, and *for* those in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, salutes you, and Demas *does also*. Salute the brethren in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the Church in his house" (vs 13-15).

Even at that time there was a small little church, just like we have here with this communication we have. I'm preaching into two houses. There are brethren there assembled and that assembly is the Church, just as Paul points out here.

Verse 16: "After you have read the epistle, see that it also is read in the Church of *the* Laodiceans, and that you also read the one from Laodicea." That one epistle we don't have. God did not see fit to put it into the New Testament. But He gave a message to the Laodiceans in Revelation.

Verse 17: "And say *this* to Archippus: Devote yourself to the ministry that you have received in *the* Lord, to fulfill it. The salutation of Paul by my *own* hand. Remember my bonds. Grace *be* with you. Amen" (vs 17-18).

That has really been wonderful being able to complete this on Colossians.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Colossians 3:17
- 2) Mark 12:30-31
- 3) Romans 12:1-21
- 4) Colossians 3:18-25
- 5) Ephesians 5:20-33
- 6) 1-Peter 3:7
- 7) Colossians 3:20

- 8) Ephesians 6:1-3
- 9) Colossians 3:21
- 10) Ephesians 6:4
- 11) Colossians 3:22
- 12) Ephesians 6:5-8
- 13) Colossians 3:23-24
- 14) Hebrews 11:6
- 15) Colossians 3:25
- 16) Colossians 4:1-2
- 17) 1-Thessalonians 5:17
- 18) Luke 11:1-4
- 19) Colossians 4:3-18

Scripture referenced, not quoted:

- Colossians 1:27
- Philippians 2
- 1-Peter 3:1-7
- Proverbs 10:4, 26; 12:24-25; 21:5
- Matthew 6:12
- Daniel 9
- Matthew 25

Also referenced:

Booklet: *The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Colossians, An Inspirational Study; A New Expanded-Amplified Translation* by Fred R. Coulter

Article: *The Lord is One* by Carl Franklin

Book: *Lord, What Shall I Do?* by Fred R. Coulter

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