



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V23 N34 August 22, 2021

NOT OF THIS WORLD

“Blown and Tossed by the Winds”

Colossians 2:6-8

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Bible Study

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

“For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.”

Hebrews 4:12



What is a major counterfeit of Christianity today?

God's original adversary, the devil, has many plans of attack. He is a schemer extraordinaire (Eph 6:11). He can seduce, tempt, cajole, ridicule, intimidate and terrorize with ease. Perhaps his greatest work is that of counterfeit. “I will make myself like the Most High” (Isa 14:14), boasted the one who was described as “fallen from heaven.” Satan's envy is perhaps even more powerful than his pride because his chief aspiration is to imitate God rather than obliterate him. Perhaps Lucifer knows that he could never be better than his Creator, so he might as well try his best to imitate the Almighty to his own nefarious advantage.

In a short essay, Dr. Charles Ryrie observed this about Satan's Counterfeit: “Whatever be the particular representation Satan makes of himself, he has a single purpose. In his program, his purpose, aim, and goal is simply to counterfeit the will of God. This has been, presently is, and always will be his purpose as long as he has freedom . . . This is the most important fact to understand about Satan's purpose in this world. If he is the master counterfeiter, then he is trying to do something that is similar to the will of God, not dissimilar. This is particularly important for Christians to grasp. Satan is intelligent enough to know that if he put something in the Christian's path, perhaps some temptation, which is obviously not the will of God, the Christian will be alert to it and resist it. But if he can offer something good which, though good in itself, is not the best, then he will more than likely have gained the advantage” (*Grace Journal*, Fall 1961, 15-18).

If the enemy of God cannot prevail against him, then he will do his best to rob and steal from God. By crafting a facsimile of God's goodness, the devil can entice us away from God's will and leave us with a cheap and shoddy “knockoff” of “the real thing.”

Counterfeit realities and imitation truths have plagued Christians since the first century. One of the earliest “faux” philosophies that challenged the early church was something later labeled *Gnos-*

ticism. This teaching emphasized spiritual experiences and downplayed physical responsibility and morality. Many teachers arose proclaiming that Christianity had not gone far enough in distinguishing itself from the Old Testament and needed to leave behind a slavish devotion to a written text. Rather, it should focus on enlightened knowledge that could only come through mystical experiences and enlightened teachers. While emphasizing the exaltation of the mind and the spirit, Gnosticism downgraded the value of God's physical creation and sought to replace a sanctified life with exhilarating and ecstatic experiences of the unknown.

Gnosticism became so popular that many in the Church sought a significant counter to the evils and harms of this alluring philosophy. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, wrote his life's work, *Against Heresies* (AD 180), as an argument against Gnosticism and one of its major proponents, Valentinus. In his massive treatise, Irenaeus unpacked the logical fallacies and the biblical contradictions of Valentinus and his followers. In great detail, Irenaeus described the absurdities of this new philosophy and offered the genuine truths and promises of Scripture. In fact, Irenaeus quoted so much Scripture, that many historians today look to Irenaeus as proof of an early adoption of the books of the New Testament as God's Word by the early church.

The battle that Irenaeus waged against a popular counterfeit religion is a battle Christians face in every generation. The best way to counter a counterfeit is to study and master the original. We should be wary of any teaching or philosophy that seeks to replace God's Word. Any teaching or teacher that diminishes the importance or the primacy of the Bible in the life of a believer should be held suspect and, if needed, discarded. Not every philosophy or teaching is a counterfeit. But many teachings and teachers are out for the sole purpose of ensnaring and trapping the unsuspecting into a path of ruin.

God help us to avoid the counterfeits of our day.



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Underline the phrase that shows *comparison* in verse 6.
- Draw an arrow from the word “received” to what was received in verse 6.
- Draw an arrow from the word “live” to the foundation of such living in verse 6.
- Circle the word that speaks to unseen qualities in verse 7.
- Double underline “the faith” in verse 7.
- Draw an arrow from “faith” to its source in verse 7.
- Draw an arrow from “thankfulness” to the word that indicates quantity in verse 7.
- Double underline the negative caution in verse 8.
- Draw arrows from the word “philosophy” to its modifiers in verse 8.
- Draw arrows from the word “depend” to the phrases that modify it in verse 8.
- Draw a line connecting the occurrences of the word “Christ” in verse 8.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, “This text is about _____.”



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What is included in receiving Christ Jesus as Lord (v. 6)?
2. What connections to you see between 2:6-7 and 1:9-12?
3. What does “live your life in him” look like *practically*?
4. Verse 7 contains four actions that modify the command of verse 6. What images and ideas do the first two actions evoke?
5. In what are we to be strengthened (v. 7)?
6. If you have “received Christ Jesus as Lord” (v. 6), how could anyone ever “take you captive” (v. 8)?
7. What kind of philosophy does Paul warn against (v. 8)?
8. Tradition is usually a good thing. What kind of tradition is dangerous?
9. What is Paul referring to by mentioning “elemental forces” (v. 8)?
10. Verses 6-8 begin and end with Christ. Why is our understanding of Jesus critical to our growth as a Christian and our protection from evil?

Commentary On The Text

The main subject of Colossians is Jesus Christ. The book is saturated with descriptions of Jesus and his attributes. The Christology of Colossians is robust and compelling. Paul is enamored with Jesus and does not want the believers in Colosse to lose sight of the treasure they have in Jesus. "Paul is not writing what we might think of as a standard theological treatise, beginning with 'doctrine' and ending with 'ethics' or 'practical teaching'. For him, all is doctrine, all is practice, all is worship, because all is Christ . . . Therefore, it should be observed that virtually every section and sub-section in the main body of the letter could be accurately summed up with reference to Christ himself. This indicates an important truth about Colossians: its driving force comes from that which is stated in 1:5-20. The main reason why the Colossians should give thanks to God is because of Jesus Christ; if they do this with full knowledge and understanding about who he is and what he has achieved, everything else will fall into place" (N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, TNTC, 23).

Colossians 2:6-8 is the essential message of the entire book. The command to "continue to live" in Christ (Col. 2:6) is the first major imperative of the book. The balance of the book details how to live out this command. "This paragraph, along with the closely related 2:8-15, is the heart of Colossians. In these two verses Paul succinctly summarizes the basic response that he wants from his readers. Paul ties these verses to their context by reflecting language and ideas found earlier in the letter. The positive exhortation to continue to live in Christ, which is elaborated in a series of four participles (vv. 6-7), is very similar to what Paul has prayed for in 1:10-12" (Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 177).

The Colossian believers are reminded of the faith they "received" (Col. 2:6). This was expressed in their personal experience ("your faith," Col. 1:4), but involved also a faith that was delivered to them as a special trust from faithful teachers. This "delivered" and "received" faith is also spoken of as "the faith, as you have been taught" in Colossians 2:7. Faith in Christ is not only a personal experience. It is also a shared experience in the faith community. This shared aspect becomes critical when faith is challenged by falsehood (Col. 2:8-15).

This faith is focused on the object of Christ Jesus as Lord. The Greek text places an article before Christ and Jesus. A very wooden translation would be "the Christ Jesus the Lord." Paul combines in this short statement two essential elements of Jesus' identity. Jesus is the Jewish Messiah and also the divine Lord who is worthy of worship and obedience (Col 1:13-25; 2:9-15). We are to live or "walk around everywhere" in this reality of Christ as Lord.

As we walk in the fullness of Jesus, we are exhorted to grow in four ways. The first charge is in a past tense, emphasizing God as the one who has "rooted us." This is an

agricultural metaphor that communicates stability. We would do well not to "uproot" ourselves from what God has secured in us through faith. We are then to be "built up," an architectural allusion that communicates advancement and completion. Then we are to be "strengthened," a legal term that envisions someone building a strong case for the defense and proclamation of the faith that was delivered to us. Faith here is given a definite article in the Greek. We are to be strengthened in "the faith," not just our own personal faith. We should seek to learn more about Christ from faithful teachers as we continue to walk in our personal faith journey. Finally, we are to "overflow with thankfulness." A life overflowing with gratitude for the faith it has received rarely has room for spurious thoughts or envious longings for other loves. A Christian living out the fullness of Colossians 2:6-7 would be worthy of a hearty "well done" from our Lord Jesus Christ!

As bright as Colossians 2:6-7 shines, Colossians 2:8, in contrast, flies in like a dark storm cloud. Even Christians who are living their best lives need to beware of deception that can lead to captivity. The Colossians encountered teachers who were trying to harm them and take them away from the glory that is Christ (Col 2:4, 18; 4:5-6). These were not just voices of differing opinion, but were teachers who were actively seeking to harm through deception. Paul used the word "philosophy" as a description of content of these false teachers. "Philosophy" in the Greek of Paul's day could mean any teaching from Jewish tradition to Greek esoteric thought. What is key here is Paul's description of dangerous forms of "philosophy." Paul was not anti-philosophy. He was not against all knowledge. Rather, Paul was warning against teachers who sought to counterfeit and steal believers away from the faithful community.

This deceptive "philosophy" was described as rooted in the "elements" of the world and not in Christ. The ancient world often ascribed mystical powers to elements such as fire, wind, water and earth. Some would have seen these mystical powers coming from spirits or demons. The Enlightenment's divide between secular and sacred did not exist in the world of Paul. Religious teaching was not just about doctrine in the ancient world; it was primarily about allegiance and devotion.

Even though many "philosophies" and "teachings" today may not be based in spiritual realities, we would do well to ask ourselves, "What does this teaching lead me to worship?" Even a seemingly innocent "self-help" methodology could deceptively captivate someone and lead them away from faithfully "walking in Christ." Even the strongest of believers (Col 2:6-7) needs to be on guard against being taken captive by attractive yet dangerous counterfeit teachings (Col 2:8). If Satan cannot overcome God, he will do his best to imitate and steal from him.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 6 *received* “When Paul says that his readers have ‘received’ (*paralabete*) Christ Jesus as their Lord he is not simply reflecting on their personal commitment to Christ (though this is no doubt included), but he uses the semitechnical term specifically employed to denote the receiving of something delivered by tradition. Early Christianity took over from rabbinic Judaism the idea of transmitting and safeguarding a tradition. The classic Jewish exposition occurs in the ‘Sayings of the Fathers’ which scribal legend had traced back to Moses: ‘Moses received the Torah from Sinai and delivered it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the prophets, and the prophets delivered it to the men of the Great Synagogue’” (Peter T. O’Brien, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 44, *Colossians, Philemon*, 105).

v. 6 *continue to live* “This verse is a direct development of 1:10a, where Paul exhorts believers to ‘walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.’ The point there is that the saint’s ethical character is ‘to be fitting with’ or matching the character of their ‘Lord’ (Jesus) in order to ‘please’ him. . . . The closest of these parallels (outside of Col. 1:10) is 1 Thess. 4:1, which calls believers ‘to walk’ in the manner of faith they have exercised earlier. The parallel of Phil. 4:9 includes the same notion. These parallels reinforce that Col. 2:6 expresses the idea of walking in the same manner of faith” (G. K. Beale, *Colossians and Philemon*, BECNT, 172).

v. 6 *Jesus Christ the Lord* “Certainly the definite article ‘the’ (*ton*) before ‘Lord’ (*kurion*) makes this term emphatic and probably gathers up all that Paul has previously said about Christ in Colossians. The one whom the Colossians received as their tradition is the center of God’s mystery (1:27, 2:2), and the Lord in both creation and reconciliation (1:15–20). He is Lord absolutely (1 Cor 8:5, 6), not just one among many” (O’Brien, 106).

v. 7 *strengthened* “*bebaioō* [strengthened] occurs in legal texts to mean ‘validate’ or ‘guarantee’. . . . With this participle, Paul summarizes what he expects to happen as a result of the first two: by sticking to their roots and being built up, the readers will be established in faith. Like the first two participles, this one also is in the passive mood, implying that it is God who does the establishing—as he does the ‘rooting’ and the ‘building up’—and, like the second, in the present tense, suggesting an ongoing process of ‘becoming established’” (Moo, 181).

v. 7 *overflowing* “In the active voice and means that God’s action in the lives of Christians

should evoke overwhelming thanksgiving. As luxuriant green leaves are a sign of a healthy plant, profuse thanksgiving is ‘the unfailing mark of a healthy spiritual life.’ Those who bubble over with gratitude for what God has already done are not easy prey to anxiety and doubt. They have no need or desire to look for fulfillment elsewhere and cannot be taken in by false promises or shaken by bigoted detractors” (David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Colossians and Philemon*, 140).

v. 8 *See/captive* “An urgent warning cry is intended to rouse the community to a state of watchful attention: Pay attention, be on your guard! Paul often introduces polemical statements with the admonition: ‘beware’ (*blepete*). What is at stake is to watch carefully, to weigh matters soberly. Be on your guard lest anyone snare you! The verb ‘to snare’ (*sulagogein*)—a rare word, that is used in the NT nowhere else—means the capture and carrying off of booty. Therefore, a word has been chosen that not only indicates seduction but also points to the evil intent of those who are trying to gain influence over the community” (Eduard Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon*, Hermeneia, 94).

v. 8 *hollow/deceptive* “Makes clear just what kind of ‘philosophy’ it is: one that is ‘vain’ (*kenēs*) and characterized by ‘deceitfulness’ (*apatēs*). The former, translated hollow in the TNIV, means, when used in a physical sense, ‘empty’ (see 2 Kgs. 4:3) and so, in a metaphorical sense, refers to people or teachings that are ‘devoid of intellectual, moral, or spiritual value’ (e.g., Jas. 2:20; Eph. 5:16)” (Moo, 186).

v. 8 *traditions* “In Paul’s world, ancient tradition insured the excellence and sanctity of knowledge. If it was old, then it was considered good and not to be lightly dismissed. Today, we have convinced ourselves that the newest development is better. New, we assume, means improved; consequently we are inclined to be interested in the latest thing. In the Hellenistic period, the ancient age of a religion authenticated it and made it deserving of honor because it had stood the test of time” (Garland, 142).

v. 8 *elemental . . . forces* “The material components of the universe were often associated with spiritual beings or the gods . . . In light of this background, then, a reference to the material elements of the universe in a religious text such as Colossians 2 would almost certainly include some reference to those deities or spirits who were so closely associated with the elements” (Moo, 190–192).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Grow stronger in your faith in Jesus. Celebrate the faithful witness of Christ delivered to you by faithful teachers. Be on guard against any teaching that would deceptively take you away from the splendor and majesty of Christ.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

Lately the world has put a possessive pronoun in front of the word *truth* – *his* truth or *my* truth takes precedence over *the* truth. Not only that but the world is encouraging our kids to live out *their* truth, and this my friends is dangerous ground! The definition of truth is the quality or state of being true; that which is true or in accordance with fact or reality. Truth has become so watered down and distorted we can look at the face of reality and question whether it's right or not. If it looks like a snake and slithers like a snake, it's a snake! Truth isn't a smorgasbord in which we pick and choose what suits us best. Rather, truth is found in God's Word and is the plumbline by which we filter our actions, thoughts and especially the everchanging culture of the day. Are you teaching your kids that God's Word is true, timeless, and can be trusted? Honestly, how often do your kids see you with an open Bible? If a problem arises or financial decision needs to be made, are you seeking Biblical wisdom? Is your Bible stuck on the shelf ready for Sunday or are the pages of Genesis falling out? The world is luring our culture further and further away from the truth of God's Word. Teaching our kids that God's Word is true will lay a strong foundation on which they can confidently build. Let's help our kids navigate the world rooted firmly in Christ and the truth of God's Word!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Colossians 2:6-8.

1. What should we be rooted in?
2. What will strengthen us?
3. With what should we overflow?

What Do You Think?

Can you think of a hollow or deceptive philosophy? How does that go against what we know is truth in the Bible?

What Do You Do?

Fun facts! Do a little research about your Bible – who wrote it, how long did it take, etc. Tell us something interesting you learn from your research for an extra KidPix token.

CORE COMPETENCY: Bible Study

I read the Bible to know who God is and what He wants from my life.

MEMORY VERSE: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

"All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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