



COLOSSIANS

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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. Colossians 3:16

Paul uses the rare term “word of Christ” (this is the only time it is seen) in this verse rather than the more common “word of God.” In Philippians 2:16, he calls it the “word of life.” The word of God is the word of Christ, and the word of Christ is the word of life. Each time the word is given a descriptor in this manner, it helps us to more rightly understand the immense importance of this marvelous gift we have been given. It is a word of intimate fellowship with our Creator, and it is a word from which life is produced, if we are willing to properly apply it to our own lives. Thus it is the doctrine of Christ which Paul is speaking of. His word is our doctrine.

Paul admonishes those at Colossae (and thus us!) to let this marvelous word of Christ dwell in us “richly.” The word gives the idea of abundance. As it is an adverb, it means that the word of Christ should dwell in us abundantly. It shouldn't just be a passing part of our lives, but one which overflows from us at all times. In understanding this, he then adds on a descriptive thought indicating that not only should the word dwell in us richly, but that it should be “in all wisdom.”

A question arises in these words though. Is “wisdom” described by “teaching and admonishing” which follow after it, or is it connected to the word “teaching?” Both are possible –

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It is hard to be dogmatic, and the ambiguity may mean that it was intentional. One is wise when they teach and admonish, but one who has the word of Christ in an abundant manner

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will naturally desire to teach wisdom and to admonish others. Either way, the instruction and admonishment is to be “in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.”

Psalms are words which come directly from the Word of God (which is the word of Christ). They have been accumulated and are included in the Old Testament. As Paul cites them as profitable for instruction, then they are a useful tool for all of God’s people at all times, and are not to be ignored in our daily lives.

Hymns would be songs which include Scripture in them, teaching theological truths about God. They are intended to lead us to a firm foundation in knowing and understanding His wonderful works.

Spiritual songs would then be songs which are written about a relationship with God, but not necessarily relying on Scripture. They direct hearts and minds to God based on the emotion of the composer’s personal feelings about his relationship with his Creator.

Paul instructs his readers that they are to engage in these things while “singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” The Greek has an article before “grace.” Thus it literally says, “in the grace.” Because of this, it is limited to the grace of God. As believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, this is what Paul is referring to. We are to rely on the Spirit and together with Him sing in our hearts to the Lord. Based on the construction of the Greek, it therefore correctly reads, “...in the grace, singing in your hearts to the Lord.” We are to actively live in the grace of God, and we are to express that state with singing in our hearts to the Lord because of it.

Life application: One cannot fulfill the exhortations of this verse unless they fill themselves with the word of God. We are to read it, meditate on it, speak it, share it, and rejoice in it. Let us never tire of filling ourselves with this most marvelous treasure which has been given to us by our glorious Creator.

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

Paul now gives a greeting rather similar to 1 Corinthians 10:31 – “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” He is a bit more specific in this exhortation, changing “eat or drink” to “word or deed,” and adding in that all should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus.

The words “whatever you do” is really all-inclusive. Anything in our regular walk of life, and anything in our spiritual life as well, is to be brought into harmony with our dedication to the Lord. To expand on that, he adds “in word or deed.” When we speak and when we act, we are to direct those things properly and in a manner worthy of “the name of the Lord Jesus.” He is

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to be the focus of our eyes, the direction of our thoughts, the utterance of our lips, and the reason for our deeds.

And in addition to these things, we are to give “thanks to God the Father.” The theme of being thankful has literally permeated this epistle. As he closes each section of exhortations, he has added, and will continue to add, a note concerning this (see Colossians 1:12, 2:7, 3:15, and 4:2). If we have words to utter, we are alive to utter them. If we have deeds to do, we have strength to do them. Each of these things comes from God who created us and sustains us. Because of this, thanks should never be left from our lips and lives.

But Paul goes a step further than just telling us to be grateful to God the Father. We are to do it “through Him,” meaning Jesus. Jesus is the focal point of God’s attention toward His people, and He is to be the focal point of our attention as we return thanks to God. Without Jesus, we would be lost forever, but because of Him, we have a sure hope of an eternal dwelling. There, Christ will radiate out the glory of God for all eternity.

Life application: Let us think on this verse often, and then put it into action. It is so very easy to get misdirected by the world in which we live. But if we just hold fast to Christ in all we do, and give thanks to God the Father through Him, we will be useful, pleasing vessels for God’s use.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Colossians 3:18

Paul now goes from general precepts which affect the whole civil life of men, to precepts which are more specific and which pertain to a man’s family. He begins by addressing wives, writing a very basic thought which contains the same sentiment found throughout all of Scripture, but which is unfortunately mocked and ridiculed, even in the church itself, in today’s world. His words are fitting, proper, and what God expects. He says, “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands.” The word “submit” is in the present tense. This is your duty now and as long as you are wife to your husband. You are to submit to him.

God has ordained a hierarchy within the family unit, and this structure is expected to be adhered to. Disobedience to it is no different than any other type of disobedience. But modern sensibilities shun any such authoritative structure, and they place societal values above those of biblical values. Because of this, the family unit readily breaks down, and in turn so do the marriages. But God’s word stands, and for the woman of God who is obedient to His word, she will submit to her husband as He has directed. Paul says that such “is fitting in the Lord.”

The verb now switches to the imperfect tense, signifying from the moment when she became a believer, or from the moment that she marries as a believer. His words here seem to imply that such was not the case with some women at Colossae, and he is specifically addressing the issue to correct that deficiency. But the spirit of non-submission found in Colossae is held in

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high esteem among the modern feminist movement. If marriage takes place at all, it is with the attitude that says, "Submit schmubmit. I can handle taking charge." This approach has spread to believers, and it causes real problems within the church and within the families of the church.

Paul will give exhortations next to husbands, fathers, and bondservants. Each has his place and his responsibility within the home environment, and each should be willing to follow though with adhering to the words we have been given. Paul speaks of this matter elsewhere, such as in Ephesians 5 and Titus 2. Peter also speaks of this matter in 1 Peter 3.

Life application: The word is written. We will either adhere to it and be considered obedient, or we will shun it and be considered disobedient. No other option exists for the believer in Christ. Human pride is a sad infection in our lives which must be quashed lest we stand before our Lord and suffer loss because of it. Wives, submit yourselves to you husbands, as if fitting in the Lord. In turn, you will bring honor to Him and stability to your home.