

COLOSSIANS 1:15-18

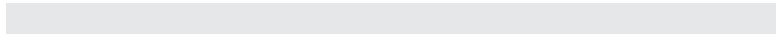
MORE THAN ENOUGH

STUDENT HANDBOOK 2017-18



Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU) is a Bible-based institution for theological and professional studies. It is rooted in the great commission of Jesus Christ to “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation” and to “make disciples of all nations...teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Mark 16:15a; Matthew 28:19, 20), which is the primary emphasis of Southwestern’s parent body, the General Council of the Assemblies of God.

The purpose of Southwestern Assemblies of God University is to prepare undergraduate and graduate students spiritually, academically, professionally, and cross culturally so as to successfully fill evangelistic, missionary and church ministry roles and to provide quality educational and professional Christian service wherever needed throughout the world.



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PROLOGUE

The students of Southwestern Assemblies of God University (SAGU) have the unique opportunity to enjoy a devotional time together once a week with either the students of their dorm or with just their hall of 25-30 fellow students who are in the same stage of life that they are in. It is during this one hour together that community is built and long lasting spiritual relationships are developed. This particular devotional time is a time honored tradition at SAGU that many generations have been able to enjoy.

During the Fall 2008 semester, the Residential Life Department decided to redesign the devotional program so that the students of SAGU could go through a book of the Bible together within the framework of the collegiate school year. This has proven to be a valuable experience for them that has provided the additional benefit of having shared themes within scriptural passages that everyone is discussing across the whole campus and Resident Assistants (RA's) and Dorm Directors (Dorm Pastors) are leading on a weekly basis. In the Fall of 2014, a devotional based on the themes in 1 Timothy was assembled and printed for the students of SAGU for the very first time. The Residential Life Department at SAGU used this guide as a tool for discipleship groups on campus that we were encouraging students to be involved in to build each other up and to spur each other on to be more like Jesus. In continuation of this practice, this particular booklet is a 24 week (12 weeks a semester) devotional guide based on the book of 1 John. The purpose in putting together these devotional guides with writers that the students know and respect (professors, staff members, and administrators), is to inspire students today to be passionate about the living Word of God and to inspire discipleship to expand on campus.

We would like to thank our President, Kermit Bridges, our Vice President for Student Development, Terry Phipps, and the Administration of SAGU to allow us to compile this work and any future guides for the spiritual growth of our students. We would also like to thank the writers of the individual devotions for taking the time to invest in this project. We are extremely grateful for their endeavors, personal insight, and transparency in sharing their hearts with us. Our prayer is that the Lord continues to enlighten minds as students of His Word and disciple others in the path of Christ, but that we also heed His voice to “make disciples” for His Kingdom.

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Discovering Colossians

So much is being written today about God. “Experts” are posting their thoughts, beliefs, and doctrine on Facebook, in blogs, and tweets, etc. Their followers read their postings religiously and spread the “good news.” It seems that society accepts whatever someone believes. “You have your beliefs and I have mine” seems to be the basis for Truth.

Do you have a blog or 2 or 3 that you follow? Do you write one yourself? It’s so easy these days for someone to write about God and have it sent around in the world in a matter of seconds. But, how do you know if it’s good stuff? Whether it’s Biblically sound? Or, doctrinally correct?

The Apostle Paul writes to the church at Colossae, who mirrors our society today. Everyone had an opinion about God and everyone felt they were right. Paul writes to combat a type of teaching that was not biblically sound and was threatening the church. It seems that popular culture and some type of heresy was being added to the Gospel. Paul’s response to this heresy was to point to the life and work of Jesus Christ.

The book of Colossians gives a very good measuring stick to judge this stuff by – the ultimate and only measuring stick is Jesus. Of all of Paul’s letters, this is his strongest declaration of the uniqueness and sufficiency of Christ.

As you study the book of Colossians, dive into the wonderful truths of Jesus. May these truths be the guiding light in your life. He is...More Than Enough

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Have We Become Ungrateful?

One of my favorite things to do is to give gifts. There is, however, one thing that threatens to take all of the things that I love about giving gifts away from me and I am wondering if you might be able to relate. Have you ever spent time finding the right gift, wrapping it perfectly, and making sure you delivered it in a special way, only to find that days to weeks and nothing was ever heard about the gift? How frustrating! If I am going to go through all that trouble to get you something, the least you could do post a shout out on Instagram with the hashtag #myfriendisbetterthanyours or at least send a generic “thank you” text. Come on!

When we don't get the thanks that we feel that we deserve we often find ourselves angry. Yet our self-righteous anger should shine a spot light on how ungrateful we often are towards our heavenly Father who gives us every good and perfect gift. Have we become ungrateful?

Ungratefulness isn't only limited to gifts, it actually takes many forms. It often comes in the form of comparison. If only I had what they have then I would be happy. It can also surface when you are so concerned with other things, be it technology, work obligations, etc., that we are unable to be present with family or friends. Ungratefulness also shows when we begin to take for granted our brothers and sisters who continuously pray for, encourage and support us. Or maybe we have forgotten to thank God for those around us who are unwavering in their faith.

If you find yourself doing that, don't worry you are not alone and Paul and Timothy give us a great example of how to combat ungratefulness through prayer.

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ when we pray...

-Colossians 1:3

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Colossians 1:1–8

The first and best place to start to address ungratefulness is through prayer. As you start your day would you take some time in prayer and thank God for all of the blessing that he has freely given us.

Ask yourself:

- *Make a list the things in your life that you are thankful for right now.*
- *What are some ways you could show gratitude to those people on your list?*

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Praying for Spiritual Growth

Praying for others is a privilege.

How many times have we been asked to pray for others; family members, or a loved one. Maybe it's a fellow believer, a friend, co-worker, fellow student, or an acquaintances, friends of friend. Prayers requests for healing, deliverance, favor, or financial provision. It is with great faith we pray and believe for God to move in the situation. God's word tells us to pray for one another. How often are we thankful for those people requesting prayer? Perhaps we should also pray far beyond just the need, but also praying that they may be filled with the full knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

How often do we pray for those around us who aren't requesting prayers? People like our Pastors, children's pastors & workers, teachers, the fellow Kingdom laborers, or other believers working behind the scenes? Praying for them and giving thanks to the Lord for them. Praying that they may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. Let us give thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. "Good advice: Pray for your friends," Pastor Jim Hennesy.

What a privilege it has been to pray for you before every year before the beginning of the school year. Prayers for many of you before you have even stepped onto the SAGU campus. The anticipation of what God is going to do in the lives of our students in palpable. The excitement of what God is going to do with and through you as you seek his will. For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. We pray that the knowledge of God's will results from remaining in his Word and in

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Colossians 1:9–14

fellowship with him. Only this kind of knowledge results in spiritual wisdom and understanding transforms our hearts.

Believers can pray for spiritual growth for themselves and for others. Paul’s prayer for the Colossian believers is a model of such prayer. We can pray for wisdom and spiritual understanding in order to know God’s will. And we can pray that we will live for God, being fruitful in His service. Then we can give thanks to God for making us “saints in the light.” When we pray this way, we are praying for spiritual maturity.

Ask yourself:

- *Who are you praying for?*
- *How would you like for people to pray for you?*
- *Who are you thankful for and why?*

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The Preeminent Person of Christ

Peace through... blood?

Back in the days of the when the Romans ruled the earth, they had a saying that was printed on their coins: “Peace through strength.” Of course, this is the way the world worked then, and it’s often the way the world works now. Humans, seeking to end conflict and gain control, tend to think that it’s the guy with the biggest stick, the sharpest sword, the loudest gun that gets to make the rules. And when that guy does inevitably win – well, of course there’s peace now! Anyone who had a problem with that guy died!

Jesus, however, does not seem interested in playing by the rules of the world. When we think that the end of conflict or the beginning of progress requires the use of brute force (physical, political, or otherwise), Jesus tends to go about things a little differently. It’s not that He is not aware of His own complete power or is incapable of acting a certain way. After all, Paul writes, “God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.” All the rulers and powers and authorities on earth only exist because of Him!

But instead of using that power to vanquish his enemies and bring about “peace through strength,” Jesus does the unexpected. The divine man that we follow, the king dressed in rags, brings the world closer to Himself by His very own blood. The world sees the powerful Christ and has no choice but to attempt to vanquish Him with violence. Christ – despite the power and authority to act otherwise – submits Himself to the world’s violence. And by doing so, He shows that violence to be empty and useless. He makes peace “through his blood, shed on the cross.” The maker of the universe, the only one who actually has the right to make peace through strength, surprises us. He draws near to us only by doing the very opposite of what we expect. There is no true peace through strength – there is only peace through the blood of Jesus.

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Colossians 1:15–20

Ask yourself:

- *What do you think it means to follow Jesus when this is how Paul describes him?*
- *When you think about the way you interact with the world, or see that things are not the way they “should” be, do you tend to trust in the peace-making way of Jesus?*

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Reconciled to Christ

I'll never forget the day I gave my life to Jesus.

Just a few days after my 12th birthday, I was about to go to sleep when I had this unbearable yearning in my soul. I didn't know it at the time, but now I recognize that it was the Holy Spirit drawing me into relationship with Jesus. I remember having an overwhelming need to call out to the Lord and I surrendered to it. Since that night in November, I can't say that my walk with Christ has always been perfect – but his grace was, is, and will be sufficient for me. I've decided that following Jesus was never about my perfection, but his. His perfection, though, influences my progress. I know that I am not who I was and I know that I am not what I will be. Daily, I'm conformed into the image of Jesus as I put off what I used to be and put on who Jesus says I am (Rom. 8:29). At 12, I didn't fully understand what God was bringing me out of. Thankfully, in his letter to the Colossians, the Apostle Paul gives us some understanding. Before Christ, we were "alienated" and "separated from him by [our] hostile thoughts." Not by any action of our own, but according to his mercy, the Father has brought us into the kingdom of the Son of his love. The Scripture uses a word to describe this transformation: reconciled. To reconcile simply means to restore. In biblical terminology, it especially focuses on God bringing us back into harmony and peace with him. Col. 1:22 explains further that because of Jesus' death, we are now holy, blameless, and above reproach. One translation says: "By giving himself completely at the Cross, actually dying for you, Christ brought you over to God's side and put your lives together, whole and holy in his presence." In doing what only Jesus could do, he took on our nature so we could take on his (2 Cor. 5:21).

This is the perspective we live from now.

In Christ alone, we are right with God and this causes our entire being to be changed. We think, desire, talk, and act differently. Identifying that we are holy, blameless, and above reproach in the sight of Jesus, Col. 1:23 goes on to say, "if

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Colossians 1:21–23

you continue in the faith.” To continue in what we’ve been taught requires effort on our part. Though we are not saved by our good works, we are certainly saved to them (Eph. 2:10). Our behavior is proof of what we say we believe. The way that the Apostle Paul tells the Colossians to continue in their faith is to be “well-grounded,” “stable and steadfast,” and “not shifting away from the [confident] hope of the gospel that you have heard.” The foundation for not shifting or being tossed about comes from remembering that though we were enemies to God, he found value in us. Giving the life of his dear Son, the Father revealed our redemptive purpose through the cross. Knowing what we’ve been brought out of and what we’ve been brought into allows us to see where God is taking us – this is reconciled.

Ask yourself:

- *What have I been delivered out of?*
- *What has Jesus brought me into?*
- *Where am I going from here?*

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Paul's Ministry to the Church

Stop and think for a minute about the last time you had to suffer or endure intense physical or emotional pain at the hand of someone you love ... or perhaps someone you've never met. How did it make you feel? I can guarantee that question is easy for some to answer. Some would want to go back and erase all the memories. Others live in a world of anger, bitterness, or hurt. Few would welcome it happening to them again.

Enter into this visual Paul the apostle. Paul, the guy who once had a mission in life to hurt and kill all who believed in Christ. Paul, the very same guy who had a first-hand personal encounter with Christ and had his life transformed. This guy welcomed pain. He welcomed jail time. Why would anyone do that? Why would anyone willingly welcome pain, hurt, and rejection into his life? It's simple. He loved Jesus.

He didn't just love Jesus, he was in love with Jesus and understood that all Jesus wants is for all of us to be with him one day. In all the minutes and hours he spent by himself in prayer and worship, he also realized something that we often miss: It's not about us. Life. Life with all of its ups and downs really isn't about us and our physical needs at all. Hard to hear right? Listen again. Paul realized that the things that happen in this world (or to us) really aren't about us at all. Ultimately, it's all about Christ. We were meant to fulfill Christ's purpose: his mission and reason for our lives. That's hard to hear. It's even harder to process when you're going through something that hurts so deeply you're questioning life and God himself.

It's interesting that the same passage of scripture that starts out by telling us Paul's feelings about suffering also tells us Jesus' feelings about this matter. As the Message translation states, "God wanted everyone...." Think about that for a minute. Paul was willing to endure

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Colossians 1:24–29

all he did simply because he loved Jesus and knew that Jesus wants to be with all of us. The God who created you. The God who loves you. The God who died for you. He wants you. He longs to know you and to converse with you. He longs to live in you.

Nowhere in this passage did it say we had to do anything special or have it all together in a perfect box to give our Lord. All it says is he “wants everyone.”

Take a moment to think about that truth today. Does God have you? Does He have all of you? If He does, how much are you willing to endure in order to fulfill His mission and His promise? And if He doesn't have you, are you ready to let him in?

Ask yourself:

Paul welcomed the chance to suffer. When you stop to think about that concept, it's natural to question, but why? Why would someone want to suffer -- regardless the reason? Paul was so in love with Jesus that he looked at suffering as a way of serving. It's about reframing our thinking.

God wants everyone. Regardless of past. Regardless of beliefs. Regardless of who you currently are or what you look like.

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Unity Among the Believers

Jesus prayed that all believers would be one and love another in the same way that He loves us. When we avoid, criticize, or argue with each other, we hurt Jesus as well as ourselves. But when we rely on the power of His Spirit working through us, we can achieve the Unity He desires.

Ask yourself this question:

Am I a part of the problem or am I a part of the Solution?

Paul says in Colossians 2:2 “My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ”. Paul was fervent in his passion for all of us to know Christ, understand what Christ did for us and then show and demonstrate his Love and Unity to the world.

How can we demonstrate Love and Unity in our personal life? How do we show love and unity to our family, as a student on a university campus, our church and more importantly how do we show the world Christ’s love and Unity?

I have a 4’ sword hanging in my office that is a daily reminder of Unity. I had served on a church Board for ten years and then served the same church as a Staff Pastor for 5 years. The lead Pastor gave me along with the other Board members and Pastors a sword. This was to be a reminder to all of us of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. As the story goes, when the Knights would come to Camelot, each Knight would lay his sword down on the round table signifying that his agenda, his kingdom, and his wants would be put aside for the betterment of Camelot. For all of us at the church, as Board members and Pastoral Staff, we would lay aside our agenda, our wants and desires and ask God what is his agenda? What is God speaking to us and then how do we follow his

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Colossians 2:1–5

will for our personal lives as well as the church. We would seek God and demonstrate Unity to the Church and to our Community.

Ask yourself:

- *All these years later I frequently ask myself this question: Do I live for myself or do I live for God. Do I promote Love and Unity or do I promote me in all that I do. What about you who do you live for?*
- *Proverbs 19:21 says, “Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails”. As I do my job, live my life do I follow Paul’s example and promote Love and Unity.*

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Rooted in Christ

One of Paul's concerns in the book of Colossians is warning the church against false teaching. He admonishes the church to be on their guard and to have discernment. The church today though, we don't have to worry about false teaching, right? "Wrong!" said anyone who has ever taken a Bible class at SAGU. The church today should still be on their guard and have discernment. "Don't drink the Kool-Aid" didn't become a saying for no reason. The questions now, is how do we, as the body of Christ and as individuals, have discernment and be on our guard against false teaching? The answer, my friend, is found in verses 6 and 7. Let's take a look!

Paul begins by encouraging the church to "live in him" by being rooted in Christ. Let's think about a plant for just a second. As we all know, plants have roots that grow under the soil. The roots are the foundation for the plant. How do we apply this to our lives then? We are commanded to be rooted in Christ, which means that our roots should be in him. He should be our foundation. If you are wondering what it looks like to be rooted in Christ, I would say the first step is salvation. Then, as your relationship with Christ grows, so do your roots grow in Him. Thankfully, it is never too late to plant those roots and begin an adventurous, crazy, and ever satisfying relationship with Jesus Christ. Ask yourself: Are my roots planted and growing?

The second thing that Paul mentions is to be built up in Christ. We are encouraged to have an active, healthy, and growing relationship with Christ. If the plant is not going to grow, then it is useless. Likewise, if my devotional life with Christ has not grown in a year or even a couple of months, then I am doing something wrong. I can assure you that I pray more fervently now than I did a year ago, and I pray that next year, I can say that I pray even more fervently than I do now. Or, before I came to

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Colossians 2:6–7

SAGU, I hardly ever prayed in tongues, though I had the filling. Now, as a senior, I try to make it a daily priority. Now, maybe some of you are thinking “Liza, I am just going through a desert season”. Guess what? Even a cactus grows in the desert. That is not an excuse to not be growing. Maybe an idea is to write down what your devotional life looks like now and then compare it in 6 months or a year. Or ask a mentor how you can work on growing your daily walk with Christ. You also might be thinking “I daily read my Bible, pray for the world, and seek God, yet it is hard to see change”. Dear Friend, I promise you that if you daily prioritize God and seek His face, your walk with Him will grow. It may not be as obvious as other people and it may be just a little bit every day, but He is with you and He will grow you.

Ask yourself:

- *Is my relationship with Christ actively growing?*
- *So, how can we have discernment and be on our guard against false teaching? By being rooted and built up in Christ. Then, as a cherry on top, I believe we will be strengthened in our faith and overflow with kindness.*

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Filled in Christ

Have you ever been tempted to look beyond Christ for fulfillment? I think we can all say at one time we have. Perhaps you look for security in another individual. Or maybe you wrap your identity in your appearance. I think we can all agree that it is nice to be complemented, but if we find our fulfillment in what others say about, we will always be left disappointed.

If you can relate to this, you may want to hear the story the apostle Paul tells about the temptations the Colossians were facing. In verse 8, we see that the Colossians were facing one of two influences to resist, which would turn their eyes away from Jesus. The first influence is revealed to be the worship of multiple Greek and Roman gods (2:8, "...philosophy and empty deceit, according to the human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world...) who governed different areas of human life such as wealth, sex, food, etc. However, if the Colossians gave into this temptation to look to these gods for fulfillment, they compromised their belief of Jesus' death and resurrection, being the one true God, and their only provider. What Jesus did in his life and resurrection left the Colossians lacking nothing, and gave an avenue to be "filled in him". Hence, they have everything they need in Christ and do not need any of these other false gods that were to supposedly provide fulfillment.

Being filled in Christ means that we live a life understanding he is the one true hope for our lives. Jesus is the visible expression of God. He is God in the flesh. If we are fulfilled in Christ, we believe in the life, death, and resurrection and share in his authority over the temptation to look for fulfillment beyond him.

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Colossians 2:8–10

Ask yourself:

- *What are some things in my life that replace the fulfillment that Jesus is supposed to provide?*
- *What are some steps I can take to get rid of these things?*
- *How can I ensure that I live a life understanding that Jesus is the one true hope for my life?*

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Buried and Raised with Christ

As an athlete and a coach I have spent most of my life thinking God either loved me or was mad at me based upon wins or losses, good or bad performances, or injury or health. My view of God's love was purely performance based. Intellectually, I believed that God loved me unconditionally, but practically, my sense of self-worth and idea of God's love was dictated by wins and losses. When I lost or failed I went into the dumps thinking I was worth nothing and that God was punishing me for my sins. Repentance was motivated more out of hope of receiving God's favor and a future win rather than true remorse.

There are numbers of athletes and coaches who are very successful because their entire identity is based upon their performance. This performance-based identity has driven them to levels way above the average because they have had to perform to feel validated or loved by God. Does this describe you?

Instead of your self-worth being based upon performance, performance should be based on God's unconditional love for us. We should compete because God made us to do so. With a heart of gratitude we should express the gifts He gave us. It is Christ's unconditional love and our relationship with Him as a child of God that gives us our true identity.

With an identity found in Christ, our self-worth does not fluctuate based upon performance. Loses or subpar performances are not because God is punishing us. As His children, we always have His love and favor, not just when we win. God uses wins, losses and overall performance to draw us deeper into His love and plan for our lives. His love for us never changes! You are loved with an everlasting love and there is nothing you or anyone can do to change that!

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Colossians 2:11–12

Ask yourself:

- *Are you guilty of allowing performance to affect how you view yourself and God's love? Explain*
- *Do you often compare your old self to your new self in Christ?*
- *Do you see how this can be a confusing conflict?*
- *Why is self-worth connected to performance?*

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Alive in Christ

And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

“You, who were dead!” Paul shows a contrast between being dead or alive. We are all included! We were all dead before Christ.

What I discover in the text is that it’s God’s work which accomplished all that was necessary to bring us from death to life. What if we could get God to do all our assignments, tests, and papers? Maybe like me you’ve said: “Hey God, you have some problems down here to take care of!” He is a problem solver. The text shows that He’s already done better than that. It’s in the past. He has already done the work. “You who were dead.”

Everything in reference to his mighty work of redemption is past tense.

Glory to God!

Look back over the passage and count or underline every past tense reference in these two verses. Then simply declare to God,

“Thank you that I owe nothing on my sin bill.” Rest in the relief that the power of sin is broken.

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Colossians 2:13-15

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Let No One Disqualify You

Being a Christ follower does not come with an automatic easy, breezy life. There are things as Christians we have to continue to grow in and to continue to overcome as we follow Christ. Pressure is one of those things we have to overcome. We can get this idea in our head at times that we have to be perfect and act a certain way. Well the truth is we have to love God and love people, and our actions and lifestyle should line up with that simple statement.

In Colossians Paul says “...do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath Day. These are a shadow of the things to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.” This statement was referring to certain foods and drinks that were considered unclean and certain traditions that were required before Christ came into the picture. The second thing that Paul says in this passage “Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize.” Prize means the heavenly reward and hearing God tell us well done good and faithful servant.

As Christians we can get caught up with traditions and expectations to uphold. It is important to remember that Christ came and made it simple. We cannot let the judgment of other people rule in our life and our hearts. God is the one true Judge, so we must look to him for approval. Our hearts should be to honor God in ALL we do. There may be people in our life that are “spiritual” and have a sense of “false humility” that try to speak into our life, that actually discourage us and tare us down. Paul tells us that those people are disconnected from God. We have to make sure that the pressure from people around us is not more important than our heart to honor God.

God has a plan for each of us and we should not choose to listen to the pressures of people over the voice of God in our life. Don't let anyone

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Colossians 2:16–19

disqualify you because you are too young, too old, you don't have the money or the abilities or even you don't have the image or reputation to do what God has called you to do.

Ask yourself:

- *What pressures have you allowed to sink in to your head and your heart that are not from God?*
- *Have you been a person that has judged others for not being as proper as they should be? Or have you found yourself disqualifying others?*
- *Take time to pray over any false humility that is in your life and then take time to ask God to speak about any people that you are listening to over him. Ask God to replace all the feelings of disqualification and judgment with his truth.*

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Resisting the Indulgence of the Flesh

Preventing fleshly indulgence requires going beyond legalistic restrictions and rituals that we might observe, and focuses instead on the promise of being revealed with Christ in His glory (3:4). To enable the growth of the Spirit within us into true personal Christlikeness, we must begin with death to a way of living which often results in having a form of Godliness, but which is actually counter to development of the true nature of Christ.

The thrust of the scripture here is that the carnal nature can be fed even through strictness of lifestyle, self-denial and self-torture for religious reasons. Powerful false religious movements often feature suicide (Islam), self-torture (Hinduism) and severe restrictions of lifestyle (Buddhism) as means of religious gain. But these have no effect on developing the glory of Christ within the person, though they might appear to some to be wise (2:23), even heroic. Even religiously observant Christians can mask a lack of Christlikeness within by outward behaviors—the flesh is fed when it might appear that it is being starved.

THINGS TO CONSIDER:

We will not be free from the potential for fleshly indulgence until we are rid of our earthly bodies. No matter how long a person lives in Christ while on earth, the flesh has an appetite that must be suppressed. But, as can happen in our physical bodies, hunger eventually goes away if it is ignored. Whatever we feed will thrive.

Suppression of fleshly indulgence really only happens when we feed the Spirit that has been birthed within us. Rather than focusing on spiritual “don’t’s”, it’s essential to focus on spiritual “do’s”: daily spirit-feeding habits that nurture our life in Christ. Consistency in these habits makes resisting fleshly indulgence much easier. No matter whether occasions of fleshly indulgence occur early or later in our spiritual

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Colossians 2:20–23

journey, there is always a path toward restoration and fruitfulness. I have heard it said “don’t ever give up on God for He won’t give up on you.” “... a righteous man falls seven times, and rises again.” (Prov. 24:16)

Warning signs to think about:

- *Am I gratified by my own religious behavior, especially if it is observed by others?*
Avoid behaviors that bring religious applause from others.
- *Do I allow personal failures in this area to sideline my practice of spiritual “do’s”, such as daily spirit-feedings of Bible reading and prayer?*
Get yourself quickly out of the spiritual ditch.
- *Have I ever allowed the failure of someone I considered spiritually mature to foster self-doubt about the ability to avoid fleshly indulgence?*
Remember that spiritual pedestals underneath others can be very fragile.

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A Proper Mindset

In Colossians, Paul tackles a system of thought and lifestyle that directly conflicts with the philosophy and life that is rooted in Christ Jesus. In the third chapter, he provides some practical directives that when followed, will keep believers going in the right direction. The first directive is found in verse two: set your mind on the things above. Paul sees this as an intentional undertaking that must be continually reset. He stresses the importance of regulating our thoughts and understands that the outcome of right thinking is right living.

Athletes who run long distances such as marathons (that's 26.2 miles!) understand the importance of being mentally conditioned before a race. Their success depends not only on their physical fitness but also on the thoughts that run through their minds. Runners are susceptible to a whole set of ailments and injuries: shin splints, black toe, and even runner's trots. Why would anyone every put up with these kinds of ailments? What makes someone keep running through unpleasant conditions? The answer— they set their minds on one thing, the finish line. Successful marathoners continually set and reset their minds to resist any distractions to enable them to stay the course for 26 miles. Life is full of potential distractions that can sidetrack believers and get them off course in their relationship with God. It is critical, therefore, that Christ-followers intentionally set their minds. The tense of this verb suggests that it is not a one-time accomplishment but rather a continuing and deliberate action of resetting.

What does Paul mean by things above? Often this is interpreted to think about heaven or things that are godly, good, peaceful or positive. But that is not what Paul means by things above. Notice that he makes reference to Christ being seated at the right hand of God. Paul is drawing attention to Christ's lordship, the one who was crucified and came to renew life. He reminds believers that they have been buried

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Colossians 3:1–4

and raised with Christ, and that the old system of thought and lifestyle is now dead. Set your mind on the things above is all about realigning our allegiance to the lordship of Christ so that nothing hinders our race. Our pursuits, interests, and investments are to be wrapped up in union with Him. This is an ongoing act of surrender that begins with a self-examination to uncover where we have not yet yielded to Christ. When we reposition our loyalty to Him, we can run the course without distraction, and Christ will be revealed in us.

What are you pursuing that prevents you from setting your mind on the things above? Where do you resist the invitation of the Holy Spirit to realign your loyalty to Christ and expose areas you need to surrender? The same power that raised Christ from the dead will enable you to set your mind on things above.

1954 was the first year two runners ran a mile under 4 minutes in the same race. John Landy from Australia led all the way until the last 200 feet when he gave a backward glance to see how far his competitor was behind him. For a split second he lost focus and his rival, Roger Bannister from England, took the lead and set a new world record. Landy has gone down in history as the one who looked back. Bannister set his mind and ran the miracle mile. Set your mind on the things above.

Notes

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Death to the Old Life

In American culture today, when a couple gets married, the bride-to-be and the groom-to-be's respective wedding party's will host bachelor and bachelorette parties to celebrate the new life that a couple will be living together. The tradition also aids in helping them to say goodbye to the single life. Some cultures use this time period for the future bride and groom to evaluate whether they still want to commit to the other person or not and will spend a night being tempted to see if their love is true and as committed as they believe it is. There are many regrets made during these get-togethers by some groups, but some will merely spend time with their respective bachelor or bachelorette to celebrate the change that is coming to the individual's life. Regardless of the rationale, the time period before the wedding can be a time of anxiety and soul-searching.

In Colossians 3:5-8, Paul encourages new believers to leave the ways that the old life offered because the new life has so much more in store in Christ. When we step over the threshold from our old selves, bathed in selfish indulgence to the new life of being made alive by Jesus and made full of grace, love, and self-sacrifice, a significant change and power shift occurs.

Our commitments change. We no longer want to commit ourselves to things that bring nothing to us but destruction. We reach out for people and things that will help us to help others and will aid in spiritual growth instead of death.

Our attitude changes. Our hearts become full of passion for Jesus and for what concerns Jesus. Because we are no longer slaves to sin and serve ourselves and the pattern of the world, we want our attitude to reflect the victory Jesus gave us through His sacrifice. When our hearts are full of Him, our words and attitude reflect that goodness as it springs forth from us.

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Colossians 3:5–8

Our worship changes. Since we are committed to a loving and self-sacrificing Jesus, we embrace His grace and worship Him with a renewed heart. This worship is reflected in the words and reflections we express to God and His people.

Being the hyper-evaluator that I am, my words can always flirt with what's wrong with something before I evaluate what's right and good. I have to intentionally remind my spirit that I am made new in Christ and what has entered my life should be a reflection of what comes from my life, which includes my attitude as well as my words.

Don't allow the enemy to make you dwell on the old "you". The new "you", which is the "you" 2.0, has much better features and a much longer lifespan.

Notes

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The New Self

Every New Year, many people resolve to live differently. We promise to lose weight, find a new job, quit bad eating habits, and care better for our family and friends, or change in some other way. But then the cold reality hits: change is not easy. After a few weeks (or days) into a new year, old and destructive habits return. Our change to new life in Christ is much different. It doesn't depend on our willpower alone. God does not just forgive our sins and then say, "Now try hard to do things differently." In Christ, God makes us into new people.

We probably all learned in grade school how a caterpillar builds a chrysalis and, over time, emerges as a butterfly. While it is inside the chrysalis, the caterpillar is growing and changing, and when it comes out, the change becomes clear to anyone who sees it. Our lives as we walk with Jesus are not so very different. When we receive Jesus as our savior, He accepts us and loves us right where we are, but He loves us too much to let us stay that way. Over time, the Lord works in our hearts to change us from the inside out.

Colossians 3:9-10 reminds us that we have "taken off the old self" and "put on the new self." Once we have received Jesus, we can't go back to the person we were before. As we begin to listen to God and do what He says, by taking our next steps as He reveals them to us, we will grow and we will change. It won't happen overnight, and it might not be easy, but it will be worth it as we grow into the person who God created us to be.

So the "new self" is the new bundle of attitudes and emotions and practices that Jesus has called us to become. It's important to remember that, from the beginning, God's plan has been to make you like his Son, Jesus. This is your destiny. God announced this intention at Creation: "Then God said, 'Let us make human beings in our image and likeness.'" (Genesis 1:26 NCV)

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Colossians 3:9–11

But the image is incomplete and has been damaged and distorted by sin. So God sent Jesus on a mission to restore the full image that we have lost. What does the full “image and likeness” of God look like? It looks like Jesus Christ! The Bible says Jesus is “the exact likeness of God,” “the visible image of the invisible God,” and “the exact representation of his being.” (2 Corinthians 4:4 NLT; Colossians 1:15 NLT; Hebrews 1:3 NIV) This is the goal of the “new self”, to be just like Christ!

God’s ultimate goal for your life on earth is not comfort, but character development. He wants you to grow up spiritually and become like Christ. Becoming like Christ does not mean losing your personality or becoming a mindless clone. God created your uniqueness, so he certainly doesn’t want to destroy it but he does want you to grow and become “a new creation” and be more and more like Him daily.

Just like a caterpillar’s fullest potential is not to stay a caterpillar, our fullest potential is not to stay the way we are. Let’s surrender to the Lord today, and allow Him to make the change in our hearts unmistakable.

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Bearing with One Another

In verses 12-13, Paul tells us that as Christ followers, we “must ‘clothe’ ourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and forgiveness”. But before we can put on these qualities, in the same way that we get dressed and ready each day, we first must shed any attitudes that don’t align with the heart attributes Paul listed. We must rid ourselves of our pride, defensiveness, impatience, aggressiveness, judgment, and resentment every day. How can we expect forgiveness from the Ultimate Judge, but not extend grace and forgiveness in our own life? There is no way that we can consider ourselves kind, but speak harshly to someone we don’t agree with, or consider ourselves humble while we seek praise for the good deeds we’ve done. It is impossible to be both at the same time; they are literally complete opposites! By nature we house these ugly traits inside of us that point back to ourselves, which is why this task that Paul orders us to do isn’t easy. It’s hard; it’s a fight between our spirit and our flesh (Gal. 5:17; Romans 7:15-25), which is why we need to be in the Word daily, and allow the Holy Spirit to move in our lives, take root in our spirit, and help us to produce the beautiful fruit of the Lord (Gal. 5:22-25).

In verse 14, Paul goes on to say, “Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.” Love is the sparkly gold ribbon that’s wrapped around the most perfect and priceless gift you could ever give someone. It’s the spine and binding of the greatest book you’ve ever read. It’s the thread that weaves together a quilt of the most beautiful colors you can imagine. It holds everything together. If you are living a life led by love for others, then all of the things that Paul listed in verse 12-13 will follow and accompany you flawlessly. We can see in 1 Cor. 13:4-8 where love encompasses all of these things: patience, kindness, humility, forgiveness, peacefulness – which we also know is the fruit of the spirit. It’s a consistent theme throughout the New Testament and they go hand in hand.

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Colossians 3:12–15

Ask yourself:

What would the world look like if we were ruled by the love of God? A love that's driven by thoughtfulness and consideration of others, that isn't about ourselves and our own wants, needs, and agendas, but others. What if every morning, as we got ready for the day, we shed our selfishness as we do our pajamas, and we put on selflessness, forgiveness, kindness, thankfulness, humility, and sought out opportunities to bring peace among our peers? What if others saw this love beaming out of you and said "I want that", or "You're different. How can I have what you have?" What if living out this love pointed back to Christ and gave you the opportunity to tell others about Him?

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Whatever You Do

Everything you do has a purpose. Every cause you take up will have an effect. Whatever we do makes a difference but often times it's the reason we do something that makes the biggest impact.

I am a very task oriented person—I like to have a to-do list, and I like to get it done. Sometimes it's hard for me to pause and think about why I'm doing something. Paul is giving practical instruction on how to interact with people and situations every day. The first step in every situation is always to start in the Word. Before you see other people's faces you have to seek the face of God. We are to soak in the Word of God fully and consistently to the point that all we think and speak is filtered through the Word. Paul is urging us to consume the Word of God so much so that it constantly lives in us. When we do this it's a cause-and-effect, the next part is an end product of being poured into consistently. This is when you teach and admonish others. You can't teach someone something that you don't already know. You cannot pour spiritual support into someone's life if you do not have a hold of your own spiritual support. In the same way you cannot admonish or correct someone with the wisdom of God if you are not consistently filling yourself with the presence of God. When you are poured into—you will overflow.

God has not called me to solely be a task-oriented person, God has called me to be a Gospel-oriented person. Even in the mess of life there is a purpose for everything you do—even if you have to try really hard to find it. Paul is instructing us that in any matter—big or small—do it for the Lord. It's really easy to be independent and try to take on the world on our own...but we don't have to. We have a God who is strong and who is waiting right there with us. Do everything first for the glory of God and secondly give God thanks in everything. Because good or bad—He is still God. In every action we make and every word that comes from our mouth we must be filled with gratitude. Thankfulness will always go a

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Colossians 3:16–17

long way. Live a lifestyle that is always worship to God. Whatever you do—you are worshipping God. You are thankful to him in the big and the little moments of your life. When we are thankful to God it's really hard to not be filled with the joy of God.

Be in the Word constantly, pour into others consistently, whatever you do have a spirit of thankfulness and always give the glory to God. God's got your back.

Ask yourself:

- *Do I give glory to God in the little moments of my life?*

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Guide for Families

The way we treat people, fulfill commitments, and respond to our boss or our parents is an expression of what is in our hearts. If our hearts are devoted to the Lord, then everything we do should be for the Lord. Sometimes we forget this and allow our human nature to take over. In Colossians 3, Paul teaches how to stop living in the flesh and begin living in the renewed self because we have been redeemed in Christ. He gives specific guidelines for families including spouses, children, parents, and workers. Paul's message to the church of Colossae can be applied today just as much as the day his letter was written.

Paul shares in verse 23 that "whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord." If verses 18-22 are read through this lens, we find that the Lord is wanting us to be aware of our heart, motives, and actions in our devotion to Him. As Christians, we can be so focused on loving unbelievers that we can forget to be aware of those closest to us. We can also be so comfortable with those closest to us that we forget that we need to be Christ-like towards them as well. We forget that serving Christ is also to serve those in the Body of Christ which includes our family members, bosses, and co-workers. Being single and not having kids yet doesn't mean we shouldn't strive to love those around us now. It means we get to live it out now as we prepare for what's next. We can begin serving him by serving others and loving others as we would ourselves. We can begin examining our heart, attitude, and mindset now and allow him to work in our lives so that we can be the person he has created us to be. While marriage is in the distance, we are all still children now, even if it's to a spiritual parent. Even if it's something still being worked on, we can begin living out obedience to those with us now. Many have moved to a college campus and do not live at home anymore, but the Lord still wants us to love, honor and respect our parents as Christ would, no matter where we live or how old we are.

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Colossians 3:18–22

Our places of work is often the next place in life where we spend the most time besides family, so Paul instructs, “Don’t work only while being watched, in order to please men, but work wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord.” We must remember that everything we do is for the Lord. Overall, it isn’t the reward that any earthly master can give us, but the life that the Lord gives when we live for him. We must do everything to the Lord and we must treat everyone as the Lord has showed and taught us. Not only should we love unbelievers but we need to love and serve our family, friends, supervisors, and co-workers. It means we may need to ask the Lord to give us a new perspective, a revived love, or soften our hearts towards someone. It may mean we need to ask for forgiveness and change our attitude toward a family member or co-worker. Allow the Lord to show you how you can better love and serve the people He has given you in your life.

Examine yourself and actions and determine whether you need to make changes in the way you act towards your parents, a sibling, your friends, your supervisor, or your co-workers. Think about 3 things you can do to show love for 3 different people in your close circle this week. Ex.) ask for forgiveness, do something they want to do, do a chore for them that they dislike doing, write an appreciation note, etc.

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Serve the Lord

I once heard a statement that resonated in my spirit and truly changed my perspective on genuine servanthood. It went something like this, “Jesus’ spiritual authority was not found in a title, but in a towel.” Jesus was and is our greatest example of what it means to be a true servant. He did not come to this earth and boss people around, treat people cruelly, act as a dictator and force others to submit to His will. Rather, He came humbly and gently, wrapped a towel around His waist, and served.

The bible tells us that Jesus did not come to be served, but to serve. He washed his disciple’s feet, fed the hungry, ministered to the brokenhearted, set the captive free, and we know the list goes on with the great testimonies of how the Son of God touched the world. Jesus raised the bar, set the standard, and is the example that we should all follow. Jesus demonstrated with His own life the very thing that was most important... serving His Father, and serving people.

In these verses you just read, Paul is reminding Christian’s that we have a Master who is in Heaven, and all our labor and efforts, even how we treat other’s, should all be done with Him in mind. Paul also informs us that our reward (our inheritance) or consequences come because of how we serve and treat others. This leads us to having to ask ourselves some questions. Am I wiping these cafeteria tables with Him in mind? Am I scrubbing these toilets with Him in mind? Am I supervising my resident hall with Him in mind? Am I serving my student body with Him in mind? Am I filing papers, answering phone calls, sending emails with Him in mind?

After honest reflection, have you found yourself being motivated to do these things because of the status it provides, the title it gives you, the authority you possess, the popularity it brings, or even the monetary

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Colossians 3:23–4:1

incentive that's attached to it? If so, I encourage you to wrap the towel around your waist and receive a better perspective of what truly matters. It's always been and will always be about serving Him!

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The Pursuit for Wisdom

As Christians we love the idea of wisdom and being in tune with God, but we rarely ever enjoy the process of actually getting there. That takes too long. We want to instantly arrive at wisdom and spiritual depth and we want it NOW! But like Mr. Miyagi in *The Karate Kid* says, we must be willing to “wax on, wax off.” It’s a learning process! Paul teaches us that the only means to wisdom and depth is through application. You simply cannot arrive to a point of wisdom. It is a tedious journey that requires discipline and sacrifice. So as Christians what is our “wax on wax off” process towards wisdom and spiritual depth? In Colossians 4:2-6 Paul gives us that process:

1. Verse 2: “Devote yourselves to prayer...”
 - Persevere: being strongly determined and passionate.
 - This means praying when you don’t feel like it!
2. Verse 2: “...being watchful and thankful.”
 - Between the world, the devil and our own selfishness there is an endless war for our attention.
 - Know thy self and what could potentially distract you!
3. Verses 3-5: “And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message...”
 - This means being able to discern which doors and opportunities God has placed before us, but this only comes after we have made it a priority to pray and be watchful!
4. Verse 6: “...make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversations always be full of grace...”
 - The words we use should be worthy of being identified with Christ.
 - Your words have the potential to produce an outcome.

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Colossians 4:2–6

For many individuals, we are the closest thing to Jesus that others will see. If this is the case we cannot afford to cheapen the application process that leads us to wisdom and spiritual insight. We must be devoted to the process and application which God has called us to that we might become wise and in tune with the Spirit. So wax on, wax off! Wisdom is waiting.

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Supporters of the Cause

Have you ever heard a great artist or musician live? What about a gospel choir or chorus ensemble? Whether you are musically inclined or not, it goes without saying, there is something powerful that shoots through the room when people sing. If your own experiences haven't led you to agree, maybe science will.

Time magazine released a five-year study that shows the effects of singing, and the results are impressive: alleviated depression, diminished anxiety, reduced levels of stress, and a higher quality of overall mood. Why is that? Scientists link it to a release of endorphins such as oxytocin, which not only supply all of the mentioned benefits but, when released in groups, has an incredible bonding impact: your heart rates sync, your breathing patterns begin to match, your circadian systems link up, and your level of trust and affection for one another is increased. As a matter of fact, the positive individual benefits even multiply physiologically when you sing in a group versus going at it alone.

Paul is writing to the church at Colossians about a “faithful servant and brother” named Tychicus as well as a runaway-slave-turned-Believer, Onesimus. He mentions both of these men in earlier letters, consistently pointing to their faithful service, gifts of encouragement, and value to the kingdom. While they are each potentially sufficient in their own right to go propel an individual ministry, they have chosen to play a supporting role for the sake of a bigger story. They've chosen to be a voice in the choir, the last few verses of the last chapter, the background guys. That's fortunate, because the kingdom thrives on background guys, and when multiple voices sing one song, the benefits only multiply.

There are times in life where pursuing the solo and spotlight will tempt you – and it gets tricky because it often happens in the context of ministry and leadership. It feels justifiable, right? You want to lead for

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Colossians 4:7–9

the kingdom, you want the pastoral position to further His cause, you want the spotlight to point the world back to Him, not yourself. Truthfully, we live in a society that almost breeds it - but from Genesis to this very semester, God makes it clear that His ambition for His Church is unity and togetherness. Its choirs over solos. That doesn't mean your part isn't important. It just means that your part is not only better when it's joined to the rest of the song but it was CREATED to be. It means that, much like Time Magazine reminds us, we're better when we're together.

Is God taking you through a process of separating self-motivated ambition from heaven's purpose? Are there any areas of your life where it's a challenge to be content as the background guy? Have you ever found identity in title, role, or calling and outside of Christ alone?

If you haven't died to the thing in you that wants to be the great one, it can be scary and disappointing to imagine life as a Tychicus or Onesimus instead of life as a Paul; don't let that fear keep you from asking Him to increase Himself, His will, and His intentions. I promise, you will be more fulfilled in the unity of the choir than you would ever be on your own stage. Ask God to help you pinpoint the areas of your heart still leaning toward your solo.

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Final Greetings from Paul

Have you ever been on a team in which a small percentage does most of the work? In how many group projects have you participated in college, resulting in a few members – or one member – doing most of the work? Have you been one that does most of the work? Have you avoided most of the work?

If you look at the ministry efforts of most churches, you will see approximately 20% of the people doing 80% of the work. This is not a new trend, and it is widely accepted as the reality of church life. No, this is not a ministry-recruiting guilt trip. Think about it. If all of our material riches, personal accomplishments, and career achievements will mean nothing after we die, what should our lives really be about? What are the efforts that will last for eternity? How do we best carry out those efforts – alone or together?

Although the apostle Paul is considered the greatest individual missionary in history, he was not a loner. In Paul's final remarks to the Colossians, we see the team and we learn a lot about teamwork in the church. In this short letter, Paul wrote about lust and greed in one verse, anger in one verse, wives in one verse, husbands in one verse, and fathers in one verse; yet, he devoted the final 12 verses (although we are only looking at the final 9 verses in this part of the semester) to people with him and in Colossae.

We read about: Tychicus, the missionary and interim pastor; Onesimus, the runaway slave that earlier came to Jesus through Paul; Aristarchus, a Jewish believer imprisoned with Paul; Mark, the writer of the 2nd gospel and one with whom Paul ironed out their previous conflict; Justus, an encourager of Paul; Epaphras, the planter of the church in Colossae; Luke, the writer of the 3rd gospel and regular ministry companion of Paul; Nyphma, the woman who hosted the church in her home; Archippus, the

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Colossians 4:10–18

man who shared pastoral duties during the absence of Epaphras; and Demas, the man who deserted Paul, having “loved this present world.” Think about this roster. It is obvious that Paul is not the only worker. He was part of a team effort. This is the way that it must be. God has gifted each of us to use our gifts to serve Him and bring others to Him. Benchwarmer is not one of the gifts. During your time at SAGU, you’ve heard from many people who serve on church staffs, foreign mission fields, and other vocational ministry endeavors. Such individuals are not the team; on the contrary, they are a small part of the team. As a follower of Jesus, you are on the team. What kind of teammate will you be?

Ask yourself:

- *What kind of teammate will you be?*
- *What steps must a benchwarmer take to get involved in teamwork? How does one discover the gifts he/she can use as an active team member?*
- *Have you been deserted/disappointed by others who were supposed to be strong teammates while you were doing something for God? How should you process this in your own role as a teammate?*
- *We must consider every interpersonal relationship as a setting for ministry. Discuss the implications of this in everyday living – both now and in your future career, family, and community.*

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Conclusion

Dare: Make a short resume of all of the failures you can remember and think about those things for a minute before reading any further.

In the Spring of 1985, Coca-Cola decided to reformulate its recipe and branded it as “the new taste of Coca-Cola.” Coca-Cola had been losing ground with diet sodas and several other drinks for a number of years. Adding to that was Pepsi’s “taste tests” against Coke and several other brands in supermarkets across America that were made into commercials. According to the tests, Pepsi would win every time as the drink that Americans preferred. Nevertheless, Coca-Cola decided it would invent a sweeter flavor to compete more with Pepsi. In their own taste tests, the “New Coke”, as it became known to the general public, beat out Pepsi and the other colas. As soon as the product was ready, the previous Coke was removed from shelves and New Coke, with a new label, entered the marketplace. The backlash was quick. Even though the New Coke was doing well in markets all over America, it failed miserably in the Southeast where Coca-Cola originated and where it was sold the most. With only one major section of the US dissenting, the New Coke outcry became more widespread and within 3 months, the original formula came back to the shelves. On July 11, 1985, “Coca-Cola Classic” was back on the market and quickly began outselling the New Coke version and Pepsi. In fact, by Christmas 1985, Coke Classic sales were twice the amount of Pepsi’s. Some speculated that the whole switch from original to new and then to classic was a marketing ploy to gain attention and positive ground in the market. Regardless of a conspiracy or not, the people of America proved that they loved the original Coke over a new substitute.

Paul’s letter to the Colossians illustrates and proves the point that creating something in the place of Jesus or the Gospel will never be

ENOUGH

fruitful. The ever-lasting and self-sacrificing, original Jesus will always out-last, over-perform, and dominate any new man-made copies. Only Jesus can take a creation and make it new into His image and make it better than it ever was before.

Whenever we think things are not like they should be, whether it be mistakes we make, or that it's not politically correct to be a Christian, or when we don't think we measure up and we idolize perfection over Jesus, my prayer for you is that in every facet and season of your life that you realize that Jesus is always...“More Than Enough.” There is nothing that Jesus would prioritize over us. There is nothing you can do better to have him love you more. Nothing could ever quench our spiritual thirst, but Him.

Notes



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