

Today we're continuing with *Part 2* of the new series entitled *From Curses to Blessings*. We've been following a particular flow in the book of Colossians, that was setting the stage for the kind of focus that God wants us to have for the family. It begins by focusing on the creation of the God Family with Jesus Christ as the foundation of that creation. It goes through and explains those things we talked about last Sabbath and whom God made the head of the Church, the Body of Christ. And Paul goes through and explains these things, explains the process of God's Family. He's explaining the Family of God, from the most basic understanding that we must have about what God is doing, and He focuses on Jesus Christ. We're to focus on Jesus Christ, that is the foundation, the beginning of the Family of God, the first of the Firstfruits.

So Paul systematically goes through Colossians talking about various things that affect the family. And our task is to glean what God is telling us, to strive to grasp and understand a flow of things and as he goes through this process here. Understand that this is a flow: sometimes we read things in a story flow and sometimes we just try to read through different kinds of scriptures and so forth, but Paul is very clearly going through a particular flow leading us to understanding that he desires us to grasp, or candidly that God desires that we grasp.

**Colossians 3:1 - If you are risen with Christ**, and so again, it's a part of this process because if we understand God the Father and this creation, it goes through chapter one and chapter two and it sets that foundation talking about a creation that God is working with and it's about His Family. And so he focuses upon those things and then he has us focus upon Jesus Christ and he's leading us down to another focus that has to do with the family in chapter 3. He says, **If you are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above**, a part of God's plan of calling us out of this world and helping us to understand those things that God has *for us*, to understand the promises and the hope that we have just as we heard in the sermon before of what God is planning for us just a few months down the road. Awesome the time we live in, to grasp that we have that opportunity to live into a new age.

So **if you're risen with Christ**, meaning that you're baptized, you've gone under the water, you've come up out of the water, you're risen with Christ, you're to walk in newness of life, you have hands layed upon you, you enter into the Family of God in a begotten form; not yet there, but you're begotten. And so we're going through this systematically. God talking about *His creation* that's ongoing, it's continuing on today. That's an awesome thing when you think about it! All the vastness of the universe that's out there – dumbfounding! And yet His creation, His work is continuing on in our lives. It's an awesome thing. Not instantaneous, but over years and years and years of moulding and fashioning.

So we're to **seek those things which are above**, that come from God, the things that God tells us we're to set our eyes upon, **where Christ sits on the right hand of God**.

**Set your affection**, this word in the Greek means 'to set your mind, set your thinking, set your attitude'; that's what this word means; our attitude, our mind. God says you have to set your thinking in a certain way, on those things which are from above, the truths of God, the way of God. So again, **set your**

**affection**, your desires, just as we read earlier about David, his attitude toward God. It was an *attitude*, his mind, the way he thought about God. He set his affection, his desire, his mind, his attitude, his thinking **on things from above, not on things on the earth**. This isn't what it's all about! This is a beginning if we understand it.

We go through life, we live it, but we're to strive to live it in a certain way, especially once we're risen with Christ and we seek to conquer and overcome what we are, to be able to yield to God, to the purpose of God. And so much of it has to do with what our focus is. What is our focus? Do we become more consumed sometimes, or concerned with what's going on around us in a physical world? Do we get so wrapped up in it that this is our world then? We become more in tune with what's going on around us physically in our world? Or do we strive and look forward and cry out to God for His, understanding how close we are.

It kills me sometimes when I see people just *give up!* *Every year in God's Church I've had to witness people I love give up!* *...give up the battle!* *...give up the fight!* *And it's still happening!* People give up; it's too much of a fight for them! Become consumed with what's going on around them in their world! Their desires! A world that *beats* on you, and after a while if you're not careful, it can get the best of you. So where's your focus? Is your grasp and hold on something you're wanting to hold onto in this world? People quit this way of life for the...just like we heard...a bowl of soup. Cheapen what God has offered to us. What will you give it up for? Hopefully your mind is set on that which is above, your affection, your desire, your motivation, your attitude... your attitude is one of the 'Be-attitudes' [beatitudes] as it's sometimes called, (which I don't really like that expression); but what's listed in Matthew in the beginning there when Christ starts going through and talking about 'blessed are those...' <sup>1</sup> certain things that are given, promised. An attitude of mind, an attitude of thankfulness for what God has given! But sometimes, I'll tell you; this world becomes so heavy around us – jobs, finances, relationships. Sometimes those things eat away at people and they consume them and they take their eyes off the goal, where we're supposed to be running toward.

**...not on things of the earth;** don't set your affection, don't set your heart, *your* mind... we just have a few more months – amazing! And people are still willing to sell it away. Blows my mind!

And so we're to set our mind on those things which are spiritual and not on that which is physical. Simple way of saying it and stating the same thing. But if we understand all that's involved it has to do with power that God gives to us, of where is your heart? Where is your mind? Where is your attitude? Where is your thinking? What consumes your life? Do you let the pulls of things happening around you pull you down to where after a while you kind of pull back, you pull back and you don't throw yourself into this and seek what God is offering to you and *fight* for it with every fibre of your being? You've got to *fight* for this way of life all the time you're in God's Church.

**For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God...** if we're risen with Christ, if we're setting our minds on those things which are from above, from God, on the spiritual and not on the physical. Don't let the physical get a hold of you and make you lose sight of what is spiritual and what God is placing before you – that it consume your life, or become something you desire to have more than God's. People give up for the silliest things sometimes on this earth that can consume us. Sex! A relationship with someone else that we want so badly that we'll leave God and leave the truth of God! Amazing! Because we're going through and talking about today, relationships, from curses to blessings. From

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 5:3-11

curses to blessings... of something that God is offering to us, giving to us to help us to see what has kept people still in Egypt. In Egypt!

Do you realize our whole life is one of coming out of sin? You're not out of sin until you have conquered; and you haven't conquered and you don't conquer until it's over, until this inside your chest either quits beating, [snap] or you're changed...then it still quits beating because you don't have that in a spirit life. You don't have a heart pumping blood anymore, you've been changed. And so it's a fight until you become something different – all the way. Is that where your mind is set? Is that where your heart is? Is that what you believe with all your being? That it's that kind of a fight and that's the focus you have in your life?

**For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.** As long as we keep fighting, as long as we keep repenting of the sins, of the things that God shows us in our life.

**When Christ, who is our life,** He is our life! He lives in us! God the Father and Jesus Christ live in us and we live in them *IF*... if we continue to repent and keep our eyes focused, our attitude, our affection on things from above, on the spiritual. **...for you are dead,** in other words, self is dead, you buried them, you buried him or her under that watery grave and you don't want it to come back up again and you're supposed to be... that's what we determined to do, choose to do to walk in newness of life.

**...and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then you shall also appear with Him in glory.** Now, this is addressed to, specifically, the 144,000. That's where it starts. What was being addressed here in Colossians was to the Church in Paul's day, and everything that Paul wrote, everything that Peter wrote, everything that John wrote, as a whole, they were addressing the Church in their time with 'the present truth'; with the truth they understood at that point in time that God had given to them. Everyone else has to follow the same process. All of those of you who are going to live into a new age must follow the same process. And so it continues on through time. Those in the Great White Throne will follow the same process of conquering and overcoming; but Christ will already be here. Christ will be here during the Great White Throne; He will be here before that in the thousand years ahead of time, or before the Great White Throne.

And so this 'appearing' is about the first great resurrection that's going to take place; that everyone must follow the same process of baring self, of striving to conquer and overcome, of keeping your eyes focused on that which is spiritual. You know what? In a few months down the road it's going to be a lot easier for mankind, for human beings to keep focused on the spiritual. There's going to be one Church. Not going to have all this *sick* confusion out there. The peer pressure is going to be to live this way of life. There's not going to be a problem with getting off for the Sabbath! There's not going to be a problem getting off for the Holy Days! And people are going to have the same knowledge around the earth, the truth. What an awesome world! But it's still going to be a fight against human nature.

And so it says in **verse 5 - Mortify therefore your members,** you're to put to death, that's what 'mortify' means. It's an expression here 'to put to death' certain things in your life, **your members which are upon the earth;** that which comes out of selfish carnal human nature; **fornication,** the Greek word is 'pornea' and it has a lot more to do than just what we would normally classify as strictly fornication. It has to do with immorality, which is a wide open book if you will, of life that can be lived; immorality can entail many things, certainly fornication. **...uncleanness;** just different ways of expressing some of the

same things, because immorality, all these things, are a matter of uncleanness. God has called us to be clean, which has to do with living *His* way of life.

Another place where the word ‘uncleanness’ is used is **I Thessalonians 4:7 - For God has not called us to uncleanness**, to continue to live as we choose to live or want to live or as those around us live. We’re called to live something different, to be an example of something different in *our* lives. **For God has not called us to uncleanness, but unto holiness.** And so there’s that contrast – dark and light, uncleanness and holiness. How do you do that? There’s only one way. God’s presence. Anything that’s holy must have God’s presence. There’s not a one of us that has anything to do with anything that has holiness in it unless God’s in it and Jesus Christ’s in it and therefore if they dwell in us and we dwell in them, then there is that holiness that’s set apart by God. We’re set apart by God, sanctified for holy use and purpose and God desires to live His life in us. Jesus Christ died so He could live in you! That’s why He died! First, yes, to be forgiven of your sins, but the *purpose* of it was so that He could dwell in you to *change you*, this mind, the way you think. Incredible!

Something else it says here to put to death... (**Colossians 3:5**) ...**inordinate affection**, passions, wrong passions, wrong desires. There are right desires we should have. We should be *passionate* about God’s way of life! *Excited* about God’s way of life! *Excited* for what’s about to come to this earth! *Thankful*, *passionate* about the fact that Satan is about to be put away! I am **PASSIONATE** about that - truly! And that demons are no longer going to be able to *hurt* mankind! They’ve done so much damage and they continue to twist and distort and cause so much damage around us and in our lives and in the lives of people we love. *Thank God* they’re about to be imprisoned! How thankful are you about that? ...for what God offers you? *Incredible* the time we live in!

...or is it that important to you? How important is it to you that people no longer have to suffer? Not just *you suffer*, because it’s not just about us, it’s about those who are around us and those who we see suffer; the hurt, that are torn apart in life. Forty years in God’s Church and I’ve seen so much suffering in people’s lives. And the more we grow the more we learn about suffering and what it’s like to be in this body and what it’s like to *resist sin* and to *yield* to God’s spirit in our lives and the *battle* that’s there. It’s not easy is it? But that’s how this mind is transformed. What a beautiful thing! What a *passionate* thing that’s right and just before God – to yield ourselves to His spirit to change.

Another thing it mentions here to put to death...means you have the responsibility, the task of seeking to put it to death, of *seeing* it in your life and a *desire* to get rid of it, *a desire for it not to be around*. ...**evil**, as the word is, **lusts/desires**, evil lusts and desires... there are right desires and there are wrong desires. There are right passions and there are wrong passions! That’s what we’re being shown here in life that God has set before us. And there’s that which is just downright evil – anything that’s against God’s way, that is contrary to God’s way, is evil; and yet if we don’t see it for being evil sometimes we embrace it and we live it and we do it and we let things come out of our mouth and we talk about things that we shouldn’t talk about that are evil – about others.

...**and covetousness, which is idolatry**: that which we raise up as an idol, of something *we* choose to do that God says we shouldn’t do. And so it’s like idolatry. We lift up this obelisk and just kneel down in front of it, whatever it is that conflicts with God’s truth and God’s way of life, because we *want* it, we embrace it, we set our *affection* on it. That’s what sin is like. Anything you yield yourself to sin it’s something you have love toward, or affectionate toward, have passion for. And therein is the battle. Mortifying, putting to death, wanting to put to death things that are wrong. Having a desire, yet seeing

those things that are in our members, in our being, that that battle is always before us. It doesn't disappear when you come into God's Church and you're put under the water. It's still in you and you have to *fight it* and never give up until your change comes.

**In the which you also walked in times past**, in other words, fully, without knowledge, without understanding of God's truth of how to walk. Sometimes people have a difficulty when they come into God's Church because they *think* they love Jesus Christ, because they *think* they were always searching for Christ! Well, I've a bit of a difficulty with that because there's a bit of self-righteousness in that; not a bit, but a lot. And sometime we deceive ourselves into thinking that's what we wanted. No, when God called us He had to start doing a lot of correction, correcting us in a big way, helping us to see that everything about God and everything about Christ as a whole was just all upside down, like this goofy little tree over here in the corner. It's just a tree! It's not even a tree, it's plastic! And Jeremiah talks about a tree – a tree is just a tree, and people want to cut it down in the forest and bring it into their house and kneel in front of it – that's their problem. It's not mine. It's just a tree to me, and it's a plastic one. I don't care if the lights are on – doesn't bug me! It's a winter scene. If somebody else wants to see something else in it that's their business and if they misuse it that's their problem!

So in times past we were deceived, as the whole world is around us, when you lived in them. But now we're to be something different, we're to change, put to death those things that are wrong in our lives and God continually helps us to see more and more what isn't good in our life and what must be changed. And right now in this series we're going through He's showing us things that hurt relationships between men and women. And if we in God's Church can learn that we haven't fully seen nor grasped the bigger picture in some of this – everybody in God's Church who's ever been called into God's Church; from the time the Church began in 31 AD, they begin to learn about certain things in relationships that they should live. And as books were written, as Paul wrote, as Peter wrote, as different ones wrote in scripture here they begin to learn and they begin to grow and relationships *got better!*

And *husbands*, if they lived by God's way of life, and as they live by God's way of life and those who became a part, or were yielding themselves as a part of that which was being moulded by God as a part of the 144,000 – husbands and wives did better in their love for each other, they grew in love toward each other. You can't help it if you live by God's way of life, by His spirit, your life is going to become better – your marriage is going to become better, your family's going to become better from the time you're called in to the time that it's over with for you; you're going to be better at the other end...or else you weren't growing! ...or else God wasn't living in you. *BUT* how much more there's always yet things to learn that we can grasp and comprehend more – especially where we are now.

And so if within God's Church we still have more to learn, how much more is the world in blindness and imprisoned and can't even begin to grasp the changes that need to take place in their life; that we're at a threshold in time! I'm *excited about that!* I hope *you're excited* about that! That we're beginning to be taught some things, and being shown a door, or a window if you will, into something that's going to make marriages better, relationships between men and women better – because they're not as good as they're supposed to be, or need to be, of something that started 6,000 years ago. And the more that God has us focus on this subject, the more we can change and the more those relationships can become better and the more people can begin to see the prejudices that are there and the thinking that has existed that's been passed down from generation to generation to generation – for *hundreds of generations* in our lives! ...that He's just now bringing us to a point, because we're entering a new age,

where great knowledge is going to open up for this world in a more powerful way than ever before and a lot of these things that have been upside down and twisted and distorted God's going to change. And *you are so BLESSED* to begin seeing these things now because you're going to be able to be a *part* of helping to change the world.

You're the beginning of helping to change the world – that's what God is doing with us. And with the rest of the 144,000 that come of all those that will be there at that particular point in time. I am in awe of; I'm dumbfounded by these things. The more that we can focus on this, the more that we can begin to see. And how much families have gotten to a certain point, even within those who've been called in times past, have only been able to come to a certain point in their lives...that God is blessing us now to be able to go *way beyond*... way beyond because there's much yet to be changed in this whole world. And so all these things are addressed.

**But now you are also to put off all these;** so there's more – there's always more. ☺ Mr. Armstrong said there are two ways of life: give and get. And we have within us both. The give way is the result of that holiness that I talked about – God's spirit that dwells within us, God the Father and Jesus Christ that dwell within us by the power of their spirit – that part that we're able to have and live and see to a point, that we want to become more like, that we want to yield ourselves more to. Then we have this other part, this nasty evil part, that's a part of our human nature; the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life...and you have it! I have it! We all have it! And through time we become more refined and we're able to grow spiritually – like a baby in a womb – you can begin to see more and more the parts. And as we grow spiritually more and more of what is of God can be seen there, and less of us...thank God. That's the way it's supposed to be! It's a beautiful thing!

**Verse 8 - But now put off these too;** work on these as well. ...**anger**, because it's a part of life. It's a natural response that when some of these other things happen in your life...that anger is an automatic response! It's an automatic product, maybe is a better way of saying it, of some of these other things beforehand. They tie together! ...**anger, wrath**, the word means 'outbursts of anger, rage, a spirit of vengeance'. And as we come into God's Church we begin to learn those things of how we have those things perhaps a part of our life and we're to work on them, to conquer them.

...**malice**; which is evil. It's a word for evil. Evil! I think of everything we've focused on in the last few months. God wants us to see evil for what it is – *evil*. That the definition be *deep* in our being, in our minds, that we're able to see things that are against God's way, things that are a matter of sin as being really evil, despicable, and the way we see it. Because the more you hate something, the more you see something that's evil you don't want it a part of you and you'll be able to be more on guard against it and be able to get rid of it more fully in your life. So this word 'evil' or 'wickedness'.

...**blasphemy**, which is a word for 'slander' or 'lying' or 'being false toward others' about others, of not being a true witness, a right witness of things in life, but a false witness if you will, **slander, blasphemy**, being slanderous towards others, of putting others in a bad light. Why should we ever have anything come out of our mouth... Now there's times in dealing with situations in life, perhaps there's a need to discuss something, or to be aware of something – but that needs to be handled so carefully in life because we see things around us and we have to deal with things around us in life; and so you have to be careful in how you do things and how you speak of situations in people's lives; but not to put them down for the sake of being able to spread gossip, or to just talk about people or one another, to put

them in a bad light. And so again here, this Greek word, it has to do with 'slander, lying,' or 'false, harmful or twisted accusation against others'.

**...filthy communication;** which is abusive language. That can take on many forms – abusive language. That can even exist in marriages, being abusive to someone. When people misuse authority, you know what? They're abusive. When people are 'lording' it over others they're abusive. And so whatever comes out of their mouth is abusive language when they're not using the authority that God has given the way it should be used. It's happened within the Church, in the ministry. It happens in families. And God is helping us see this more and more so it's not a part of our lives, so we can get rid of it. But we have to see it first to get rid of it.

**Do not lie to each other, seeing that you have put off the old person,** it's not 'man' in the Greek language at all. Again, it's **the old person**, which can be man or woman, or both in the Greek language. It's amazing here the things that have been translated and how they've been translated. **Do not lie to each other, seeing that you have put off the old person,** under the watery grave; **with his,** again, it's not 'his', it's **he/she/your...with your deeds;** that you **put off the old person with their deeds and have put on the new;** the new person – that's what we strive to put on, **which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him who created Him:** So it's going back to this creation that's taking place, that begins in Jesus Christ, that has to do with God's Family that's still ongoing – that's been ongoing for 6,000 years. God's been creating a Family for 6,000 years! The God Family! There are going to be some through time, all through time, that God has worked with, and more after the time of Jesus Christ, after the Church began, larger numbers than that were worked with and moulded and fashioned by God's spirit within the environment of the Church. It's incredible!

**..being renewed in knowledge in the image of Him who created Him:** and so again, this process here of that which we're being moulded and fashioned after – after Jesus Christ who was in the image of God and that's the image we're being moulded – after that 'kind'. I love Pentecost when it talks about various things and talking about our being moulded and fashioned into the Godkind. That's what we've been called... the world doesn't understand that. I used to love it when Mr. Armstrong would talk about that. Not in those exact words, but talking about how people don't understand why they're on this earth. Mankind doesn't know why he was created. What's it all about? It's to be in the *God Family*, the Family of God.

**Where there is neither Greek nor Jew,** it's not about *race!* *Not about race!* And there are people who've gotten upset in times past; there were people who left in times past who got upset because they thought things were about race. They thought Mr. Armstrong was *prejudice* and filled with matters of race because he talked about Israel. Well, it's just the way God's working! Someone asked me today if there are people in different parts of the world being called. And I said, "Basically only within the scattered nations of Israel." So many peoples of different races and backgrounds and so forth are being *called;* but in the nations of Israel. You know why? Because that's where God has chosen to work with them so that they can be moulded and fashioned and worked with at this time. And as we get into a new age it's going to be everyone! Everyone's going to have the opportunity to become a part of the same. But God works in a very orderly way. *Awesome* how God works in life.

And so it says here...**Not Greek nor Jew; circumcision nor uncircumcision,** and this is, of course, in their time and how some felt about some of those things. And Paul was saying it's not a matter of any of that! **Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free,** and as I've stated before, fits into this context...**neither man**

**nor woman:** It isn't about that! Those things *don't exist* in the God Family – no male and female; no man nor woman, no specific race – we *all* become a part of Israel – spiritual Israel. There will be names that people carry within that organizational structure that God has within the Temple of God, within the structure that God has planned – because it's not about race, it's what the words mean! ...especially Israel, if we understand it, and how God works with us. And it's not about male nor female, man or woman; it's about God's Family and how we become a part of it... **bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all.** The begotten Family of God. And if we're part of the begotten Family of God what an awesome thing!

**Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies;** we learn to be merciful. We learn and grow in mercy. God teaches us mercy in the Church. I've learned more about mercy in the last three years of my life than I did in all the other years in the Church put together. *I have learned more about the mercy of God in the past three years than I have in all the previous years in the Church of God put together.* ...**bowels of mercies;** because we grow, and if we grow and as we grow it just mushrooms and becomes greater and greater as time goes on and we *never become stagnant*. I feel for people out there who are scattered, who are asleep and stagnant like stinking water that's stagnant. They don't know that and they don't understand that! My heart goes out to them because *everyone of us who was a part of the past would be there in that stagnant water, we wouldn't be growing, we couldn't see* unless God had mercy and a purpose for calling us out of that and giving us an opportunity like we have now. And if we have that opportunity then the growth that's *possible* is awesome!

The longer you're in God's Church, the more you grow, and the leaps and bounds by which you grow become greater and greater and greater...they truly do. It's an *awesome* journey! And we're about ready to make another quantum leap forward that is truly, literally going to be mind-boggling – especially for those who are a part of the 144,000. We're going to have a mind that does not get older and has a harder time remembering and thinking and using what God has given; but rather given minds we can't even begin to comprehend – with capacity that we can't even begin to comprehend. I long for that time...how exciting it's going to be to have even more and receive more. That's why I say when you grow in God's truth and God's way of life it just becomes greater and greater and greater, more awesome as time goes forward. Fight for it! There's nothing richer, nothing wealthier, nothing more beautiful, nothing better in life... can't even be *compared* to it.

**Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness,** to others, kindness, mercy towards others, **humbleness of mind,** not being lifted up. Don't lift yourselves up. Not worrying about lifting self up or trying to prove something or feeling that... anyway, as we go through some of this I hope that *men* will see where more work needs to be done in some of these areas because of this thing of testosterone that runs through the body and that makes us think in ways that we do sometimes because it *messes with the mind*, this 'macho' thing where sometimes we think we have to 'prove' ourselves or why people get in disputes and fight with one another and disagree with one another. All men have it; of course we all have human nature, and women, you have the same battles in a similar sort of way, but we'll get into that later.

...**meekness,** that means a *teachable spirit*, a willingness to learn from others. Isn't that an awesome thing; that we're not so *puffed up with self* that we're just ready to express how *we* see everything. "This is the way *I see it!* Oh let me tell you what *I read!* No! I have this... this is what *I understand* and this is what you need to do in your life! This is how *you* should do it! No, this is..." I think about when people have something when they're sick or they have something wrong with them, "This is the *cure!*"



This is what it is... You take so much of this and this'll take care of it all." It's an attitude of mind sometimes that we have if we're not careful, that we know. But what about listening to others, what about listening to other people's experiences, what about our minds being able to actually see things in a greater way and learn more and receive more in life by being willing to listen? But sometimes we're more ready to *say* something and speak our mind; kind of like we like to hear our own voice or something, rather than listening to someone else and learning and then evaluating. But *seeking* to learn what we can. There's wisdom out there in different places and it's not just in us is it? Matter of fact, when you really know the truth...

**...longsuffering;** a willingness to suffer long...sometimes in relationships, oftentimes in relationships because we see the weaknesses. The more you're around people the more you see certain things. You have to be careful how you deal with certain things in life because it can affect your relationship, it can affect a marriage. All these things can affect relationships between men and women or any kind of relationship in life.

**...forbearing one another,** these things of patience and forbearing one another. I love these words here when it talks about forbearing one another because it's a word that has to do with 'allowing for the differences', of not being *threatened* by *differences*, but allowing for them – willing to learn from them. Humbleness of mind! There are things you can learn from one another in life. There are things you can enjoy from one another in life; but sometimes we don't know how to do that. We have to learn it. "If you do it God's way there are things that have to be learned, to do it the right way, to have the right results. Some people are threatened by differences. Some *men* are *threatened* by the differences of women. Some women are threatened by the difference of men. And if you don't understand that you have much to learn. If you think that's not true – you *really* have much to learn. And if you don't understand those things you have to cry out to God to teach you, to help you to see, to open up your eyes to see and understand things about yourself first – because if you don't see yourself in some of these areas then you're not going to be able to see other things that are right there in front of you that God wants you to see.

Husbands and wives...what a beautiful relationship when it's done God's way – the two become one, the mind and the things you can learn from each other. My wife and I were discussing that this morning – of things we have learned from each other in life: not just the fact of being man and woman, which you're to learn from each other, to become a better person, to become more understanding of life and what life should be like and how to live life...but one thing I talked about was the fact that she grew up in the church and I didn't. We've learned from each other in those things, plus many other things we've learned from each other in. Sometimes people don't take the time to learn because they think they *already know* and what they know is best. Big mistake that oftentimes is made by men.

**...forbearing one another,** allowing for the differences, not being threatened by the differences; **and forgiving one another,** that's important in every relationship in life; a willingness to forgive, not holding something against people, a desire... matter of fact, not only a desire to forgive and be forgiving toward someone, but a desire for that to happen quickly.

**...if any have a quarrel,** finds fault, is complaining **against anyone else:** doesn't matter who it is; **even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.** An attitude that Stephen had! What an awesome thing! He's telling about God's way and they're going to kill him; and basically he said the same thing that Jesus Christ said, just a few different words there, but basically the same thing, "Father forgive them, they don't know

what they're doing." That was the same attitude and same spirit. And so, sometimes do we we really grasp that when people are angry – when someone's angry at you or someone gets caught up in something, to understand they've gotten caught up in something that you hope and you look forward to the day they're going to be able to work with that, or deal with that and address that in their life and not to hold anything against them, to be willing to *forgive* those things, to put them away.

**And above all these things put on**, and this word is **agape**; it's God's love, something you have to put on because you don't have it of and by yourself. It's something that comes from God, it's God and it's a part of something we can imbibe in of in life and live and have a part of us to the degree that God's spirit is in us and to the degree we desire to live this, to have it live within us which is practicing all these other things I've just read; **which is the bond of perfection**. It's what makes things perfect in God, God's spirit, God's love... God is love. God's Word, it expresses what God's Word is all about, God's plan, God's purpose - it expresses how God functions, how God sees things, how God works, how God wants us to see and understand. It has everything to do with relationships; it has to do with everything within the God Family.

**So above all things put on agape, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts**, this verse means more to me than it ever has in times past because of what we went through before the Feast of Tabernacles and during the Feast of Tabernacles and since. **Let the peace of God... if something is to rule in your life – let the peace of God rule in your hearts, in your mind, in your being; to which you are called in one Body; and be thankful**. Always that attitude of thankfulness and gratefulness to God for what He's offering us and giving to us; for what you do have and for what is good.

And so all this has led up to what is expected in the Body, in the Family, in the Church. This is how God says the Family is to be, His creation is to be! All the things that Paul has gone through in Colossians in setting that foundation of this creation of what He's working with, the Family, His Family and Jesus Christ who is the Head of the Body; and now he goes in and talks about a certain kind of behaviour that is to live within us, that's to be *in* us and what is not to be in us, what we're to mortify, to put to death in order for us to have a right mind. God brings us up to this point in time showing this is what His Family is to be like! This is how we're to live!

So again, all that's expected in the Body of Christ, in the Church, concerning *all* relationships: and our focus right now, and this sermon is focused even more so on men and women; of striving to grasp and understand things that have been with us for 6,000 years, things which we're to break away from and become free of and come out of Egypt and come out of bondage and be free. There's been a bondage and curses because of certain ways of thinking that God wants us to become more and more free of so that family can become better and better, richer and richer in the Millennium. It's going to be a lot different than the families in the past 6,000 years, of how people have lived life, because of the awesome changes that God is getting ready to make in the world.

**Verse 16 - Let the Word of Christ**, the word is 'logos', the very being of God, the very mind of God, the very thinking *of God*, the Word of God, **dwelt in you**; and so as we grow our minds become more in unity and oneness with God – we're able to see and understand more and more of what God is doing. I think of the things given to us at the Feast – we were blessed to see more, and it becomes more exciting! He's helping us to understand! I marvel at this thing here, the mind, and how God has worked with a physical brain, putting a spirit essence in it that gives us an awesome ability to think and reason and plan

and remember...and that He can change it because it's physical with a spirit essence in it (not the holy spirit); a spirit essence because it's in a physical body with a physical brain...and that that can be worked with and it can be *impregnated* with the holy spirit. *Impregnated with!* God gave us something *physical* to understand something that happens on a spiritual plane that is beyond human comprehension: that God calls us in the Church, gives us understanding of a purpose and a plan of what it means to be begotten of the holy spirit and then we just learn more and more and that's magnified – it becomes greater and greater.

**Let the Word of God dwell in you richly in all wisdom**; that which comes from God – all the wisdom that God desires to share with us and give to us through time that we're able to grow in more and more and more. ...**dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual song, singing grace in your hearts to the LORD.** Now this sounds very Protestant. I don't like the way this is written because it just sounds so Protestant. There will be people who read this who think...I can just see it... "We're to go around singing to each other..." Like people do in the world when it comes to Protestant churches and so forth and some of the things that go on there and how people take some of these sweet sounding things that they think they can say to talk to each other... "Don't you just *loooove* Jesus...? Have you given your *hearrt to the Looord?*" (I can't even say it like they say it, thank God, it's not in me.)

This has a different meaning to it than that. It's not a matter of singing psalms to each other. It's not a matter of saying these nice little sayings and platitudes to one another in a certain kind of environment, in a fake world that the world does.

So the definition and usage here is actually a little clearer in Ephesians 5 and I want to read it there so that we can strive to grasp this a little bit better, then we'll come back to Colossians here. **Ephesians 5:17 - Wherefore do not be unwise**, that sounds familiar, 'dwell in you richly in all wisdom' – interesting. Because Paul is still speaking the same thing but in a little bit of a different way. He's saying the same thing; **Wherefore do not be unwise, but understanding what the will of the LORD is. And be not drunk with wine**, so he gives a physical example here of something that can happen to you physically; **wherein is excess**; in other words, you can have too much and become drunk; **but be filled with the spirit**; you have to be filled with it; you can't have *too much* of God's spirit! It kind of goes back to what is our focus; on that which is spiritual? Do we set our affection, our desire, our attitude, our thinking on that which is spiritual? Well, that's what we're to strive to do, to be filled with the spirit as much as *humanly* possible. How much of God's spirit can we receive? Well, that's between us and God and what He can give to us in a relationship and a part of growth as well.

**Speaking to yourselves**; it doesn't mean that you go around talking to yourself and answering. It means telling yourself; that's what the word means in the Greek language here, 'just telling yourself' **in psalms and hymns**, it's a way of thinking. That's what it's saying, set your affection on things above. So how do we think?

There are times I've told people about praying – go back to the Psalms. If you're having a difficult time opening up before God, you don't know what to say... I have that happen in my life to this day. I told God that this morning. Today in praying to God there was a type of flow that was very easy. Last week I was walking along a path and having a difficult time expressing certain things, talking about certain things and just shared that with God. We go through different things as human beings. We have different kinds of battles we have to deal with in our lives and around us in our families, in the Church

and in the world; and sometimes it's hard to pray even to God because we're very physical, very carnal by human nature. It doesn't mean we don't want to, it's just that there are times that you're going through certain things and you really don't know what to say.

**Speaking to yourself;** in other words, it's a way of thinking. The Psalms are written in a certain way that have to do with God's Word and God's way of life. It says **in hymns and spiritual songs**, it has to do with what's inside of you; it's how you feel. So there are some things sometimes we have to remind ourselves of and tell ourselves – and sometimes you do it in prayer. You have to remind yourself of certain things and then you think of other things in scripture or God's plan and all of a sudden it's there again and that flow is there and that connection is there and we go through a lot of things in this physical life.

**...singing and making melody in your heart to the LORD;** now I don't always *feel like* singing and making melody to God in my heart because I get caught up in things in the world. It might be (I hate to use the example of driving because people think I'm the worst driver in the world) when I'm walking down a mall – something simple. If you can understand the little things in life you can understand the bigger things – okay? There are principles there; there are *patterns* of life – that if you can understand certain patterns that are easier to understand that everyone may deal with and battle from one time to another then you can understand it in the bigger things in life. And so I use those kinds of examples.

I think about people in this world; talking here especially in the Dallas area, some of you drive to work... What is it? An hour? 20 minutes away? In Dallas, something that might normally be 20 minutes away is like an hour away when you're out here on the freeway fighting. And you know what? That doesn't make you feel good! You're not necessarily singing with melody in your heart to God at that time! *I'm sorry!* It's just the way it is because you're in a physical world. And you know what? It can take a toll on you and you can get *tired* of how *selfish* people are and you have a battle on your hands because you have to battle yourself then thinking about... It's just the way of the world isn't it? And how hard is it sometimes just to relax then and let them fight their fight out there and just set your mind to the reality; it's going to take me an hour to get to work. Now sometimes that's easier said than done. Sometimes you can do it, and sometimes you can't.

This is what we're talking about here. It's about how we think on a continual basis – sometimes we do well and sometimes we don't; but we're to *strive* to do well, we're to *strive* to remind ourselves to think on, tell yourself, be reminded of, ask God for help. From time to time you just have to do it when you're rubbing shoulders in this world; you have to cry out to God and say, "Father, help me because right now I'm not real happy with the environment around me." It's a selfish world and sometimes that can cause battles; because you know what? You see things that others don't see. They live in it and I feel sorry...when you can come to start understanding that and you start feeling for them, when you start understanding what they're caught up in – a rat race, no hope. They don't know why they're on this earth. They don't know what life is all about. They don't know what tomorrow's bringing! And so many people would just as soon bury their head in the sand. That's their choice because life is so hard in this world, there are so many unknowns out there, it's becoming easier to live in a false world.

**...telling yourself in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the LORD.** You know, sometimes if you're by yourself, to even think of a Psalm, a song. Have you ever done that? Just strive to sing one of the songs like we sang at the Feast. It's good to learn those things, to listen to those things sometimes and get that in your mind, and all of a sudden it's amazing how that

can change your attitude because your focus begins to change; you begin to think differently. And that's what this means. That's what this is talking about. It's an *encouragement* of how you think and what you set your mind on. Don't let the world get the best of you. Don't let selfishness in the world, the evil of this world get the best of you. Be excited about the hope that you have of what's just around the corner and that you're to set a different example, you're to be different from the world around you.

**Giving thanks always**, times like that, you know what? It's good to start praying and just ask God for help, to help you to be able to see things in a right way and to begin to focus on things you have to be thankful for – be thankful you're not lost like they are. I'll tell you what – it's powerful! When you get your mind right with God and God's spirit and God's love dwelling in you and coming in you toward others in the world – maybe on the job, maybe a boss has treated you... maybe a co-worker is treating you a certain way? Sometimes it's hard to do this - what we're talking about here- getting your attitude, getting your mind focused like it needs to be – being thankful and grateful for what God has given to you, understanding what you have that they don't have.

**Giving thanks always for all things unto God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;** so again, seeing and keeping in mind those things that have to do with God's plan and purpose that we're called to be a part of that the world doesn't have.

**Colossians 3:16 - above all things put on charity which is the bond of perfection. Let the peace of God reign in your hearts which you are called in one Body and be you thankful. Let the Word of God dwell in you richly with all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns... (verse 17) - And whatever you do in word or in deed,** that comes out of your mouth or in how you're living, what you're doing – whatever it is, any time of day – it says here: **do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.** So it's a matter of an attitude of mind.

Isn't that amazing where all this is leading? Let's just read the next verse and we'll start here next Sabbath: **Verse 18 - Wives, submit,** yield to (I'll go back and we'll explain some of these next Sabbath), **unto your own husbands, as is fit/proper in the LORD. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be bitter against them.** There's a lot to learn here that's written in *two verses* about husbands and wives, about family, and in all that Paul has already discussed before this – everything is leading up to and God wants us to have this focus. It's about *family*, His creation, what He's moulding and fashioning, what our battles are and what He's given to us that's beautiful when done right before Him.

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