

Jesus Is Absolutely First

1. Faith, Love, and Hope

Colossians 1:1-8

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Colossians 1

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. 3 We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4 since we heard of your **faith** in Christ Jesus and the **love** which you have for all the saints; 5 because of the **hope** laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the **word of truth, the gospel** 6 which has come to you, just as in all the world also **it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing**, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in **truth**; 7 just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf, 8 and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

Gnosticism

Entry level fruit vss. 1-8

- faith in Jesus Christ
- love for the saints
- hope laid up in heaven

You heard of all of these in conjunction with the Gospel — the word of truth — reality.

It came to you and to the whole world.

It is constantly bearing fruit and increasing.

It's doing the same in you since you heard it and understand grace

Epaphras

started the church
ministered to Paul

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2. Intercession

Colossians 1:9-12

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9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and **to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will** in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

10 **so that you will walk** in a manner worthy of the Lord, to **please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;**

11 **strengthened with all power**, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience;
joyously 12 **giving thanks** to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

My prayer — that you be filled with the knowledge of God's will

So that . . .

1. You'll have a worthy walk
2. You'll please Him in every way
3. You'll bear fruit in every good work
4. You'll increase in the knowledge of God
5. You'll be strengthened with all power
— according to His glorious might
— for the attaining of steadfastness and patience
6. You'll give joyous thanks to the Father

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3. Jesus' Manifest Deity

Colossians 1:13-23

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13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. 19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,

20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Jesus Is . . .

the image of the invisible God
the firstborn of all creation
the Creator of everything
 in heaven
 on earth
 visible or invisible
 thrones, dominions, rulers,
 authorities
 all created through Him and
 for Him
before all things
who holds everything together
the Head of the body
firstborn from the dead
coming to have first place in every
thing
having all the fullness in Him

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4. Jesus — Your Manifest Destiny

Colossians 1:13-23

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1. He is your manifest destiny

vss. 13, 14, 21-23

Manifest Destiny is a phrase that expressed the belief that the United States had a mission to expand, spreading its form of democracy and freedom. Advocates of Manifest Destiny believed that expansion was not only good, but that it was obvious ("manifest") and certain ("destiny"). Originally a political catch phrase of the 19th century, "Manifest Destiny" eventually became a standard historical term, often used as a synonym for the territorial expansion of the United States across North America towards the Pacific Ocean.

13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,

- rescue

- from the domain of chaos
- into the domain of beneficent rule by Jesus Christ

14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

- redemption

- through Jesus' blood
- this means forgiveness of our sins

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him. 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. 19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,

20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. 21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach — 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

- reconciliation

- in spite of the past with its sins and failures
- in His fleshly body Jesus did this by His death
- this is committed to a future

Power

In a seminary missions class, Herbert Jackson told how, as a new missionary, he was assigned a car that would not start without a push. After pondering his problem, he devised a plan. He went to the school near his home, got permission to take some children out of class, and had them push his car off. As he made his rounds, he would either park on a hill or leave the engine running. He used this ingenious procedure for two years.

Ill health forced the Jackson family to leave, and a new missionary came to that station. When Jackson proudly began to explain his arrangement for getting the car started, the new man began looking under the hood. Before the explanation was complete, the new missionary interrupted, "Why, Dr. Jackson, I believe the only trouble is this loose cable." He gave the cable a twist, stepped into the car, pushed the switch, and to Jackson's astonishment, the engine roared to life. For two years needless trouble had become routine. The power was there all the time. Only a loose connection kept Jackson from putting that power to work.

J.B. Phillips paraphrases Ephesians 1:19-20, "How tremendous is the power available to us who believe in God." When we make firm our connection with God, his life and power flow through us.

One New Year's Day, in the Tournament of Roses parade, a beautiful float suddenly sputtered and quit. It was out of gas. The whole parade was held up until someone could get a can of gas. The amusing thing was this float represented the Standard Oil Company. With its vast oil resources, its truck was out of gas.

Tom carried his new boat to the edge of the river. He carefully placed it in the water and slowly let out the string. How smoothly the boat sailed! Tom sat in the warm sunshine, admiring the little boat that he had built. Suddenly a strong current caught the boat. Tom tried to pull it back to shore, but the string broke. The little boat raced downstream. Tom ran along the sandy shore as fast as he could. But his little boat soon slipped out of sight. All afternoon he searched for the boat. Finally, when it was too dark to look any longer, Tom sadly went home. A few days later, on the way home from school, Tom spotted a boat just like his in a store window. When he got closer, he could see — sure enough — it was his! Tom hurried to the store manager: "Sir, that's my boat in your window! I made it!" "Sorry, son, but someone else brought it in this morning. If you want it, you'll have to buy it for one dollar." Tom ran home and counted all his money. Exactly one dollar! When he reached the store, he rushed to the counter. "Here's the money for my boat." As he left the store, Tom hugged his boat and said, "Now you're twice mine. First, I made you and now I bought you."

A gathering of friends at an English estate nearly turned to tragedy when one of the children strayed into deep water. The gardener heard the cries for help, plunged in, and rescued the drowning child. That youngster's name was Winston Churchill. His grateful parents asked the gardener what they could do to reward him. He hesitated, then said, "I wish my son could go to college someday and become a doctor." "We'll see to it," Churchill's parents promised. Years later, while Sir Winston was prime minister of England, he was stricken with pneumonia. The country's best physician was summoned. His name was Dr. Alexander Fleming, the man who discovered and developed penicillin. He was also the son of that gardener who had saved young Winston from drowning. Later Churchill remarked, "Rarely has one man owed his life twice to the same person."

Not long before she died in 1988, in a moment of surprising candor in television, Marghanita Laski, one of our best-known secular humanists and novelists, said, "What I envy most about you Christians is your forgiveness; I have nobody to forgive me."

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5. The Mystery — Christ in You, the Hope Of Glory

Colossians 1:24 - 29

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Colossians 1

24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

25 Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, 26 that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, 27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. 29 For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

2 Corinthians 4:7-11 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

15-18 For all things are for your sakes, so that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God. Therefore we do not lose heart, but though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

1. The ministry is difficult vs. 24

— Jesus suffered to start it

For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit 1 Peter 3:18

— subsequent ministers are involved in His suffering

— it's all for the Church

2. The ministry is defined vs. 25-29

— it's of the Church (no one is an island)

- a stewardship given for the benefit of others
- done by fully preaching the word of God

— it's the constant unveiling of a mystery (accomplished through preaching)

- now manifest to the saints
- the rich glory is among the Gentiles

— it's simply Christ in you (He is your hope of glory)

— it's making people complete in Christ

- by proclaiming Christ
- admonishing
- teaching
- laboring, striving according to His power mightily working in you

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6. Faith or Philosophy

Colossians 2:1-10,a

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Colossians 2

1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face,

2 that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself,

3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

9 For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,

10 and in Him you have been made complete,

4 I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument.

8 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.

5 For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ.

6 Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

7 having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

1. The supremacy of Christ vss. 2,3,9,10

— He is God's mystery 2

— In Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge 3

— In Him the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form 9

— In Him believers have been made complete 10

2. The threat of philosophy vss. 4,8

— People trying to delude with persuasive arguments 4

— The threat is being taken captive 8

— Philosophy is part of empty deception, tradition of men, elementary principles of the world — all of which are contrary to Christ 8

3. The Christ life vss. 2,5-7

— encouraged hearts, knit together in love, attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of Christ 2

— good discipline and stability of faith in Christ 5

— walk in Christ the same way you received Him 6

— keep firmly rooted, be built up in Him, be established in your faith, and overflow with gratitude 7

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7. Faith's Strength

Colossians 2:11-15

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Colossians 2

10,b and He is the head over all rule and authority;

11 and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;
12 having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.
13 When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him,

having forgiven us all our transgressions,

14 having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

15 When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

4. Rests in His complete victory 15

— God personally disarmed all the rulers and authorities

1 Corinthians 2:6-8 Yet we do speak wisdom among those who are mature; a wisdom, however, not of this age nor of the rulers of this age, who are passing away; but we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God predestined before the ages to our glory; the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for if they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

— God made a public display of them

— God triumphed over them through Jesus Christ

1. Rests in Christ 10,b

— He is the head over all rule and authority
1 Corinthians 15:25-27 For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For He has put all things in subjection under His feet.
Hebrews 10:11-14 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God, waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a foot stool for His feet. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

2. Rests in our identity with Christ 11-13b

— in Him we were spiritually circumcised 11
— it's the removal of the body of the flesh
— we are baptized into His burial 12
— baptized into His resurrection 12, 13b
— this when dead in transgressions 13a

3. Rests in our complete forgiveness

13c,14

— all our transgressions are included in the forgiveness 13c
— a certificate of death with decrees against us that was hostile to us was cancelled 14
— He nailed all this indictment to His cross

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8. Philosophy's Weakness

Colossians 2:16-23

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Colossians 2

16 Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day —

18 Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,

17 things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

19 and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.

20 If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as,

21 "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!"

22 (which all refer to things destined to perish with use) — in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men?

23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

1. It involves judging vs. 16,18

— judging always relates to pride and control
Romans 2:1

— judging is always a trap — if you judge you'll be judged Matthew 7:1,2

— judging pertains to external performance

— judging has nothing to do with Jesus

John 3:17; 12:47

— if you accept the rules and join in you lose your prize vs. 18

2. It's elements are mere shadows of truth vs. 17

— God gave His Law to reveal Himself and bring people to Himself Galatians 3:18-25

— People turned the Law into religion and made its observance the test (Nehemiah's day)

— they should have loved the Law and let it bring them to God

— the elements of the Law all looked forward to the real thing

— the true substance is Christ

3. It turns people away from Christ vs. 19

— you can't do both legalism and Christ

— in Christ everyone makes a contribution to the whole body

— when the contribution is made God causes the body to grow

4. It denies reality vs. 20

— in Christ you are dead to legalism

— you are freed to live in freedom

— don't opt for subjection to worldly principles

5. It subjects people to pointless rules

vss. 21-23

— rules about actions and days

— it all may look good, but it's a hollow sham

— no real benefit is ever derived from external performance Galatians 5:16

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9. Christ Our Life

Colossians 3:1-4

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1 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

phaneroo — make apparent, show openly
Colossians 3:4

epipháneia — appearing, manifestation, brightness
1 Timothy 6:14 - 1st Advent

apokálupsis — reveal, uncover — also reveal the interpretation of the object
1 Peter 1:7 - 2nd Advent — much more glorious than epiphaneia

parousía — coming, presence
2 Thessalonians 2:1

doxa — glory, therefore, is the true apprehension of God or things. The glory of God must mean His unchanging essence.

1. Identifying with His cross vs. 1a,3

- since you have been raised (resurrection)
- you have died with Jesus (death & burial)
- your life is hidden with Christ in God

2. Identifying with His values vs.1b,2

- habitually keep seeking heavenly things
- set your mind on heavenly things
- this is where Christ is
- do not allow focus on earthly things

3. Identifying with His revealing vs. 4

- Christ IS your life now
- when He is revealed, you'll be revealed with Him

- this is the culmination of redemption — man is one with God because of Christ

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10. Matters of Life and Death

Colossians 3:5-7

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Colossians 3

5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.

1. Kill off the old evil desires vs. 5

- **immorality** — fornication, lewdness, or any sexual sin
- **impurity** — moral uncleanness, lewdness
- **passion** — sensual appetite - these are lusts that dishonor those who indulge in them. This can be cultivated.
- **evil desire** — the unholy desires which are fixed on sensual objects like pleasures, profits, honors
- **greed** — idolatry

We need to get a far away from these things as possible, rather than staying as close without getting trapped.

6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,

2. It only makes sense vs. 6,7

- these are the things that bring the wrath of God on people of disobedience
- these are the things God saved you out of

7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them.

Romans 6

1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? 2 May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death?

4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; 7 for he who has died is freed from sin.

8 Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, 9 knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, is never to die again; death no longer is master over Him. 10 For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.

11 Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus.

12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, 13 and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.

14 For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace. 15 What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! 16 Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?

17 But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, 18 and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.

19 I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification. 20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. 21 Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death. 22 But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

3. Sorting life and death Romans 6:1-23

1. Bondage and defeat aren't necessary 1-3
2. A new life is available 4-7
3. Jesus makes it all possible 8-10
4. Possess your possessions 11
5. You decide who's going to control you 12,13
6. Don't cop out 14-16
7. Obedience means having a new master 17,18
8. Live the ever-increasing life cycle 19-22
9. Summary: sin means death — God's gift is eternal life 23

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11. Getting Along With God's Family
Colossians 3:8-14
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Colossians 3

8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices,

10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him — 11 a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

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

9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices,

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

1. Private preparation vss. 8-12

- put some things off

- anger
- wrath

James 1:19 But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; 20 for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

- malice
- slander
- abusive speech
- the old man with his evil practices

- put some things on

- the new man with his renewal into true knowledge according to Christ
- heart of compassion
- kindness
- humility
- gentleness
- patience

2. Public interaction vss. 9,13,14

- don't lie to each other
- bear with each other
- forgive each other
- wrap everything in love

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12. You Can Know God's Will

Colossians 3:15-17

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Colossians 3

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Ephesians 5:17 So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord.

16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Romans 12:1 Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

1. Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart vs. 15

- rule = umpire
 - your call related to the body of Christ
- Ephesians 5:17,18

2. Be thankful vs. 15

- the only attitude to have as you live in peace 1 Thessalonians 5:18

3. Let the word of Christ richly dwell in you vs. 16

- it wants to, so agree with it
- Romans 12:1,2
- it's an investment that takes great effort
- Hebrews 4:12

4. Teach and admonish with all wisdom vs. 16

- use psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to do it Ephesians 5:19
- this is going to say a lot about your music, isn't it?

5. Sing with thanksgiving vs. 16

- the right music plus the right teaching equals the right attitude

6. Do everything you do in Jesus' name vs. 17

- words and deeds endorsed by Him
- if you can't do it in Jesus' name - don't do it
- all of it wrapped in thanksgiving to God

Eight Steps to Total Intimacy In Marriage

Rekindle The Flame Ministries



Spirit	Dating
Soul	Engagement
Body	Marriage



Jesus Is Absolutely First

13. Foundation for Total Intimacy In Marriage
Colossians 3:18, 19
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Colossians 3

18 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.
19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.



Ephesians 5

18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; 21 and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

Be Sure To Invite Jesus

Years ago, when Johnny Carson was the host of The Tonight Show, he interviewed an eight-year-old boy. The young man was asked to appear because he had rescued two friends in a coalmine outside his hometown in West Virginia. As Johnny questioned the boy, it became apparent to him and the audience that the young man was a Christian. So Johnny asked him if he attended Sunday school. When the boy said he did Johnny inquired, "What are you learning in Sunday school?" "Last week," came his reply, "our lesson was about when Jesus went to a wedding and turned water into wine." The audience roared, but Johnny tried to keep a straight face. Then he said, "And what did you learn from that story?" The boy squirmed in his chair. It was apparent he hadn't thought about this. But suddenly he lifted up his face and said, "If you're going to have a wedding, make sure you invite Jesus!"

1. Walking in the Spirit

- Surrender to the Holy Spirit
- Ask Him to fill/control your soul
- Lay down your soul life
- See how your life now originates in spirit
- Maintain purity in dating and engagement
- Call on the Holy Spirit for ability to obey

2. Assuming Personal Responsibility

- The Love/Respect Cycle
- Wives submit or respect
 - Meek and Fearless inner person
- Husbands love
 - As Christ loved the church
 - Laid down His life
 - Protect her purity
 - Put wife ahead of his birth family
 - As he loves himself

Jesus Is Absolutely First

14. 3 Keys to Maintaining Total Intimacy In Marriage

Colossians 3:18, 19

Rekindle The Flame Ministries

18 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.

1. Guard Your Heart

- Be faithful in the Word Proverbs 4:20-27
- Watch your speech Ephesians 4:29-31
- Watch your eyes Job 31:1 & Matthew 5:27,28 & 1 Thessalonians 4:3-7
- Watch your path - no casual time with someone
- Watch out for distractions - anything that compromises intimacy

2. Don't Get Bitter

- Put your hope in God and expectations only on Him Psalm 62:5-8
- Pour out your pain and struggles to Him
- Put forgiveness in the place of bitterness Ephesians 4:32
- Colossians 3:19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.

3. Communicate

4 Keys:

1. 5 Commitments

- to Christ
- to Church
- to each other
- to kindness
- to forgiveness

2. Loyalty

3. Hope

4. Motivation

- Wrapped in Acceptance & Respect Romans 1:11,2 & 15:5-7
- Respect is expressed by:
 - Listening
 - Taking time
 - Admitting mistakes

Proverbs 4:20 My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. 21 Do not let them depart from your sight; keep them in the midst of your heart. 22 For they are life to those who find them, and health to all their whole body. 23 Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life. 24 Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put devious lips far from you. 25 Let your eyes look directly ahead, and let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you. 26 Watch the path of your feet, and all your ways will be established. 27 Do not turn to the right nor to the left; turn your foot from evil.

Ephesians 4:29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Job 31:1 I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze (lustfully) at a virgin?

Matthew 5:27 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; 28 but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart."

1 Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 and that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is the avenger in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you. 7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification.

Psalms 62:5 My soul, wait in silence for God only, for my hope is from Him. 6 He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be shaken. 7 On God my salvation and my glory rest; the rock of my strength, my refuge is in God. 8 Trust in Him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us. Selah.

Ephesians 4:32 And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

Romans 1:11 For I long to see you so that I may impart some spiritual gift to you, that you may be established; 12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you while among you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine.

Romans 15:5 Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

1 Peter 3:1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior. 3 Your adornment must not be merely external--braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear. 7 You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.

Jesus Is Absolutely First

15. Godly Children

Colossians 3:20, 21

Rekindle The Flame Ministries

Colossians 3

20 Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.

1. God gave you your family because He loves you Psalm 139:13-16

- you have a book in heaven
- you have DNA plus your days are planned
- don't compare
- surrender to God — grace vs. bitterness
- thank God for His love and creativity

2. Your parents are tools in God's hands to shape you into a beautiful gem Malachi 3:16,17

- God is in the jewel making business
- heat and pressure make the best diamonds
- be obedient, it pleases God
- receive the Word
- Proverbs every day
- COOPERATE

3. Find every way you can to honor and obey your parents and do it Exodus 20:12

Exodus 20:12 Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: 3 that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.

Psalm 139:13 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. 14 I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. 15 My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. 16 Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them.

2 Corinthians 10:12 For we are not bold to class or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves; but when they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding.

Hebrews 12:15 See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; 16 that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. 17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

Malachi 3:16 Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name. 17 "They shall be Mine," says the LORD of hosts, "On the day that I make them My jewels. and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." (NKJV)

Proverbs

12:1 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid.

13:18 Poverty and shame will come to him who neglects discipline, but he who regards reproof will be honored.

13:24 He who withholds his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him diligently.

19:18 Discipline your son while there is hope, and do not desire his death.

22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it.

22:15 Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; the rod of discipline will remove it far from him.

23:13 Do not hold back discipline from the child, although you strike him with the rod, he will not die.

23:14 You shall strike him with the rod and rescue his soul from Sheol.

29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.

Jesus Is Absolutely First

16. Godly Parenting

Colossians 3:20, 21

Rekindle The Flame Ministries

Colossians 3

20 Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.

1. Determine your purpose Colossians 1:28,29

- that my children may know God and walk with Him for life

2. Determine your goals

- 0-6 capture the will
- 7-12 build character
- 13-18 independent dependence on Christ

3. Understand authority issues

- the greatest gift of a true education is learning the ability to joyfully accept "NO" Proverbs 12:1, 13:18
 - power based — compliance
 - position based — obedience
 - expertise based – conformity

4. Balance love and control

- be a model Ephesians 6:1-4
 - always bless your children
 - clearly state the rules
 - clearly state the consequences
 - the place for corporal correction — Proverbs verses
 - always carry out the consequences
 - always make a way back

5. Discipline God's way Hebrews 12:5-11

- for correction, not punishment vs. 5
- to prove love vs. 6
- to prove relationship vs. 7,8
- for the good of the child vs.9,10
 - no fear
 - no anger
- to bring the child from point A to point B vs. 11

6. The basics

- completely rely on Jesus
- walk in the Spirit
- keep your marriage first
- keep the big picture
- bless your children
- be committed to Church

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, do not provoke or irritate or fret your children [do not be hard on them or harass them], lest they become discouraged and sullen and morose and feel inferior and frustrated. [Do not break their spirit.] (AMP)

Colossians 1:28 We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. 29 For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

Ephesians 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3 so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. 4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Hebrews 12:5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprovved by Him; 6 for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives." 7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Jesus Is Absolutely First

17. Jesus On The Job

Colossians 3:22-4:1

Rekindle The Flame Ministries

Colossians 3

22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

1. Perspective 22

- command: totally obey
in all things
not merely external
but with a sincere heart
- reason: because you fear the Lord
reverence for Him yields this sincere
expression of devotion to Him

23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,
24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

2. Performance 23,24

- command: do every bit of your work
heartily
- reason: it's for the Lord not for men
- assurance: you will receive the reward of
the inheritance
- reason: you are serving the Lord Christ

25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

4:1 Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.

3. Protection 25,4:1

- anyone who does wrong will receive the
appropriate consequences
- there will be no partiality
- command: bosses, deal in justice and fairness
- reason: you have a Boss in heaven

The sign in the store window read: NO HELP WANTED. As two men passed by, one said to the other, "You should apply — you'd be great."

1 Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

John 6:27 "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal." 28 Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" 29 Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."

Jesus Is Absolutely First

18. Evangelistic Prayer

Colossians 4:2-4

Rekindle The Flame Ministries

Colossians 4

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; **1. Priority vs. 2**

Devoted — To tarry, remain somewhere (Mark 3:9); to continue steadfastly with someone (Acts 8:13); to cleave faithfully to someone (Acts 10:7); referring to those who continually insist on something or stay close to someone (Acts 2:46; Romans 13:6); used metaphorically of steadfastness and faithfulness in the outgoings of the Christian life, especially in prayer.

- Devote
- Keep alert
- With thanksgiving

Keeping alert — To watch, to refrain from sleep. It was transferred in meaning from the physical to the moral religious sphere (Matthew 26:38, 26:40-41). It denotes attention (Mark 13:34) to God's revelation or to the knowledge of salvation (1 Thessalonians 5:6); a mindfulness of threatening dangers which, with conscious earnestness and an alert mind, keeps it from all drowsiness and all slackening in the energy of faith and conduct.

3 praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; **2. Purpose vs. 3**

- Accomplishing evangelism
- OPPORTUNITY - That God will open a door for the Word
- BOLD EFFECTIVENESS - So that we will speak forth the mystery of Christ

4 that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

3. Precision vs. 4

- That I may make it clear
- Speaking as I ought to speak

Answered Prayer

In his book *Sit, Walk, Stand, Watchman* Nee describes a preaching mission to an island off the South China coast. There were seven in the ministering group, including a sixteen-year-old new convert whom he calls Brother Wu. The island was fairly large, containing about 6,000 homes. Nee had a contact there, an old schoolmate of his who was headmaster of the village school. But he refused to house the group when he discovered they had come to preach the Gospel. Finally, they found lodging with a Chinese herbalist, who became their first convert. Preaching seemed quite fruitless on the island, and Nee discovered it was because of the dedication of the people there to an idol they called Ta-wang. They were convinced of his power because on the day of his festival and parade each year the weather was always near perfect. "When is the procession this year?" young Wu asked a group that had gathered to hear them preach. "It is fixed for January 11th at 8 in the morning," was the reply. "Then," said the new convert, "I promise you that it will certainly rain on the 11th." At that there was an outburst of cries from the crowd: "That is enough! We don't want to hear any more preaching. If there is rain on the 11th, then your God is God!" Watchman Nee had been elsewhere in the village when this confrontation had taken place. Upon being informed about it, he saw that the situation was serious and called the group to prayer. On the morning of the 11th, there was not a cloud in the sky, but during grace for breakfast, sprinkles began to fall and these were followed by heavy rain. Worshipers of the idol Ta-wang were so upset that they placed it in a sedan chair and carried it outdoors, hoping this would stop the rain. Then the rain increased. After only a short distance, the carriers of the idol stumbled and fell, dropping the idol and fracturing its jaw and left arm. A number of young people turned to Christ as a result of the rain coming in answer to prayer, but the elders of the village made divination and said that the wrong day had been chosen. The proper day of the procession, they said, should have been the 14th. When Nee and his friends heard this, they again went to prayer, asking for rain on the 14th and for clear days for preaching until then. That afternoon the sky cleared and on the good days that followed there were thirty converts. Of the crucial test day, Nee says: The 14th broke, another perfect day, and we had good meetings. As the evening approached we met again at the appointed hour. We quietly brought the matter to the Lord's remembrance. Not a minute late, His answer came with torrential rain and floods as before. The power of the idol over the islanders was broken; the enemy was defeated. Believing prayer had brought a great victory. Conversions followed. And the impact upon the servants of God who had witnessed His power would continue to enrich their Christian service from that time on.

While crossing the Atlantic on an oceanliner, F.B. Meyer was asked to address the first class passengers. At the captain's request he spoke on "Answered Prayer." An agnostic who was present at the service was asked by his friends, "What did you think of Dr. Meyer's sermon?" He answered, "I didn't believe a word of it." That afternoon Meyer went to speak to the steerage passengers. Many of the listeners at his morning address went along, including the agnostic, who claimed he just wanted to hear "what the babbler had to say." Before starting for the service, the agnostic put two oranges in his pocket. On his way he passed an elderly woman sitting in her deck chair fast asleep. Her hands were open. In the spirit of fun, the agnostic put the two oranges in her outstretched palms. After the meeting, he saw the old lady happily eating one of the pieces of fruit. "You seem to be enjoying that orange," he remarked with a smile. "Yes, sir," she replied, "My Father is very good to me." "Your father? Surely your father can't be still alive!" "Praise God," she replied, "He is very much alive." "What do you mean?" pressed the agnostic. She explained, "I'll tell you, sir. I have been seasick for days. I was asking God somehow to send me an orange. I suppose I fell asleep while I was praying. When I awoke, I found He had not only sent me one orange but two!" The agnostic was speechless. Later he was converted to Christ.

While Josh McDowell was attending seminary in California, his father went Home to be with the Lord. His mother had died years earlier, but Josh was not sure of her salvation. He became depressed, thinking that she might be lost. Was she a Christian or not? The thought obsessed him. "Lord," he prayed, "somehow give me the answer so I can get back to normal. I've just got to know." It seemed like an impossible request. Two days later, Josh drove out to the ocean. He walked to the end of a pier to be alone. There sat an old woman in a lawnchair, fishing. "Where's your home originally?" she asked. "Michigan -- Union City," Josh replied. "Nobody's heard of it. I tell people it's a suburb of --" "Battle Creek," interrupted the woman. "I had a cousin from there. Did you know the McDowell family?" Stunned, Josh responded, "Yes, I'm Josh McDowell!" "I can't believe it," said the woman. "I'm a cousin to your mother." "Do you remember anything at all about my mother's spiritual life?" asked Josh. "Why sure -- your mom and I were just girls -- teenagers -- when a tent revival came to town. It was the fourth night -- we both went forward to accept Christ."

"Praise God!" shouted Josh, startling the surrounding fishermen.

Dr. Helen Roseveare, missionary to Zaire, told the following story. "A mother at our mission station died after giving birth to a premature baby. We tried to improvise an incubator to keep the infant alive, but the only hot water bottle we had was beyond repair. So we asked the children to pray for the baby and for her sister. One of the girls responded, 'Dear God, please send a hot water bottle today. Tomorrow will be too late because by then the baby will be dead. And dear Lord, send a doll for the sister so she won't feel so lonely.' That afternoon a large package arrived from England. The children watched eagerly as we opened it. Much to their surprise, under some clothing was a hot water bottle! Immediately the girl who had prayed so earnestly started to dig deeper, exclaiming, 'If God sent that, I'm sure He also sent a doll!' And she was right! The heavenly Father knew in advance of that child's sincere requests, and 5 months earlier He had led a ladies' group to include both of those specific articles."

Jesus Is Absolutely First

19. Relating to Unbelievers

Colossians 4:5,6

Rekindle The Flame Ministries

Colossians 4

5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

Acts 1:8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

1. It's about how you act vs. 5

- conduct yourselves with wisdom
- act wisely

Proverbs 10:1 A wise son makes a father glad, but a foolish son is a grief to his mother.

Proverbs 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he who is wise wins souls.

- make the most of every opportunity
- do your best

2. It's about how you talk vs. 6

- be sure your words are with grace
- use gracious words
- as if seasoned with salt

Proverbs 12:18 There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Proverbs 15:2 The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, but the mouth of fools spouts folly.

- you will be able to answer any question
- know the right answers

Howard Hendricks

The phone rang and I greeted a young pastor friend from Arlington, Virginia. "What are you doing?" he asked. "Studying," I replied. "Nothing special." "Are you sitting down?" "Yes, why?" "Your father just trusted Christ this evening." "He what? You've got to be kidding!" I blurted out. Such an inappropriate response grew out of long detours in our father-son journey. Ever since I received Christ as a boy my concern has been for the salvation of my family and loved ones. On repeated occasions I had broached the subject of the gospel with dad, but his response was less than excited. My father has always been a very important person to me. Not that I approved of everything he said or did or that I imitated him consciously in any way. We weren't really close friends, either. But he was important in my life because of the indirect impact he made upon me.

Dad was a military man. He had seen action around the world. During the periods when he was embroiled in battle, I would become very sensitive to his spiritual need. I and my family prayed for him, but at times I'm afraid my faith sputtered. His response was always the same: Son, don't worry about me. I'll work it out with God (as if God could be manipulated like a Pentagon official).

God brought a man into my life, a man with a passion for men. His name was Butch Hardman. One day before we knew each other Butch was boarding a plane in Detroit when a friend handed him a cassette tape. "Ever hear Hendricks? Here's a tape you should listen to." On that tape I related my father's spiritual need.

Butch listened and something about the anecdote reminded him of his own father with whom he had shared Christ shortly before he died. He began to pray for this unknown man, George Hendricks. Some months later Butch attended a pastors' conference in Philadelphia where I was the speaker. He shook my hand afterward. That was the only time our paths crossed before a remarkable incident in Arlington.

Butch was driving the church bus down the street, having discharged all his passengers. He saw a man standing on the corner who reminded him uncannily of Howard Hendricks. Could it possibly be...? He backed up the bus, stopped, got off, and went over to the man. "Are you by any chance Howard Hendricks' father?" It is easy to imagine the startled response. "Er-ah (I can envision my father's critical once-over with his steely blue eyes) yeah—you a student of my son?"

"No, I'm not, but he sure has helped me. Got time for a cup of coffee?"

That encounter began a friendship, skillfully engineered by the Spirit of God. Butch undoubtedly sensed dad's hesitancy when he discovered he had met a preacher. For a long time Butch did not invite him to attend his church. He simply suggested that dad drop by the office for coffee. Patiently he endured dad's cigars and his endless repertoire of war stories. Before long he also learned that dad had been diagnosed with terminal throat cancer.

Months later Butch was at his bedside. "Mr. Hendricks, I'll be leaving shortly for a Holy Land trip. Instead of my listening to you tonight, would you let me tell you a story?"

Butch had earned his hearing and he began simply to relate the interview of Jesus Christ with Nicodemus as recorded by the Apostle John. At the conclusion dad accepted Butch's invitation to receive Jesus Christ as his own personal Savior. Then dad got up out of bed, stood, and saluted with a smile. "Now I'm under a new Commander-in-Chief!" That night Butch called Dallas.

The last time I saw dad alive I could not believe he was the same man I had known. His frame was wasted, but his spirit was more dynamic than I had ever known.

In accordance with dad's specific provision in his will, Butch Hardman conducted the crisp military funeral in Arlington cemetery where the gospel of Jesus Christ was presented to the small group of family and military attendants. As the guns saluted their final farewell, I knew God had vindicated forty-two years of prayer.

Footprints, Howard & Jeanne Hendricks, Multnomah Press, 1981, pp. 16-19

Jesus Is Absolutely First

20. Laboring In Prayer

Colossians 4:12,13

Rekindle The Flame Ministries

Intercession or supplication

Intense effort

Prolonged effort

Colossians 4

12 Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.

13 For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

These three cities were about 100 miles north of Ephesus.

Ephesians 1

15 For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. 18 I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

Ephesians 3

14 For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, 16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

WHY?

1. May we learn to intercede so wholeheartedly that Jesus Christ will be abundantly satisfied with us as intercessors.

2. It is not that we bring God into touch with our minds, but that we rouse ourselves until God is able to convey His mind to us about the one for whom we intercede. Is Jesus Christ seeing of the travail of His soul in us? He cannot unless we are so identified with Himself that we are roused up to get His view about the people for whom we pray.

3. Intercession is the one thing that has no snares, because it keeps our relationship with God completely open.

Jesus Is Absolutely First

21. Caring For Friends

Colossians 4:7-11 14-18

Rekindle The Flame Ministries

Colossians 4

7 As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information. 8 For I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts; 9 and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number. They will inform you about the whole situation here.

10 Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings; and also Barnabas's cousin Mark (about whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him);

11 and also Jesus who is called Justus; these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision, and they have proved to be an encouragement to me.

14 Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and also Demas.

15 Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also Nympha and the church that is in her house.

16 When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea.

17 Say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.

Tychicus - vs. 7

Tychicus was an Asian by birth; Acts 20:4 And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus, and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia. His name signifies "fortunate", and is the same with "Fortunatus" in Latin, which name is mentioned in 1 Corinthians 16:17 I rejoice over the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus, because they have supplied what was lacking on your part.

It is said that this Tychicus was one of the seventy disciples, and was afterwards bishop of Chalcedon.

However, he was employed by the apostle as a messenger to Colossae, as he also was to Ephesus, see Ephesians 6:21 But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you., to inform the members of the church of his state and condition, how it was with him; as that he was in prison at Rome, for the sake of the Gospel.

Onesimus - vs. 9

Had been formerly a servant of Philemon, an inhabitant of Colossae

Onesimus had probably been recently converted; and Paul felt toward him the warm attachment of a brother;

Philemon 1

10 I appeal to you for my child Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, 11 who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me. 12 I have sent him back to you in person, that is, sending my very heart, 13 whom I wished to keep with me, so that on your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel; 14 but without your consent I did not want to do anything, so that your goodness would not be, in effect, by compulsion but of your own free will. 15-18 For perhaps he was for this reason separated from you for a while, that you would have him back forever, no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh and in the Lord. If then you regard me a partner, accept him as you would me. But if he has wronged you in any way or owes you anything, charge that to my account;

Who is one of you - That is, either who is from your city, or one of your own people and nation. It is clear from this, that Onesimus was from Phrygia, and probably from the city of Colossae itself. It would seem also that he was of a higher rank than is designated by the word "slave" now. He was, indeed, a "servant" *doulos* - of Philemon There is reason to think that Onesimus was not a slave in the proper sense, but that he might have been a respectable youth, who had bound himself to service for a term of years.

Aristarchus - vs.10

My fellow-prisoner - Aristarchus was of Thessalonica, and is mentioned in Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2 as Paul's companion in his travels to Asia and Rome. He was dragged into the theater at Ephesus, during the tumult with Gaius. He was now at Rome with Paul Philemon 1:23,24 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, greets you, as do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow workers.

Mark - vs. 10

John Mark Acts 12:12,25 12 And when he realized this, he went to the house of Mary, the mother of John who was also called Mark, where many were gathered together and were praying. 25 And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem when they had fulfilled their mission, taking along with them John, who was also called Mark. — the Evangelist according to tradition.

He was a "cousin," or "kinsman to Barnabas"; the latter being the better known. The relationship naturally accounts for Barnabas' selection of Mark as his companion when otherwise qualified; and also for Mark's mother's house at Jerusalem being the place of resort of Christians there. The family belonged to Cyprus (Acts 4:36); this accounts for Barnabas' choice of Cyprus as the first station on their journey (Acts 13:4), and for Mark's accompanying them readily so far, it being the country of his family; and for Paul's rejecting him at the second journey for not having gone further than Perga, in Pamphylia, but having gone thence home to his mother at Jerusalem on the first journey Acts 13:13 Now Paul and his companions put out to sea from Paphos and came to Perga in Pamphylia; but John left them and returned to Jerusalem.

Jesus - vs. 11 **who is called Justus -**

The name Jesus was probably that which he bore among the Jews. Justus is a Roman name, and was probably that by which he was known among the Romans. It was not uncommon thus to assume another name when one went among a foreign people. (Saul/Paul)

Who are of the circumcision - Jews, or Jewish Christians. Nothing more is known of Justus.

Luke - vs. 14 the beloved physician

This was undoubtedly the author of the Gospel which bears his name, and of the Acts of the Apostles. He is mentioned as the traveling companion of Paul, and appears to have accompanied him until his imprisonment at Rome 2 Timothy 4:11 Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. He is supposed to have been a native of Cyrene, and to have died in Achaia, soon after the martyrdom of Paul, at the advanced age of 84. He is here mentioned as a physician, and in his Gospel, and in the Acts, there are incidental evidences that he was acquainted with the science of medicine, and that he observed the events which he has recorded with the eye of one who practiced the healing art.

Demas - vs. 14

Demas is mentioned in Philemon 1:23,24 There salute thee Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus; Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow laborers. He is here spoken of with commendation as one in whom the apostle had confidence. A later mention in 2 Timothy 4:10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. indicates that afterwards, when troubles thickened, he was not found proof to the trials which threatened him in Rome, and forsook the apostle and went to Thessalonica. He did this under the influence of the "love of this present world," or of life, evidently unwilling to lay down his life in the cause for which Paul suffered. His departure, and that of the others on whom Paul relied in Rome, was one of the severest trials which he was called there to endure; see the notes at 2 Timothy 4:16 At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge..

Archippus - vs. 17

Archippus is mentioned also in Philemon 1:1,2 Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ, and Timothy our brother, unto Philemon our dearly beloved, and fellow laborer, and to our beloved Apphia, and Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church in thy house:. He is not elsewhere referred to in the New Testament, and nothing further is known of him.

Take heed to the ministry ... - The Greek here means the office of ministering in divine things; but it is not certain precisely what office he held there. It seems probable from the language which the apostle applies to him - "the ministry" that he was not a deacon, properly so called, but that he was a preacher of the word. In Philemon he is mentioned by Paul as his "fellow-soldier," and it is evident that the apostle meant to speak of him with honor. It is always proper to caution even the most faithful and self-denying servants of the Lord to "take heed," or see to it, that they perform their duties with fidelity. The office of the ministry is such, and the temptations to unfaithfulness are so great, that we need constant watchfulness. That you fulfil it - That there be nothing wanting, or lacking, in any of the departments of labor which you are called to perform.