

November 23, 2025 (Lesson 12)

## WALK IN CHRIST YOUR LORD

1. **Be Rooted and Built Up in Christ** (Colossians 2:4-12)
2. **Alive With Christ** (Colossians 2:13-17)
3. **Reject Man-Made Religion** (Colossians 2:18-23)

**Central Truth:** Faith in Christ is life-changing.

**Focus:** Acknowledge the importance of being established in Christ, and identify and reject wrong teachings.

**Evangelism Emphasis:** Christ gives life to all who accept Him.

**Golden Text:** “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Colossians 2:6).

Colossians 2 builds on the supremacy of Christ that Paul established in the first chapter. He continues to lay a strong theological foundation, warning the Colossians about false teaching interspersed with instruction to apply the revealed truths. He emphasizes the understanding and importance of the lordship of Christ. History reveals the Roman government demanded that the emperor be declared as the lord of the lives of those under its influence. Nero was the emperor during the time of the writing of this epistle. Declaring “Jesus is Lord” placed the early Christians in grave danger. Nero assassinated anyone he perceived as a threat, including his mother. Paul wanted the Colossians to understand what true lordship is.

Paul understood believers need a firm foundation for their faith (Rom. 10:17) and conduct (2 Thess. 3:14). In Pentecostal circles, especially in the past, theology was discounted and considered anti-spiritual. *Theology* (literally, “God-study”) is the examination of Scripture to form a belief system consistent with the Word (1 Tim. 5:17). It is not optional for the followers of Christ (2 Tim. 2:15). As noted in the previous lesson, Paul prayed that he might understand more about God (doctrine or theology). The more he knew about God, the more he wanted to be obedient. Theology determines what we believe; belief determines who we are; who we are is revealed through our conduct. While some of the verses in Colossians can be difficult to understand, it is worth the effort to know God and know Him fully (1 John 5:20).

## 1. BE ROOTED AND BUILT UP IN CHRIST

### A. Keep Walking in Christ (Colossians 2:4-7)

<sup>4</sup> And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. <sup>5</sup> For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. <sup>6</sup> As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: <sup>7</sup> Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Paul's writings can be challenging, as even Peter acknowledged (2 Peter 3:15-16). Paul was a deep thinker, and he often wrote the way many Pentecostal pastors preach—with Spirit-infused passion for the Gospel. Colossians is an excellent example of this. He introduces subjects, comes back to address them, then alludes to them in the material that follows. It can be bewildering until one realizes his purpose was to build upon and reinforce the material in the minds of his recipients. “And this I say” (v. 4) can be a reference to the previous passages, or an introduction to the material that follows (or both). His deep concern was for their spiritual stability and welfare, warning them about deceptive and deluded (“beguiled”), yet persuasive, presentations (“enticing words”; see James 1:22). Paul had at least one particular person in mind who was trying to lead them astray. If they knew who they were in Christ, and their foundation was firm and their pathway straight, they would build upon the Word, rather than the eloquence of a deceiver (Matt. 7:14-15).

Although Paul was not physically present with the Colossians, he encouraged them by noting that he was with them “in the spirit” (Col. 2:5a). This is taken as a twofold reference. First, Paul had a kinship with them as a fellow believer that surpassed physical presence. Second, the same Holy Spirit who empowered Paul also empowered them and accompanies all believers as we move toward maturity. As we gather together in worship, we are part of and, in a sense, present with all believers everywhere engaged in worship. Paul rejoiced, “beholding” (via reports and through the Spirit) their “order” (v. 5b), which revealed they were maintaining proper conduct in the congregation and their

worship (see 1 Cor. 14:40) *and* taking their places in the offices and operating in the gifts received from God. The Colossians walked decisively and determined (“steadfastness,” Col. 2:5c) in their belief in Christ, in order to become more like Him (v. 6). The church had received the gift of Christ and the ability to follow His example.

Paul, continuing the “walk” metaphor, used four verbs to describe their position, participation, progress, and his continued hope for them (v. 7). First, “rooted” is often used of a building foundation that should be determinedly implanted (see Eph. 3:17). Building on the idea of walking in Christ, it conveys that the pathway is firmly established and leads to the correct destination. It also indicates consistency in one’s walk. Second, they were to be “built up,” or place the proper materials in the correct order to construct a solid spiritual “building” upon the established firm foundation (Jude 20). Third, the Ephesians were reminded of the need to be “established in the faith” (NKJV). Paul reminded them they had received the correct instruction to make this possible (“as ye have been taught”). Finally, they were to continue increasing in the faith and resultant fruit to the point of overflowing (“abounding therein”). The same term is used in John 6:12 to describe the overabundance of the loaves and fish after the crowd was fed. These attributes were to be pursued and accomplished with a grateful heart that should also overflow with praise, worship, and gratitude (“with thanksgiving”).

### **God’s Program**

God has a program of character development for each of us. He wants others to look at our lives and say, “He walks with God, for he lives like Christ.”—Erwin Lutzer

#### **B. Reject Worldly Philosophy (Colossians 2:8-12)**

<sup>8</sup> Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. <sup>9</sup> For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. <sup>10</sup> And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: <sup>11</sup> In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made

without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: <sup>12</sup> Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

Paul returned to the issue of false teachers and the need to “beware” (v. 8) or accurately see people for who they are, not just what they say. Character affects content. He was concerned that some may be taken captive by and hand over control of their spiritual well-being (“spoil you”) to false teachers. These teachers utilized two primary tools—“philosophy and vain deceit.” *Philosophy* is limited, human reasoning. *Vain deceit* is empty and worthless deception, describing the nature of the philosophy expounded by the teachers. Paul said the origin of this teaching was human “tradition” and “the rudiments of the world” that restrict spiritual development through bondage.

Traditions are not inherently wrong; they can be helpful for instruction and maintaining order. (As a former soldier, this writer still chafes internally when men wear hats inside a church building.) *Rudiments* originally referred to the alphabet, then was used of basic principles. When these things are based not on Scripture or healthy common sense (rare these days!), but on the world’s values and ideology, they become traditions and teachings manipulated by spiritual forces to ensnare us and keep us from Christ’s will (Gal. 4:3, 9). They take on a binding power and supplant the power of Christ in our lives (Col. 2:20). We must be “alert and cautious” (1 Peter 5:8 Amp.) and submit everything, even traditions and convictions, to Christ (Mark 7:5-13).

Paul contrasted the limited thinking of humanity with who Christ actually is (Col. 2:9). “Fullness” is the opposite of something or someone incomplete. The totality of the divine nature “dwelleth,” or inhabits and abides in Him. Christ could not be any more God than He is by His position, authority, and redemptive work. He is the very visible “image of the invisible God” (1:15), more than a mere resemblance (see John 1:18). Christ is the presentation of the reality, for He is God made flesh (or Incarnation, 2 Cor. 4:4; John 1:14). Because of who He is, we participate in His

fullness and receive fulfillment (“complete”) “in” and by “him” (Col. 2:10a). Paul contrasted Christ’s dominion as the “head of all principality and power” (v. 10b) against the traditions and rudiments of the world (v. 8)—the supreme King compared to the inferior worldly views.

He further explained the Colossians’ position in Christ against the legalistic teaching of those who would put traditions upon them (v. 11). Their identity and salvation were not found in a mark of the flesh (“circumcision,” Rom. 2:28-29), but by the removal of sins and a cutting away of the carnal nature of the heart by Christ. They had been “buried with him in baptism” and resurrected (“raised”) with Him from death (Col. 2:12; see Rom. 6:1-4). The baptism imagery is vivid: The old nature was put to death and buried, and they were raised from death to life. The symbolic action of baptism did not save them; rather, their faith in the working (“operation”) of God resulted in salvation. Because of Christ’s resurrection, they could have full faith that the work of Christ is more than sufficient and accepted by the Father.

§        *What does it mean to be “complete in [Christ]” (v. 10), and why is this vital?*

## **2. ALIVE WITH CHRIST**

### **A. Trespasses Forgiven (Colossians 2:13-14)**

<sup>13</sup> And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; <sup>14</sup> Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

The Apostle Paul continued to position the true nature of salvation and the completeness of Christ’s work against false human reasoning and traditions, using the themes of death and life (v. 13). The Colossians were lifeless corpses because of sin’s effects (“dead in your sins”). They were bound by the power of the carnal nature and its devastating consequences on the heart (Rom. 1:21; 7:18), the core of their being (“uncircumcision of your flesh,” Col. 2:13). However, God had infused them with true life (“quickened”) and joined them in a powerful, mystical, actual union “with”

Christ. The moment they exercised faith in Christ, God forgave them of “all trespasses.” “Forgiven” conveys three primary attributes: (1) it is an act of grace; (2) it delivers from sin with its effects and consequences; (3) the forgiven are brought into Christ’s care.

Paul highlighted a second aspect of Christ’s saving work (v. 14). The first phrase of the verse implies we were bound by a contract of indebtedness, basically an IOU; thus, it was a declaration of indictment resulting in bondage and shame (“handwriting of ordinances”). However, Christ caused this to be canceled and removed (literally, “obliterated”) from our responsibility (“blotting out”; see Heb. 10:11-18). It was nailed to “his cross,” where it remains! As believers, we are clean; we are free; we are whole; we are Christ’s!

### **The Cross of Christ**

The Crucifixion was the shocking answer to the prayer that God’s kingdom would “come on earth as it is in Heaven.”—N. T. Wright

#### **B. Free From Human Judgment** (Colossians 2:15-17)

<sup>15</sup> And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. <sup>16</sup> Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: <sup>17</sup> Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

Verse 15 definitively contrasts the difference between Christ’s power and that of the spiritual entities motivating the false teachers, who imposed their views, traditions, and reasoning. The false teachers enforced conditions and restrictions that hindered full spiritual development (Matt. 15:7-9; 23:23-24). These restrictions then took on a power unto themselves that found its base in the demonic spiritual realm (Titus 1:10-16; Jude 4, 8, 16). The intent was to bind, restrict, and enslave the hearers to the false teachers (Matt. 7:15-23; 2 Peter 2:1-3). However, Paul, continuing the message begun in Colossians 2:9, revealed three ways Christ addressed the evil spiritual forces (“principalities and

powers”) that fight against us (v. 15). First, He “spoiled” (literally, “stripped them bare”) or exposed them for who they are and what they do. In so doing, He disarmed them of their deceiving power. Second, He publicly disgraced them (“made a show”; only used here and Matt. 1:19, “make her a public example”). Third, He was completely, publicly, and eternally victorious over these forces (“triumphing”; also see 2 Cor. 2:14, where He enables the same in us). These are accomplished “in it,” referring to Christ’s cross (Col. 2:15) and resurrection (v. 12). What was meant for His defeat defeated them.

Paul warned them of human condemnation (“judge,” v. 16). This verse could easily fill an entire lesson; succinctly, Paul admonished them to regulate their lives by their relationship with Christ, not the traditions, superstitions, and convictions of others. He addressed two primary areas of concern: *sustenance* and *sacred occasions*. Asceticism was very common during this period. Some believed through extreme self-denial and strictness one could become closer to God. Certainly, we are called to times of intense fasting, prayer, and laying aside things in order to focus on our spiritual growth (see 1 Cor. 7:5; Dan. 9:3-4), and they bring us closer to God. However, Scripture—and not the dictates of others—should regulate these spiritual disciplines. What Paul is addressing goes far beyond Word-centered practices. It is motivated by a direct or indirect desire to manipulate God, wherein we become the prime mover in the relationship, rather than Him. The things in which we partake (sustenance) or participate (sacred occasions) should be directed by the Word (2 Tim. 3:16) and the Spirit (Eph. 5:18), not those who would bring us into bondage (Gal. 5:1). Paul directed the Colossians to focus not on unsubstantial things (“shadow”), but on the substantial (“body”) found only in “Christ” (v. 17). This is how we defeat the powers that actively work against us. We must not become distracted by peripheral issues or the uninformed opinions of others.

§      *In what ways must we not judge fellow believers, and why not (vv. 16-17)?*

### 3. REJECT MAN-MADE RELIGION

#### A. Disregard False Worship (Colossians 2:18-19)

<sup>18</sup> Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, <sup>19</sup> And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

Paul added a third dimension that addressed the Colossians' exposure to false teachers. He firmly instructed them to not allow anyone to cheat them ("beguile") of their place in Christ ("reward") or disqualify them through distractions (v. 18a). The Greek word translated as *beguile* warns against allowing one's life being judged by non-Biblical criteria (v. 16). The believers were not to be condemned into submitting to the views of the false teachers, which would bind and distract them from life in Christ. Here, Paul had one particular teacher in mind. Inherent in *beguile* is a predetermined decision against this church: The false teacher had already concluded the Colossians needed to be educated in the only views that were correct (his!). This teacher relentlessly insisted that the church embrace a false "humility" based on asceticism or self-abasement—the distorted view that the killing of the flesh enables spirituality. Paul valued humility and self-denial in the positive sense of the concepts, but here the sense is clearly negative and destructive.

Included in this insistence is the "worshipping of angels." There are three possible interpretations of this phrase. First, influenced by the rampant paganism of the time (see 1 Cor. 10:20) the teaching said angels should be exalted as spiritual mediators between the church and God (a practice still embraced by the Roman Catholic Church). Second, the "angels" were the "principalities and powers" (Col. 2:15) and source of the detrimental "rudiments of the world" (v. 8). Therefore, they were worthy to be worshiped, thus, encouraging the heretical worship of demonic powers. Third, the teacher was encouraging the Colossians to esteem the angels and engage



in “angel-like” worship. The first view would certainly distract them from Christ’s presence (Rom. 1:25; Rev. 22:8-9). The second view would disqualify them completely from Christ’s presence and provision (2 Thess. 2:8-11; Rev. 19:20). Neither of these two positions would be acceptable to Paul. The third view cannot be taken seriously, due to the condemnation context. Here, the term used for *worship* carried a negative connotation for Paul, better understood as adherence to a religion rather than relationship. Simply stated, we are not to worship angels.

Paul detailed the foundation of these false teachings (Col. 2:18b). The verse is difficult to translate clearly into English. The language indicates the false teacher *claimed* he had a vision (“seen”). The Greek term is usually associated in ancient secular occurrences with ecstatic, mystical, religious visions (such as Greek mythology) and pagan worship. Paul declared what he saw was not true and Biblical (“hath not seen”), but served as the false teacher’s basis for his assumed authority, special revelations, teachings, and commands (“intruding into those things”). The source was his own conceited and empty (“vainly puffed up”), carnal (“fleshly”) “mind.” Visions are Biblical and something Paul experienced (2 Cor. 12:1-11), but the content and implications must be examined under the microscope of the Scriptures and by those who are mature in the faith (Acts 16:9-10).

This teacher and his false revelation did not have a grasp (“not holding”) of who Jesus Christ is (“Head”), although he may have at one time (Col. 2:19). Throughout the epistle, Paul clearly defined and emphasized the primacy of Christ to combat the heretical views. He again reminded the Colossians they had been incorporated into the “body” of the preeminent Christ through “joints and bonds” (see 1:18; 2:17), or one could say through sinews and ligaments that support and securely bind believers to the body of Christ (“knit together”). The Head supplies everything we need (“nourishment ministered”) and “grows with a growth that is from God” (2:19 NET). Paul

purposely uses the repetition to emphasize whatever we need to grow in Christ will be supplied: “From Him the whole body . . . promotes the growth of the body” (Eph. 4:16 HCSB).

### **Faulty Teaching**

An evangelist, in his fervor, espoused the idea that since the Godhead is composed of three persons, there must be a trinity for each member of the Godhead. Someone pointed out that he now had nine members in the Godhead. He was sincere in his passion, but wrong in his view. He accepted the correction by those with an informed understanding. Novel teachings may inspire temporarily, but our foundation must be Christ alone.

### **B. Renounce Worthless Religious Practices (Colossians 2:20-23)**

<sup>20</sup> Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, <sup>21</sup> (Touch not; taste not; handle not; <sup>22</sup> Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? <sup>23</sup> Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body: not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

Paul began this section with a pointed question for the Colossians (vv. 20-22). He picked up the theme of death and resurrection in Christ (see vv. 12-13) to remind them of effect and application of their salvation. Since they were “dead with Christ,” he asked why they were living contrarily by adhering to the “ruling spirits of the world” (v. 20 NCV). These powers take on a life of their own as they are embraced and begin to rule one’s life and lead to spiritual decline, through “ordinances” or dogmatic teachings and rules. The question indicates some of the Colossians were succumbing to the false teachings. They were placing themselves in a spiritual prison to which they had the keys for release or imprisonment. These rules are indicative of the severe self-mortification espoused by the primary teacher (v. 21) and do not have a lasting eternal value (v. 22a). The ordinances were not

based on Scriptural principles, but were “commandments and doctrines” that bring bondage through human design (v. 22b).

Paul exposed the fallacy of these powers and rules (v. 23). They appeared to have value (“wisdom”) if one was engaged in self-imposed religious bondage. They would lead to a false “humility” that resulted in self-abasement (“neglecting the body”), but they were of no lasting value. These practices would not bring “honor,” but instead indulged the carnal nature (“flesh”). The implication is clear: These things should not be embraced by those who have died in Christ and are living the resurrected life with Him.

§ *List religious practices that can lead people into bondage.*

## **FOCUS ON CHRIST**

This lesson contains profound theological teachings and weighty implications. It is very relevant for today. There are many who present themselves as teachers, preachers, and theologians who are more concerned with money, power, and fame than they are the well-being of those they seek to influence. We must be aware of these and remove ourselves from their audience. There are some who may have honorable intentions, but are led astray (and mislead others) by the need to find some novel doctrine or interpretation that opens the door for an unscriptural principle. Both of these can bring us into the bondage of occultic powers and ordinances. Our focus must be on the provision and presence of Christ and determining the truth of any teaching through careful study of the Bible.

### **Daily Devotions**

- M. Choose God’s Way (Deuteronomy 30:15-20)
- T. Trust, Seek, Wait (Psalm 27:1-14)
- W. Personal Responsibility (Ezekiel 3:15-21)
- T. The Power of the Gospel (Romans 1:15-17)
- F. True Treasure (2 Corinthians 4:1-7)

S. Eternal Grace and Glory (2 Corinthians 4:8-18)