

## The Indwelling Word

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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 –*

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I thank God daily for the home in which I was raised, which was markedly different than that of most of my peers. To frame it with today's sociological labels, the vast majority of my friends and acquaintances came from "Baby Boomer" marriages, while my parents were of the "Traditionalist" generation. My father had served in World War II (something that was characteristic of my friends' grandparents, if they could boast it at all), and my mother was only ten years his younger. In the foolishness of my adolescence, I was frequently embarrassed by the perception that my parents were "old". Little did I know that God was providentially supplying me with a boon, the benefits of which that would last my whole life through.

While I miss my parents terribly today (they have both advanced to glory), not a day goes by that I don't retreat in heart and mind to the security I knew at Ridge Road in North Huntingdon, PA. That secure upbringing was thanks to the generational values that drove my parents to create the home that they did. They were not born-again believers at that time in my life, no. But they were God-fearing people who believed in working hard, going to church, overcoming your tough breaks, and spending much time together as a family. Today, when the pressures of daily life begin to enclose me, I often retreat to my childhood memories of home, always finding it an encouraging stop-over on my way to the throne of grace.

I hesitate to share these opening thoughts because I am keenly aware that many people do not share similar positive childhood experiences. And yet that fact as surely helps to substantiate my transitional point – that our foundations are part of us. Our formative years where we spend the majority of our time and investing (or risking) our hearts irreversibly become an intrinsic part of who we are. Negative childhood experiences can obviously become positive motivators just as secure upbringings serve as nostalgic signposts on the pathway of life.

Home in its fullest sense extends beyond the physical structure and encompasses both its environment and its inhabitants. It is where we spend an enormous portion of our time and, as we do so, it reciprocally stamps its imprimatur upon our thoughts, our perceptions, and our aspirations. Our home mysteriously, perhaps mystically, finds its residence within us.

What does all of this have to do with our text? The word of Christ is to *dwell* in us. In order for that to happen, we must first make it our frequent abode. We must spend vast amounts of time therein, as children do in their households. We must take care to acquaint ourselves (over weeks and months and years) with its structure, its members, its guests, and its rules. We must consult it when the daily pressures mount, and not neglect it in moments of abundance or stagnation. *As we dwell in it, it will begin to dwell in us.* Its truths will cease to be merely penned words on the page, but rather our very own living possessions of greatest value. Its heroes will become our dearest friends, and its Author our greatest joy. We will begin to speak its dialect, own its syntax, and sing its themes. Its culture will become our ideals. And as we mine it daily, it will grow neither dull nor dim, but will increase its loving and living pull upon our hearts and minds, permitting us to continually grow in grace and in the knowledge of His will.

Father, may the word of Christ be our dwelling, and we its dwelling place.