

psychological etc., he must yet admit that everything spoken or done is to operate within prescribed limits.

b. Its conformation. To do something in the Name of the Lord Jesus is to do it in conformity to His character and thus to act in the sense of His representative. This is no mean intent. The use of "Lord" adds the authoritativeness which is necessary in such a consideration. If only the real child of God would quote Him as the Master Who sets the task and owns and uses the servant, what a difference it would make!

c. Its expression. Thankfulness to God for the privileges of speaking and doing all as unto the sovereign Lord! Rather than a complaint that the submission to Christ is a hardship, the idea is that one ought to be ever grateful to be His!

Conclusion Three areas have been probed by Paul: the heart, the body, and the life (action). If your heart is experiencing peace and thanks, if the body is filled with the Word (perhaps the mind is latent here), and the entire life (action) is permeated with the sense of His sovereign Lordship—one will know the reality of the Christ of God as he can know it no other way. May we exhort you to enter into this blessed experience right now? Amen.

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

"Exhortations for Growth"

Colossians 3:15-17

Introduction

1. Grace exhorts a believer on Christ to live in conformity to the new life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Human cooperation is a necessity to Christian living.

2. Following the detailing of a description of what Christians are to wear, Paul formulates three helpful areas of further concern for a child of God. Each area is related to a Person within the Godhead and accents a particular facet of Christian responsibility. These are:

1. The PEACE of God. v. 15.

a. Its definition. Peace with God (Rom. 5:1) is gained through personal faith on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the result of the blood of Christ applied to the heart of a believing sinner. But the peace spoken of by Paul here is that which our Lord promised His own (John 14:27). It is in fact the possession of all who are born again, albeit not exactly the experience of all.

b. Its action. An extremely exciting verb is used in this verse. It really means to act as an umpire or to arbitrate or decide. The thought is that every inward debate between self and God or between self and others is to be governed by the inward peace which He has given. That peace within is not to be ruffled. This is the peace which is to settle things and bring about control and direction. The present tense of the verb denotes the continual action urged.

c. Its intention. At the time of conversion, God called believers to this peace. In this peace, the unity of the Body of our Lord is realized. Christ is the Head, the saints are the Body. The controlling peace results in the one Body manifestly. What a blessed solution for all church problems!

d. Its association. Thankfulness is the concomitant of a ruling peace. For where peace is, it is in-

evitable that thankfulness will be also. The verb "be" is really "become" for all of the Christian life is one of progress. As peace arbitrates, one will become thankful!

Mark this: There is nothing more sure to isolate hearts than the spirit of complaint. There is nothing more sure to fuse hearts than the spirit of thanksgiving. Let us ever be restless to weld hearts together!

2. The WORD of Christ. v. 16.

a. Its identification. This phrase is used concerning the spoken Word of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here, however, it is obviously concerned with the revealed will of God. That's the Bible in totality. Men may be clever about a lot of things, even the positions of false religions, BUT God is concerned with the Word of the Lord—are YOU?

b. Its location. The verb "dwell in" is so important. Being in the present tense, the constant attitude of the believing heart is noted. So emphatic is the concern here that the adverb "richly" is added. The twin ideas of quantity and degree are alike involved. Let the Word of Christ constantly dwell in the child of God abundantly and at all times. It is not enough to be taught the Word. It must take up its home in one! Far too many Christians know about psychology etc. and too little of the Word. Be filled with the Word!

c. Its ministration. The phrase "in wisdom" belongs to this portion of the verse. One is to be found "teaching and admonishing" in all wisdom! It is easy to see that if the Word is dwelling in one, he will be in a position to minister it properly! Teaching is the common pedagogical term and implies exactly what it says. The verb for admonish is a compound of two Greek words: mind and put. Hence, to admonish is to put in mind. Now that's a thoughtful word. The Word of God is not to dry up within a soul, but it is to be used in teaching and putting people in mind as to what the will of

the Lord is! Blessed is the fellowship of believers who constantly have this sort of spiritual enjoyment among "yourselves" (the proper translation for "one another").

d. Its manifestation. The key word here is "singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." The Word of God gives birth to true spiritual singing! It is in the heart and always unto the Lord. Incidentally, how often music is rendered with a lower aim than the one outlined here. How can an unbeliever be in a choir and lead in the worship of the Lord Jesus Christ. He cannot sing unto the Lord in his heart! What kind of music is suggested for the child of God? Here it is:

1) Psalms. Some feel that this is not really the Psalms of the OT and this may be true, but the idea should be the same. The word means music performed in accompaniment with a musical instrument.

2) Hymns. It is not clear just what is meant here, but it is very possible that music of Christian composition is noted. 1 Tim. 3:16 is an example of an early Christian hymn.

3) Songs. The type which are to come from Christian lips is designated as "spiritual." Hence, the generic term is limited by this word.

"Sing til we feel our hearts
Ascending with our tongues;
Sing til the love of sin departs,
And grace inspires our songs."

3. The LIFE in the Spirit. v. 17.

a. Its operation. This Golden Rule for the believer has an operation which includes every facet of one's life, word and deed. The fact that "word" is mentioned first has led some to think that words are more important than deeds. Both are critical and their mention serves to indicate that the two are complementary and indivisible. If one divides the life into physical, mental,