

Being Thankful People

November 26, 2006

So we tell others about Christ, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all the wisdom God has given us. We want to present them to God, perfect (mature) in their relationship to Christ. That's why I work and struggle so hard, depending on Christ's mighty power that works within me.

Colossians chapter 1 verses 28 & 29 (903)

- “warning” to put in mind, to caution, to gently admonish someone
- “teaching” to help someone learn
- Notice the community & responsibility that God places on all of us Christ-followers
- This is all to be done in God's wisdom, not ours
- “perfect” is mature, complete in mental & moral character
- There is no area of my life that God is not interested in
- I cannot be fully devoted in isolation. It takes loving input from other Christ-followers around me
- God expects me to be growing in maturity

Reality Check - How am I doing with community & growth?

- ✓ Do I have God-honoring people in my life who are “warning” & “teaching” me?
- ✓ Am I growing in my ability to discern God's wisdom from the world's wisdom?
- ✓ Am I more “mature” (complete in mental & moral character) today than I was 6 months ago? 1 year?
- ✓ Am I consistently giving more areas of my life to God, and thus growing towards full-devotion?
- ✓ What are the regular steps I take to grow spiritually?
- ✓ Does my spiritual routine reflect maturity by me doing what I know is best for me, not just what I feel like doing?

I want them to be encouraged and knit together by strong ties of love. I want them to have complete confidence that they understand God's mysterious plan, which is Christ Himself. In Him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. *Colossians chapter 2 verses 2 & 3 (903)*

- “encouraged” is to be comforted, consoled, cheered up. It refers to someone that is warm, gracious & compassionate towards others
- “knit together” refers to your ability to work together with others to accomplish a common purpose
- Again, notice the community that is assumed
- True community cannot exist without these two things!
- This refers to stability & confidence
- It's the ability to have a mental clarity in the midst of life's storms & doubts
- It's the ability to trust Christ when trials & troubles overwhelm
- It's being able to trust Christ when nothing else around me makes sense
- Wisdom IS NOT just knowing facts & information!! It's being able to put these facts & information to practical use, allowing your life to be altered & directed by them
- Wisdom is being able to say & do the right thing at the right time in the right way for the right reason
- When you lack wisdom, you make the same mistakes again & again, you're defeated by the same sins again & again

(over)

Reality Check - *How encouraging & unified am I?*

- ✓ Do I affirm, encourage others?
- ✓ Do I look for and acknowledge the good in others?
- ✓ Do I encourage others to shine, & do this cheerfully?
- ✓ Do I enjoy working with others?
- ✓ Do I enjoy helping others succeed?
- ✓ Can I work with & rejoice with those who are different than me?
- ✓ Am I truly able to “rejoice with those who rejoice” & to “weep with those who weep?”
- ✓ Do I understand & live out that life is not about me?

Reality Check - *Is my confidence in Christ?*

- ✓ How stable is my thinking throughout the week, month, year? Does it tend to be consistent & level in honoring God?
- ✓ How confident is my attitude, thinking & actions about God & his plan for me?
- ✓ How much do I manipulate people and / or situations to get what I want in life?
- ✓ Do I demand answers or is Christ enough?

Reality Check - *Am I growing in wisdom?*

- ✓ Am I seeing victory in new areas of my life?
- ✓ Am I confronting sin by taking steps I was not taking before?
- ✓ Do I find myself saying the same things I wish I could take back?
- ✓ Do I find myself thinking the same things I wish I could take back?
- ✓ Do I find myself doing the same things I wish I could take back?

I am telling you this so no one will deceive you with well-crafted arguments. For though I am far away from you, my heart is with you. And I rejoice that you are living as you should and that your faith in Christ is strong. And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

Colossians chapter 2 verses 4 - 7 (903)

- Refers to a stability that comes from being firmly grounded and rooted in what is true
- A Christian in this situation is capable of feeding himself / herself & of growing
- A Christian in this situation becomes more dependent on Christ and less dependent on others
- This brings stability in life
- Paul says that as a result of everything we just talked about, we will “spill over” with thankfulness
- Literally, he says that we should “super abound” with thankfulness & thanksgiving

Reality Check - *Are my spiritual roots strengthening?*

- ✓ Am I increasingly capable of self Bible study & prayer
- ✓ Am I increasingly able to work through my life situations and come to a place that honors God?
- ✓ Is God increasingly using the Bible as a mirror in my life, using it to show me my faults and sins?
- ✓ Are my spiritual roots going deeper & becoming stronger in Christ?
- ✓ Overall, am I a source of comfort & encouragement to others, or am I uprooted & leaning on others?

Reality Check - *Am I increasingly more thankful?*

- ✓ Am I complaining more or less than I did a year ago?
- ✓ Am I thankful to God in ways that I was not thankful a year ago?
- ✓ Am I noticing more & more wonderful gifts that God has filled my life with?
- ✓ Do I express gratitude to God on a consistent basis?
- ✓ Do I express gratitude to others on a consistent basis?