

"Living out the Virtues of the Christian Life"

Part 5

Colossians 3:12-17

Introduction: In our study of Colossians, we have been looking at the virtues of the Christian life and we have considered 9 of them so far.

1. Bowels of mercies
2. Kindness
3. Humbleness of mind
4. Meekness
5. Longsuffering
6. Forbearing one another
7. Forgiving one another
8. Love
9. Peace of God.

These virtues are manifest in a believer's life by the power of God that dwells within us. Not every believer shows forth these virtues because not every believer is controlled by the Spirit. We are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit which has the idea of the Spirit controlling our lives. When this happens, it is then that these virtues are manifest.

Ephesians 5:15-18

¹⁵ *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,*

¹⁶ *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*

¹⁷ *Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.*

¹⁸ *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*

Tonight, in our study we have come to one of the most important verses that we will study. It will be in this verse that we shall see two more virtues.

➤ **The Virtues**

➤ **Part 5**

10. **Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly.**

Notice Colossians 3:16

Let us notice several points from this verse:

✓ **It is a choice that produces change.**

We see this in the word "let" which means we must be open to Word of God. Last week we looked at how Paul exhorted his readers to "let the peace of God rule in their hearts" which would bring a calm into their hearts. Here he exhorts his readers to LET the Word of Christ dwell in them richly. We often allow many things to dwell in our hearts but with many believers it is not the Word of Christ. We fill our minds with news, concerns about society, concerns about the economy, and concerns about family, but it is rare to find a believer that has allowed the Word to dwell in them. With many their minds are so full of things that have no eternal value that they have little room for the Word.

Notice Colossians 3:15

The order of these verses is so very important. In order to allow the Word to dwell in us richly we must first of all allow the peace of God to rule in our hearts. If we have not the peace of God then the turmoil from the circumstances around us will push the Word of God out. Paul is calling on his readers to trust the Lord in whatever they face and to allow the Word of God to fill our hearts so as to guide them through the valley or the storm we are in. Worry does nothing but wear us down.

Matthew 6:25-34

²⁵ Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

²⁶ Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

²⁷ Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

²⁸ And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

²⁹ And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

³⁰ Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

³¹ Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

³² *(For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.*

³³ *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

³⁴ *Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.*

Notice Colossians 3:16 again.

➤ **To dwell in us is to control us.**

Let us notice what Paul wrote to the Ephesians. He offered a prayer for them in chapter 3.

Ephesians 3:14-17

¹⁴ *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

¹⁵ *Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

¹⁶ *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;*

¹⁷ **That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;** *that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,*

The idea of Jesus dwelling in our hearts means that He moves in and sets up residence, and is to have complete access to EVERY area of our lives. In people's houses there are certain rooms which they do not allow guests into. They stuff things away in those rooms and do not wish for others to see what is behind the closed door. Often believers have the same thing in certain areas of their lives. They have things which they keep shut up and will not allow the Lord access. But let me remind us that while we may try to keep Him shut out of that area, He still knows everything that is there.

In the very same way, the Word of God is to dwell within us to the point it changes every single area of our lives. Not just some of the areas but all of the areas. Let us notice a few verses.

James 1:21-25

²¹ *Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.*

²² But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

²³ For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

²⁴ For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

²⁵ But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Job tells us what it is to let the Word dwell in us.

Job 23:12

¹² Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

The Psalmist tells us one of the results of the Word dwelling in us.

Psalm 119:10-11

¹⁰ With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.

¹¹ Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.

Jeremiah also reveals more results of the indwelling Word.

Jeremiah 15:16

¹⁶ Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

Notice what Richison wrote.

"If we spent as much time in the Word of God as we do in the newspaper, just think how much we would know of God's will for our lives! We might know how many robberies and murders took place in our city for that week but what difference does that make in our lives? We might be better off if we did not know.

If we generate a serious attitude about letting the Word of God dwell in our lives, we will be richer and our character will grow stronger. Our individual lives will change and our homes will be better.

You may say, "But I do not understand what I read in the Bible." We must work at it. Gradually we will retain more. We do not learn to ride a bicycle the first time we get on it. Neither do we learn the Bible without effort. It takes time, effort and dedication. The results will gratify our souls.

Most of us do not take the Word of God seriously. We play at it. We do not mark our Bible or memorize it. We do not make it a part of us. There are people who memorize hundreds of plays for a football game. Yet if we memorize a verse of Scripture, we want a medal."

Notice the words of George Mueller.

"The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts. I solemnly state this from the experience of 54 years. The first 3 years after conversion I neglected the word of God. Since I began to search it diligently the blessing has been wonderful. Great has been the blessing from consecutive, diligent, daily study. I look upon it as a lost day when I have not had a good time over the word of God."

Notice Colossians 3:16 again.

I want you to notice that Paul is talking to the assembly of believers at Colossae. So, the proper interpretation is corporate and then personal. He wants to be sure that the Word of God is the focus of the church. Not entertainment, and not programs but the Word. The Word of God is what is needed in the church today because it is the Word of God that changes lives. Notice what Paul said to the elders at Ephesus.

Acts 20:27-32

²⁷ For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

²⁸ Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

²⁹ For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

³⁰ Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

³¹ Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

³² And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Conclusion:

We live in a time of great deception and we live in a time of demonic influence.

Matthew 24:11, 24

¹¹ And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

²⁴ For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

This is in the Tribulation but we are moving in this direction very rapidly. The deception is happening today.

1 Timothy 4:1-3

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

² Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

³ Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

We therefore need the Word of God dwelling within us. Let me leave you with a story that should motivate every one of us.

H. A. Ironside told of visiting a godly Irishman, Andrew Frazer, who had come to southern California to recover from a serious illness. Though quite weak, he opened his worn Bible and began expounding the deep truths of God in a way that Ironside had never heard before. Ironside was so moved by Frazer's words that he asked him, "Where did you get these things? Could you tell me where I could find a book that would open them up to me? Did you learn them in some seminary or college?" The sickly man gave an answer that Ironside said he would never forget. "My dear young man, I learned these things on my knees on the mud floor of a little sod cottage in the north of Ireland. There with my open Bible before me I used to kneel for hours at a time and ask the Spirit of God to reveal Christ to my soul and to open the Word to my heart. He taught me more on my knees on that mud floor than I ever could have learned in all the seminaries or colleges in the world."