



Can You Remind Me of Who I Am?

Colossians 3:15-17

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



Here is the BIG IDEA in this lesson:

God has called us to spiritually and lovingly build up one another.

Introduction:

The book of Colossians is NOT the kind of letter that you can jump into anywhere and understand what it's really about. It's like a song or a poem that flows together. It has been compared to a flower that grows from a small bud to a large bud, then gradually opens up to reveal—layer upon layer—the petals that had been hidden inside all along. However, the truth contained in this epistle is not *soft*, *weak*, or *fragile*; it is a robust, flesh-and-blood type of letter that calls us *to live out our faith in a clear, distinctive way amid those who are prone to blend its truth with all sorts of falsehoods*.

The particular danger that the Colossians faced is one that we still face today. It is the erroneous notion that becoming a Christian is not enough—or, that Christ alone is not sufficient! This is the deadly doctrine that suggests that something *more* or something *else* is needed to make the Christian complete.

Stop for a moment and think about the current voices and pressures that echo this same danger. Finish this sentence: Today, I hear or feel the pressure of...

In the church at Colossae, Satan had planted two deceptive groups of tares. The first was a group of *philosophers* who "kidnapped" new converts with worldly wisdom or the traditions of men (2:8, 18). Among this first group were spiritual gurus called **Gnostics**, who encouraged believers to dabble in things like *astrology, mysticism, horoscopes, and unbiblical beliefs about the nature and mediation of angels* (2:16-18). The second was a group of unsaved Jews (**Judaizers**) who suggested that by observing certain *diets, special days, and duties*, they could obtain true spirituality (2:16-23)!

Syncretism is the word that is used to describe the combining of beliefs and principles. On the surface, there may not seem to be anything wrong with blending *sound doctrine*, like the deity of Christ, with worldly principles, like "*cleanliness is next to godliness*"; however, the danger with mixing sound doctrine with worldly or man-made practices is that *it undermines and demotes Christ from His position of preeminence*.

Remember, the subtlety of Satan's strategy is not to get believers to forsake Christ *completely*; the diabolical aim is to bewitch believers unknowingly (2 Cor.11:3). The enemy desires to get believers to simply make Christ *a part* of some system that they create.

The aim of the Apostle in this letter is to teach us that everything we need is in Christ! And the way of spiritual growth is not by addition (*works, diets, duties, rules, etc.*), but by nutrition. In Christ, nothing needs to be added, because in Him, "*...all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and in Him you have been made complete...*" (2:9-10a). What more do we need?



Lesson: Thinking Truth Through

The Greek word for "*admonishing*" is made up of two words: "*nous*," which means mind, and "*tithemi*," to put. Combined, it means *to place or put into the mind, to instruct, to warn, and to teach*. It is the fullest biblical word that we have for counseling. Let's look at several verses that will help us to get our minds around what it means to admonish one another.

- A. According to Acts 20:31, besides Paul's evangelistic efforts, what other activity took up a great deal of his time and energy?
- B. Who was responsible to admonish in the church? (*Read Romans 15:14*)
- C. What qualities qualified and equipped one to do so?
- D. In Colossians 1:28, what was Paul's aim in pastoral ministry?
- E. How did he seek to accomplish this? (*Cf. 2 Cor.3:18; 2 Tim.3:15; 1 Tim.1:5*)
- F. According to 1 Corinthians 4:14, what is a key element that must never be forgotten when admonishing another? (*Cf. Col.3:21; Eph.6:4*)
- G. Even in the most serious of circumstances, an unruly (undisciplined) Christian is to be admonished how, according to 1 Thessalonians 5:14? (*Cf. 2 Thess.3:13-15*)

H. What tool is perfectly adequate for bringing about true change in one's life? Read 2 Timothy 3:16. (Cf. 2 Tim.4:2)

When you bring all of these verses together, this is what you find: admonishing one another always involves three things:

1. *Recognizing and personally addressing something wrong that needs to be changed (some sin, some obstruction, some difficulty, some need, or some problem)*
2. *Understanding that the way behavioral change happens is by instructing/influencing the mind with the truth of God's Word*
3. *Having the right purpose and motive in mind if it is to benefit others*



Application: Making Truth Stick

In order to apply this command, we must be willing to get involved in one another's lives (2 Cor.11:29; Cf. Acts 20:31). However, there are some prerequisites for effectiveness.

1. Knowing what the Scripture means for one's own life (in other words, how it works in bringing about sanctification) is essential.
2. Having the right motivation is non-negotiable. If our motives are not right, we quench the Holy Spirit who desires to use His Word to help the entire body grow in Christlikeness (Col.3:16).

An example to avoid: In 1 Samuel 3:13, Eli serves as an example of what can cause admonition to fail:

- He did not speak soon enough.
- He did not speak strictly enough.
- He did not speak seriously enough to effect genuine change in his boys.

An encouragement to follow: In Colossians 3:5-17, the Apostle pictures spiritual growth in terms of *putting aside certain things* and *putting on other things*; all of this is because of God's action of grace by His Spirit.

- What are we to lay aside? (vv.5-9)
- What are we to "put on"? (v.10-14)
 - According to verses 10-11, what are we to do? Let what you do come out of the knowledge of *what you are* and *to Whom you belong*.

- According to verses 12-13, how are we to do it? Restrain your *natural reaction toward difficult people*—let them be themselves.
- According to verse 14, why are we to do this? Because *love* will be the garment that holds every other virtue in place.

What will be the result of putting on these things?

- Peace will rule in the fellowship. (v.15)
- Christ will be seen in the family. (v.16)
- God will be glorified in the body of Christ. (v.17)

Being a doer of the Word (2 Tim.3:16)

1. What did I learn (“teaching”)?
2. Where do I fall short (“reproof”)?
3. What do I need to do about it (“correction”)?
4. How can I make this a consistent part of my life (“training”)?

Answer Key

Lesson: Thinking Truth Through

- A. admonishing
- B. the entire church
- C. full of goodness—right motives and filled with knowledge—a working knowledge of how truth worked in their own lives
- D. making every man complete in Christ—mature
- E. by proclaiming Christ and the Scriptures
- F. not to shame him, but strengthen him
- G. as a brother in Christ—with affection
- H. all Scripture

Application: Making Truth Stick

An encouragement to follow:

- anger, malice, wrath, abusive speech, lying, evil practices, etc.
- the new self—heart of compassion, kindness, humility, love, etc.

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