

Practicing Biblical Humility Part-4

Paul's Message is Put On Humility

Colossians 3:12

As we open God's Word to Colossians 3:12, the days are darkening for the Church. The Apostle Paul is in prison.

His days of freely moving across the Roman Empire have passed.

But, his internship at Antioch, and those three missionary journeys had forged close ties with churches many of which Paul planted across the ancient world.

So, from prison either in the Acts 28 prison at Rome, or possibly still in the Acts 25-26 prison at Caesarea Maritima, Paul sits to write his prison epistles.

In Colossians 3:12 we hear Paul's heart to these believers that he had never met (2:1) but so wanted to see living out their new life in Christ.

Colossians 3:12 New International Version (NIV)

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Colossians 3:12 King James Version (KJV)

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

Colossians 3:12 New King James Version (NKJV)

12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

Colossians 3:12 English Standard Version (ESV)

12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,

Colossians 3:12 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

Pray

We are looking at how God asks us to be Practicing Biblical Humility.

Over the next three weeks we will see how this vital truth is communicated to us in God's Word.

Humility Taught by Peter, Paul & James

There are three key chapters about humility we will study. Last week we spent our time in the Word looking at:

Peter's Message: Be Clothed with Humility (1 Pet. 5:5)

This week we will look into Paul writing from prison as he sent a letter to the church he had never visited. We will look at the entire book of Colossians to see the setting for what Paul taught those embattled saints about their new life in Christ.

Paul's Message: Put on Humility (Col. 3:12)

Next week we will go all the way back to the first New Testament church in Jerusalem, with the first New Testament pastor, and the first New Testament epistle. It was the earthly brother of Jesus named James that wrote that first epistle, pastored that first church, and gives us the amazingly practical epistle named James.

James' Message: Humble Yourselves in the sight of God (James 4:6)

Now as we look at Colossians 3 we are first reminded about:

Living for Christ When It Is Hard

The book of Colossians is reflective of Paul's ministry across the first century Roman world. Paul knew the culture, he knew the struggles, he knew the needs. Paul had trained, traveled, and now was at the end of his public ministry, as he writes from his Roman imprisonment.

We can see the prison epistles in light of the chronology of Paul's life.

Remember the stages of Paul's life, and the challenges it can give to us?

Here is the first half of Paul's life.

Did you register that statement?

Paul Trained for 14 years to Serve for 10 years

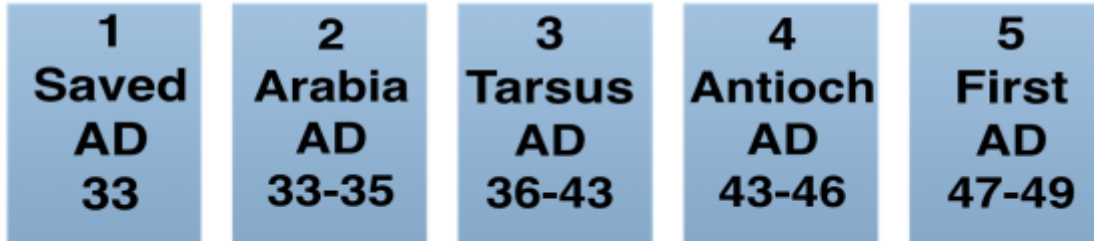
God seems to run on a different schedule than we do.

He is never in a hurry.

He enjoys us waiting.

He asks us to be still, wait upon Him, trust His timing, and allow Him to be strong when we are weak.

Stages Paul's Life & Ministry



Acts 9:1-22

(Gal. 1:17-18)

Acts 9:23-30

Acts 11:25-30

Acts 13-14

Paul Trained 14 years to Serve for 10 years!

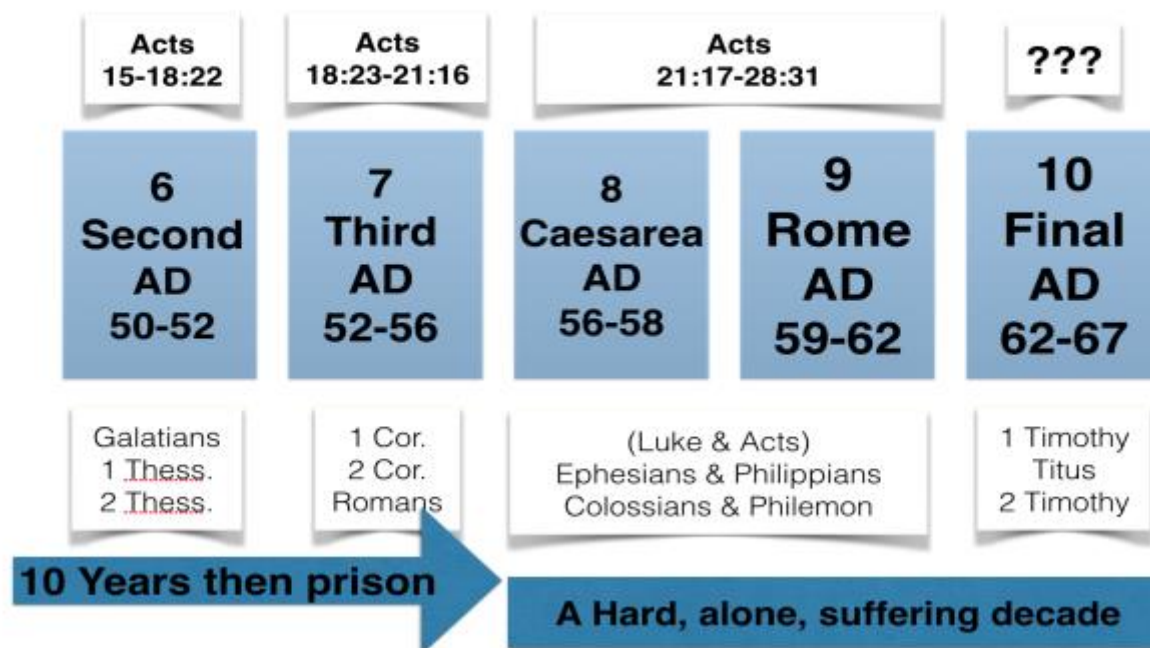
We like to go fast.

We are often in a hurry, and we hate to wait.

We want things to be clear from the start and to be free from difficulties or we change course, change our mind, or even quit.

God is so different. Look at Paul's second half of life.

Stages Paul's Life & Ministry



Want to know what we could conclude from just looking at Paul's life story?

14 Years Training + 10 Years Ministry + 10 Years in Prison = God's Formula for a Ministry That Impacts Millions for 20 Centuries

Lessons in Godly Living from Prison

Paul wrote to the heart of the struggling churches of Colosse & Laodicea. Just as Christ would address thirty years later in His letter to the same area in Revelation 3, the overpowering temptations to sin were faced constantly in Colosse.

The solution is always the same. Repent.

Go back to the factory settings, the original way we were designed to operate.

Everything starts with salvation's key element called justification, as we by faith reach out and receive the payment of the justifying death of Jesus Christ in our place.

That justification instantly unleashes for us the sanctifying life of Christ.

Jesus unleashed in us overpowers temptations, mortifies sin, and liberates us from every bondage. His word begins to sanctify us and we find more and more areas of our lives useful to Him. That is the power of Christ in me, the hope of glory.

Swimming Against the Current of the World

As Paul sat to write to the Colossians, he was writing to a group of saints swimming

each day against in the strongest imaginable currents of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Colosse in Roman Asia was at the center of every type of sin.

What was Paul's answer to their needs for growing in that environment?

He challenged them to make daily choices to sanctify their attitudes and behavior.

As we read this passionate letter to the Colossian saints, we hear Paul plead with them to allow Christ's work to be unleashed into their lives.

The framework of Paul's letter to the Colossians is in two parts.

Chapters 1-2 are about our position in Christ because of His justifying death for us.

Chapters 3-4 are about the practice of living out each day the sanctifying life of Christ.

One day the great Church leader Augustine was walking down the street when one of the prostitutes of his past life spotted him and ran to him calling out his name. He turned and looked at her straight in the eye and said, "That man you seek—has died!"

That is the change of life Paul writes about.

Everything starts with justification, as we by faith reach out and receive the power of the justifying death of Jesus Christ in our place on the Cross.

That justification instantly unleashes for us the sanctifying life of Christ.

Life is all about Sanctified Living

Sanctified living is understanding that the death of Christ on the Cross opens for me Christ living out through me each day.

That's the heart of Biblical sanctification. Sanctification requires our participation, our obedience, our responses—and that is what Paul lays down before us in Colossians 3.

Just before we read what Paul wrote, may I again remind you of the two sides of the coin of salvation.

We could call the two sides faith and works as James does.

Another way would be to use Paul's words from Romans—justification and sanctification. To best understand what Paul is asking us to do in Colossians let me contrast and explain justification and sanctification.

The Two Sides of Saving Faith

Justification is what Christ did for me on the cross—*sanctification* is what Christ is doing in me because of the cross.

Justification is immediate and was completely finished in me the instant I was saved—*sanctification* is an ongoing process never completed on earth until I meet Jesus face to face at death or His coming.

Justification is activated the moment I trust in the Person of Christ Jesus and His finished sacrifice of the cross—*sanctification* grows with each obedient choice I make empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Justification is my position declared right in God's sight—*sanctification* is my practice made right by becoming more conformed to His image.

Listen to Paul say that because you are saved (justified) this is how you should live (sanctified), as we stand and read Colossians 3:5-17 and then pray.

Living the New Life Christ Bought for Us

As we were saved only by the accomplishment of Christ's sacrifice on the cross—so we

live each day 'by faith' (the same faith by which we were saved). We are always dependent upon Christ's gracious death upon the cross that saves and keeps us!

“Sanctification is a process—the process of becoming more like Christ, of growing in holiness. This process begins the **instant you** are converted and will not end until **you** meet Jesus face-to-face. Through the work of His Spirit, through the power of His word and fellowship with other believers, God peels away **our** desires for sin, renews **our** minds, and changes **our** lives. Sanctification is **about our own choices and behavior**. It involves work. Empowered by God's Spirit, we strive. **We** fight sin. **We** study Scripture and **pray, even when we** don't feel like it. **We** flee temptation. **We** press on; **we** run hard in the pursuit of holiness.¹

What God's Grace Can Do In Us

Colossians 3 is built around 14 imperative commands. Remember that God never commands me to do what He hasn't already given me the grace to accomplish by faith through His Spirit!

“Our participation in the process of **sanctification** comes only after we've been totally accepted and made right before God through faith in Jesus. **So yes, we work** hard at obeying God's word. **We** read our Bibles. **We** pray. **We** meditate on Scripture. **We memorize Scripture**. **We** share the gospel. **We** serve in our church. **We** fast. **God commands us in His Word to do** many things, and our obedience is both pleasing to Him and brings **His** blessing to our lives. But not one adds to our justification, our standing before God, our eternal life. Only grace sustains lasting change and **sanctification**. Through the cross we overcome not only the guilt of sin, but the power of sin as well².

God Desires to Change Us

Let's walk back through this chapter, see what Paul relates to us from the Lord, and then pause and **ASK** the Lord to unleash these powerful spiritual qualities in our lives today.

If then you were raised with Christ (justified), **seek those things which are above**, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. v. 2 **Set your mind** on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. v. 5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: **fornication** (NIV sexual immorality), **uncleanness** (NIV impurity), **passion** (NIV lust), **evil desire, and covetousness** (NIV greed), **which is idolatry**. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. v. 8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: **anger, wrath** (NIV rage), **malice, blasphemy** (NIV slander), filthy language out of your mouth:

Stripping Off the Toxic Ways of the Flesh

v. 9 **Do not lie to one another**, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all:

Paul says that there are certain things of which the Colossians must strip themselves.

¹ C. J. Mahaney, The Cross Centered Life, Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2002, p. 31-34.

² C. J. Mahaney, The Cross Centered Life, Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2002, p. 31-34.

The word he uses is the word for putting off clothes.

There is here a picture from the life of the early Christian.

When the Christian was baptized, he put off his old clothes when he went down into the water and when he emerged he put on a new and pure white robe.

He divested himself of one kind of life and put on another.

Salvation Can Completely Change Our Personality

We put off the old self and put on the new self, just as the candidate for baptism puts off his old clothes and puts on the new white robe.

Barbarians were those who were not Greeks, those whom we would call heathen today. The Scythian was the worst kind of barbarian. Scythia was north of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea in the area around the Caucasus Mountains.

The people who lived there were probably the most barbaric the world has known. You talk about pagan, heathen, brutal, and mean! They would take their enemies and scalp them; then they would use the skull as a cup and drink the blood of their victims out of the skull!

I cannot think of anything more heathen than that!

Did you know that the ancestors of many of us who have white skin came from that territory? We are called Caucasians after the area where these barbarians lived.

Sanctified Living is Commanded, Not Optional

v. 12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, **put on...** This is an Aorist Middle Imperative, Paul commands us in the Name of Christ to choose to do this for ourselves.

- **Tender mercies** Greek *splanchna* # 4698

This term describes not merely a mental understanding of a person's pain, but a visceral depth to feeling their pain.

Because of Christ's grace opened to us through His death on the cross-He can now make me feel His compassion for the needs and struggles of others. This is vital for growing closer to others in His Body. We can ask Jesus to clothe us with His compassion.

- **Kindness** Greek *crestotes* #5544

The ancient writers defined this word as the virtue of the man whose neighbor's good is as dear to him as his own.

Because of Christ's grace opened to us through His death on the cross-He can now make me express His Kindness and love my neighbor as myself which fulfills the whole Law towards man. We can ask Jesus to clothe us with His Kindness.

- **Humility** Greek *tapeinophrosunen* # 5012

Paul here calls us to "humbleness of mind." It has often been said that humility was a virtue created by Christianity. In classical Greek there is no word for humility.

Because of Christ's grace opened to us through His death on the cross-He can now make me wear His humility in all my thought and actions through life. We can ask Jesus to clothe us with His Humility.

- **Meekness** Greek *prautes* # 4240

Here the emphasis is meekness of spirit, which is a person who is self-controlled,

because he is God-controlled, that he is angry at the right time and not angry at the wrong time.

Because of Christ's grace opened to us through His death on the cross-He can now make me live out His meekness in all my responses. We can ask Jesus to clothe us with His Meekness.

- **Longsuffering** Greek makrothumian # 3115

Longsuffering is the Greek word which means "long-burning"-a fuse which burns a long time, and is not a short fuse that leads to explosions with our friends and Christian brethren.

Because of Christ's grace opened to us through His death on the cross, He can now make me grow in His longsuffering patience. We can ask Jesus to clothe us with His Patience.

Why Not Walk in the Power of His Grace Today?

Everything starts, as we by faith reach out and receive the payment of the justifying death of Jesus Christ in our place.

That justification instantly unleashes for us the sanctifying life of Christ.

Jesus unleashed in us overpowers temptations, mortifies sin, and liberates us from every bondage. His word begins to sanctify us and we find more and more areas of our lives useful to Him.

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