

## COLOSSIANS

By Pastor Humberto Paz

These days we hear much talk about “Worldview” and “Biblical Worldview.” There are good reasons for this. The worldview today is referred to as culture, perspective of life, opinion, ideology of life. An ideology where values are changed for ideas not proven but accepted as truth.

**Before we enter to study Colossians, it would be good to briefly review the different perspectives or ways of life in the world.**

There have been four main worldviews and many others called worldviews which in reality, fit into one of these four main worldviews.

- 1: **Theism:** is a belief in the existence of one, or [a] God especially, the belief in a personal God as Creator, and Ruler of the universe.
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- 2: **Naturalism/Materialism/Atheism,** is the belief that all things came out of nothing. **there is no God;** humans are just highly evolved animals; the universe is a closed physical system. **As Carl Sagan, astrophysicist and popularizer of science puts it, “The cosmos is all that is or all that ever will be.”**
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- 3: **Pantheism is the belief that everything is God, God is impersonal, and abstract.** This is the basic belief-systems of Eastern religions, and Eastern philosophies. **We all share the same essence or “stuff” of reality, which is spirit (Hinduism—the Brahma; Buddhism—Nirvana) The basic philosophy of New Age thinking has been summed up in three pithy sayings: ‘All is God’, ‘All is one’ and ‘All is well’.** They believe God is in the trees, we are one with the trees....(Progressive Christianity holds this. They say, when Jesus said, the Father and I are One, he had an enlightenment, He did not know it until He realized it within Himself.)
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- 4: **Deism** is the belief that there is a God -- Who created the universe; but one cannot know Who He is. (Copyright © 2018 Research Center for Apologetics, International. All Rights Reserved.)
- Also believe This God does not intervene in the world.
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- **Postmodernism: there are no objective truths and moral standards; “reality” is ultimately a human social construction.** In other words, we make the reality. Reality is what I make it to be. **Today we see and hear people deciding themselves who they are, not who they were created to be. I am who I feel I am.** Transgender, I am a boy trapped in a girls body, or a girl trapped in a boy’s body. **LGTB** There is nothing wrong with same sex marriage and same sex sexual relationships.

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- **Pluralism:** the different world religions represent equally valid perspectives on the ultimate reality; there are many valid paths to salvation.
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- **Moralistic therapeutic deism:** **God just wants us to be happy and nice to other people;** He intervenes in our affairs only when we call on Him to help us out. **My confusion is treated therapeutically. Identity confusion now is treated as a sickness.**
- **Governments, educational systems. World organizations are joining in the proliferation of worldviews that fit in one of the ones mentioned above.**  
<https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml>
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- **Judges 17:6, 21:25, “In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes.”** It seems like we are living in the days of the judges. Even as Christians, in some cases we are behaving as the people of Israel in the time of the judges.
- As we speak about Worldview, we are speaking of Biblical perspective on life, or better, **Biblical way of life. Way of life according to God and His Ways.** Remember, Jesus said I am the way, the truth and the life. He is the way to truth (**truth we must discover every day in every situation. The Holy Spirit will guides into all truth**) and the **way to and the way of life.** Acts 17:28, *“For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.”*
- **Deut 5:33; 1 Kings 3:14; Psalm 81:13; Jeremiah 7:23, all these scriptures speak of walking in the ways of the Lord for our own good.**

In the beginning of the Church, it was also known as “The Way” JESUS.

- Acts 9:2, *and asked him for letters to the synagogues at Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the Way, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.*
- Acts 19:9, *But when some became stubborn and continued in unbelief, speaking evil of the Way before the congregation, he withdrew from them and took the disciples with him, reasoning daily in the hall of Tyrannus.*
- Acts 19:23, *About that time there arose no little disturbance concerning the Way.*
- Acts 22:4, *I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and delivering to prison both men and women. Saulo, Saulo why do you persecute me?*
- Acts 24:14, *But this I confess to you, that according to the Way, which they call a sect, I worship the God of our fathers, believing everything laid down by the Law and written in the Prophets,*
- Acts 24:22, *But Felix, having a rather accurate knowledge of the Way, put them off, saying, “When Lysias the tribune comes down, I will decide your case.”*

- **2 Peter 2:2, Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,**

"The Christian (Biblical) Worldview is not just a framework of thoughts or an intellectual system, but it is the **spiritual discernment to understand God's will**, the critical mind to understand contemporary thoughts, the transformed mind, holy wisdom, and truth. In other words, the Christian worldview is the truth and the spiritual belief system to be able to see and think the way Jesus sees and thinks."

<http://cosmocristiana.blogspot.com/2011/10/definicion-de-la-cosmovision-cristiana.html>

- To the last part of the definition, I would modify it by adding a few concepts showing in bold. *the Christian worldview is the truth and the spiritual belief system to be able to see and think the way Jesus sees and thinks so we can live, act, love, have His attitude. It is not only about belief but also about life in God. WAY OF LIFE WORLDVIEW.*

### Secular Worldviews Infiltration the Church Today

The Early Church as the Church today faced challenges with false teachings that tried to change the believer's Biblical perspective on life. **The whole Bible is our foundation for us to live life. In the letter to Colossians, Paul gives us guidance to the Biblical way of life.**

The American Worldview Inventory 2020, conducted by CRC Director of Research Dr. George Barna, surveyed 51 beliefs and behaviors among Christian groups and found that rather than transforming the culture around them with biblical truth, the opposite is happening. American Christianity is rapidly conforming to the values of the post-Christian secular culture. Key findings of the survey include:

*Evangelicals are embracing secularism: A majority (52%) of evangelicals reject absolute moral truth; 61% do not read the Bible on a daily basis; 75% believe that people are basically good. The study found that one-third to one-half of evangelicals in the survey embrace a variety of beliefs and behaviors counter to biblical teaching and longstanding Evangelical beliefs.*

- *Pentecostals and charismatics take secularization a step further: Two-thirds (69%) reject absolute moral truth; 54% are unwilling to define human life as sacred, with half*

*claiming the Bible is ambiguous in its teaching about abortion; and 69% say they prefer socialism to capitalism. A full 45% did not qualify as born-again Christians.*

- *Mainline Protestants are the most secular of the four faith families: Sixty percent (60%) of mainline Protestants' beliefs directly conflict with biblical teaching. Three key values define this group: truth and morality are relative; life has no inherent value or purpose, so individuals should pursue personal happiness or satisfaction; and traditional religious practices are no longer seen as central or essential to their Christian faith. Only 41% of mainline Protestants are born again.*

- *Catholics are increasingly secular and permissive: Catholics' beliefs are surprisingly similar to those of mainline Protestants, but considerably different from that of evangelical and charismatic Protestants. They are most likely to believe in salvation through works or living a good life, and least likely (28%) to be born again. Today's Catholics are more permissive than other groups, being most likely to accept sexual relations outside of marriage, lying, speeding, and refusal to repay a loan as morally acceptable behaviors.*

[https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/CRC\\_AWVI2020\\_Release11\\_Digital\\_04\\_20201006.pdf](https://www.arizonachristian.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/CRC_AWVI2020_Release11_Digital_04_20201006.pdf)

**The Barna report shows us that some of these worldviews have infiltrated the Church as agnosticism infiltrated the Colossian church.**

According to the Barna Report **62% of pastors are teaching syncretism and the secular, humanistic, anti-God culture has infiltrated the leadership and therefore the Church.**

That was the case with the Galatian church and other churches in the NT. If pastors teach syncretism, the members who stay in the Church will not have a Biblical worldview.

Another report from Barna Group from March 10, 2022, shows the following results:

The [study](#), released Tuesday by the university's Cultural Research Center, **found that only 2 percent of all parents of pre-teens in the United States possess a biblical worldview.** And although two-thirds of those parents are self-identified Christians, only 4 percent of that group holds to a biblical worldview.

The research involved interviews with parents of children under the age of 13. It was part of the center's American Worldview Inventory for 2022.

Looking closely to the Barna Reports, we can see that we as a church have a challenge in front of us. Some denominations have split into those who hold the Biblical views on life and those who believe culture decides how to live.

Have you heard of: Progressive Christianity. This view says we need to adjust the Bible to the culture. Book *Moving beyond belief: A new focus for the Christian Faith*.

This book argues that a religion centered around biblical belief has not worked when it comes to living the teachings of Jesus. The central argument of the book is that we must shift the focus of our religion away from biblical belief to a sense of the deep, transforming love that comes from knowing God. **Go by feelings of your experience rather than truth and faith in Christ.**

**The Progressive Church or Progressive Christianity holds the following views:**

**Deny the atonement work of Jesus on the cross.**

progressive Christians will refer to Jesus' sacrifice on the cross as horrific or unnecessary. The idea that God the Father would require the blood sacrifice of his Son is perceived to be an indictment on God's character, turning him into a divine abuser. This is sometimes referred to as "Cosmic Child Abuse."

A famous preacher said in a video, "what kind of God is He who required the sacrifice of His Son to deliver us from Himself."

**Bible not the Word of God:**

In the progressive church, the Bible is viewed more like an ancient spiritual travel journal than the inspired, inerrant, and authoritative Word of God. The Biblical writers are viewed as well-meaning ancient people who were doing their best to understand God in the times and places in which they lived, but they were not necessarily speaking for God. **Scripture is also seen as contradictory, not internally coherent, and not authoritative for Christians.**

**Original sin**

Progressive Christians don't typically deny that sin exists or that it is a bad thing. But they often deny the idea that we have some sort of a sin nature that was passed down to us from Adam and Eve. Instead, progressive Christians often teach that sin isn't what separates us from God, but our own self-imposed shame. For them, you don't need God to be saved, you just need to find it in yourself, it is within you.

**Jesus is not the only way to salvation:**

**Pantheism, Pluralism, Social Justice CRT.** They believe the gospel is not primarily the good news of God saving sinners and reconciling them to Himself, but social justice issues become the heart of the gospel. **We talked a little about this in the beginning speaking of different worldviews.**

## Affirmations

### ***LGBTQ Relationships and Marriage***

There is an almost universal acceptance of same-sex relationships and marriage, a belief in the validity of transgenderism, and a rejection of cisgender norms. **(Biological sex identification)**

### ***Universalism / Universal Reconciliation***

The primary view of heaven and hell in the progressive church is Universalism, which is the idea that **no one will be punished in hell, and everyone will eventually be saved and restored to right relationship with God.** Some progressive Christians will still say that Jesus is the only way, but believe he will save everyone.

### ***The Gospel of Social Justice and Critical Theory:***

In progressive Christianity, **the gospel is not seen primarily as the good news of God saving sinners and reconciling them to Himself. Instead, social justice issues become the heart of the gospel message, with what one does being viewed as more important than what one believes.** Often, the secular framework of critical theory is embraced, where the world is viewed through the lens of oppressed vs. oppressor.

### ***Pluralism***

**Religious pluralism is the idea that all roads lead to God, and no one religion holds ultimate truth** when it comes to who God is and how he reveals himself to the world. Often, progressive Christians will tout the mantra, “Everyone has a seat at the table,” meaning all creeds and religions are true in their own way and the people who embrace them are equally accepted by God.

### ***Pantheism, Panentheism or Perennialism***

As stated above, many progressive Christians affirm pantheism or panentheism. Another view that is promoted in **the progressive church is perennialism, the idea that although different religions look different on the outside, at their core they share the same truth.** In other words, they share the same source and come from the same ultimate or divine reality. **This divine reality can be discovered through mysticism and contemplative practices.**

Today, as in the New Testament and throughout the ages the Church has faced and faces the attacks and pressures of the culture with anti-God worldview. In the New Testament we see the Apostles correcting the teachings of the false teachers and instructing the Church in the Truth.

The Colossian church was facing this challenge and Paul sets out to debunk the false teachings and affirm the truth of Jesus.

Colossians were being infiltrated by the agnosticism of the time. Their primary attack was against the person of Jesus Christ and His sufficiency to save mankind, attacked the teachings of the Gospel of Jesus, attacked His deity, His participation in creation and so on.

### Emphasis of Gnostic Teachings:

1. They presented Jesus as insufficient and inadequate to give salvation and forgiveness of sins.
2. Astrology, here they call it rudiments or elementary principles, Col 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."*  
Col 2:20 *"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."*
3. Heresy attached great importance to the powers of demonic spirits. Paul mentions principalities, powers 1:16, 2:10, 2:15.
4. There was a philosophical element to heresy.  
Heresy sought to destroy the faith of believers with hollow and deceptive philosophies. Col 2:8 *"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit..."*
5. They insisted on the observance of days, rituals, festivities, new moons, Sabbath. Col 2:16 *"Therefore let no one become your judge with regard to food or drink, or as to the feast day, or new moon, or Sabbath".*
6. Ascetic Element. They laid laws about food and drink, Col 2:16, *"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:"* They tried to limit the freedom of believers by imposing all sorts of legalistic ordinances.
7. It tended for men to think lightly of the chastity that the Christian should have. They tried to make man think lightly of the sins manifested in the body. 3:5-8, *"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: <sup>6</sup> For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: <sup>7</sup> In the which ye also walked some time, when*

*ye lived in them. <sup>8</sup> But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."*

8.. Heresy gave rise to the worship of angels Col 2:18 *"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."*

Perhaps we can identify some characteristics of these teachings in our societies today. Usually, some people I have known with these teachings are Freemasons, I do not know if all Freemasons think the same or depends on the degree of advancement they have. This philosophy taught:

- Matter was bad. Only the spirit was good.
- Matter and spirit could not have contact with each other.

Basically, what Gnosticism of that time said was that:

- a) **God being holy and pure and matter being evil, they could not have contact or relationship.**
- b) **That creation resulted because of one of God's emanations (they say sparks) that was far enough away from Him, and matter was then created.**

This teaching influenced what people believed about creation. If God is Spirit, then He is good and cannot work in this evil matter because God cannot have contact or create evil. Therefore, God is not the creator of the world. Another branch of Gnosticism says that a god less than the Almighty God is the one who created matter.

**They argued that if Christ is the Son of God and matter is evil, He could not have the body of flesh and blood.** They believed He was like a spiritual ghost. The Gnostics said that when he walked, he left no traces in his path. This teaching removed him from being human and therefore he cannot be our savior.

These are some of the things facing the church of Colossae and Paul writes to them to correct these errors that had infiltrated the church and at the same time, Paul presents the teaching of truth about Christ. Notice that the correction Paul makes is not by naming the agnostics by name but corrects the message. We will disagree with these teachings and teachers who promote them, in the Church, we correct the teachings by teaching the **TRUTH.**



### Paul Presents the Supremacy of Christ Over All Things

1. **No other epistle has the insistence or emphasis of how complete or supreme Jesus is.**

Col 1:15 "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation."

Col 1:19 "For it pleased *the Father* that in Him dwelled all fullness,"

Col 2:3 "In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge

Col 2:9 "For all the fullness of the Deity resides bodily in Him,"

2. **Paul emphasizes Christ's participation in creation.**

Col 1:16 "For in Him all things were created, *both* in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible; whether thrones or dominions or powers or authorities; everything has been created through Him and for Him."

Col 1:17 "And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."

- 3 **Presents the Humanity of Christ.** Col 1:22 "*In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:*" Col 2:9 "*For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*"

The purpose of studying this epistle, in the first place, is not only to try to gain greater knowledge, nor to break down the verses to gain a greater understanding of scripture or to see the meaning of certain words according to the Greek language and to see their meaning at the time the New Testament was written. **The main purpose of this study is that these things mentioned above motivate us as leaders and the Church to a more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ who will enlighten us in what He wants to teach us, not only in the intellect, but in our whole being, spirit, soul and body.**

May we, like Moses, hunger to know him more intimately and have the proper Biblical worldview. Exodus 33:13, "*Now, then, if I have found grace in your eyes, I beg you to **show me now your way**, (Your way of life, what life is all about) **that I may know you, and find grace in your eyes; and see that these people are your people.***" Moses had seen the wonders of God in Egypt and in the wilderness, yet Moses knows that there is much more of God to know personally.

**Second**, to recognize that the challenges of false teachers not only existed in the time of the early Church, but still exist in our day and we need not only teach the truth, but for the truth to bring the believer into an intimate relationship with God through the Word and

the spirit and remain faithful to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The epistles expand the message of the gospels, hence the importance of teaching the epistles to the Church.

we must note Paul did not attack the personalities of the false teachers, he addressed the false teaching with the truth of the Word of God. When we teach in detail a book of the Bible, inevitable we will touch on all subjects relevant to the times we live in. We will see this in Colossians.

In teaching the Church/congregation, we must focus on the truth of the Word of God. All the worldviews mentioned before are addressed, corrected, debunked by the apostle Paul in this letter.

We need to know what is happening in the world and culture and teach the truth of the Word of God. It is very tempting to attack the false teachers, and churches that are adopting the way of the world, in doing this, we spend more time in what is false than what is the truth of the gospel. We address the false teaching with teaching the truth of God. If we look into the Scriptures, we will discover that the issues of today are not new. Ecclesiastes says, **“there is nothing new under the sun.”**

## Session Two

Chapters one and two, Paul shows the superiority of Christ over every effort, work, observance that any human being could make to satisfy the justice of God. Paul shows the sufficiency of Christ through His sacrifice as the only One to satisfy the justice of God and thus bring redemption to mankind.

### Colossians Chapter One

In several of his epistles, Paul starts his letters by affirming the position of the believers in Christ, who they are in Christ. "holy and faithful brethren" This letter seems to be more personal, focused on the individual believers. Someone said that the reason is, that Paul as he got older understood that what really mattered were the people, that the Church was not an abstract entity, but it was individual men, women, and children.

That is, people who needed to apply God's Word to their lives and not primarily to a structural institution. On many occasions in our day, it seems we place more emphasis on structure, programs, institution, institutional goals rather than building lives and cultivating individual application of God's Word. **"Saints and faithful brothers."** Saints not for their merits but for the work of Christ in their lives. Faithful brethren, Paul did not know them personally, but he trusted in the work of Christ in their lives according to the report of Epaphroditus.

## IMPORTANCE OF THE WILL OF GOD

Paul introduces himself to the church as one called by God as an apostle. Since the beginning of the epistle, he brings out the will of God and will establish in the rest of the epistle what the will of God is for the believer and the Church in the way of life in God.

Colossians 1:9, **Paul tells the Church he prays for them to be filled with the knowledge of the will of God.**

It is obvious that Paul taught Epaphras as the pastor of the Colossian church to pray for the Church, congregation and teach them concerning the will of God. Col 4:12: *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.* This is an instruction for us to pray for the congregation **to stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.** We will talk a little more about that later. Before we do, we want to consider several Scriptures which mention the will of God.

There are many passages concerning the will of God in many different circumstances of life that help us develop the Biblical perspective on life.

**When Jesus taught His disciples to pray,** He started with an intimate term, “FATHER” then, worship, following to pray for the Kingdom of God to be established, after this, the means by which His Kingdom is established, **“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”** Praying for the will of God was a priority in Jesus life. It should be a priority for pastors to pray and teach about the will of God. For congregation to seek and do the will of God.

A few passages to see the reasons to seek and do God’s will.

**Desiring to do God’s will in times of discouragement, persecution and dark times.**

Psa 143:10; *Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.* **The context of this request of David comes in a time of repentance for sins committed against God and persecution against him.**

- *Relying on God’s Character (Attributes) (Psalm 143:1-2)*
- *Persecution from his Adversaries (Psalm 143:3-4)*
- *Waiting for God’s Answers (Psalm 143:5-6)*
- *Crying for God’s Help (Psalm 143:7-12)*

**A time of need,  
discouragement,  
persecution,  
of being crushed by the enemy,**

a dark time in his life.

In the midst of this time, he thinks of the works of God and what God has done for him.

He spreads his hands to God as reaching out to God,

he states he is thirsty for God.

His spirit faints and fails him but he prays that the morning will bring a word from God's unfailing love and declares his trust in God.

In the midst of all this, what does he ask for?

he asks for God to show him the way he should go and takes refuge in God.

Then the request, *"Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness."* Difficult to know the specifics or details of what the Psalmist was going through.

**CONTEXT:** Psalmist relies on the attributes of God. Verse 1, *"In your faithfulness and righteousness come to my relief"* **What he knows of the righteousness of God is that God will stay true to His character, that God is perfect and just in His dealings which is the eternal expression of His unchanging Will. His faithfulness is the attribute which makes it impossible for God to be false to the covenant which He has made with His servants. We must teach more about the attributes of God, this will help us to do His will.**

We don't know specifically what the Psalmist was going through. Most of the time, other don't know what we are going through, nor do we know what others are going through, but we can teach that regardless of circumstances, we can depend on God because He is righteous and Faithful to His covenant with His Church.

<sup>2</sup> *And enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*

**David seems to be referring to a sin** in his life as he pleads for God not to come to him as a judge but as the God of mercy He is. David admits he could never be before God justified with his deeds or works, but **entirely depending on the mercy of God to justify him.**

<sup>3</sup> *For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.* <sup>4</sup> *Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me; my heart within me is desolate.*

<sup>5</sup> *I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands.* <sup>6</sup> *I stretch forth my hands unto thee: my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land. Selah.* <sup>7</sup> *Hear me speedily, O LORD: my spirit faileth: hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit.* <sup>8</sup> **Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning; for in thee do I trust: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk; for I lift up my soul unto thee.** <sup>9</sup> *Deliver me, O LORD, from mine enemies: I flee unto thee to hide me.* <sup>10</sup> **Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.** <sup>11</sup> *Quicken me, O LORD, for thy*

*name's sake: for thy righteousness' sake bring my soul out of trouble. <sup>12</sup> And of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul: for I am thy servant.*

**Doing God's will, will enable us to discern if the teaching is from God or not.**

**Joh 7:17; *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.*** Knowing the will of God will help us to discern if what we teach or are taught is from God. His will for our daily living is in His word.

**Context:** Jesus is questioned about His authority and His identity.

The Jewish leaders wanted to kill Him.

His own brothers did not believe in Him.

**They encouraged Him to do things publicly, showing off.** Jesus understood the timing of God, so He resisted to do things as they suggested.

The world hated Him because He testified of their works as evil. V.10

He went in secret not publicly.

Jewish leaders looking for Him (wanted to kill Him).

*The crowds said, "He is a good man" but did not say it publicly for fear of the leaders.*

Halfway of the festival of the tabernacles, Jesus went to the temple and began to teach.

The Jews were amazed at His teachings, "How did this man get such learning without having been taught.

*Jesus then tells them His teachings are not from His own but from the One who sent Him, in other words, **He was speaking the will of God to them.***

He connects this to anyone who hears and wants to do God's will. *"Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own. Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is a man of the truth; there is nothing false about Him.*

***If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.***

**Rom 12:2; 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. **Renew, your mind, prove, what is that good, acceptable, perfect will of God. When we speak about this verse, we usually stop in the first two verses and we miss knowing, considering much of the will of God for us individually and for the Church.****

*Romans 12:3, be humble. Don't think of yourself highly than you ought, be sober.*

**Serve the body of Christ with humility 12:4-8.** Speaks of the different gifts to be executed with humility. **This is the will of God and we and the congregation need to know and accept this as the will of God and prove it is good, acceptable, and perfect.**

**Life in the Will of God. 12:9-21.** 1. Devote to each other in love; 2. honor one another; 3. **keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord (doing His will)**; 4. **Be joyful in hope**; 5. **patient in affliction**; 6. **faithful in prayer**; 7. **share with the Lord's people who are in need**; 8. practice hospitality; 9. **Bless those who persecute you and do not curse them**; 10 rejoice with those who rejoice; 11. Mourn with those who mourn; 12. live in harmony with one another; 13. Do not be proud but will willing to associate with people of low position; 14. Do not be conceited; 15. Do not repay anyone evil for evil; 15. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone; 16. **If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone**; 17. Do not take revenge; 18. but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord; 19. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; 20. if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head; 21. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. **This is the worldview (perspective of life according to the will of God and we and His Church need to accept it as good, acceptable and perfect. This is the Biblical way of Life.**

**Eph 5:17**, *Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.*

**Context:** **V. 15-16, Be very careful, then, how you live**—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

**Eph 6:6**; **Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart.**

**Context:** Family relationships, working relationships. It is not a conformity of behavior or conduct, it is from the heart. Tozer says theology is not of the intellect, it must be a theology of the heart. *Theology is the study of God and of God's relation to the world.* Not a study of the intellect but of the heart. **Biblical perspective of life.**

There are many more Scriptures dealing with the will of God.

When we talk about God's will, we can talk about God's sovereign will, and then the will that expresses desire, intention, that pleases God. In speaking of God's sovereignty, we must also consider His omniscience and the free will given to man. The fact of the difficulty of sometimes reconciling these three things by our finite mind does not invalidate any of these three realities. There are things about God that we don't understand and need to trust Him and His will.

God's Sovereign will, it is not affected by my response to it. God's sovereign will was to send a Savior regardless of whether I wanted Him or not, whether I believed I needed Him or not. His sovereign will or plan is that Christ will come a second time and there is nothing I can do to prevent it. This will is motivated by His love and not by the desire to impose something on the human being.

We also see God's will being fulfilled or carried out (at least in me and in each person) only because of my or our response to His will in a positive way and in acceptance of it in obedience. For example, He died to forgive my sins and offers me forgiveness, but I need to respond to Him and accept it to be saved. His will is to transform me into the image of His Son, and this is carried out only to the extent that I respond to His purpose. To do this, I must know His will and be willing to do it. The revelation of His love for my life and the opportunity to know Him is always available to me, but my positive or negative response to His love will affect my destiny depending on how I respond to His call. His will is to save every human being, but at the same time, He will not force anyone to accept His forgiveness and salvation.

### **Paul's Prayer for the Church**

With what we have just heard and considering it as foundation, we now look at Paul's prayer for the church and why it is important to pray for us and for the Church to be filled with the knowledge of the will of God.

#### **I. ...You may be filled. (Colossians 1:9). Paul Constantly prayed for the churches:**

a. The word ***filled*** (Plerou) in verse 9 means "*flowing abundantly*" *Jesus said, I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* That is, it is not an event or something that happens only once. It is a continuous flow of living in His will. It implies that a man is completely controlled by the powers that fill him. Paul prays not only that they will be filled with the knowledge of His will, but they must do so in wisdom and spiritual understanding.

b. **In all wisdom-**(spiritual) **(Colossians 1:9).** James 3:13-18 teaches us the kinds of wisdom that can be manifested in us. What Paul prays for is that it will be spiritual wisdom that manifests itself in us. This includes our attitudes, behavior, actions, etc. James distinguishes several kinds of wisdom and their characteristics:

##### **1. Earthly, Animal, Demonic.** James 3:14-16

*But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.*

<sup>16</sup> *For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.*

##### **2. Wisdom that comes from on high.** James 3:17-18.

*"But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.*

<sup>18</sup> *And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."*

This last kind of wisdom is the spiritual one and for which Paul prays to be applied in the knowledge and fulfillment of God's will. The source of this wisdom is not human reasoning or its discovery. The source is God Himself and is given to us by His Word and the Holy Spirit.

These kinds of wisdom are manifested primarily in personal relationships, in marriages, between parents and children, between brothers, between friends, between brothers in the faith. But why is it so difficult to do God's will in spiritual wisdom? Can you write down some reasons why it is difficult for you to do God's will in spiritual wisdom? As pastors, would it be beneficial to ask this question to the congregation as a form of reflection?

c. **The second** thing Paul says in his prayer in this regard is "**Spiritual Intelligence.**"

We find in Scripture that these two terms "wisdom" and "intelligence or knowledge" appear together in many passages. Some examples are:

**Proverbs 9:10:** *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."*

**Proverbs 2:6:** *"For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."*

**Proverbs 4:5:** *"Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth."*

**Proverbs 3:13:** *"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that gains understanding."*

The word intelligence (Greek SUNESIS) means to unite, to gather, to reach an agreement, to accept something we hear and to follow it.

The noun SUNESIS was also used to describe the union of two rivers.

Imagine two streams of water, a small stream that alone would not be able to achieve much, would serve some purpose, but on a very small scale. The other current is a strong flow, a powerful force whose purpose is already defined. It is one of bringing life to many parts or areas, sustaining life within itself, and giving life to every place it flows to. The union of that small current with this powerful current becomes part of something wonderful and grandiose, the small force joins one that is stronger and is made part of the force and power of the flow or stronger current.

So what Paul is praying is that we will be filled (flow abundantly) with the knowledge of His will in **spiritual intelligence** to make a wise, spiritual, and intelligent decision and unite



and surrender our will which is a small, weak stream, to the will of God which is the mighty flow and thus be part of something great that He does.

As Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane as the time approached to give His life as a sacrifice for our sins he said, "*not my will but thine be done.*" (Luke 22:42). Jesus wanted the cup to pass from Him, but He joined His will to God's will and by aligning His will with God's, Christ has come to bring life to millions of human beings and continues to offer that life to all those who do not yet receive Him. This is what He wants from our lives.

This is Paul's prayer for you and me as individuals, as members of the body of Christ, to make us part of the great work that God is doing in the world. Let us align and unite our will to God's in spiritual intelligence, not only to be transformed into His image, but to carry out the work He has entrusted to us of the Great Commission. There will be times when we may be in situations we will say as Jesus said, if it is possible, if there is another way to do your will, let us do it that other way, but in the end, His purpose will be fulfilled in us by surrendering to His will when we say, not my will but yours be done.

Colossians 1:10. *so that you may:*

**1. live a life worthy of the Lord** (*The will of God is not only about doing, working, but living. and*

**2. please him in every way:** *We all want to please Him, as we know His will and know it pleases Him, we want to fulfill His will. congregations need to know and hear this frequently for their own lives.)*

**3. bearing fruit in every good work,** *for that, we need to be good trees that give good fruit and not the bad tree that gives bad fruit.*

**4. growing in the knowledge of God.** *As the deer panteth for the waters, my soul panteth after you.*

Perspective on life.

**Colossians 1:11, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance (patience) and patience, (longsuffering)**

**Patience:** The Greek word is (hupomone) It is related to the word we saw earlier, "abide" means "to endure", "to stand firm", "to endure with courage", "active and energetic resistance to hostile powers.

This kind of patience is not a passive patience like the saying of the ostrich that hides its head in the sand until the storm passes. It is an active patience that not only has the ability to carry or face adversity but turn them into victories. It is a patience

that conquers and deals victoriously with every situation that life sends us. It is patience in circumstances, adversities, difficulties of life. Job is an example of this, he faced every kind of adversity we can imagine, yet the Bible says of Job: *“Behold, we count them **(the people)** happy which endure **(the adversities, afflictions)**. Ye have heard of the patience of Job and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.”* (James 5:11).

**(James 5:7-11).** *“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receives the early and latter rain. **Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door. Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.** Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy*

**Hebrews 10:32-36.** There are many more Scriptures that speak of patience and the will of God.

**Longsuffering:** The Greek word is (**Makrothumía**). Makrothumía is then the gift of God and not the arbitrary cultivation of the virtue of self-control. Its basic meaning is patience with people. Matthew 18:23-25. **Parable of the unforgiving servant.**

Ten thousand talents would equal 60 million denarii. A denarii was one day's wage.

That means he would have to work 60 million days to pay the debt.

The other servant owed 100 denarii, that is 6,000 days' work.

### **The Supremacy of Christ.**

Col 1:15 *“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.”*

Col 1:19 *“For it pleased **the Father** that in Him dwelled all fullness,”*

Remember, the Gnostics taught that Christ was not sufficient so people needed to do other things to complete their salvation.

The word **“image”** implies "representation" and "Manifestation." Although this is a much discussed and difficult topic to understand, the truth is that the rest of Scripture confirms the concept of "manifestation" It is not a copy, not a shadow, but the manifestation of His essence. Hebrews 1:3 says, *“Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image **(The Greek word for this express is "charaktēr" (the English word, character) of his person***

*(His Substance, Nature), and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;"*

Representation is when someone represents someone else but the represented is not present at the place or event. Manifestation, God became and becomes present. When we say the manifestation of His power, He is present, not a representation of His power, but the manifestation of His presence and His power. *"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us."*

**"The firstborn of all creation."**

The context: everything shows that by saying the *"firstborn of every creature,"* he is not saying that Christ was created. There are enough passages that speak of Him being the creator of all things. The next verse, **(1) For by him were all things created, (2) that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: (3) all things were created by him, and for him: (4) And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.** Apart from these verses in Colossians, See John 1:3, 10; 1 Corinthians 8:6.

The term **"firstborn"** does not mean that Jesus was created. It refers more to the supremacy, pre-eminence and superiority of Jesus. *"In the Old Testament, the firstborn has a connotation of rank and retained it later in Judaism."*<sup>1</sup> the blessing was for the firstborn, he was given priority, it led to the responsibility of patriarch, and this is the thought in this passage.

***For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.***

(Colossians 1:19). In Him all the fullness of the deity was pleased to dwell. Colossians 2:9 says: ***"For in him dwells bodily all the fullness of the Godhead."*** Once again, Paul is correcting the error of the Gnostics who said that God and matter could not be in contact, therefore Jesus Christ was not the Son of God. Today there are still those who support the teaching of Gnostics.

Another Scripture that speaks of the fullness of God in Christ, John 1:16, *"For of his fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace."* The fullness of the deity in Christ to reconcile man to God. Ephesians 1:23; 3:19; Colossians 2:9

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## His Participation in Creation

**Paul emphasizes Christ's participation in creation.**

Col 1:16 "For in Him all things were created, *both* in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible; whether thrones or dominions or powers or authorities; everything has been created through Him and for Him."

Col 1:17 "And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."

Col 2:3 "In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge

Col 2:9 "For all the fullness of the Deity resides bodily in Him,"

**Presents the Humanity of Christ.** Col 1:22 "*In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:*" Col 2:9 "*For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*"

Verses 19-23 are a reminder of what Jesus has done for us. Paul does this in almost every letter. The reason is not to evangelize them again, but as reminder of the love of Jesus for them and His sacrifice for them. We need to do that in our churches. If there are new people in the Church, they will hear of the love of Jesus for them. We love Him because He first loved us.

### Session Three

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### **THE GOSPEL PREACHED**

Verses 19-23 are a reminder of what Jesus has done for us. Paul does this in almost every letter. The reason is not to evangelize them again, but as reminder of the love of Jesus for them and His sacrifice for them. We need to do that in our churches. If there are new people in the Church, they will hear of the love of Jesus for them. We love Him because He first loved us.

Colossians 1:20-23, Paul presents the gospel as he writes to the Church. *“And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross <sup>21</sup> Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. <sup>22</sup> But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— <sup>23</sup> if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.” (NIV)*

Paul in most of his letter if not in all of them, while instructing, correcting or exhorting, manages to present the gospel as a reminder to the Church of the great love of God for them

and, maybe, if the letter was being read and unbelievers were present, they would hear the gospel. The following passages are examples of this, there may be more.

Romans 5:1-3, 9-10.

1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

2 Corinthians 3:7-11.

Galatians 1:3.

Ephesians 1: 7; 2:1-6.

Colossians 1:20-23.

1 Thessalonians 1:4-6; 9-10.

2 Thessalonians 2:13-15.

I point this out because it is my conviction, we should always present the gospel whether we are teaching, exhorting or correcting the Church. The Church needs to constantly be reminded of the love of God for them through His sacrifice, redeeming us from sin, reconciled us to the Father.....

#### **PAUL'S SUFFERING FOR THE CHURCHES**

Colossians 1:24-27 Paul shares with the Church his sufferings for them.

**Verse 24** is one that has created confusion in some, and others have taken it out of the context from the rest of Scripture. I will try to present my understanding as clearly as possible.

*"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." This last part is what has caused some confusion. When Paul says, "and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh."*

**some have interpreted it as if Christ's afflictions were not complete, therefore, man needs to make merits through afflictions for his salvation. This is totally incorrect.** The rest of Scripture teaches us that Christ satisfied God's righteousness with His sacrifice. **What Paul says has nothing to do with Christ's saving work through His atoning death on the cross.**

I submit to the reader's consideration that what Paul is saying, is that he is a participant in the sufferings that Christ endured. Paul is possibly saying that, of the afflictions that Christ endured, Paul as proclaimer of the gospel has not experienced all the afflictions that Christ experienced, **speaking not of the work of atonement, but of the afflictions of**

**persecution, rejection, and physical punishment because of the preaching of the gospel.** This as an apostle to whom the ministry to the Gentiles was entrusted. God sends Ananias to pray for Paul and to give him the following message, *"For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."* (Acts 9:16).

**Other passages that speak of the suffering of the believer for Christ's sake:**

*"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."* (Romans 8:17).

*"But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. <sup>14</sup> If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."* (1 Peter 4:13-14).

*"That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."* (Philippians 3:10).

*"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you."* (John 15:18).

We will say more about this in the first verses of chapter two.

Colossians 1:28-29, I believe illustrates what I mentioned above about Paul presenting the gospel in most of his letters. *"to whom we proclaim, admonishing every man (evangelism), and teaching every man in all wisdom (discipleship), in order to present perfect in Christ Jesus every man (Christian Life worthy of Christ, or a life that glorifies Christ);* or Biblical perspective of life, or, His will as to how we are to live.

*for which* (Colossians 1:29. KJV)

**"For which"**. it is an important phrase, he is saying, towards this goal, for the purpose of, is what I work for. I want to reach this goal, the purpose of all I do is this, **to present perfect in Christ Jesus every man**. Therefore,

Verse 29, *I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily*. I work (I work a lot, to the point of exhaustion, until I am fatigued) fighting (fighting with an adversary, striving to achieve this end). Paul does not do all this with his own power, but with the power of God working powerfully in him.

Colossians 2:1-4, *"I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. <sup>2</sup> My goal is that they may be*



*encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, <sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. <sup>4</sup> I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. <sup>5</sup> For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is."*

The Greek word translated "*contend*" is **AGON**, agony. Originally it meant "a place of assembly", then, "a place of competition" or "stadium," and finally, any kind of conflict. Many Christians were taken to the same place of assembly, place of competition, a Roman stadium where gladiators fought to the death, the conflict of Christians was not physical but spiritual by refusing to renounce their faith in Jesus Christ, and falling prey to lions devouring them before the same spectators who watched gladiators fight and shouted frantically both watching gladiators die, and Christians being devoured by lions.

Paul gives us an idea of the responsibility (love, care) for the churches. *"In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, **in cold and nakedness.** (Have you ever been hungry, thirsty, in the cold, without proper clothing while in the ministry, have you lacked resources? **Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches"** (2 Corinthians 11:27-28). Paul is possibly talking about when he worked with his hands for his sustenance, his willingness to continue his ministry even when he did not have the finances of the churches to carry out his mission. Paul suffered in the external aspect, pain, fatigue, hunger, thirst, cold, nakedness.*

Paul focuses on his concern to fulfill God's mission in the churches. **The weight in the spiritual care (praying for and teaching the Church)**. I admire those who have to work to support their families and besides that, they still have the passion for what God has called them in the care of the churches.

Life itself and life in the kingdom of God is a constant conflict. **But our love and dedication to live according to the will of God, will bear the fruit God produces in us and His church.** It's not just a physical but spiritual and moral struggle. *...**"the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force."** (Matthew 11:12).* Paul writes to Timothy and gives him a charge, ***"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."***

(1 Timothy 6:12). In 2 Timothy 4:7 Paul writes to Timothy and sets himself as an example for this young shepherd to follow. "***I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith***"

Prayer is one of the ways to fight for the church because it is in prayer that we intercede for the lost, for the sick, for the Church, for those who are weak in the faith, for those who struggle in life.

The teaching of God's Word is another way to fight by correcting false doctrines that attack the person of Jesus Christ by making less of His sacrifice and sufficiency as Savior. Sometimes the struggle will be in confronting the dangers, physical attacks of those who oppose the gospel message and try to make us renounce our faith. This is happening in some countries, and we are not exempt from it happening in our countries.

Colossians 2:2, "***and united in love,***" The word united is "***knit***" this word describes a garment that is being woven with yarn that can be of the same color or of varied colors. I think more about the variety of colors because when we think of the Church, we are all different from each other.

The idea is this kind of unity requires an interweaving of our lives in which we come to be part of each other's lives. As a fabric in which our lives are interrelated (interwoven) in such a way that we are part of the same creation or divine work in which nothing can separate us from God, no difficulty, no trial, no suffering. And from each other, no offense, no insult, no evil deed, because God's love is stronger than any of these challenges.

***"I tell you this (verses 2-3) so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.*** (Colossians 2:4 NIV).

There are people with a talent to speak with persuasive words and thus convincing and confusing believers leading them to error.

***"Enticing words "*** (***by fine-sounding arguments.***) was a term used in the courts or tribunals to describe the persuasive power of a lawyer's arguments that could cause a criminal to escape just punishment. **It was persuading by arguments and not by evidence.**

**I have been in a court of law as one being questioned by a lawyer trying to indict the church. Questioned with arguments that sounded like truth but were not. Also I have been in a court of law as a member of the jury and have seen and heard lawyers using all kinds of arguments (not evidence) trying to convince us to rule in their favor.**

This was what false teachers did, they presented arguments, but not evidence. The opposite is the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I believe this is why Paul states in Colossians 1:28-29 and 2:1, the importance of teaching the Church with all wisdom so as not to be deceived by arguments and to live as is worthy of Christ. Today this need is no different, the need to strive in prayer and study of the Word of God to teach the Church to be firm in the faith. The following is an example of enticing words (persuasion): *“But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.”* (Matthew 27:20 KJV).

*“Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. 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. For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.”* (Colossians 2:6-7 NIV)

Verse 7 is referring to the false teachers who had the ability to talk in a way that made things sound like truth.

The word stablished implies to ensure, stabilize, to be firm. It is the confirmation of the validity of the authority imparted to us. The term was used to refer to an agreement or decision that was reached in the resolution of a conflict and confirmed (established) with an oath and this gave confidence in the agreement or decision.

If it was a purchase, the seller and the buyer reached an agreement in the presence of witnesses and closed the deal with an oath. We find in Scripture several passages that clarify for us the agreement we have reached with God, the decision to accept His offer of redemption and of a growing and eternal relationship with Him has been confirmed as valid by His sacrifice. The dispute of sin claiming to keep us slaves has been resolved by Christ on the cross and we are authorized to live in the freedom with which Christ sets us free.

### **Warnings Against False Doctrines and Legalism** **Colossians 2:8-23**

While we have some information of the teaching of the Gnostics, we do not have everything they taught. The fact that few remains of the city or objects have been found and give us a few more details about life in this city, what we can do is go directly to Paul's teaching and see what Paul corrects and what he emphasizes regarding the person of Jesus Christ.

Some things we can deduct from the intention of false teachers, as has already been said, was to attack the person and sacrifice of Christ. As for His person, they said that Christ was not the creator of the universe, that He was not God incarnate and therefore Jesus was only a good man, with good moral values, but He could not give salvation to man, therefore, they had to add other things apart from believing in Christ.

*"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." (Colossians 2:8).*

The word "**spoil**" in this verse is the Greek word "*sulagogein*" which described a slave trader. Someone who took other men or nation captives and made them his slaves. This is what Paul is saying to the Colossians, be careful because these teachers only seek to enslave you with persuasive words, hollow philosophy and vain deceit.

When he spoke of hollow philosophies and subtleties, is what false teachers said were necessary apart from the teachings of Christ. These were words that conveyed erroneous teachings, words given false impressions, void of anything profitable.

**For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (Colossians 2:9)** Once again, Paul emphasizes the supremacy of Christ. In Him dwells the fullness of God. God did not dwell in the law, nor in the sacrifices, nor in the observance of days, nor in the eating of certain foods. God dwell in Jesus and God dwells in us, not in our legalism, our traditions or in the observances we fabricate.

### **Jesus Christ does not Need Help from Legalism**

#### **Colossians 2:16-23**

*"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. 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, 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. 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, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; **which all are to perish with the using;**) **after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body: not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.**"*

Paul lists what the Gnostics were trying to add as requisites for salvation and deceive the Colossians.

Verse 20 seems to indicate that there were some believers who had been deceived by the Gnostics and reminds them that they had experienced death to sin and had been resurrected with Christ and tells them, these things that the false teachers have imposed on you have no value.

Next chapter starts a transition to the practical aspects of the Christian life not focusing the attention on the requisites imposed by man, but by the fountain of life which is Jesus Christ.

### Session Four

#### Biblical Way of Life.

Chapter three begins with the encouragement to seek after God, set our heart on things from above and not of this earth. Review Chapter 1:28 -29. Paul evangelizes, disciples to present every man mature in Christ Jesus. Verse 29, To this end, I strenuously contend. As we see chapter three, keep this in mind. He is telling us how we may live a life worthy of Jesus.

*"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. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Colossians 3:1-4).*

Paul is not saying that we are to abandon our responsibilities in this world or that we are to neglect life in this world. Paul makes Christ the object of our search, the divine Christ who is not separated from His humanity, that is, to seek His character, His heavenly values and not the values that come from the human mind. "Set your affection on things above" means, to put your interests on, exercise your mind on things above.

We have died to the demands of works, of self-righteousness, which would make us slaves of the flesh. "Our life is hidden with Christ in God." We have died to the old way of living and are resurrected to a new life in Christ and our life is in Him, He is our refuge, not the world. Acts 17:28 says, "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also his offspring." **Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. In other words, seek to do His will on earth as it is in heaven.**

**In Colossians 3:5-17, Paul explains in a practical way what he says in the first four verses.** We have died to sin and placed in a new position in Christ. In Ephesians 2:6, Paul says that

He raised us up and sat us in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. We are not in heaven, we are not up there, we are still here on earth, so what does it mean that we have been placed in a new position? **This position allows us to learn to live according to God's designs in heaven, it is to learn to live in the position that God has given us in the power of the resurrection. May His will be on earth as it is in heaven. This is not to say that we are already perfect.**

### Abandoning Our Old Way of Life Colossians 3:5-9

*"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;"*

**Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.** (Colossians 3:5). This is, to put to death the things he mentions here. It is not a discipline, I can't say, I'm going to discipline myself not to fornicate, not to have disorderly passions, not to have bad desires, I need to put them to death every day. Some think they can subdue the flesh or the works of the flesh, we cannot subdue the flesh, the flesh is not subject to God's law. **"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Romans 8:7).**

**When it talks about the carnal mind, is talking about the designs of the flesh** "For if you live according to the flesh, ye shall die; but if by the Spirit ye cause the works of the flesh to die, ye shall live." (Romans 8:13). How to make the works of the flesh die? It is only through the Spirit of God Who dwells in us and works in us mightily. We alone cannot, but the Holy Spirit strengthens us to obey God and seek and live according to the things above where Christ is. It is dying to the ego, to our self that wants only to satisfy itself or the flesh.

**Fornication.** (Colossians 3:5). In New Testament times, sexual immorality and impurity were common. In the Roman Empire, this kind of life was the norm. Sexual appetite was regarded as something that had to be satisfied, not controlled. A branch of Gnosticism also taught that since matter is evil and God has no contact with man because He is perfect, then sexual appetite should not be controlled. Paul states that, by Christ's

sacrifice, He offers us the opportunity to live differently if we live in the Spirit we will live, if we live in the flesh, we will die.

**Uncleanness.** (Colossians 3:5). **This is, impurity, physical, mental y moral.** Matthew 5:21-22, 27 are examples of this. *“Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.”*

**Matthew 5:27:** *“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not commit adultery: <sup>28</sup> But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.* Uncleanness could be in our thoughts, our speech, our bodies, our attitudes.”

**Inordinate affection.** (Colossians 3:5). These are disorderly passions. someone tormented and enslaved to disorderly desires by terrible things that do harm to himself and to others. There are many people in the world slaves to pornography, sadly, even Christians are living slaves to these disorderly passions, I do not say this with condemnation for none of us are exempt from falling into this. But I say it with the desire to encourage all of us to live according to the new position in which they have been placed by God. The power of the Holy Spirit is in them to put to death these disorderly passions and evil desires. Disorderly passions are not limited to the sexual aspects, there are disorderly passions of having power, of making riches, of wanting what others have, of anger, anger, envy, lies, everything that manifests itself in the children of disobedience.

**Evil concupiscence.** (Colossians 3:5). The Bible speaks of good and evil desires. The context determines what kind of desires it is talking about. In this passage it is clear it is speaking of evil desires. **In other passages we may see expressions like, disorderly passions or desires, lasciviousness, youthful passions or lusts, wordily passions, passions or desires of the flesh.** All these speak of concupiscence, a desire for what is forbidden, and it causes anxiety and suffering. Concupiscence is the result of the sinful state of the individual.

**Romans 1:23- 24:** *“And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also*

*gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves.”*

Even after we accept Jesus as our savior, we struggle with all these works of the flesh and Paul exhort all Christians in his letter to the churches against these things.

**1 Thessalonians 4:4-5:** *“That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour. Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God.”*

**Romans 13:13-14:** *“Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.”*

**James 1:13-14:** *“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.”*

**The manifestation of these things that Paul speaks of here are not always the product of demonic possession, they are works of the flesh, of our old nature that want to regain control of our lives.** James says it clearly, our own concupiscence attracts us and tries to seduce us. These evil desires do not control our lives as they did when we were without Christ.

The only way they can control us is when we give them permission to do so. When we attribute the works of the flesh to Satan, we are blaming another and not taking responsibility for our deeds. On the other hand, there are times when the depravity of some people leads them to demonic possession. On several occasions I dealt with young people involved in satan worship, their speech and behavior were controlled by spirits of lasciviousness, lust and immorality.

**covetousness, which is idolatry.** (Colossians 3:5). Greed is the disorderly desire to have more. The Greeks defined it as an insatiable desire and said, it is like wanting to fill a bottomless bucket with water. Especially a desire to have what belongs to others. It has a wide range of applications. If it was to have more money, it guided a person to steal or be dishonest in business.

If it was disorderly desire for prestige, it guided a person to a dishonest ambition, if it was disorderly desire for a person, it led him to sexual sin, if it was disorderly desire for power, he guided him to be tyrant and abusive. Paul defines it as idolatry. So idolatry is more



than having wooden or clay idols, it is all that takes the place that God must have. C. F. D. Moule says, ***Idolatry is trying to use God for man's purposes instead of giving us god's service for His purposes.***

All these things are practiced in every society and at all times. Once we have been redeemed and God gives us His Holy Spirit, we can put these things to death so that we are no longer slaves to them. Paul says, before they met Christ, they walked on those paths, but now, they don't have to continue on them. *“For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.”* (Colossians 3:6-7).

It seems that these things were manifested in some members of the Church, so he writes to them in this manner. In our day, unfortunately, these things still manifest themselves. Paul says, we must put them to death.

***“But now you also leave all these things.*** (Colossians 3:8). The word "leave" in the Greek means, undressing, taking off your clothes, putting them aside, that those clothes do not touch your body. Paul goes on with the list of things we should throw away, take them out of our lives, set aside.

**Colossians 3:8** *“But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.”*

**Anger.** this kind of anger is the one that suddenly ignites and just as it begins, it ends. It is an anger that does not last, it is like burning a pile of straw, it flares up quick but also, it goes out quick. It begins very easy, the flame of fire is large, but it is consumed very quickly and goes out.

The problem with this kind of anger is that it can lead us to impulsively do fatal things and after the anger is extinguished, we lament the damage we cause, but sometimes it's too late to remedy what we did. There are people who in a moment of anger like this, have killed another person and then, cry, lament, do not understand how they could have done so much damage. Both kinds of anger should be avoided by the Christian. Paul says, get rid of those things, take them out of your lives, make them die.

**Wrath.** (Colossians 3:8). It is the kind of anger that lasts for a long time, it is like a fire that burns very slowly and very hot, it refuses to be calmed and feeds it to keep it alive.

**Malice.** (Colossians 3:8). This speaks of an evil or vicious heart, mind. The Merrill Webster Dictionary defines it as, “*desire to cause pain, injury, or distress to another.*” It is also defined as, “Inclination to evil and contrary to virtue.” The Greek word implies depravity, wickedness, malignity. When we speak ill of someone without foundation and we do it with the intention of destroying their reputation, their image, their character. We can do it in a moment of anger, machine over time feeding anger towards a person. We make up stories that hurt the person.

**Blasphemy.** (Colossians 3:8). A severely insulting word or expression against someone or something. Insult, offend, in deed or word. Done or said against reason and justice. The context is to avoid doing this against a person. In the context of this passage, it seems to have to do with speech. The last two things mentioned in verse eight are 'blasphemy' and *filthy communication out of your mouth* That is, we should not express ourselves of other people with words that carry the premeditated intention of being insulting and aggravating. Jesus said that these things come out of the heart: “... *theft, greed, evil, deceit, lewdness, envy, **cursing**, arrogance, foolishness.*”<sup>23</sup> *All these evils from within come out, and contaminate man.*” (Mark 7:21-23).

**Ephesians 4:31.** “*Remove from you all bitterness, anger, wrath, screaming and **cursing**, and all malice.*” In these two passages, the word 'blasphemy' is translated curse. Paul exhorts us not to do this with our fellowmen.

*“Throughout the New Testament, the concept of blasphemy is controlled by the thought of the violation of the power and Majesty of God.”*<sup>3</sup> Blasphemy is also the rejection or opposition to God and His Son Jesus Christ. It is doubting Christ's statement that He is the Son of God. Some passages in which the word 'blasphemy' is used to describe this concept.

**1 Timothy 1:13,** “*Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.*”

**Mark 15:29,** “*And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days.*” The blasphemy in this passage was not just what they said, but the unbelief that Christ was who He said He was, the Son of God; it was the mockery with which they shook their heads and the words they spoke.

The alarming, sad, or unfortunate thing (depending on the degree of importance we give to this verse) is that, as a church, as believers we can be the caused for others to blaspheme God's name.

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<sup>3</sup> Theological Dictionary of the New Testament Volume 1 Page 622

*"For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written."*  
(Romans 2:24).

Paul is speaking to the Jews who felt superior for being God's people and did not live according to what God had told them. As a church or as believers, do we feel superior to the unsaved because we have received the revelation of the mystery that Christ is in us the hope of glory? Are we living worthy of the Gospel of Christ? Some blaspheme God's name for their spiritual condition and their rejection of God's love. Others, because of the Church or believers who are not a witness that reflects the life of Christ. This is why it is so important that as pastors we teach the Church about these things, so as not to cause others to blaspheme the name of God.

***filthy communication out of your mouth.*** (Colossians 3:8). This is obscene words, words of curse. These last three words that we have considered have to do with speech and in a negative way. If we consider the positive contrast to these three words, we will see that the believer's speech or communication must be, "**kind, gentle,**" seeking to edify or benefit another person with his words or expression. The communication of the believer must be "**pure**" without deception, without falsehood and without intent to do harm, without using obscene language. The believer's communication is to be, "**truthful, honest**" The Bible tells us to speak the truth in love. It's not just speaking the truth, but doing it in a way that benefits, builds others up.

***Lie not one to another*** (Colossians 3:9). This is to speak or say false things with the intention to deceive. *John 8:43-44, Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

When Paul exhorts the Colossian church to not lie one to another, is telling them to not become agents of the devil, Jesus describes the devil as a liar and the father of lies. This is what the devil has done and continues to do, lie and deceive people and will lie to us and will try to deceive us. He will lie to us and will try to deceive us, so we repeat his lies.

***seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.*** (Colossians 3:9). All these things Paul mentions in these past verses, belong to the old way of life, when we followed the ways of this world, walked in darkness, walked according to the god of this world, when we were death in our trespasses. These things should no longer be a part of our lives.

**Ephesians 4:17:** The old man walked in "the vanity of his mind" the mind includes the whole personality of the individual, intellect, emotions, morality. Vanity, means, useless, without purpose, living on what has no value, living a fantasy.

**Ephesians 4:18:** The old man, had his understanding darkened, blind in his understanding, his way of thinking, of feeling, of deciding, this because of the following condition,

**Ephesians 4:18:** The old man was excluded from the life of God. He was an enemy of God, alien, estranged, separated from life in God, dead in sin. The reason for being in this condition is expressed in the following sentence,

**Ephesians 4:18:** Because of the ignorance in them, and because of the hardness of their hearts. The word **hardness** in Greek used here means "stupidity" because of the stupidity of his heart. We need to consider the full sentence. Ignorance was not one in which they did not know, or were not aware of God, ignorance was because of hardness of heart, they were not innocent, they did not admit the truth of the gospel, they rejected the message therefore they remained ignorant.

**Ephesians 4:19:** The old man was callous and gave himself over to sensuality to commit all kinds of impurities with avidity, greediness, eagerness. By hardening the heart, man becomes insensitive to pain, to moral conscience, a life of debauchery, disorder, and immorality without limits, insensitive to God and His offer of a better life. Unfortunately, our societies still live this kind of life.

As the Church, Paul tells us that what is mentioned in verses 5-9, all has been left behind. The connotation for the phrases "put off" and "put on" is one of slipping into a piece of clothing, putting on clothes. We have taken off the old man, we have taken off the clothes of the old man, the old life, and to not clothe ourselves again with the old man. God offers new clothes for the new man.

**2 Corinthians 5:17:** *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* We are in a new path, new life, new understanding about life, life in God. Verse 10 begins with putting on the new man renewed after the one who created him, Jesus. Verses 12-17 give us the specifications of what we are to put on or to be clothed with.

**Let us Live According to the New Life**  
**Colossians 3:10-17**

*“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 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. 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.”*

*“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: (Colossians 3:10). This speaks of a process, and it is of a lifetime.”*

**(1) This renewal helps us to better perceive reality.** Everything we see in this world is temporary, has a certain degree of falsehood in the way we see it. We act as if the things of this world are eternal. Reality is God, so Paul tells us at the beginning of this chapter, *“look for the things above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Set your sights on the things above, not on those of the earth.”*

**(2) This renewal enables us to experience and express genuine love.** 1 Timothy 1:5, *“But the purpose of our instruction<sup>[e]</sup> is love born of a pure heart, a good conscience, and a sincere faith.”*

We love Him because He first loved us. In Ephesians, Paul prays that we will know the height, depth, length, and breadth of God's love. The possibility to experience His love is immense.

Every moment of our life is to experience His love, the problem for some, is that most of those moments, we do not recognize them as the expression of God's love.

Every breath we take because of His love, every day we have opportunities to experience His love through personal relationships, His manifested presence giving us strength, security, encouragement in difficulties, His grace in tribulation.

By experiencing and acknowledging His love in every moment and situation, He enables us to express genuine love for Him and for our fellowmen, especially in the

Church. Genuine love is the kind of love to which John admonishes us to express, *Sons let us not love in word or tongue, but in deed and in truth.*" (1 John 3:18).

**(3) This renewal empowers us through the Holy Spirit to live a responsible life before God.**

Steven Covey in his book, "7 Habits of Highly Effective People" says responsibility is the ability to respond, presents it as follows by reversing the syllables of the word, "(h)ability-respond" In the case of Christians would be, the ability to respond to God in the proper way, obedience, submission, surrender to His will.

To live responsibly before God is simply to be enabled by the Holy Spirit to respond to God in a way that we glorify Him with our response. Jesus always responded adequately to the Father. What I hear the Father say, that I speak, what I see the Father doing, that I do. May we be renewed day by day enabled by the Holy Spirit to respond adequately to God's will for which Paul prays that we will be filled with the knowledge of that will in wisdom and spiritual intelligence.

As a church, Paul tells us, that for us has been left behind, we have stripped off the old man, we have taken off the old man's clothes, let's not wear those clothes again, God offers us new clothes that we should wear. *"If anyone is in Christ, new creature is, old things have passed, behold all are made new"* (2 Corinthians 5:17). We are on a new path, new understanding of life in God. This is the new garment that God provides for us.

**The Garments God has designed.**

**Colossians 3:12-17,**

*"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 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. 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."*

The phrase “put on” is described by Strong’s concordance as “*sinking into a garment*” or “*to invest with clothing.*” From chapter 3:12 to chapter 4:6, the phrase “put on” is applied to the way of life we are instructed to live in all relationships.

**Bowels of mercies.** (Colossians 3:12). This speaks not only of acts that appear to be mercy, but in fact feel mercy in the heart, in several passages we find Jesus who when he saw the needs of the people, “was moved to compassion or mercy” and healed the sick, comforted those with sadness, raised Lazarus from the dead and removed the anguish of Mary and Martha, resurrected the son of the widow of Nain and healed the anguish of the young man’s mother.

There are many passages that speak of God’s mercy. They are too numerous to mention here. Mercy is part of God’s character. In the Old Testament He was known as the merciful God, Exodus 34:6; Nehemiah 9:17. Micah 6:8, “*He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*”

**Kindness** (Colossians 3:12). Josephus refers to Isaac as a kind and benevolent man, a man who dug wells of water and when others claimed those wells as their own, Isaac refused to fight with them and gave them the wells. One passage that illustrates God’s goodness is in Luke 7:44-50.

The woman who washed Jesus’ feet with her tears, while the owner of the house criticized Jesus for allowing the woman to wash and kiss her feet because she said she was a sinner. “*And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*”

**Humbleness of mind,** (Colossians 3:12). Several passages admonish us to be humble. “*And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.*” (Matthew 23:12). **Luke 18:9-14** tells us about the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector. *And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they*

*were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."*

The Pharisee based his righteousness on his works, but his heart was full of arrogance. He compared himself to the publican and felt superior for his deeds, his works. He despised the publican based on his works not on the grace of God. The publican depended entirely on God's grace, unpretentious, unpretentious. He recognized his inability to attain mercy for his works. His attitude was one of humility not only in words, but in his heart, he did not feel worthy to raise his eyes to heaven, **his prayer was, "Have mercy on me, a sinner.**

**Philippians 2:1-5** gives us the way of life to manifest the humility of Christ in us and verse 5 tells us that Jesus is the model to follow, *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"* for in you this attitude that was also in Christ Jesus. Being equal to God, he did not cling to it, humbled himself and took the form of a servant and became like men. We have nothing to boast about to be arrogant, but we are called to be humble and serve one another. Comparisons between us have no place in the Christian life.

We see Jesus' humility in his sacrificial life. Paul describes it in a very vivid and moving way in **Philippians 2:6-9**: *"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:"*

**Meekness** (Colossians 3:12). The definition of meekness in some secular resources is one of weakness and it is seen not as a virtue, but as a weakness to be avoided. This is not the Biblical definition. Meekness in the Bible is a condition of the heart to depend on God and respond according to His will. Meekness is the disposition of the spirit to accept God's designs or dealings with us as good and to accept them without resistance or argument. Jesus encourages us to learn meekness from Him. *"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."* (Matthew 11:29).



The assumption that is commonly made is that, when someone is meek, it is because they cannot defend themselves. But the Jesus was meek because He had the infinite resources of God at His disposal."

God has made available to us His infinite spiritual resources to follow Christ's example in meekness. When it comes to personal relationships, when we are offended, insulted, mistreated without just cause, especially for the sake of Christ, we have the right to protest to defend ourselves, but Christ's example is to set aside our rights and manifest His life for the benefit of others. We find several passages in which we are exhorted to show meekness in different situations.

**2 Corinthians 10:1:** *"Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you."*

**Titus 3:2:** *"To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men."*

**1 Timothy 6:11:** *"But you, O man of God, flee from these things, and follow righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."*

**Galatians 6:1:** *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."*

**2 Timothy 2:25:** *"<sup>an</sup> meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;"*

It is very difficult to treat each verse and expand it in a writing like this. My recommendation is that you do a study on these verses, meditate on situations in which you yourself have shown meekness towards others and / or, in situations in which you have seen others show meekness.

**Of patience.** (Colossians 3:12). See notes from Chapter 1:11. Apart from what is stated in these notes, we present a few short comments on this word. Sometimes we say of someone, "he is a sufferer" Of Job we say that. Other synonyms of being patient are: someone who does not complain, who carries his burden, pain, suffering without complaining. *"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; <sup>And</sup> patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."* (Romans 5:3-5).

Patience is part of a process of growth and maturity. Patience is not an option; it is a necessity in spiritual growth. Patience has its reward at the end of the trial or tribulation. Hebrews 10:36, *“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.”* Here we see the relationship of patience to God's will. Following are some passages to consider with respect to the need of patience in different circumstances:

#### **Discipline from God.**

**Hebrews 12:7:** *“If you endure discipline, God treats you as children; for what son is he whom the father does not discipline?”* The word bear in Greek is the same word for patience.

#### **Suffering unjustly.**

**1 Peter 2:20:** *“For what glory is it, if by sinning you are slapped, and you endure it? But if by doing good you suffer, and endure it, this is certainly approved before God.”* Again, the word bear is the same Greek word for patience.

#### **Patience doing good.**

**Romans 2:7:** *“Eternal life to those who, persevering in doing good, seek glory and honor and immortality.”* The word Persevering is the Greek word for patience.

#### **Running the race in front of us**

**Hebrews 12:1:** *“Therefore, since we have around us our great cloud of witnesses, let us also put off all the weight and sin that so easily envelops us, and let us run <sup>patiently[to]</sup> the race that lies ahead.”*

#### **Maturing through patience.**

**James 1:4:** *“But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”*

#### **Reigning with Him**

**2 Timothy 2:11-12:** *“That if we die with Him, we will also live with Him; If we persevere, we will also reign with Him.”* Persevere is the Greek word related to patience. It means to undergo, to bear (trials), persevere, endure.

We can see now why Paul prays in chapter 1 *“Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; giving thanks to the*

*Father who has enabled us to share the inheritance of the saints in light. **strengthened with all power.***

Both words, strengthened and power have the same root *greiga, dunamo. And dunamis.* The same word used in Acts 1:8 *“but you will receive **power** when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you **will be witnesses** to me in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

The power of God through His Spirit is not just to do miracles, healings, we usually use this verse exclusively for this. And yes, it empowers us to have His grace flow through us for healings, miracles, and wonders. We are not denying this. However, if we limit His power to this alone, we are limiting His power to work in our lives the patience and long-suffering that are necessary to live the circumstances described in the verses above.

When we suffer because of God's discipline, when we suffer unjustly, patient doing good, etc. etc. If you are a pastor reading this, I ~~put~~ submit this for your consideration, if we omit this kind of teaching for the Church, we are not serving the congregation as pastors who feed the flock with what is necessary to be strong and endure the harshness in life, the spiritual storms. The word "witnesses" is the Greek word meaning "martyr."

We will be martyrs not only for the miracles God does, but for the mere fact of being Christians. There are brothers in other countries who, although they are not working miracles, are being martyred for their faith in Christ. That power we speak of to perform miracles is the same power strengthening our brethren to be willing to be martyrs for the cause of Christ.

**Longsuffering.** (Colossians 3:12). We already wrote about longsuffering in chapter, please see notes. What we can say about longsuffering here, is, ending the verse with this virtue, what Paul says in the following verses is in the context of longsuffering, that is, patience with people.

**Colossians 3:13** *"Bearing one another, and forgiving one another if anyone complains against another. In the way that Christ forgave you, so do you."*

**Bearing one another.** The train of thought in this verse continues with having received power to live as Paul admonishes us in this verse. We need the power of God to be able to do this. From ourselves, we cannot live bearing and forgiving each other, we are unable to do so. It is God's life in us that enables us to bear and forgive.

If someone thinks this is easy, think again. Perhaps we see this lived more in the family. Think about what your wife, husband, and children have had to bear from you. Unfortunately, not all families live it. Divorce, separations, children running away from home, resentments that are expressed when there are divorces and even some who remain in marriage live a life of resentment and of not bearing and forgiving each other.

The Bible does not specify that we endure and forgive ourselves only in the family. These words are addressed to the Church, the body of Christ, to you and to me. As in everything, Christ does not ask us to do something that He has not set an example for us with His life. *As Christ forgave you, so do you.* (Colossians 3:13).

**Romans 2:4: God bearing with us.** *“Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?”*

**Ephesians 4:2: We need longsuffering to keep the unity.** *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

**1 Corinthians 4:11-13: longsuffering in persecution.** *Even unto this present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place; And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: Being defamed, we intreat: we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.*

**2 Corinthians 11:1-2:** *“Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.”* Here he does not use the same word for patience as in other passages. The expression “bear with me” is interrelated with patience, we need patience to endure each other.

**Ephesians 4:32:** *“And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.”*

**Forgiving one another, if any one complains against another. As Christ forgave you, so do you** (Colossians 3:13). This is granting grace freely, forgiving with gentleness. It is the removal of the cause of the offense.

**Ephesians 4:32, “Be rather kind to one another, merciful, forgiving one another, just as God forgave you in Christ.”** When someone offends us, we need to meditate, remember

how Christ responded to our offense. Once we are clear about how Christ forgave us, he showed grace, kindness, mercy, has been patient with us, we will be able to follow His example.

**Colossians 3:14-17.**

*“And above all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond. And may the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you were also called in one body; and be grateful. The word of Christ dwells abundantly in you, teaching and exhorting one another in all wisdom, singing gracefully in your hearts to the Lord with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

***And above all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond.*** (Colossians 3:14).

The reason for putting on love above all things is because it is from love that the virtues mentioned above flow. By saying clothed with love, means to be clothed with God, for God is love.

***Which is the perfect bond.*** (Colossians 3:14). It is a principle of unity. This word means, what is between two objects and serves to unite them. The context of this passage means the joints and ligaments.

*From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.* (Ephesians 4:16- NIV)

*Ligaments are connective tissue structures that bind joints allowing physiological movements of joints and limiting abnormal or harmful movements. Ligaments have 3 main functions. See explanation below.*

1. *They stabilize the articular ends.*
2. *They guide the movement.*
3. *They facilitate proprioceptive information by sending information, through nerve endings to the central nervous system.*

*Ligaments have a very high degree of specialization, since they are extraordinarily defined tissues to fulfill their function.*

If we apply this to the body of Christ we would say, that it is the love (God) that every member of the body of Christ holds together,

1. ***They stabilize the articular ends.*** It gives stability to the movements, activities, attitudes, intentions of each member to help each other grow, mature, endure, forgive, protect and be united to each other.

2. ***They guide the movement.*** limiting abnormal or harmful movements.
3. ***They facilitate proprioceptive information by sending information, through nerve endings to the central nervous system.*** Spiritually speaking, when the information of help, edification, forgiveness, peace, kindness, humility and the messages are received and accepted in love, the body is strengthened and fulfills its function not only internal but the external expressed in the work of the ministry. This is what "perfect bond" means.

Other passages that speak of the bond are:

**Ephesians 4:3-6:** "... *solicitous in keeping the unity of the Spirit in the **bond of peace.***"

(Read all verses). It is a call to the community of faith to walk as is worthy of God's call keeping the unity of the Spirit. Not what I think unity is, it's what the Spirit defines as unity.

***And the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which you were also called in one body; and be grateful. V.15,*** There are several passages that speak of peace. This verse speaks of peace among us as the body of Christ. Peace that comes first from God and that we experience when we put off the old man and put on the new man and live under the order of this new man being renewed by the Holy Spirit.

In the bond of peace. (SEE COMMENT ON "BOND" IN VERSE 14). Here he speaks of living in a state of peace with one another that is only possible when we love each other as Christ loves us. Romans tells us that in chapter 14:17-19: *because the kingdom of God is not food or drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who in this serves Christ pleases God, and is approved by men. So let us follow what contributes to peace and mutual edification.* Other passages are: 2 Corinthians 13:11; Mark 9:50; James 3:18.

**Mark 9:50** in particular is of interest because it refers to the effect that our relationship of peace or our relationship without peace can have on society and the world. *"Salt is good; but if salt becomes tasteless, what will you season it with? Have salt in yourselves; and have peace with one another."* Salt has beneficial properties, prevents food corruption, gives flavor so that food is enjoyed, has antiseptic properties. In the Middle East, salt has become to this day a symbol of fidelity and friendship.

2 Chronicles 13:5: *"Ought ye not to know that the LORD God of Israel gave the kingdom over Israel to David for ever, even to him and to his sons by a covenant of salt?"*

This verse in Mark 9:50 speaks of the health and spiritual strength for Christian virtue that counteracts the corruption that exists in the world and tries to infiltrate the Church. When

he says, if the salt loses its flavor, it becomes tasteless, *"What will you season it with? Have salt among yourselves and be at peace with one another."*

The desire to be at peace with one another needs to be in everyone. If I wish to be at peace with another person, but that person does not want peace with me or vice versa, that person or I, we are becoming tasteless and losing health and strength in Christian virtue that will make us powerless to counter the corruption of the world and we will be trampled by the world.

The gospel is preached with word, but more with the way we live. The unity of the Church is by the bond of love, the bond of peace. We will disagree on some things that do not affect our salvation, when they do, we can love and be at peace with one another. Unity is not in a project of building a temple, nor in a doctrinal aspect, unity is in Christ who is the head of the Church, and we are His body. Jesus said, *'In this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.'* If there is love, there is peace between us. John exhorts us to love each other not in word or tongue, but in deed and in truth.

The second part of **Colossians 3:15** emphasizes that to this peace we have been called as a body, as a church. That is part of the life of the Church, it is not just working, being engaged in external things, it is living the life in Christ. Paul said, *'I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.'* (Galatians 2:20). The peace of which the apostle speaks here is only achieved when we allow His life in us to be manifested with His virtues. Living this way is more difficult than we think, so we need to make our ego die and allow Christ to express His life through us. We must always remember, we need the strength, power and might that works in us for all patience and long-suffering. Colossians 1:11.

There are personal situations in which we need inner peace in the midst of adverse circumstances, intimidation, threats either from people or situations in life, and we need that peace or rest that comes from our trust in God. Matthew 11:28-30; John 14:27; John 16:33; Philippians 4:4-7 are some passages in which God calls us to have peace by trusting in Him.

**Colossians 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."*

May the "*logos*" of Christ dwell **in abundance** in you. The phrase "*dwell in you*" implies living place, that is, that the Word of Christ makes its dwelling place in us, it is the same word used when Scripture says, that God dwells in the lives of believers, 2 Corinthians 6:16; The Holy Spirit dwelling in us, Romans 8:11; 2 Timothy 1:14; The faith that dwells in us 2 Timothy 1:5. This life in God is ideal. Unfortunately, we can also allow sin to dwell in us, Romans 7:17.

The word "*in*" implies position, being in place, this carries a very varied idea of situations. It can refer to a guard being in his place or position to protect something or someone, an athlete being in position for the race, a soldier being in his position to attack or defend what has been entrusted to him. We have heard the phrase of instruction given by a general or a superior to a group of soldiers when they are under attack and are told, "*maintain your position.*" May the word of Christ always be in position in us to protect us from the evil one and at the same time, always be in position to be used as a weapon against the evil one and against the works of the flesh. Jesus used God's Word to defeat the devil in the wilderness when Christ was tempted.

Not only that the word dwell and be in position in us, but dwell in abundance, that is, there is richness in the Word of God, **Colossians 2:2-3**: "*That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;*<sup>3</sup> *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* I recommend that we study the following passages about God's riches and His Word." **Ephesians 1:7-8; Ephesians 2:4; Ephesians 3:8; Romans 2:4; Ephesians 2:7; Philippians 4:19; Colossians 1:27; Job 23:12; Psalm 119:72; Proverbs 2:1-5; 2 Corinthians 9:10-11; James 2:5; 2 Corinthians 4:7.**

That God's Word dwell in abundance in us has a purpose apart from what we have mentioned about defending and being used as a weapon against the evil one. The purpose in the Church is: *teaching and exhorting one another in all wisdom.* This is something we have to do to each other; this requires humility on the part of all to give and receive teaching and admonition without belittling anyone for their social status or degree of education.

The difference between admonishing and teaching, "admonishing" is putting in the mind, making people think, usually it has to do with correction, training with words either encouraging, correcting, or warning someone for their actions or attitudes. That is why we said that, for this, we need humility both to give and to receive admonition. 1 Corinthians 10:11 we have an example of admonition, "*Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*" 2 Timothy 3:16, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*" The admonition is to



be given with wisdom that is pure, peaceful, kind, full of mercy, of good fruits and without hypocrisy.

*“Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.”* Praising God with grace in the heart, it is not only singing for the sake of singing, singing beautifully, but with gratitude, under divine influence, reflecting with joy on the life we have in Christ.

**Colossians 3:17:** *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

This exhorts us to think before speaking and doing anything for others, it is not only to say what we think is good or to do what we think is good, but to always remember that for what we say and do to have value, we need to do it in the Name of Jesus. Christ Himself said in Mark 9:41: *For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.* When we pray, we ask in the Name of Jesus. To say and to do everything in the Name of Jesus and thanking God the Father through Him. This prepares us for the section that follows. How we speak and act in family relationships.

There is a tale written by a Danish author and translated by Hans Christian Anderson. Even though is fiction, it illustrates a truth about pride, arrogance, and pretension.

*Many years ago, there was an Emperor so exceedingly fond of new clothes that he spent all his money on being well dressed. He cared nothing about reviewing his soldiers, going to the theatre, or going for a ride in his carriage, except to show off his new clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day, and instead of saying, as one might, about any other ruler, "The King's in council," here they always said. "The Emperor's in his dressing room."*

*In the great city where he lived, life was always gay. Every day many strangers came to town, and among them one day came two swindlers. They let it be known they were weavers, and they said they could weave the most magnificent fabrics imaginable. Not only were their colors and patterns uncommonly fine, but clothes made of this cloth had a wonderful way of becoming invisible to anyone who was unfit for his office, or who was unusually stupid.*

*"Those would be just the clothes for me," thought the Emperor. "If I wore them, I would be able to discover which men in my empire are unfit for their posts. And I could tell the wise*

*men from the fools. Yes, I certainly must get some of the stuff woven for me right away." He paid the two swindlers a large sum of money to start work at once.*

*They set up two looms and pretended to weave, though there was nothing on the looms. All the finest silk and the purest old thread which they demanded went into their traveling bags, while they worked the empty looms far into the night.*

*"I'd like to know how those weavers are getting on with the cloth," the Emperor thought, but he felt slightly uncomfortable when he remembered that those who were unfit for their position would not be able to see the fabric. It couldn't have been that he doubted himself, yet he thought he'd rather send someone else to see how things were going. The whole town knew about the cloth's peculiar power, and all were impatient to find out how stupid their neighbors were.*

*"I'll send my honest old minister to the weavers," the Emperor decided. "He'll be the best one to tell me how the material looks, for he's a sensible man and no one does his duty better."*

*So the honest old minister went to the room where the two swindlers sat working away at their empty looms.*

*"Heaven help me," he thought as his eyes flew wide open, "I can't see anything at all". But he did not say so.*

*Both the swindlers begged him to be so kind as to come near to approve the excellent pattern, the beautiful colors. They pointed to the empty looms, and the poor old minister stared as hard as he dared. He couldn't see anything, because there was nothing to see. "Heaven have mercy," he thought. "Can it be that I'm a fool? I'd have never guessed it, and not a soul must know. Am I unfit to be the minister? It would never do to let on that I can't see the cloth."*

*"Don't hesitate to tell us what you think of it," said one of the weavers.*

*"Oh, it's beautiful -it's enchanting." The old minister peered through his spectacles. "Such a pattern, what colors!" I'll be sure to tell the Emperor how delighted I am with it."*

*"We're pleased to hear that," the swindlers said. They proceeded to name all the colors and to explain the intricate pattern. The old minister paid the closest attention, so that he could tell it all to the Emperor. And so he did.*

*The swindlers at once asked for more money, more silk and gold thread, to get on with the weaving. But it all went into their pockets. Not a thread went into the looms, though they worked at their weaving as hard as ever.*

*The Emperor presently sent another trustworthy official to see how the work progressed and how soon it would be ready. The same thing happened to him that had happened to the minister. He looked and he looked, but as there was nothing to see in the looms he couldn't see anything.*

*"Isn't it a beautiful piece of goods?" the swindlers asked him, as they displayed and described their imaginary pattern.*

*"I know I'm not stupid," the man thought, "so it must be that I'm unworthy of my good office. That's strange. I mustn't let anyone find it out, though." So he praised the material he did not see. He declared he was delighted with the beautiful colors and the exquisite pattern. To the Emperor he said, "It held me spellbound."*

*All the town was talking of this splendid cloth, and the Emperor wanted to see it for himself while it was still in the looms. Attended by a band of chosen men, among whom were his two old trusted officials-the ones who had been to the weavers-he set out to see the two swindlers. He found them weaving with might and main, but without a thread in their looms.*

*"Magnificent," said the two officials already duped. "Just look, Your Majesty, what colors! What a design!" They pointed to the empty looms, each supposing that the others could see the stuff.*

*"What's this?" thought the Emperor. "I can't see anything. This is terrible!"*

*Am I a fool? Am I unfit to be the Emperor? What a thing to happen to me of all people! - Oh! It's very pretty," he said. "It has my highest approval." And he nodded approbation at the empty loom. Nothing could make him say that he couldn't see anything.*

*His whole retinue stared and stared. One saw no more than another, but they all joined the Emperor in exclaiming, "Oh! It's very pretty," and they advised him to wear clothes made of this wonderful cloth especially for the great procession he was soon to lead. "Magnificent! Excellent! Unsurpassed!" were bandied from mouth to mouth, and everyone did his best to seem well pleased. The Emperor gave each of the swindlers a cross to wear in his buttonhole, and the title of "Sir Weaver."*

*Before the procession the swindlers sat up all night and burned more than six candles, to show how busy they were finishing the Emperor's new clothes. They pretended to take the cloth off the loom. They made cuts in the air with huge scissors. And at last, they said, "Now the Emperor's new clothes are ready for him."*

What we can see in this story is, as Christians, we can put aside the old man (nature) but if we do not clothe ourselves with new clothing God has prepared for us and Paul describes them in this passage of Colossians three, we are like the emperor who thought he was wearing the best clothes when in reality he was naked.

Sometimes we think that because we take off the old way of life, the old man, we automatically are wearing the new clothes but in reality, we are spiritually naked and the world sees our spiritual nakedness and mocks us. Paul speaks of both, putting off the old man and putting on the new man. Verses 10-17 are the new clothes we are to put on. If we are honest with ourselves, we can tell if we are clothed with Christ or not. We will know if like the emperor are pretending to wear the best spiritual clothes when we are not. We speak much about being a new creature in Christ Jesus, it is true. What we often ignore or neglect, is to walk and live as a new creature and the way to do this is found in verses 10-17 of Colossians 3.

**The tailored Clothing designed by God for Family Life  
Colossians 3:18-21**

*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.*

There is plenty of material that has been written about the family relationship, especially the relationship between husband and wife. There are teachings that don't agree with each other depending on the emphasis placed on the interpretation of what the Bible says about this very important relationship.

What I want to clarify in what is my understanding of this portion of Scripture related to other passages is the following. When the Bible address the wife, husband, parents, and children, it is addressing them individually, it is the responsibility of each one to respond or to obey God depending on God's dealings with each one.

As a husband, God does not tell me to make my wife submit to me as a husband, God is speaking to my wife not me and so it is with the rest of the family members. I have heard teachers (men) emphasize the submission of the wife to the husband, but little emphasis on the husband to love his wife as Christ loved the Church.

**Wives.** (Colossians 3:18). This does not say that wives are subject to all men as I have heard in some teachings. In some churches I have heard that women should be subject to everything that any man in the Church commands or instructs them. This is not what Scripture says. Wives are subject to their own husbands not to the husbands of other women.

**Submit yourselves unto your own husbands.** (Colossians 3:18). This is what God says to wives. The wife has the free will to do it or not to do it. The husband does not have the authority to force his wife to submit to him. God didn't give him that task. This is personal between God and the wife. The wife will give an account to God for her obedience or disobedience to Him. No, this is not verbal manipulation because the same will be said about God's personal dealings with the husband. When the wife feels secure of spiritual cover, protection, loved, appreciated, desired, she herself will submit to the husband knowing that she will not be abused or mistreated.

**As it is fit in the Lord.** (Colossians 3:18). The word "*fit*" carries the idea of reaching a goal or the completion of a dress which is tailored to the person, or, fit into a plan. God's plan, design is for the wife to voluntarily come to that state of submission to her husbands because this is what God designed, not because the woman is less than the man, but because it is the order that God established, not a hierarchical order, but an order of function.

**Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.** (Colossians 3:19). The word love is the word "agape" the same word used in John 3:16 where it says the kind of love with which God loved the world that He gave to His only begotten Son. Ephesians 5, he says to husbands, "*love your wives as Christ loved the Church.*" As part of the Church, we experience God's love, His protection, His care, His tenderness, His patience, His security and we are more likely to trust Him, to submit to Him, we are not forced to submit to Him, we do it out of our will and voluntarily.

God tells us, husbands, to love our wives as He loves us. He loved us with a sacrificial love. I have had conversations with my wife regarding my conduct about this subject. I have learned some good things, but others, no so good about loving her as Christ loved the

Church, about giving her security (emotional) about spending time with her, about putting her first and love her sacrificially.

I think it would be good for every husband to hear his wife talk about this aspect of the relationship. Someone may say, what about the wife listening to what the husband has to say about her submission to him? If the wife is interested to hear what the husband has to say, she will ask him. Here, we are talking about the husband not the wife.

***And be not bitter against them.*** (Colossians 3:19). The word “*bitter*” here means something that cuts, sharp, pointed like an arrow or a knife, something that penetrates the senses, a pungent smell. Bitter taste of plants. Causing pain and torment. Hostile, cruel.

We do this when we act in wrath, anger, resentment, we come to be slaves to these things and therefore we act according to them. Let us not be recalcitrant, obstinate, stubborn with our wives, clinging to an opinion or conduct without considering the possibility we may be wrong. When we act in this way towards our wives, we create bitterness in their lives and their life becomes like a river of bitter waters from which they drink day after day.

Obviously here we cannot deal with all this in too much detail, but we hope that this can be a motivation for us to examine our lives and relationship with our wife and correct what needs to be corrected and, if we are pastors, teach the congregation these things and at least that marriages have the option to consider these truths.

***“Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.***  
(Colossians 3:20).

***Children, obey your parents in all things.”*** The same principle to whom God is speaking directly applies here. Here, in these words, God is dealing with children not parents. Children will be responsible for God's dealings with them as children. By saying obey, it means, listen carefully, it is the same meaning as when Christ said to the disciples “*take heed how you hear.*” Obey, pay attention to what your parents say to you, do not ignore them or turn them off by thinking they don’t know what they are talking about. *for this pleases the Lord.* This aligns with God's will.

***Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.*** (Colossians 3:21). Do not provoke, do not stimulate your children to discouragement. We do this in the same way that we talk about being bitter with our wives, we cause the same results in them and they become discouraged in every aspect of life as human beings, as a family, as children of

God, making them think that God the Father is like us and they lose confidence in Him. It is said that Luther's father was so strict and stern with him that Luther when he prayed, had difficulty saying, "Our Father" To him, the word father only meant severity. All this does not eliminate discipline, but discipline in love and praise when the son pleases God,

**The Tailored Clothing designed by God for Labor Relationships**  
**Colossians 3:22**

*“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God; And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.”*

We title this part "Labor Relationships" even though at least in our regions there is no slavery. Paul's advice can be applied to our labor relationships and speaks not only to the employee, but also to the employer. Some members in our congregations are employees of an office or factory, other members are patrons or bosses. The message is for both.

Paul no doubt had conversations with Onesimus who a slave of Philemon was and from whom Onesimus had fled. The letter to Philemon is to be read in conjunction with this passage of Colossians and the first part of chapter 4. Paul speaks to all who might be in the situation of Onesimus and Philemon.

***Servants***, all those who are servants voluntarily or involuntarily, ***obey in everything***. Obey, it is the same word he uses to speak to children to obey their parents. **See notes from Colossians 3:20** to avoid repeating what has already been said.

***Your masters according to the flesh***. (Colossians 3:22). To their earthly lords, their superiors. Today we would say to our office bosses, bosses of a factory. The worker must be a conscious and responsible worker to his work and his superiors. What Paul is saying is that his faith in Christ should make him a better worker. This is not to say that the worker will not face difficult times or times of injustice and should not avoid such times, but his faith in Christ will enable him to face those times better than when he was without Christ.

***Not with eyeservice, as men pleasers***. (Colossians 3:22). This can refer to two situations: 1) When the employee always needs to be watched in his work because he has given reasons to be distrusted. 2) Not just do a good job when they are watching him, and not do a good

job when they are not being watched. We sometimes hear the expression; *we sweep the dirt under the rug*, instead of cleaning all, including what is under the rug. Work with a sincere heart regardless of how you are treated. By working in this way, you can earn the trust and respect of your superiors and cause them to treat you better for your conduct and work ethic. All this for fear of God.

**Living Unto God**  
**Colossians 3:23-25**

***And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.*** (Colossians 3:23).

In all, family relationships, labor relationships, relationships in the Church, relationships with non-believers, and in ministry relationships, the reason we are admonished to treat our fellowmen, as well as for our attitude toward them is that we are doing it as unto the Lord and not just for men. The life instructions given to each member of the family, we are to do it as unto the Lord, as part of our service to Him This is very difficult to carry out because it is difficult to separate the fact that someone treats us badly or is unfair to us to the fact that what we do we do for the Lord and not for men. By doing so. We do it not out of fear but from the heart.

***Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*** (Colossians 3:24). Jesus said, in this world you will have tribulation, difficult times, but do not be afraid, I have overcome the world. When we do what God tells us with God's spirit and heart, the reward comes from God because we are doing everything as service to Him.

***But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.*** (Colossians 3:35).

If the boss, business owner is unfair to the workers he will give account before God for the injustices done. Both boss and employee (when both are Christians) must remember that what they do is for the Lord.

The difficult thing is when the boss is not a Christian and is abusive and unjust and they exist in the world. What to do in these circumstances? Work as unto the Lord and perhaps God will touch the heart of the boss. The other option is to pray for another job. Most of us want the reward now and here in this world. We won't always get the reward when we



want it and where we want it. We need to trust God and accept His times. As we experience these difficult times, God is wanting to strengthen our lives,

By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. (Romans 5:2-5).

## Chapter 4

This chapter continues with the aspect of the final relationships and exhortations concluding the letter to the Church.

*“Masters, do what is just and right with your servants, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.”* (Colossians 4:1).

**Masters.** Those in authority over others. *“give”* This means, present, exhibit, that which is just and equitable, not only in the payment of their labor, but in the way they are treated. The payment of their labor is to be just, fair, equitable to the labor and not fraudulent, abusive and not stealing from them. The premise for this is that masters also have a master in heaven. *“Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty”* (James 5:4 – NIV).

If we read the letter to Philemon, we will realize that it is obvious that he is using the situation of Onesimus and Philemon to teach others that they were in the same conditions. The admonition to do the right and just thing with the servants is to remind them that they have a superior in heaven and if they have a relationship with that master, they should learn to treat their servants as the heavenly master treated them. God is right and just in all His ways and in His deeds.

### Call for the Church to Persevere in Prayer

Colossians 4:2-4

*Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; 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: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.*

***“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.”*** (Colossians 4:2). Perhaps one of the hardest things to accomplish. There are many things that try to interfere with our prayer life. Tiredness, sleepiness, discouragement, distractions, work, but Paul says continue in prayer despite these obstacles. Sometimes it seems that our prayers do not go out of the walls of our place of prayer, the solution is not to stop praying, but to continue, to persevere and God will manifest Himself with His presence. I think this happens to all of us, if not to all.

When Paul says, *“and watch,”* he is telling them to be alert, be vigilant, stay awake. Perhaps he was thinking of the Garden of Gethsemane when Jesus asks his disciples to watch and pray with Him and the disciples succumbed to sleep and slept. Or perhaps on the day when they were on the mount of transfiguration, when in spite of being exhausted, they remained awake and saw the glory of God. while Jesus prayed, the appearance of His face became different, and his white garment shone and Moses and Elijah appeared surrounded by the glory of God talking to Jesus about His departure that He would fulfill in Jerusalem.

Of the disciples Luke says, *“And Peter and those who were with him were sleepy; but remaining awake, they saw the glory of Jesus, and the two men who were with him.”* Paul is saying in this passage in Colossians, watching in prayer, we will see the glory of God that He wants to show us.

***With thanksgiving.*** (Colossians 4:2). we always have something to thank God for. He has been so good, merciful, compassionate in manifesting Himself in any need, pleasant or unpleasant situation in life and we see His glory in the midst of such circumstances.

***Colossians 4:3-4: praying also at the same time for us, that the Lord may open the door for us for the word, that we may make known the mystery of Christ, for which I am also imprisoned, that I may manifest it as I must speak.***

The second point of prayer that Paul asks for is for him, but not so much in terms of his person or his needs, but for God to open the door to fulfill God's mission, to reveal what was a mystery but has been revealed, God loving us by giving His Son Jesus Christ the redeemer of the world.

**Another Way of Saying We are the Salt of the World**  
**Colossians 4:5-6**

**Colossians 4:5:** *Walk wisely to those outside, redeeming time. Let your word always be graceful, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you should respond to each one.*

***Walk wisely to those on the outside.*** (Colossians 4:5). that their behavior be such that, those outside see the difference in their lives, it is not only preaching with words, but with life itself. We have quoted Philippians 1:27 where Paul exhorts the Church to live (walk) as is worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Outsiders or non-believers are not only listening to our words, but they are watching our behavior, our life. If the words do not match our lives, we are driving them away from the way of salvation.

***redeeming time.*** (Colossians 4:5). The word redeeming means to buy a time or to take every opportunity to present the gospel that when that opportunity passes no longer returns. Time, speaks of an epoch, an opportune time, a period of time, example, when we talk about some fruit or vegetable we say, this is the time in which a certain fruit or vegetable is harvested.

***Let your word always be graceful.*** (Colossians 4:6). That is, with divine influence, not words of human wisdom, but words that come from the heart of mercy, love, encouragement reflecting on the life we have in God and it is the life we share with those outside.

***Seasoned with salt, so that you know how you should respond to each one.*** (Colossians 4:6). When we talk about having peace with each other, we talk about salt, if salt loses its flavor, it serves only to be trampled. Salt creates thirst, so, when Paul says that our words be with grace and seasoned with salt, is to produce in the hearers a thirst to want to hear more of Jesus. Here Paul says your words be seasoned with salt, with the peace of God, to respond appropriately to each one. There will be times when others will mock us for our faith, we will be rejected for our faith, we will be insulted, persecuted for our faith, in Jesus we have the example of how to respond to these circumstances.

### **Colossians 4:7-18**

*All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts; With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.*

*Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;) <sup>And</sup> 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. 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. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you. Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house. 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. And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it. The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.*

The Church was interested in knowing what had happened to Paul, Tychicus, and Onesimus. Verses 7-9, Paul tells the Church, Tychicus, and Onesimus will give them a report. The Church was not being a police officer to them demanding a report of their activities, it was a sincere concern for their welfare and wellbeing. At the same time, Paul is concerned about the Church and tells them he is sending these two men to comfort their hearts.

*“Epaphras greets you, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, always praying earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may be firm, perfect, and complete in all that God wills.”* (Colossians 4:12). Paul begins the epistle with the prayer that they be filled with the knowledge of God's will. Epaphras prays the same prayer for the Church, that they may be firm, perfect and complete "in all that God wills". **This can be translated into all that is God's will.**

Paul ends the letter by recommending those who have been with him trusting that they will be of blessing, comfort, and encouragement to the Church.

**Tychic.** – (Colossians 4:7). His name means happy, fortunate. Tychicus, a believer from Asia who was one of the delegates to deliver the donations/offerings for the Church in Jerusalem. We find his name as one of those who accompanied Paul, Acts 20:4. He was one of the bearers of the letters to the Ephesians and the Colossians, Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7. From what Paul says of Tychicus who would inform the churches about what Paul was going through, it seems that Paul totally trusted Tychicus. *“Paul refers to him as saying that he was “beloved brother and faithful minister and servant in the Lord” (Col 4:7).*

**Onesimus.** – (Colossians 4:9). We already talked a little about Onesimus. He was a slave of Philemon who escaped and possibly made his way to Rome which was common for many fugitives like him. Everything indicates that Onesimus became a believer and Paul persuaded him to return to his master. In the aftermath of that incident Paul writes his letter to Philemon. It seems that Onesimus departed Rome in the company of Tychicus, taking the letter to Philemon and also Paul's letters to the churches in Ephesus and Colossae.

**Aristarchus.** – (Colossians 4:10). He is mentioned in several passages in Acts 20:4; 27:2. As one of Paul's traveling companions. Aristarchus was from Thessalonica. Acts 19:21-41, especially verse 29 we find that when the uproar was made in Ephesus incited by Demetrius the silversmith, who carved silver temples of Diana. When the crowd rushed in, they dragged Gaius and Aristarchus into the theater. Paul says of Aristarchus, *"Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner."*

**Mark the nephew of Barnabas.** – (Colossians 4:10). The writer of the Gospel of St. Mark. There is much to be said about Mark, but as Paul's traveling companion along with Barnabas, we find that he had disagreements with Paul. When Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them, Paul did not want Mark with them. Barnabas decided to accompany John Mark. However, towards the end of his life, Paul asks Timothy, *"Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."* 2 Timothy 4:11.

**Epaphras or Epaphrodite.** – (Colossians 4:12). Possibly the founder of the Church of the Colossians Col 1:7. Epaphras was the one who brought to Paul the report of the condition of the Church in Colossae and of the false teachings that were infiltrating the Church. Epaphras carries the greetings of Rome. Paul praises Epaphras for his prayer of intercession for the Church and above all, for his heart towards the congregation, *"always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."*

That each pastor could have companions/disciples like these on whom we can depend on and have such confidence to send them to other churches knowing that they have the heart of God toward the Church and will take care of it and feed it with sound doctrine. Or, that we could be this kind of disciples on whom our pastors can depend on and have such confidence in us to be sent to other regions or churches knowing that we have God's heart for the Church, and we will take care of it and feed it with sound doctrine.

### **Conclusion**

My prayer is that this study may be of inspiration o help for each pastor or believer to seek to be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding and may we be the Church Jesus wants to build.

Here, you can write your own conclusions which the Holy Spirit has impressed upon your heart to apply to your own life. If you are a pastor or church leader, maybe the Lord has given you conclusions to apply or teach the Church.