***Our Christian Walk

Colossians 1:1-2

COL-087***

Our subject is "Prayer for the Colossians," number 21 in Colossians 1:9-14.

Hebrews 4:12, "For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work."

2 Timothy 2:15, "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth. For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through the perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures, we might have hope."

1 Peter 1:23, "For you have been born-again, not of seed, which is perishable, but imperishable; that is, through the living and abiding Word of God."

2 Timothy 4:2-3, "Preach the word. Be ready in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, and exhort with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will be turned aside to myths."

2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."

**Dysfunctional People**

The gods of paganism are all the inventions of unregenerate people. These gods, therefore, are made in the image of the sinful nature of man. Satan, as the god of this world, is the pattern for all false gods which are therefore evil, hateful, deceitful, and morally corrupt in character as Satan is. Unsaved people have their minds controlled by their spiritual father, the devil. Therefore, they are dysfunctional human beings. And we have, for several weeks now, been pursuing the topic of what it is to be a dysfunctional human being, and how horrendous that is in the case of a Christian. Dysfunctional people are horribly disfigured from the image and likeness of God in which they were created. They live and they think like animals. It is a great tragedy when a Christian is a dysfunctional person in any way as if he were a mere unsaved natural man.

The first divine objective for the one who has made Jesus Christ His Savior is to make Him his Lord. This, of course, is a subsequent objective after salvation. Therefore, we do not speak about making Christ your Lord and Savior. That immediately signals a little bit of lack of doctrinal understanding on the part of anybody who uses that order. But if you're going to use those two terms together, you must say: "to make Him your Savior and your Lord." Making Christ one's Lord is a lifelong process which only ends in the presence of Christ, either through death or through the rapture.

**The Grace System of Perception**

Now, God has provided the church-age believer with the means for making Christ one's Lord by acquiring the mind of Christ to guide the Christian each moment of the day. We refer to that as the grace system of perception, and this is the means that God has provided for securing what the Bible calls "the mind of Christ" – full knowledge doctrine "epignosis" in the human spirit, and the control of the life by the Holy Spirit to a Christian who is in temporal fellowship, as per 1 John 1:9. That is the winning combination. That is the only way that Jesus Christ made it in His humanity. He did not ride on His deity. He rode it just the way you and I do, with one exception: He didn't have a sin nature. But He went through the devil's world on two things: knowing doctrine; and, being in temporal fellowship with the Holy Spirit. This grace system of perception is the means to the mind of Christ.

Now, Satan, of course, does everything he can to destroy the Lordship of Jesus Christ over a believer. For this reason, he denies Christians access to doctrine teaching; that is, expository (explanation) teaching of the Scripture. This, even when Christians sometimes receive instruction in the Word of God – when they go negative to it, it is of no use to them. And this is why you wonder why some young people sometimes do terrible things. They've sat in church, and they've been instructed, maybe on a moral issue. That is because, when they heard it, in the back of their mind there was a negative volition response: "I'm not sure about that. Everybody else does differently. I don't know about this." And that's all you need to make the Word of God useless to you. And that's the first step toward becoming a dysfunctional believer.

Well, Satan, in order to keep Christ from being Lord, wants to make you a dysfunctional believer. He does this in a variety of ways. He substitutes, for example, programs for the local church instead of the teaching in-depth ministry of the pastor-teacher to instruct people in the doctrines of the Word of God. He will override the believer's mind with emotional domination of the soul in order to prevent objectivity in thinking, which is essential for making Christ your Lord. You cannot make Jesus Christ the Lord of your life if you are an emotional yo-yo. That's why, out in a charismatic movement, Christ is generally not the Lord of those people. They are their own lords, and they are making their own truth by their own feelings and their own experiences, rather than by the Word of God. They operate on the subjective basis, and subjectivism from the emotions, I guarantee you, will neutralize the Lordship of Christ, and he will even do this sometimes when a Christian thinks that he is honoring Jesus as Lord. He just feels it. He has felt his way to something that he believes is honoring Christ.

I saw a National Geographic program this week, and it was in West Virginia in Appalachia. And it took us to a church where they believed in snake-handling. I mean these were real snakes – not people. And their premise for this is based on Mark 16:17-18, where Jesus said, "And these signs will accompany those who have believed in My Name. They will cast out demons. They will speak with new tongues. They will pick up serpents. And if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them. They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." And it was fascinating to watch the film which was made of the church service, as gradually they brought the snakes out of the boxes, and people were jumping and jiving, and the music was beating away, and they were swaying and moving and holding the snakes. And sometimes a whole handful of these snakes was wheeling around. One man was asked, "Why do you do this? It's very dangerous." He said, "Well, this is to demonstrate that Christ is our Lord, and that we are pure. If we are not pure, we will get bitten." One man said he had been bitten, I think, like 118 times.” That poor guy needs to clear up his life or quit messing with the snakes.

What do they do? They were proving that: "Christ is my Lord. He is going to control me. He's going to take care of me. I can handle these snakes. Nothing will happen to me." But the oddity, I thought, as I watched the program, was that, as you see from the passage we just read, on which this is based, is that they will prove Christ as their Lord also by drinking poison without deadly results. The snake handlers don't mess with that sign. They used to, but they ran out of candidates quickly. So, they quit drinking the poison. It also says that they're going to drive out demons. Well, if they did that, there wouldn't be any fun in the church service anymore, because I guarantee that it's the demons that are driving what they're doing. But they don't do that. And they certainly don't speak in foreign languages as another sign that they are in pure rapport with Christ, and He is their Lord. And certainly, they're not in there doing the healing.

What these poor people don't understand is that this particular passage of Scripture refers to a condition of the New Testament church, when the early witnesses faced an antagonistic empire, and when they were treated to the abuse of these things, and when they were forced to deal with poisons and snakes and this sort of thing. And what was happening? What was happening was that they were being destroyed by someone who did not teach them the meaning of the Word of God. There was totally subjective distortion of the Word of God. And they'll pay for it for all eternity. That's the hopelessness of what they're facing. What is the source of this? A subjective mind. A subjective mind is not the mind of Christ.

**Full Knowledge**

So, the functional Christian is the biblical Christian – Christ living in him with his mind with full knowledge doctrine. So, Colossians 1:9 has brought all this together when it said, "For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, (that is, their love up in verse 6), we have not ceased to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled" (a natural void with which the Christian is born) filled with the knowledge of His will." And we pointed out to you that this word "knowledge" here is a very important word, because it is a different word from ordinary knowledge. The Greek word looks like this: "epignosis" (ep-ig'-no-sis), E P I G N O S I S. "Epignosis" is a word that means full knowledge. And we haven't got time to review how the process works, from what you get of knowledge, which is this last part here ("gnosis"), just plain old information which you may go negative toward, or you may ignore, or if you take it and believe it, then it suddenly is stored by an act of faith in your human spirit – the point of contact that you have with God, and it becomes full knowledge.

This is one of the most important pieces of doctrine you'll ever learn. This is the thing you need to know right after you're born-again, or you're going to be an idiot spiritually all your life. You have to understand there's a difference between knowing a principle of doctrine that you have some mental reservations on (that does you no good whatsoever), over against having an "epignosis," because what "epignosis" does for you is that it produces the mind of Christ. And that is very thrilling – to know that you can move about in life, not the sin nature influenced mind, but a mentality that is constantly being influenced by the Word of God. And it is your mind, remember, that tells your emotions what to do. It is your mind that tells your will what to do.

So, if you want your kids to grow up and be decent human beings, they have to understand that there's a difference between knowledge of the Word of God, and that to which they've said "Amen." That to which they have gone with positive volition – that will grab their lives, and that will then control what they do.

So, we come to the knowledge of the will of God through this full knowledge in all spiritual wisdom and understanding. Spiritual wisdom (wisdom in spiritual things) means how to apply doctrine in any particular point. And understanding means discernment, so that you see through people and circumstances, and you don't go through life as somebody's idiot. Christians do horrendous things, and you stand back and say, "How could that happen?" It is because they have not possessed the understanding that God gives those who are positive and receptive to His Word.

So, coming Colossians 1:10, here's the walk of the functional Christian: "So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord." This word "walk" here refers to one's daily conduct. More specifically, it refers to your moral behavior, and it's looking at your life as a whole, made up of many individual acts. And the word in the Greek is in the active voice, which means this is what you're doing. This is what you choose to do. And it is in the infinitive mood, which tells us that we're being told something which is the purpose of God. Here is something that is not optional. Here is something that is a purpose of God. This is the way God expects you to perform: So that you may walk in a certain manner."

**Walk**

The apostle Paul, in his epistles, uses this Greek word for "walk:" "peripateo" (per-ee-pat-eh'-o) [in an ethical sense: I conduct my life, live] very often to signify the life and behavior of believers. So, what we're talking about here is something that refers to how you are to conduct yourself as a Christian, and it is a requirement of God that you do so.

Let me show you a few verses. Galatians 5:16 says, "But I say walk ('peripateo') by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh." Here it is very clearly the word "walk" being used in terms of walking by means of the guidance of the Holy Spirit over against walking by means of your sin nature. You can see that the difference is going to be dramatic.

Compare that with Galatians 5:25, "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk ('peripateo') by the Spirit." And here he's saying, if you were born-again by the Holy Spirit, which you were, then why do you want to walk by the sin nature which was the path of death? Get yourself on-track with the Spirit of God. And how are you going to do that? Well, we're back to the whole system of learning the Word, and the Spirit of God leading.

Now, for many people this blows right over their heads. Somehow, there is a great selectivity on the part of God. We know that he calls people to salvation. He also calls people to a knowledge of the deep things of the Spirit of God. Some people never make it. Some people never even learn how to enter the Holy of Holies with God. It bores them stiff. They can only stand so much of a service, and they're out and gone.

Romans 6:4 is another example. The word "walk" is being used by Paul as behavior: "Therefore, we have been burdened with Him through baptism into death, in order that, as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too should walk ('peripateo') in newness of life. The Christian is not to live in the pattern that the Word of God calls the pig and the dog. The believer is compared in the Word of God to pigs who are cleaned up, and go back to their filthy lifestyle, or to a dog who goes back to his regurgitation (his folly). Christians are to walk in a newness of life that has the honor and the dignity and the attractiveness of the life of Christ.

In Romans 8:4, this word is used again: "In order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk ('peripateo') according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" – walking by means of the Holy Spirit. This is not something you can decide to do. This is something that requires you to use the mechanism that God has provided. To walk according to the Spirit means confession of those known sins. Most Christians don't even know that doctrine. They never get off of first base.

Romans 14:15 uses this word "walk:" "For if, because of food, your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking ('peripateo') according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died." Here there are certain things that are perfectly alright for a Christian to eat in the way of food. But if some people are offended in their spiritual lives because you eat certain things, don't do it in their presence. And his point is that you should live your life according to the principle of love: "I know this bothers you, so I won't do this where you'll be offended, though it's perfectly all right for me to do.

2 Corinthians 4:2: "But we have renounced the things hidden because of shame; not walking ('peripateo') in craftiness or adulterating the Word of God, but by the manifestation of truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." Now here's a splendid example of the meaning of this word, "peripateo." We have renounced the hidden things of shame. This is the great problem of our society today. Our children are not reared with a sense of shame. They're not ashamed to speak about certain things. They're not ashamed to use certain words. They're not ashamed to view certain things. They're not ashamed to be found in certain places. This is the whole concept of shame, which is what our society is driving out, so that they can bring in an evil society that is preparing the way for the antichrist world. You have to have shameless people in order to accept someone like the antichrist.

"Not walking in craftiness or adulterating the Word of God." This is what liberals have done for years. First they threw out the Bible, and then they discovered nobody was listening to them because they had no basis of authority. So, they came back to the Scriptures, and they started changing the meaning of the words. It was no longer a literal interpretation of the Word of God. It was an interpretation of what they believed was the intention of the writer, not what he actually said. So, by craftiness they have adulterated the Word of God.

"But by the manifestation of truth (the truth which is manifest in Scripture), commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." What does he mean by that? He means walking in a way that nobody can discredit Christ because of the way you are acting as a Christian.

Now, do not assume that Christians are all nice people in the way they act. I could regale you for the rest of this morning with some real stories about how people of this congregation have acted, over my four decades, in a shameless way, and the injuries that they have brought to people, and this is on the basis of being members of the body of Christ. If you play the game the devil's way, he will get you, even as a believer. You will become as dysfunctional as any unbeliever.

Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk ('peripateo') in them." Here's a life fulfilling my mission. That's why there are going to be tears at the Judgment Seat of Christ, that Christ is going to wipe away, as people look back, and they see what their mission was, as per their spiritual gifts and their opportunities, and they blew it. They spent their life in some rinky-dink religious operation, and all they did was existed. Their lives were not focused upon what the boy Jesus was focused on in Luke 2:49: "I must be about My Father's business." Ephesians 4:1: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk ('peripateo') in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called." This is the same idea. My walk is to be commensurate with my position of holiness in Christ.

Ephesians 5:2: "And walk in love, just as Christ also loved you, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma, and walk in love. The Greek word for "love" there is "agape" (ag-ah'-pay). Therefore, we don't have an emotional factor there. This is mental attitude love. This is a lack of bitterness. This is a mental attitude goodwill. It doesn't deal with any emotional factor whatsoever. And this is the way that Christ loved us. Even if He could emotionally be repulsed by us, He still treated us with an attitude of goodwill and kindness. And this is how we are to walk. So, here again, the word "walk" ("peripateo") means your lifestyle.

Then in Ephesians 5:15: "Therefore, be careful how you walk ('peripateo'), not as unwise, but as wise." There's only one way you're going to be able to walk wisely as a Christian. And that is if somebody has explained to you the Word of God.

Philippians 3:17: "Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk ('peripateo') according to the pattern you have in us." So, that tells us something else. If other believers are not walking in a way which is compatible with the Word of God, that's not just all right. You treat them with mental attitude goodwill love ("agape"). But nevertheless, you recognize that they are a great threat to your spiritual life, and to your eternal rewards, if you get yourself too closely involved with them. Just get yourself married to somebody like that, and you'll learn what real grief is.

So, this simple word, "peripateo," in the Greek, really means "looking around you." I look here when I walk. I look here when I walk. And you walk circumspectly. You look around carefully how you're walking. This is the purpose of God. This is the walk which can only be produced by the "epignosis" full knowledge that is spoken of in Colossians 1:9. This provides the will of God, and through that comes the wisdom and understanding of God.

What are we after? We're after a walk (a lifestyle) – a daily life that is described as a manner which is "worthy" (Colossians 1:10). The Greek word looks like this. It's the word "axios" (ax'-ee-os), A X I O S. This word in classical Greek connoted having the same weight [assigning the matching value ("worth-to-worth")] as something else. It's like the balance on a scale. If this thing is "axios" of this side, it meant that it's in balance. If it is not "axios," then it'll be out of balance with the other side. So, "axios" conveyed the idea of something being in balance with something else. And here, we're told, that what's on the other side of the balance is the Lord.

So, here's the balance scale. And you are here, and the Lord is here. And what he is saying is that these two things should be in balance in a certain way, and they are to be balanced in terms of the Christian's character and conduct to that of the Lord. The Christians' conduct should be in balance with that of the Lord Jesus Christ on the other side of the scale. Christians are so to act that their lives carry the same moral weight as that of Jesus Christ.

Philippians 1:21 says, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain." For me to live is Christ living in me. And the idea is that you are in balance with His life. This connotes, as 1 Peter puts it, walking in the steps of Jesus. 1 Peter 2:21: "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps." Christ has given us the example. We are to follow in His steps. That's another way of saying that your life should be on balance with his life. The Christian's walk, therefore, is to be as holy as the walk of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:15-16 says, "But like the Holy One Who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior, because it is written, 'You shall be Holy, for I am Holy." Now that is an expression of pure madness, if you are expected to perform that on a human level. There is nobody who's going to be categorized as living in a balance of holiness with the holiness of Christ. Who is to be able to live to the capacity of the holiness of God? And I'll tell you: this is a command. This is not just not just an inspirational invitation. This is a command. But the Holy One, God, Who called you to salvation – "Be Holy yourselves also in all your behavior, because it is written, 'You shall be Holy, for I am Holy." Now, the only way you're going to do that (to be that kind of a functional human being) is through that grace system of learning doctrine, and through your subjection to the leading of the Holy Spirit because you stay in fellowship with him. You don't grieve Him by willful unrepentant sin. You don't quench Him by saying "No" to His leadership. You don't walk by means of the sin nature, but you walk by means of the Spirit of God. How are you going to walk by means of the Spirit of God? One way – you know "epignosis" doctrine. When you know that, then the Spirit of God brings up to your mind what you need at any particular point in time. And you will be a person who balances the scale with the character of Christ.

Even after we've seen it in Scripture, our minds say, "That is so fantastic. It's hard for me to believe that I could live such that my life is in balance at some point with the character of Christ. You won't always be that, but that should increasingly become the norm. And it is possible for you.

In the Old Testament, the Jew never could do this, because the Jew didn't have the Spirit of God indwelling him. He had doctrinal instruction, but he didn't have power. That's why Paul says that the Law was wholly perfect and good, but it was weak through the sin nature that was in man – through the flesh, the old sin nature. So, in the Old Testament, God said, "Be good. Be good and I will bless you." In the New Testament, grace takes over, and God says, "Be good, because I've already blessed you with all blessings in heavenly places."

The appeal is totally different. In the Old Testament they never could make it. But here, in the age of grace, we can live and balance our lives to the character of Christ? That is exactly right. But the system has to be in place. And once you understand how this works, then you become a real prince and princess in the royal family of God. A functional Christian life is based entirely on "epignosis" knowledge. And "epignosis" knowledge is based upon a pastor-teacher and a congregation that's giving you the information of truth. Trying to walk worthy of Jesus Christ by your own personal wisdom is doomed to producing a dysfunctional person. You cannot make it on a basis of your own thinking.

We are told to walk in a way that your life balances the walk of Christ. We can get even more specific on that point from the Word of God. There are several Scriptures on features that characterize a walk which is worthy of Jesus Christ. Listen carefully.

In Ephesians 4:1-3, Paul says, "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called; with all humility and gentleness, with patience showing forbearance to one another in love, being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit, and the bond of peace." And you notice that verse 3 says, "to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" – not to make the unity of the spirit. You cannot make the unity of the spirit. This is what the whole ecumenical movement is all about. Getting churches together; decreasing; cutting down; and, diminishing the impact of the differences so that we can have peace. Well, if you are not in Christ, and therefore, you share the unity of the Holy Spirit, you will never make peace.

One of these evenings, I'm going to have a special program for you, and let you see a discussion by some of the most prominent leaders in the evangelical camp who have signed the accord: the agreement of Catholics and Protestants together. And what these men have done, who know the Word of God, and who are born-again people, have signed an agreement that states that we should not seek to convert Roman Catholics. They are to be treated as brethren in Christ. And you'll be interested in seeing, as they flash up on the screen, the statements of the Council of Trent that specifically were written following the Protestant Reformation to explain what Roman Catholics believe on God's way of salvation. And in it, they say, "If anyone believes that he may be instantaneously justified by an act of faith in Christ, let him be anathema." And when the Catholics say that, they mean: "Let him be condemned to the lake of fire.

Anybody who believes the Catholic plan of salvation, which is: yes, Christ paid for your sins; but now you must make yourself worthy to receive that benefit by your works and by your life. Anybody who follows that has contaminated the grace process. Right? Romans 11:6 says, "If it's of grace, it's not of works. If it's of works, it's not of grace." You can't mix the two. Ephesians 2:8-9: "It is by grace, not of works, lest any man should boast." And that confusions is driven by the desire to have unity: "Well yes, I can join a Catholic. I can even join a Mormon who thinks he's going to become a God. The only people who don't think Mormon men are going to become gods are their wives. They don't think that anybody could ever go that far.

However, the whole concept of having a unity with people spiritually, if we diminish the cold fact of how to get into heaven, is a fundamental thing, and how to make Christ Lord of your life. The truth of the matter is that we can cooperate with Mormons and with Catholics on matters of social importance – on abortion and morality issues. Sure we can. We agree on that. But we get that from the Bible. But just because we agree with that, that doesn't, for one moment, mean that we are brethren in Christ. If an atheist comes along and says, "I think that abortion is a horrible, murderous thing – even partial-birth abortion, which is infanticide, and which is about the most brutal thing you could imagine a human being doing, end even if the President of the United States says it's okay to do it." And if that atheist comes along and says, "I think it's wrong," I have no problem joining forces with him to fight the issue. But when we win, I don't want to hear the atheist say, "Thank God, we won." I want the guy to be consistent with what he believes, as I will be consistent with what the Word of God says.

So, this is significant – being diligent to preserve the unity of the spirit in a bond of peace.

Here's another one: Romans 13:14-15. This characterizes a walk worthy of Christ to balance the scale: "And this do, knowing the time – that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep. For now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. The night is almost gone. The day is at hand. Let us therefore lay aside the deeds of darkness, and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness; not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality; not in strife and jealousy, but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the sin nature in regard to its lusts." Now, I don't have to explain any of that to you. The words are very clear as to what it is to walk worthy of Christ. If you violate any of these, you're an unworthy person of baring the name of Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:7 is another example of worthy walk: "For we walk by faith, not by sight." Faith in what? Faith in what your peers have to say? Faith in what society says? Faith in what most people think? Faith in what your social circle thinks? No. faith in the Word of God. We walk by faith in what God has said. We don't walk by sight.

This is why the charismatics get all upset when we call to their attention that they do all the things that God really condemns in the Word of God. And they make claims that are simply not true. And their proof for it is their own experience: "This was my experience. I know this is true. This is my motion about this. I just have a feeling." I love it the way the Mormons put it. The Mormons talk about "a burning in their bosom." The antacid companies love that expression too. They love to find Mormons, because they focus a lot of advertising toward Mormons because Mormons have this burning in their bosom problem.

Then there is Ephesians 2:10 to remind ourselves of that once more: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works." Yeah, okay. Which good works? "Which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." That's why, in the morning, you don't come on deck to help us in the Berean Youth Clubs, just because we have a need there, if that's not the good work for which God called you to perform. You stick with the work that He wants you to do – the ones that He has gifted you to do.

We have a super one here in Ephesians 4:17-19. This is a worthy walk: "This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord: that you walk no longer as the gentiles who walk in the futility of their minds." And do you remember what that word "futility" means? It means the emptiness – a spiritual vacuum. Now, what do you think is going to happen in a mind that has no divine viewpoint? It's devoid of divine viewpoint. Nature abhors a vacuum, and in spiritual things it's true just as well. That mind is going to draw into itself every corrupt, mistaken spiritual notion to fill itself, if you do not fill it with the viewpoint of the Word of God. The consequence of having that kind of a mind where you bring in all that human viewpoint is in Ephesians 4:18. The result is that the mind is darkened in their understanding. You can't think things through. You are excluded from the life of God. You no longer have a contact with Him because of the ignorance that is in them – the lack of the knowledge of doctrine, because of the hardness of their hearts. And this is where callouses build up on the soul: on the emotions; on the mind; and, on the will. That's a whole area of study we've had many times, but here's where it comes to bear. And this is the nature of unbelievers, but this is what can happen to the believer.

Ephesians 4:19: "And they, having become calloused, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness." And this is what happens to the Christian. Can you imagine a Christian who gives himself over to sensuality for the practice of every kind of impurity, and doing it with greediness – he can't get enough of it? This is the consequence of an unworthy walk that is not balancing the scale with the character of Christ.

Drop down to Ephesians 4:25-32. Look at this. This is worthy of Christ: "Therefore, laying aside falsehood, speak truth; each one of you with his neighbor. For we are members of one another. Be angry, and yet do not sin. Do not let the son go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity." A lot of people sin just because they gave the devil an opportunity. They put themselves in a position where they could compromise their character.

Ephesians 4:28: "Let him steals steal no longer. But rather let him labor, performing with his own hands that which is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who is in need." That's God's welfare program: "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification, according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you are sealed for the day of redemption." Sinning is grieving: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God, in Christ, also has forgiven you." I think there's something like 14 specific points in that passage that tell you what is worthy of a Christian in his daily life, in reflecting his place in the family of God.

Ephesians 5:2: "And walk in love ('agape'), just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us in offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma." When it says, "Walk in love,” that is “agape" love: mental attitude love. You put yourself out for somebody else whether they deserve it or not, as Christ did for us when we didn't deserve it.

Ephesians 5:8: "For you were formally darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light." In heaven's name, don't walk around like you are still some benighted pagan.

Ephesians 5:15, "Therefore, be careful how you walk: not as unwise men, but as wise." How are you going to get wise? By your IQ? No. By your knowledge of doctrine. No matter what your IQ is, you can have the highest IQ in the world spiritually. You just have to be receptive to the Word of God.

Then there's one more in 3 John 3-4, "For I was very glad when brethren came and bore witness to your truth; that is, how you are walking in truth. I have no greater joy than this: to hear my children walking in the truth." Well, parents, if you want your kids to walk in the truth, you do have to teach it to them. You do have to make it clear to them that there are things worthy of Christ, and things that are unworthy of Christ. And then you have to make it clear to them that when they hit a certain age level, and they're not under your authority (it was 20 years old in the Old Testament), that they now must bear the brunt of being their own priests, and making their own choices: to walk with the light that they have been given; or, to choose to walk against it, and bring the grief into their lives that that produces. But they should have a chance to know it. And the Word of God promises that no matter what the ups and downs may be, the long-range will be that they will not forget what you have taught them as the truth in the frame of reference you gave them.

So, here's what we have said. Living worthy of Jesus Christ is the way that you treat Him as your Lord. The purpose of "epignosis" knowledge in the human spirit is to enable the believer to fulfill his duty to live worthy of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:27 says, "Only conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I may hear of you, that you are standing firm in one Spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel." Paul, as a teacher of the Word of God, always wanted to hear good reports about those he left behind. He wanted to know that they were focusing on the Word of God, and that that was controlling their lives. And when that was taking place, and they were walking in temporal fellowship with the Spirit of God, that's going to be a powerful church. That's going to be a group of believers who care for one another. That's going to be a group of believers who indeed have made Christ their Lord. They're not going to whine. They're not going to belly ache. They're not going to complain. They're not going to try to excuse themselves. The tougher the battle gets, the more forceful and determined they will be.

In the Marine Corps, they taught us that sometimes we may find ourselves in positions where the enemy may overwhelm us, and we may be driven to our knees. But then, the instructor says, "But that's always a good position from which to fire your weapons." That's what happens with a Christian. He may be driven to his knees, but that's a good position from which to fire your weapons of prayer, and of the mind of Christ.

1 Thessalonians 2:12 says, "So that you may walk in a manner worthy of the God who called you into His kingdom and glory." That, believers, is our duty. This is our calling. Once you are saved, the next thing is making Christ your Lord. And when you do that, you will not someday be the fulfillment of the Scripture in Matthew 16:26, "What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses his own life?" And that's not the word "soul." It's the word "life" ("psuche") (psoo-khay') [breath of life]. Note: see example Mathew 6:25. It's the wasting of your potential of the rewards that you could have in heaven if you were walking a worthy life on the principles of full knowledge.

A Christian life which honors Christ, I remind you, however, is not the product of entertainment preaching. Entertainment preaching is a lot of fun to attend. I love to watch the guys on TV. The people cheer; they yell; and, they clap. Nobody ever cheers for me. Nobody ever claps. Some people even go out the other door. Some people leave before the service is over. "I don't get no respect." But entertainment preaching isn't going to carry it for you. You'll have a lot of fun, but you're going to be a hollow, empty shell. But if you have the Word of God, you have got everything.

So, honoring Christ as your Lord is not the product of entertainment preaching. And that's why we are zeroing in on those achievements in Berean Youth Club. It's not inspirational thoughts to help you through your week. You'd be surprised how many people come and ask, "I just need an inspirational thought to help me through my week." You idiot, the thing that's going to help you through your week is the mind of Christ – not some inspirational thought from me.

It's not the product of some program of fun and games: "Yeah, let's get the kids together, and let's have a lot of games and fun. That'll make them strong in the Lord. And it's not the product of positive thinking theology. It's the product of only one thing. It's believing the Word of God, from the gospel to receiving rewards in heaven. And that's no small thing for you to understand – that it's a matter of believing the Word of God. That's what takes what's up in the mind, and drops it down into the human spirit.

I watched a famous evangelist on TV this past week, speaking to a vast audience, and he was preaching the gospel on the Prodigal Son. And I listened intently throughout the message, and I never heard the word "believe" uttered once.

"Take Christ into your life?" What does that mean? "Bring Him into your living." What does that mean? "Open your heart to Christ." What does that mean? Never once did I hear the keyword: "believe" the gospel. Believe the promise of God that your sins are covered, and trust in Christ, which is what believe means, to take you to heaven. Now I can understand that. And I bet everybody in that stadium would've understood that. Depend on Him.

What about Mohamed? Forget him. What about Louie Calypso Farrakhan baloney. Forget him. What about Buddha? Too fat – forget him. Here's what you need: Trust in Christ. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." Believing. That's what it's all about. You do have to have something to believe, and somebody to explain it to you. But once you believe it, that's life transforming. Then Christ will be your Lord. Our Father, we want to thank you for the Word of God, alive and powerful and active, as always. We pray that we may be profited by it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1995

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