



KINGDOM POLICIES

PART 4

Forty Daily Devotions
from Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians
(Based on the NKJV)

Introduction

In this devotional series, we will focus on practical applications of the New Testament to everyday life by going through five of the church letters written by the Apostle Paul. In Romans, we saw where there was a lot more to be discovered than just the way to salvation. Paul dealt with the believer's everyday walk in society and the relationship that we should have with civil authorities, peoples of other ethnic origins, and our own personal, spiritual growth through faith and the power of the Holy Spirit. In Galatians, Paul addresses legalism. Just as legalism affected churches in Paul's day, it is just as much a threat in churches today. Paul will help us see the priority that God places on a personal righteousness that is based on faith in Jesus Christ and His work on the cross. In Ephesians, we will learn about the power and presence of the Holy Spirit and how God equips every believer for victorious living. In Philippians, we will learn, through Christ's own example, how we can have consistent, fulfilling joy in our lives. Finally, in Colossians, Paul will help us understand the power of Christ by allowing us to see Him as the Creator and Maintainer of the universe.

Daily Reading Schedule

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
1	Galatians 2:11-21	1/23/21
2	Galatians 3:1-10	1/24/21
3	Galatians 3:11-18	1/25/21
4	Galatians 3:19-29	1/26/21
5	Galatians 4:1-11	1/27/21
6	Galatians 4:12-24	1/28/21
7	Galatians 4:25-5:3	1/29/21
8	Galatians 5:4-15	1/30/21
9	Galatians 5:16-26	1/31/21
10	Galatians 6:1-10	2/1/21
11	Galatians 6:11-18	2/2/21
12	Ephesians 1:1-12	2/3/21
13	Ephesians 1:13-23	2/4/21
14	Ephesians 2:1-10	2/5/21
15	Ephesians 2:11-22	2/6/21
16	Ephesians 3:1-12	2/7/21
17	Ephesians 3:13-21	2/8/21
18	Ephesians 4:1-13	2/9/21
19	Ephesians 4:14-25	2/10/21
20	Ephesians 4:26-5:5	2/11/21

Day	Scripture Reading	Date
21	Ephesians 5:6-17	2/12/21
22	Ephesians 5:18-29	2/13/21
23	Ephesians 5:30-6:9	2/14/21
24	Ephesians 6:10-17	2/15/21
25	Ephesians 6:18-24	2/16/21
26	Philippians 1:1-11	2/17/21
27	Philippians 1:12-24	2/18/21
28	Philippians 1:25-2:8	2/19/21
29	Philippians 2:9-18	2/20/21
30	Philippians 2:19-30	2/21/21
31	Philippians 3:1-11	2/22/21
32	Philippians 3:12-21	2/23/21
33	Philippians 4:1-9	2/24/21
34	Philippians 4:10-23	2/25/21
35	Colossians 1:1-12	2/26/21
36	Colossians 1:13-29	2/27/21
37	Colossians 2:1-17	2/28/21
38	Colossians 2:18-3:11	3/1/21
39	Colossians 3:12-4:1	3/2/21
40	Colossians 4:2-18	3/3/21

Day 1: Galatians 2:11-21

“Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed;” (Galatians 2:11)

Peter and Paul

I often see people cringe when I say I am not sure that Peter and Paul really liked each other. However, I want to go on record as saying that I definitely believe they loved and respected each other. There is a big difference between “liking” and “loving” – and you know it. Look again at Galatians 2:11 and notice where Paul said that, when Peter came to Antioch he “withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed”. The issue was that Peter had come to Antioch and readily associated and fellowshiped with the Gentile believers there and even had meals with them. However, when a delegation of Jewish believers from Jerusalem arrived, Peter “withdrew and separated himself” from the Gentiles (v. 12). The other Jews then followed Peter’s lead, and even Barnabas joined them! What follows (vs. 14-21) is a clear explanation as to why grace is to be preferred over law. Law led only to guilt, shame, and death while grace led to forgiveness, glory, and life! It is important to note that neither Acts nor Galatians records any response from Peter to Paul’s charges. One can only imagine that these *personal charges* led to some *powerful changes* in the way the Jewish believers thought and the way they treated the Gentile believers.

Prayer Emphasis: Love and respect your fellow believers. Refuse to become involved in any group that believes they are better than others. Express your love and appreciation to a fellow church member that is not in your immediate circle. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Twenty-One:** *All Christians are of one family and they should show love and respect one for another.*

Day 2: Galatians 3:1-10

“O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?” (Galatians 3:1)

Doctrinal Issues

The first two chapters (1-2) of Galatians are about some personal issues while the following two chapters (3-4) are about doctrinal issues. Those who wanted to add the keeping of ceremonial law to the gospel of grace were accused of having “bewitched” the Christians at Galatia. This is the only place this Greek word is found in the New Testament, and it means “to charm” or “to put in a trance.” The gospel plus law theory obviously seemed to make sense to both those who preached it and those who heard it. It still sounds right to many people today. However, a different gospel may *sound* or *seem* right and yet still be very wrong! You will read the word “foolish” twice in today’s verses. It comes from a word that was used only once in the gospels. This word is used in Luke 24:25 when quoting some of the things Christ said to the two disciples with whom He walked on the road to Emmaus after His resurrection. The Lord told these disheartened believers they were “foolish” not to believe “all that the prophets (had) spoken!” Doctrine can only be based on the Bible! Anything less than that is more *doctored* than it is *doctrine*!

Prayer Emphasis: Reread today’s verses and circle the words “believe,” “believed,” or “faith.” Note that even the Old Testament saints (Abraham) were saved by faith and not by keeping the law. **Underscore** the line that states the *gospel* was preached to Abraham! **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Twenty-Two:** *There has always been only one, true gospel!*

Day 3: Galatians 3:11-18

“Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ.” (Galatians 3:16)

“The Promises”

Take a moment and circle or underscore the word “promise” every time you find it in Galatians 3. Other than in Hebrews, this word is found more often in Galatians than any book of the New Testament. To understand this promise, we must understand who made the promise and to whom it was made. These verses refer to Genesis 17:19 when God promised Abraham that He would give him a son in his old age (Isaac) and “with his descendants” an “everlasting covenant” would be made. In our focus verse, the word “Seed” is singular because it is speaking of one person (Christ Jesus) and not of many people (the Jewish nation). God made a formal agreement with Abraham, 430 years before the Law was ever given, that promised a “Seed” would be the source of his salvation. When the law was introduced many years later, it was not introduced as a *replacement, addition, or improvement* to the covenant that God already made with Abraham. Long before the law was ever given, God was saving people by His grace. He has never saved anyone by anything other than grace – and He never will!

Prayer Emphasis: Pray for all who preach the gospel. Ask God to keep them true to the message of grace. **Realize** that the message of grace began with God and no man has the authority to change that message. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Twenty-Three:** *God wants to use us to preach the same gospel that He preached to Abraham – a gospel of salvation by grace alone.*

Day 4: Galatians 3:19-29

“What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions...” (Galatians 3:19)

The Purpose of the Law

When Paul anticipated questions from his readers, he would often just go ahead and ask them himself! Such is the case in verse 19. Paul asks, “What purpose then does the law serve?” He answers his own question in three different statements. First, Paul stated that the law was temporary while grace was everlasting (see “everlasting covenant” in Genesis 17:19). The law was given to draw attention to our sin and our need for a Savior (vs. 19-20). Second, the law could only bring *conviction* and not *conversion* (vs. 21-22). If it had been possible for even one person to be saved by the keeping of the law, God could have spared His Son from His death on the cross. The law was not “against” God’s promises (v. 21). It was designed to be a tool to remind men of their need for the promised Seed that would come and fulfill the law completely. Last, Paul taught that the law prepared the way for Christ (vs. 23-29). Verse 24 clearly states that the law was “our tutor” to lead us to Christ. However, “after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor” (v. 25). Those who have believed on Jesus, and His gospel of the death, burial, and resurrection, are no longer Jews or Gentiles, but “heirs according to the promise” (v. 29).

Prayer Emphasis: Thank God that our salvation is based on God’s *promise* and not our *performance!* **Praise God** for that blessed truth! **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Twenty-Four:** *The Law was used by God to reveal our sin and need for the Savior who was promised many years prior to Moses or the giving of the law.*

Day 5: Galatians 4:1-11

“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son...to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” (Galatians 4:4-5)

“The Adoption of Sons”

Paul is not through with his argument regarding salvation by grace and grace alone. Find the phrase “the adoption of sons” and underscore it in your Bible! This is a very important verse and all believers who come to understand it will be blessed beyond belief! What Paul wants his readers to understand is that God, in His infinite mercy, takes all who believe the promise of salvation through His Son into His own family and gives them the full rights and privileges of His only begotten Son, Jesus! God gives us a key to the house when we are saved and full privileges to all that is contained therein. We are to remember that we are no longer mere servants, but “sons” and heirs “of God through Christ” (vs. 6-7). By that, we understand that we serve God because He is our Father. God’s indwelling Spirit teaches us to call out to God with the words, “Abba, Father!” (v. 6). The word “Abba” is the Aramaic word for Father. Therefore, Jews and Gentiles alike have the same Father because they were born to Him in the same way. Jews were not saved by the law while Gentiles were saved by grace. All who were saved were saved by grace and given the right to call God by the same name that Jesus prayed to him in Mark 14:36!

Prayer Emphasis: Cry out “Abba, Father” today and **realize** that you are now just as much God’s child as the One conceived to Him through Mary. **Celebrate** your new birth just like you would the birth of Christ! **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Twenty-Five: For the believer, every day is Christmas!**

Day 6: Galatians 4:12-24

“Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman.” (Galatians 4:21-22)

Abraham’s “Two Sons”

It is obvious that something caused a change in the people’s *attitude* and *appreciation* toward Paul. He said that the Galatians earlier “received” him and treated him with great respect (v. 14). The “trial” in his “flesh” that Paul referred to in verse 14 might have something to do with his vision. The Galatian’s love for Paul had been made evident in the fact that, if possible, they would have “given” their “own eyes” to Paul to help him. Now, Paul had to ask, “Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?” Paul feared that his faithfulness to the grace alone gospel might have cost him some very dear friends (v. 16). Paul then tells a story of two sons. One was a slave and the other was free. These two sons were used as a means to help these Christians understand the two covenants. The son that was free was free because of a promise. The Holy Spirit makes it very clear to all who believe that we are not born of the “bondwoman” (the law) so we are no longer in bondage to the law. It is hard to imagine anyone being willing to trade the joy that comes from being freely forgiven by God’s grace for the burden that comes with trying to earn your own salvation by good works and the keeping of the law!

Prayer Emphasis: Realize that we do not elevate ourselves by putting others down. However, we must **refuse** to listen to those who teach salvation by any means other than grace. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Twenty-Six: There is no joy or blessedness to be found in a performance-based salvation!**

Day 7: Galatians 4:25-5:3

“...Mount Sinai...corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage...” (Galatians 4:25)

Two “Jeruselems”

Just after speaking about “two covenants” in verse 24, Paul mentions two “Jeruselems” in verses 25-26. Paul spoke of the Jerusalem “which now is” first. The one that “now is” relates to Mount Sinai, Hagar, and slavery to the law. The figure of Jerusalem is used here because, at that time, Jerusalem represented the center of Judaism, which was still under bondage to the law. Then, in verse 26, Paul spoke of the “Jerusalem above.” This refers to the state of the New Jerusalem that would be the heavenly city of God. In that city, Christ would reign as the eternal king and Christians would be His citizens. In verse 28, Paul again compares believers to Isaac, the child of promise (see 3:29). This means that we are God’s children now – according to His promise! However, even this wonderful promise does not exempt us from trials or persecution. Just as Ishmael persecuted Isaac (see Genesis 21:9), the children of this world will persecute God’s children today. The “liberty” that is referenced in 5:1 is the freedom from the yoke of the law. We are no longer “entangled” by the heavy yoke of the law. Paul states that those who accept circumcision on a grace plus basis will have to take every other part of the law with it. In 5:3 God says that the person who adds *any* part of the law to grace must add *every* part of the law to grace.

Prayer Emphasis: Expect trials and persecution. **Refuse** to be caught off guard when such events occur. **Praise** God that your life is a strong enough witness for the Lord that the enemy would try to hinder you. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Twenty-Seven:** *If we add one part of the law to grace, we must be willing to add it all.*

Day 8: Galatians 5:4-15

“...you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.” (Galatians 5:4)

“Fallen from Grace”

I cannot tell you how many times I heard the term “fallen from grace” after I became a Christian. Some interpreted this to mean that a person can lose their salvation. It is important to note that Paul is not writing to people who have lost their salvation – or he would not continually call them “brethren” (vs. 11, 13). He is writing to people who are saved by grace but beginning to dabble again in matters of the law. The law has everything to do with man trying to *climb up* to God while grace has everything to do with God *coming down* to man. One is about man doing something for God while the other is about God doing something for man. The Christians at Galatia had been running a good race, but the false teachers had added just a little bit or “leaven” (works) to the teaching about grace (v. 9). It might not have seemed like much, but just one tiny bit of works contaminated grace entirely. The phrase, “fallen from grace” meant they had fallen away from the teaching that had been delivered to them and not that they had fallen from salvation. Paul stated that those who were guilty of such false teaching would pay dearly because of it.

Prayer Emphasis: Remember that sin cannot undo what grace has done! Once saved – always saved! Since we could never do anything good enough to be saved, we can never do anything bad enough to lose our salvation. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Twenty-Eight:** *What Christ has done for us equals salvation. What we do for Him equals service.*

Day 9: Galatians 5:16-26

“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” (Galatians 5:16)

“The Spirit” & “the Flesh”

If we “Walk in the Spirit” we will not “fulfill the lust of the flesh,” or, as some translations read, the “sinful nature.” In the KJV, the words “Spirit” and “flesh” are found 10 times each in chapters 5 and 6. To “Walk in the Spirit” means to have our lives under the Spirit’s control. The “flesh” refers to the fallen nature that still lives within us. While we live in this body, we will have to strive to keep it under submission to God’s Spirit. It will be a life-long struggle for all of us. Verses 19-21 speak of the “works of the flesh” while verses 22-23 speak of “the fruit of the Spirit.” There is a big difference between *works* and *fruit*. Works are a product of man’s energy while fruit is a product energized by the indwelling Holy Spirit. Christian character comes from within – by the power of the Holy Spirit. The word used here is “fruit” and not “fruits.” The person who is living and walking under the control of the Holy Spirit will exhibit all nine of these character traits as one, single “fruit” that is evident to all. How could we possibly hide the evil things that the flesh produces? It would not be possible. In the same way, how could we possibly hide the fruit of the Spirit? If the Spirit of God lives in us, it will be obvious to all who are around us.

Prayer Emphasis: **Decide** now to surrender your life to the control of the Holy Spirit. **Be faithful** in your Bible reading and prayer time. **Ask** God to make an obvious difference in your life! **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Twenty-Nine:** *When it comes to the flesh or the Spirit, the victor will be the one for whom you cast the deciding vote.*

Day 10: Galatians 6:1-10

“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” (Galatians 6:1)

It’s About Others!

If we are walking or living in the Spirit, we will not use our liberty in Christ for selfish purposes. Jesus lived for others and we are to follow His example. We are family, and family is always there for one another. There are two ways that we are to help one another. First, we are to provide *spiritual* help to one another. Paul spoke of a brother who was overtaken by sin. Should our attitude be one of judgment and condemnation? Not at all! If we are spiritual, it should be our heart’s desire to restore such a person in a gentle and loving way. The word “restore” in verse 1 is from a medical term used for the setting of a broken bone. We should consider how we would want someone to treat us if we were in the troubled person’s situation and then treat them accordingly. We are also to help one another in *material* ways. The person who is blessed by the teaching of the Word will be willing to share material things with others. We often apply these verses to reaping bad things when we commit sinful acts, but, in context, these verses are talking about providing the material needs of those who forsake their careers to make sure that the spiritual needs of the church are met. We are not to “grow weary” in our love and support of others (v. 9).

Prayer Emphasis: **Take** your mind off of yourself and **pay attention** to the needs of others. **Share** some of what God has so graciously given to you with someone in need. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Thirty:** *We can learn how spiritual we are by how we respond to someone who is in need.*

Day 11: Galatians 6:11-18

“See with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand!” (Galatians 6:11)

“Large Letters”

Paul usually had someone help him when writing his letters. Because of the comment about writing with his “own hand” (v. 11), some think Paul wrote this letter himself. A quick review of the first verse of the letter reveals that Paul does not mention the letter being from anyone else or acknowledge anyone’s assistance in the writing. The words “large letters” do not refer to the length of the *document* but to the size of the individual *letters* that made up the words. It is generally assumed that Paul wrote in very large letters because of some issues with his vision. It is important to note here that Paul did not allow his *physical* handicap to keep him from performing his *spiritual* duties. This letter closes with a stinging rebuke of those who serve the Lord for their own glory. Paul spoke of those who were trying to make “a good showing” by enlisting large numbers of people to follow their teaching on mixing law with grace (v. 12). There are still many spiritual leaders who see numbers as the most important indicator of spiritual success. It was also Paul’s opinion that these teachers supported mixing law with grace so they could be at peace with the legalistic Jews and avoid being persecuted for teaching a grace only salvation. While some seemed to boast in numbers, Paul chose to “boast...in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (v. 14).

Prayer Emphasis: Thank God for those who gave their lives to share God’s Word with us. **Hold** your Bible close to your heart and know that it came at a very high cost for many. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Thirty-One:** *Believers should seek only God’s glory.*

Day 12: Ephesians 1:1-12

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.” (Ephesians 1:3)

“Every Spiritual Blessing”

The key thought in Paul’s opening remarks in this letter is how blessed we are as believers. In verse 3, he tells us we are “blessed...with every spiritual blessing.” In the first chapter, Paul is going to speak about the blessings we receive from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Some blessings from the Father are listed in verses 1-6 and include the facts that God has chosen us (v. 4), adopted us (v. 5), and “accepted” us (v. 6). The word translated “accepted” in verse 6 comes from the Greek root word for “grace” and is translated that way in the NIV and other translations. This word was used in only one other place in the New Testament. In Luke 1:28, the angel of the Lord came to Mary and informed her that she was “highly favored.” The angel went on to explain why she should consider herself to be “highly favored” by adding, “the Lord is with you!” Ephesians was written to help us understand that the Lord is with us as well. Just as we have been blessed by the Father, we have also been blessed by the Son. Verses 7-12 remind us that Jesus has redeemed us (v. 7a), forgiven us (v. 7b), revealed God’s will to us (vs. 8-10), and has made us an inheritance (vs. 11-12).

Prayer Emphasis: Accept the love of the Father and the Son. **Enjoy** your blessings! **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Thirty-Two:** *Believers realize that blessings are sometimes more about what we have in our hearts than about what we can hold in our hands.*

Day 13: Ephesians 1:13-23

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,” (Ephesians 1: 13)

The List Goes On!

After listing the ways that believers have been blessed by the Father and the Son, Paul listed some ways in which we are also blessed by the Holy Spirit. The first blessing is found in the fact that, the moment we are saved, the Holy Spirit enters our heart and seals us (v. 13). This seal declares that we now belong to God and nothing or no one can take us from Him. We are also told that the Holy Spirit becomes the “guarantee of our inheritance” (v. 14). This “earnest money” (KJV), or “deposit” (NIV), assures us that we will someday experience total redemption and receive God’s promised blessings in glory. At the end of each of these three sections on blessings, Paul tells us why the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have blessed us. Look for the phrase, “to the praise of His glory” in verses 6, 12, and 14. All blessings are to equip and enable us to glorify God in our lives. Take a moment and review verses 15-23 and make a note of some of the things that were on Paul’s “Prayer List” and circle or underscore the things he wanted these Christians to know and receive.

Prayer Emphasis: Pray very specifically for someone today. You might even **ask** someone if they have anything that they would like for you to pray with them about. **Thank** God for the many blessings He has given you. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Thirty-Three:** *Believers should be praising God for their many blessings while praying that others might also be blessed.*

Day 14: Ephesians 2:1-10

“But God, who is rich in mercy...made us alive together with Christ...and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,” (Ephesians 2:4-6)

The Believer’s Position

Chapter one had much to say about the believer’s *possessions* in Christ while chapter two explains the believer’s *position* in Christ. We are told that we “sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” To help us understand what that phrase should mean to us, Paul explains three important things. First, *he tells us what we were*. We “*were* dead in trespasses and sins” (v. 1). We *were* disobedient people who walked after the ways of this world and not the ways of God (v. 2). In addition, we *were* people who had been enslaved by the temptations and lusts of the flesh (v. 3). After that, *Paul tells us what God did!* In verses 4-9, we see that God has “made us alive” (v. 5). He has also raised us up and appointed us a place at His own right hand with Jesus. We are not there because of us or any good thing we did. We are there because of Jesus and God’s grace and mercy. Then *Paul tells us what we are now*. In verse 10, we learn that we are God’s workmanship and we have been made a new creation that can follow and serve Him. Notice that God has “prepared beforehand” a wonderful plan for our lives and that “we should walk in them” (v. 10). While it may be true that we may not always know what the future holds, we can always rest assured that we know exactly Who it is that holds our future!

Prayer Emphasis: Accept God's call to serve. **Seek** to discover His plan for your life and **follow** it faithfully. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Thirty-Four:** *Believers understand that mercy means we **don't** get what we **do** deserve while grace means we **do** get what we **don't** deserve.*

Day 15: Ephesians 2:11-22

"...that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity." (Ephesians 2:16)

Reconciled

Yesterday, we read about our being *raised up* to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Today, we read about being *reconciled* to God by the cross (v. 16). Because the early churches were becoming integrated with believers from Jewish and Gentile backgrounds, Paul wanted to address some specific issues relative to each of these nationalities. First, *he talked about what the Gentiles were*. In verses 11-12 he explained how the Gentiles had been "without Christ" (v. 12). By that he meant they had not received a promise of the Messiah from God. They were strangers, aliens, and foreigners in the eyes of the Jews and were disallowed in the temple and generally kept at a distance in all manner of life. In verses 13-17, Paul went on to explain *what God did for the Gentiles*. He tore down the wall of separation between the Jews and the Gentiles so those who were once made to feel as if they were "far off" (NKJV) or "far away" (NIV) could be near to God. Paul then explained *what the Jews and Gentiles are now*. The closing verses of chapter two clearly show that, under grace, all people have equal access to God. Thanks to the work of our High Priest, Jesus, every believer can enter boldly into the Holy of Holies and meet with God. Paul closes with a picture of the church as a temple or building that is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Each believer is like a stone in the building that, when "fitted together," becomes a great temple for God (v. 21).

Prayer Emphasis: **Commit** to becoming a real part of a New Testament church. **Move** beyond just having your name on a "roll" to having a "role" in God's Kingdom work! **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Thirty-Five:** *God has a place of service in the church for every believer.*

Day 16: Ephesians 3:1-12

"To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." (Ephesians 3:8)

Paul's Ministry

We can learn a lot about Paul by reviewing the "self-evaluation" that he provides in these verses. First, *he referred to himself as a prisoner* (v. 1). Although this statement has a spiritual application, Paul was literally a prisoner in Rome at the time he was writing these words. Also, you can read Acts 22:21-22 and see that Paul's declaration that God had called him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles created such an uproar that he wound up in jail! Later, in verse seven, *Paul referred to himself as a "minister."* This word for "minister" is often translated "servant." Few ministers see themselves as servants today, but that is exactly what the word "minister" means. The word translated "minister" here is the same word that is used when Jesus told His disciples that anyone who desired to be first must be willing to be a "servant" (Mark 9:35). Finally, *Paul referred to himself as a preacher* who was called to "preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ" (v. 8).

Prayer Emphasis: Perform your own “self-evaluation” today. Based on what you do for the Lord, how would you describe your ministry? **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Thirty-Six: Every Christian is to be a minister for Christ.**

Day 17: Ephesians 3:13-21

“For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (Ephesians 3:14)

Paul’s Second Prayer

In chapter one, Paul’s first prayer for these believers was that they might be *enlightened* (1:15-23). In this second prayer, he prays that they might be *enabled*. Paul wanted them to *learn* about the Christian life and then *live* it out before the world! He prays for them to have spiritual strength and that they might be empowered by the Word. He prays that they would be rooted and established in love and that they might somehow comprehend the depth of God’s love for them. What he really wanted was for them to be filled with what he referred to as “the fullness of God” (v. 19). In other words, he wanted them to have everything that God had made available to them as His children. He reminded his Ephesian friends that they served a God that was able to do immeasurably more than they could ever ask or imagine! To that God they were to give glory forever and ever!

Prayer Emphasis: Create your own spiritual needs prayer list and then **ask** God to meet those needs. **Select** some of the things on this list, pray for them every day for two weeks, and see if God does anything amazing in your life. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Thirty-Seven: Christians are to be enlightened and enabled by God’s Word and empowered by prayer.**

Day 18: Ephesians 4:1-13

“I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another...” (Ephesians 4:1-2)

The Believer’s “Walk”

In the Bible, a believer’s lifestyle is often referred to as their “walk.” The word translated “walk” in Ephesians 4:1 is translated “live” in the NIV. In both translations, you find the word “worthy” in the first verse. Whether you want to say “walk” or “live” you should desire to do it in a way that is “worthy” of a Christian. Paul has a few things to say about the lifestyle that a believer should lead in today’s verses. It is apparent that one of the main goals of every Christian is to maintain a spirit of *unity* with other believers. Take a moment to circle the word “one” every time that you read it in today’s Scripture. Doing so will help us to understand that unity has something to do with being one in Christ. The *source* of our unity (vs. 4-6) is the One Lord and our oneness in Him. The *secret* to having unity in the church is found in verses 7-11. (Note the times it says “He” ascended, “He” led, or “He” gave.) The secret to unity in the church is found in each member following the leadership of the Lord. In verse 11, Paul introduces us to those who are called to be *servants* of this unity. Notice that the different offices in the church are to work together for one, united purpose. That purpose is to equip and enable believers to live the life and walk the walk! Moreover, notice that they are to keep doing what they do until all believers reach the *unity* of the faith, are mature in Christ, and attain to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Prayer Emphasis: Ask yourself if you are “endeavoring” to maintain unity in the church (v. 3). **Check** your attitude to see if it is marked by humility, meekness, patience, and the willingness to forgive others. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Thirty-Eight:** *Believers should be wise enough to know the value of unity and willing enough to do what it takes to maintain it.*

Day 19: Ephesians 4:14-25

“...we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine...but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head...” (Ephesians 4:14-15)

“Grow Up”!

When we heed the teachings of the Word of God, we will no longer be “children” who are so easily “tossed to and fro” by every false teaching that comes along. Instead, we will be able to speak the truth ourselves, “grow up” into Christ, and be all that He desires for us to be. Note that we are to be “speaking the truth” but we are to be sure that we do so “in love.” When we become grown-ups, we realize that we must take our place in the work force. Circle the words “working” and “work” in today’s verses and realize that there is much responsibility that comes with our redemption. Our work requires that we live in a world that is not always a positive environment. We may have to live *among* people who have given themselves over to the lifestyles described in verses 18-19, but we surely do not have to live *like* them! Paul tells the Ephesian believers that they are to “*put off*” their old way of life (vs. 22) and “*put on*” a new way of life (v. 24). If they did so, they would soon find themselves “*putting away*” (v. 25) such immature things as lying so that they could speak the truth to those they encountered along life’s way.

Prayer Emphasis: How mature are you? It has been said that the measure of your *maturity* can be found in the measure of your *responsibility*. **Find** a place of service in the church and **become** a worker for the Lord. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Thirty-Nine:** *The difference between a “Peter Pan” kind of Christian and an “Apostle Paul” kind of Christian is found in their willingness to “grow up.”*

Day 20: Ephesians 4:26-5:5

“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.” (Ephesians 5:1-2)

Doctrine and Duty

The more we learn from the Bible, the more we learn about the Christian’s duty as a soldier and servant for Christ. The first three verses of today’s reading (4:26-28) tell us much about how a Christian is to *act*. We are to make every effort to avoid ever becoming angry and quick to get over it when we do! We are to come by things honestly, working hard so that we might have enough for our own needs and enough to share with others who might have needs. Verse 29 helps us to better understand how a Christian is to *speak*. Our words should be wholesome and helpful and should build others up. Our words should be a benefit to those who hear them. Verses 30-32 should help us see how a Christian should *think*. We should not be bitter, angry, or malicious in our thinking. Our thoughts should be kind and compassionate. We should be willing to forgive others because we live every day in the realization that we have been forgiven by Christ. The first four verses of chapter five help us understand some of the things that a Christian

should *be*. We should be “imitators of God” by loving others as Christ has loved us. We should be pure in our lifestyles and careful to avoid the dangerous sins mentioned in verses 5:3-5.

Prayer Emphasis: **Act** on what you *learn* from Christ. **Speak** about what you *have* in Christ. **Think** like He wants you to think and **be** what He desires you to be. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Forty:** *What we can **be** for Christ depends on how we think, speak, and act for Him.*

Day 21: Ephesians 5:6-17

“Let no one deceive you with empty words...” (Ephesians 5:6)

“Empty Words”

The first two verses of chapter five taught us that the believer is to *walk in love*. Moving on, Paul tells us that the believer should also *walk in the light* (vs. 7-14). When we walk in the light, we will not become “partakers” (partners) with the world (v. 7). This word for “partakers” is used only in Ephesians. In Ephesians 3:6, we were told that the Gentiles had become “partakers” of the promises of Christ. As believers, we have no business becoming partners with the world and its ways. Light can have no fellowship with darkness. One must give way to the other. When we walk in the light, we learn to walk in ways that are pleasing to the Lord (v. 10), and we will become witnesses against the darkness (v. 11). The word translated “empty” in verse six is translated “vain” in the KJV. However, the first two times the word is found in the KJV it is translated “empty” (Mark 12:3; Luke 1:53). The word literally means to “be empty” or “to be without.” In this case, it means to speak words that are “empty” or “without” truth. Walking in the light allows us to walk wisely and in paths that are clearly illuminated by God’s Word. The more willing we are to walk with Christ, the wiser we will become concerning His will for our lives.

Prayer Emphasis: **Watch** how you walk! **Love** God enough to **partner** with Him and **be a light** in a very dark world. **Realize** that this does not always prove to be popular with some, but always **remember** it is God that we should desire to please. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Forty-One:** *Believers are to be partners with Christ and not with the world. Whose side are you on?*

Day 22: Ephesians 5:18-29

“And do not be drunk with wine...but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:18-19)

“Filled with the Spirit”

The last part of chapter five and the first part of chapter six help us see how every believer can walk in love and light. We do so by walking in the Spirit. In the next few days, we will see how the presence and power of the Holy Spirit can enable us to be lights at home and at work – showing the way for our spouses, children, parents, and business associates. The coming of the Holy Spirit completely changed the way that church was to be. He who lives within us cannot be contained within the walls of a building. He cannot be left on a pew or put on a shelf until the next time we are ready to attend services. He goes with us everywhere we go and wants us to make Christ known to all people. We cannot set Him aside or leave Him behind because we have been “filled” with His presence. He has saturated every part of our being, and there is no place within us that He can be locked away and hidden from the world and the people with whom we live and associate. His influence will be evident in the words we *speak*, the songs we *sing*, and

the way we *submit* to one another. Notice that these expressions of the Holy Spirit are first exhibited in the home and between marriage partners. From the home, it will spread to the workplace and every other place that we might go.

Prayer Emphasis: Ask yourself, “Is the presence of the Holy Spirit evident in my life? Could my spouse or children bear testimony that I am a faithful follower of Christ?” **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Forty-Two:** *Believers are to be so filled with the Spirit that it is evident to everyone we know.*

Day 23: Ephesians 5:30-6:9

“For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.” (Ephesians 5:30)

“Members of His Body”

A key to understanding the believer’s walk is found in Ephesians 5:30. We have become one with Christ and, therefore, we (believers) have all become “members” (literally “part”) of His body. We are not to function independently of Him or to do anything to or with anyone that He would not do. That is why a man should “love” his wife and give his life to her (v. 28). That is why a woman should “respect” her husband and give her life to him (v. 33). When we understand that we are only a “part” of God’s family and body, we will cease to think only of ourselves. That will bring about some very powerful and positive changes in our marriages and in our homes. We will then be able to raise our children and teach them to become followers of Christ. There can be no greater joy than seeing your children find their place in the body of Christ and begin to be a part of the solution to this world’s greatest needs. In the church, home, and workplace, the Holy Spirit’s presence reminds us that we are a part of something very important. He knows well how to be a “part” of something because he is a “part” of what we call the Trinity or Triune God. We cannot separate God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Spirit. We must acknowledge that they are three and yet one. It should be the same among believers – we are one body carrying out the work of the Lord.

Prayer Emphasis: Find a place of service in the church. **Allow** the Holy Spirit to help you become a part of something bigger than yourself. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Forty-Three:** *All “members” are to be a vital “part” in the functioning of the church.*

Day 24: Ephesians 6:10-17

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” (Ephesians 6:10-11)

Warfare

Thus far, Paul has taught these believers about their *wealth*, their *worth*, and their *walk*. Now he is going to teach them about their *warfare*. In any warfare, *it is important to know something about your enemy*. In verses 10-12 we learn that “the devil” has many “wiles” that are employed for one purpose – to cause the believer to not “stand” when Satan wages war “against” us. Every Christian needs to understand that we do not fight against *people* (“flesh and blood” v. 12), but against a *power* that represents sin and darkness. When our battles are against “flesh and blood,” they may cease to be spiritual. God never forgets that Satan is the enemy, and neither should we. God loves all people, and, therefore, so should we. We read on and learn that, in any warfare, *it is important that we know something about our equipment*. Our equipment

is likened to the different parts of a Roman soldier's armor. God used these illustrations because everyone who read these words in that day could easily visualize these pieces of armor and understand their purpose or function. Our actual armor is truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the Sword. In the first five pieces of armor, we find our *protection* from the enemy's weapons. In the final piece of armor, we find our *power* over the enemy and his allies.

Prayer Emphasis: Ask God to equip you for the spiritual battles that you must face. **Refuse** to war against people and **choose** to war against the devil. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Forty-Four:** *There is no such thing as a Christian making a truce with the devil.*

Day 25: Ephesians 6:18-24

"...praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints..." (Ephesians 6:18)

The Importance of Prayer

We have learned about the saint's *enemy* and the soldier's *equipment*. Now we are to learn about our source of *energy*. The power to overcome the wicked one is found in the Spirit. We are to be "praying always." There is never a time when the believer should not be praying because there is never a time when we are not in warfare. The Word of God and prayer have always been God's program for the church and its victory over the enemy. We are to be praying "for all the saints." This is no time for selective supplications that are only concerned with the needs of our own lives and the lives of our families and friends. This is a time for all believers, everywhere, to be praying for a worldwide empowering of the Spirit that will allow the church to attack the gates of hell and break them down for the Kingdom of God! Just as we are to pray "for all saints" (v. 18), we are to pray for all servants as well (v. 19). Paul seldom asked people for anything, but when he did, it was most often for their prayers. His preaching caused him to be imprisoned and placed "in chains" (v. 20). Wherever he was, free or imprisoned, Paul's desire was to speak boldly and openly for Christ. He felt that was what he "ought" to do (v. 20).

Prayer Emphasis: Pray for God's people and pastors today. **Encourage** someone who needs it today. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Forty-Five:** *Prayer is the source of the believer's power (ability) to serve and stand.*

Day 26: Philippians 1:1-11

"...always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy..." (Philippians 1:4)

Paul's Joy

Philippians has often been referred to as the epistle of joy. However, at the time that he wrote this letter, Paul's circumstances were anything but joyful. He had been arrested and taken to Rome. He wrote this letter while in prison there. How could he write so much about joy from a prison cell? He could do so because the gospel was the most important thing in his life. He learned that he could find ways to spread the gospel no matter where he was. You will find the word "gospel" five times in the first chapter of this book, and "Christ" is mentioned 17 times! It is obvious that Paul's joy was based on his *purpose* and his purpose was based on a *Person*! After the typical salutation and introduction, Paul immediately let the believers in Philippi know that he was thankful for their "fellowship" in the gospel ministry (v. 5). Even in

what might seem to be dire circumstances, Paul prays for this church, asking God to continue to use the church at Philippi to be a blessing to others. He says to them, “I have you in my heart” (v. 7) and I love you with the love of Christ Jesus (v. 8). Verses 9-11 could be called Paul’s “Prayer List.” Take a moment and underscore the things he was asking God to do for these Christians.

Prayer Emphasis: Using verses 9-11 as a guide, **pray**, asking God to bless our church with the things that Paul desired for these Christians. **Pray** for the many Christians that are imprisoned for their faith. **Thank** God for some difficult experience that led you to a stronger faith in Him. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Forty-Six:** *Believers can experience joy in any circumstance or situation.*

Day 27: Philippians 1:12-24

“What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice.” (Philippians 1:18)

“Christ is Preached”

After reading from some of Paul’s other letters and hearing him share about the many trials and tribulations he had suffered, it is interesting to note that he says very little about that in this letter. He seems to sum it all up in one phrase when he mentions, “the things which happened to me” (v. 12). He then enters into a song of praise for the fact that God had used his sufferings to encourage others to preach the gospel. Even Paul’s guards, and others, were aware that Paul was imprisoned for one thing only, and that was his commitment to share Jesus Christ with everyone that he met. Wherever people were when they learned of Paul’s “chains” (v. 14), they soon began to talk about Jesus! Paul’s paramount and consuming desire was that Christ would be “magnified,” whether through his life or his death (v. 20). The word that is translated “magnified” in verse 20 is the same word that was used by Mary in Luke 1:46 after her visit by the angel Gabriel. Upon hearing the report of what God had intended for her, she said, “My soul magnifies the Lord!” She went on to say, “And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior” (Luke 1:47). This kind of joy is what we will find Paul sharing with his Christian friends at Philippi and encouraging them to express to others.

Prayer Emphasis: Ask yourself, “Is Christ exalted (magnified) in my life?” **Respond** to your problems with praise and He will be. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Forty-Seven:** *Believers experience great joy when Christ is exalted in their lives.*

Day 28: Philippians 1:25-2:8

“...fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord...” (Philippians 2:2)

“J-O-Y!”

If you have not heard that J-O-Y stands for, “Jesus, Others, and You!” then you have not been in church for very long. This little tool has become a good way to remind us that “joy” abides within those who allow Christ to rule over their priorities. As we read through Philippians, we can see the verses from which this little saying was born. Back in 1:20 *Paul clearly put Jesus Christ first.* His exaltation was the greatest priority in Paul’s life. Then *Paul clearly put others second.* He was willing to be wherever God could use him the most and continue in his present situation if it was best for others. It is equally clear that *Paul put himself last.* Christian joy can help us all “C” things in a different light, no matter the situation. Take a

moment to circle the “C” words in today’s verses. You will find confidence, continue, conduct, and others. However, “Christ” is the most repeated “C” word in these verses! Verses 6-8 in chapter two sum up the kind of life that Christ lived while on this earth. His life was one marked by humility, selflessness, and a willingness to sacrifice and suffer for the good of others, even to the point of being willing to die on a cruel, rugged cross for sins that He did not commit. It is interesting to note that our “C” list follows a path that leads directly to “the cross” (2:8).

Prayer Emphasis: Overcome the desire to put yourself first by seeking to exalt Christ in your life. **Do** something that is very “others oriented” at your earliest convenience. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Forty-Eight:** *It is when we humble ourselves that Christ is most exalted in our lives.*

Day 29: Philippians 2:9-18

“...the sacrifice and service of your faith...” (Philippians 2:17)

“Sacrifice and Service”

A submissive mind always leads to sacrifice and service. We saw that to be true of Christ (2:7-8). We will now see that it was true of Paul (2:17). The words “sacrifice” and “service” are found in this verse in most translations of the Bible. Notice that the words “sacrifice and service,” are followed by the words “glad” and “rejoice” (v. 17). As you read these verses, remind yourself that nothing had changed about Paul’s situation. He was still in prison. He was still suffering for the cause of Christ. He was still in chains. In fact, his situation seemed to be growing worse and the probability of his death growing more certain. However, his attitude was one of joy and not of sorrow. He encouraged the Christians at Philippi to live without “complaining and disputing” (v. 14). In doing so, they would “shine as lights in the world” (v. 15). We know the stars are always there, but they are most visible against the darkness of night. When we have the right attitude about sacrifice and service, we will most assuredly stand out in the darkness as we stand up for Christ. Such a lifestyle can prove to be very contagious!

Prayer Emphasis: Look for a way to **encourage** a fellow believer today. **Express** joy in every situation and others will join you in your praise to the Lord. **Pray** that the joy of the Lord will be evident in our church and that we will **shine** as lights to our world. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Forty-Nine:** *Asking God to change the world demands our allowing God to change our attitudes.*

Day 30: Philippians 2:19-30

“But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state.” (Philippians 2:19)

Timothy & Epaphroditus

We said earlier that a submissive mind leads to sacrifice and service and that sacrifice and service lead to joy. Just as it was with Jesus and Paul (2:7-8 and 2:17) so it was with Timothy (2:19-22) and Epaphroditus (2:25). Paul stated that he was going to send Timothy to visit the Christians at Philippi. He paid this young man quite a compliment when he said that he had no one as “like-minded” as him other than Timothy (v. 20). This word, “like-minded,” is translated from two Greek words with the first meaning “equal” or “same” and the second meaning “soul” or “life.” Later, Paul would describe Timothy as one who had, even from his childhood, “known the Holy Scriptures” (2 Timothy 3:15). The attitude of this young preacher

was marked by “service” (v. 22). While others were busy looking out for themselves, Timothy was busy looking after the needs of others and serving with Paul in the ministry of the gospel. Most of what you will ever learn about Epaphroditus is found in Philippians 2:25-30. From these verses, it is easy to see that this young man also had the attitude of Christ. He was willing to sacrifice for the cause of the cross. He lived, “not regarding his life” so that others could know Christ as Savior (v. 30).

Prayer Emphasis: Refuse to be the Christian that breaks the chain of sacrifice and service. **Remember** that sacrifice was born in the heart of God and that it is one of the ways He will use us to reach the hearts of men. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Fifty:** *When we serve the Lord, and make sacrifices for His cause, we continue a tradition that began with Christ and lives on through His followers.*

Day 31: Philippians 3:1-11

“...have no confidence in the flesh...” (Philippians 3:3)

“No Confidence in the Flesh”

The first word of this chapter, “Finally,” is an indication that Paul is beginning a new section to this letter and moving closer to his closing remarks. Because he was such a religious person before his salvation, Paul is careful to warn his readers against those who preach salvation by the keeping of the law. Verses 4-11 contain the first part of what we call Paul’s personal testimony. He has much to say about his past in these verses, and this is one of the most autobiographical sections of his writings. He opens his heart and allows his readers to see that he had once trusted in his Jewish and religious background. His religious pedigree was quite impressive. In compliance with the Jewish law, he was circumcised on the eighth day of his life. He was an Israelite of the tribe of Benjamin. He was a Pharisee who maintained a lifestyle that was legalistically righteous to the extent that he referred to himself as “blameless” (v. 6). No wonder he referred to himself as “a Hebrew of the Hebrews” (v. 5). Yet he learned that all those *religious awards* could never lead to *eternal rewards* in heaven.

Prayer Emphasis: Learn to give a clear and concise testimony about your own salvation experience. **Practice** giving it in private until you can comfortably stand before others and boldly share it in public. Begin with where you were before salvation. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Fifty-One:** *No one can trust in religion or religious activities for their personal salvation.*

Day 32: Philippians 3:12-21

“Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.” (Philippians 3:12)

Paul’s Present and Future

Paul’s personal testimony began with what his life was like before meeting Christ. His testimony continues by sharing what his life was like in his present walk with the Lord. In the first part of his testimony, Paul sounded like an *accountant* adding up the debits and credits in his life, hoping to finish his life with enough good works to merit heaven. After meeting Christ, he begins to sound like an *athlete*. He likens the Christian life to a race and says that he is pressing toward the mark, or finish line. It appears that this dedicated preacher senses that he is nearing the end of his race and that he desires to finish strong for the Lord. The last part of Paul’s testimony was about his future. Athletes had to be citizens of the country they

represented. In verse 20, Paul declared that the Christian's "citizenship is in heaven." Paul expected to see the Lord's return at any time. He lived every day with the hope that he would be alive at the time of the rapture. His use of the word "transform" in verse 21 shows us that Paul fully anticipated that he would be alive at the time of the rapture of the church, or, at least, that his "lowly body" would be changed at either the rapture or resurrection (v. 21). One way or another, Paul believed that a new, glorified body was in his future and that he would spend eternity in heaven.

Prayer Emphasis: Share your personal testimony with someone at your next opportunity. **Pray**, asking God to bless your words when you have the chance to share them. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Fifty-Two:** *Christians should have much to say about their past, present, and future!*

Day 33: Philippians 4:1-9

"Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren...stand fast in the Lord." (Philippians 4:1)

"Stand Fast"

In this final chapter, Paul encourages his Christian friends in this church to "stand fast in the Lord." He then speaks to some definite things in which they should stand firm. First, he asks them to *stand in peace*. Two prominent women in the church, Euodia and Syntyche were having a disagreement of some kind. We are not told what the disagreement was about. It might have been about something very spiritual, but, in any case, it was something that Paul felt needed to be addressed in the closing of this letter. These two women who had once "labored" with Paul for the cause of the gospel were now contending with one another (v. 3). The "true companion" that was asked to "help these women" through their controversy was never identified (v. 3). It is very important that we all do our part to maintain peace and harmony in the body of Christ. Maintaining peace in the church was important to Paul, and he wanted it to be important to these Christians. In verse seven, Paul speaks about "the peace of God." When we are *saved*, we have "peace *with* God" (Romans 5:1). As we *serve*, we are to do so in the "peace *of* God." Paul sets forth a step-by-step process for experiencing peace. It is found in *right praying* (vs. 6-7), *right thinking* (v.8), and *right living* (v. 9).

Prayer Emphasis: Make harmony and unity in the church a priority in your life. **Refuse** to participate in church quarrels or to even take sides among those that are quarrelling. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Fifty-Three:** *Believers who fight the good fight are never fighting against one another.*

Day 34: Philippians 4:10-23

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13)

"Stand Fast" (Part Two)

Earlier in this devotional, we saw that Paul desired that the Christians in the church at Philippi "stand fast" in the "peace of God" (v. 7). Now we will see that he also encourages them to *stand in the power of God* when he states, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (vs. 13). Every Christian should memorize Philippians 4:13 and make it a part of their spiritual armor. There we learn that we, like Paul, can say that we can do "all things through Christ who strengthens" us. Paul believed that Christ alone was the source of the believer's strength. Take a quick look at John 15:5 and you will see that Jesus taught the same thing when He said to the disciples, "without Me you can do nothing!" To attempt to live a godly life

without the power of the indwelling Christ is harder than trying to nail jello to a tree! It just cannot be done! Last, Paul desired that the Christians in Philippi *stand in God's provision* (vs. 14-23). In the KJV, you can circle the word “things” 28 times in this little letter. Sometimes it is used to refer to spiritual things, and sometimes to just “things.” We must remember that it is God who will “supply” all of our “need” (v. 19). For that reason, Paul could encourage the Christians of that day, and ours, to give God “glory forever and ever” (v. 20). To that Paul added, “Amen!” And, so should we!

Prayer Emphasis: Memorize Philippians 4:13 and 4:19. Ask God to supply some “need” today – either for you, your family, or for someone you know. **Be specific. Share** your prayer request with the one for whom you prayed. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Fifty-Four:** *Believers do not serve the Lord in their own strength, but in the strength that the Lord provides them.*

Day 35: Colossians 1:1-12

“...as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,” (Colossians 1:7)

Epaphras

Paul probably wrote this letter to the church at Colosse while he was imprisoned in Rome. After his typical salutation, he stated that he heard some very good things about this church! He heard about their strong faith and the love they had for Christians everywhere. He heard of their strong hope of heaven. He considered the faith, love, and hope that was so *evident* in their lives to be *evidence* of their close relationship to Christ. How did this church become so strong in their faith, hope, and love? They “learned” it from “Epaphras” (v. 7)! Epaphras was, no doubt, a teacher and leader in the church at Colosse. He is mentioned only three times in the New Testament. The first reference is here in 1:7, where Paul refers to him as his “dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ.” Later, in 4:12, he calls him “a bond-servant of Christ.” He is mentioned once more (Philemon 23) where Paul calls him his “fellow prisoner.” Tradition states that Epaphras, a native of Colosse, was saved under Paul’s ministry in Ephesus and then returned to his home city to preach the gospel and establish a church there.

Prayer Emphasis: Circle the word “faithful” in Colossians 1:2. This is the first (and only) time that Paul referred to any group by this term in the salutation of any of his letters. Now **circle** the word “faithful” in 1:7 and note that it refers to Epaphras. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Fifty-Five:** *Faithful ministers are more likely to produce faithful followers.*

Day 36: Colossians 1:13-29

“He has delivered us from the power of darkness...” (Colossians 1:13)

“Delivered”

Paul taught that those who have believed on Christ had been “delivered...from the power of darkness.” He went on to say that we have been “conveyed...into the kingdom of the Son...in whom we have redemption through His blood” (vs. 13-14). I think it is important to note that the Holy Spirit includes the words “through His blood” in verse 14. Some do not want to discuss such things, but we are clearly told that Christ shed his blood “for the remission of sins” (Matthew 26:28) and that “without shedding of blood there is no remission,” or forgiveness of sin (Hebrews 9:22). Verses 15-29 include one of the most beautiful

expressions of love and worship for the Lord Jesus Christ that you will read anywhere in the Bible! The word “firstborn” (v. 15) is very important. It is one word made up of two Greek words put together. The “first” part (pun intended) of the word is from the Greek word that means, “first in time, order, place, honor, or rank.” Notice the ways that Christ is “first” in these verses. He is “first” in *creation* (v.15), “first” in the *church* (vs. 18-23), and He should be “first” in the life of every *Christian* (vs. 24-29). Note that Paul certainly considered himself to be a “minister” of Jesus Christ (vs.23 & 25).

Prayer Emphasis: Consider the words “delivered” or “rescued” and think about what God has saved you *from*. Then re-read the words “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (v. 27) and consider all that God has saved you *to*. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Fifty-Six:** *Believers have been rescued from the dominion and power of sin and have been given a place of sonship and service in the kingdom of God.*

Day 37: Colossians 2:1-17

“For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.” (Colossians 2:9-10)

Three Warnings

In chapter 2, Paul is going to sound out three warnings to believers of his day and ours. We will discuss the first two warnings today and the final warning tomorrow. First, in verse four, he warns them to *beware of “persuasive words.”* These Christians needed to “beware” that they were not cheated by those who taught them anything that was based on the philosophies and traditions of this world and not on Christ (v. 8). The best way to test any teaching is to ask one question: “Does this teaching make Christ superior to everyone and everything else?” If not, then it is not doing justice to the One in whom “all the fullness” of God dwells (v. 9)! Second, they were to *beware of religious legalism.* These false teachers had blended a little of everything into the mixture to appeal to the religious beliefs of everyone listening. Paul taught that believers had been forgiven of all sins, and the “handwriting” (the law) was cancelled and nailed to the cross with Jesus. The cross triumphed over the law in the sense that it accomplished that which the law or religion could never do. Paul assured these Christians that the law was only a “shadow of things to come” and that Christ became the “substance” of what the law had foreshadowed (v. 17).

Prayer Emphasis: Ask God to give you the wisdom to avoid following any teacher or preacher that does not exalt Christ as the only way to God and salvation. **Reject** any gospel that is Christ “plus” anything! **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Fifty-Seven:** *Believers should be aware that good preaching is more about **what** is said than **how** it is said.*

Day 38: Colossians 2:18-3:11

“Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels...vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.” (Colossians 2:18)

The Third Warning

Next, Paul warns these Christians to *beware of false humility.* There were teachers who might attempt to lead the believers at Colosse into a sense of “false humility.” The word “false” indicates that Paul is addressing a self-imposed humility that is not born from a true spirit of worshipping Christ. There were teachers who were guilty of pretending to know things that cannot be known and to have seen things that

cannot be seen. As such, they had become “puffed up” and so spiritually pious that they were no longer in a right relationship with Christ. In other words, there were those who had become so spiritually minded that they were of no earthly good to Christ or the church. They were caught up in the “Do’s” and “Don’ts” of religion, and they had lost sight of what their walk with Christ was really about. Chapter three helps us see that the Christian’s walk is to be based on a right relationship with Christ. As such, we should “seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God” (3:1). Verse five includes some things that we should “put to death” while verse eight lists some things that we should “put off.”

Prayer Emphasis: Commit to living a life of purity that is based on your relationship with Christ. **Seek** to “put off” the things that are mentioned in Colossians 3:8. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Fifty-Eight:** *Christ is our all in all, or everything that we need* (v. 11).

Day 39: Colossians 3:12-4:1

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts...” (Colossians 3:15)

Christian Fellowship

When Christ is first in our lives, we will do everything possible to be “bearing with one another, and forgiving one another” (v. 13). When dealing with others, we should always be mindful of how Christ has forgiven us. As Christians, we should always deal with one another in the spirit of love. This means that we should exhibit the characteristics of love (see 1 Corinthians 13) in our relationships and dealings with others. We are to “let the peace of God rule in (our) hearts” (v. 15). The word “rule” in verse 15 is very much like our word “umpire” today. This means we should allow God’s peace to “make the call” and we should all agree to abide by what will best allow God’s peace to be uninterrupted in our fellowship. To do this, we need to have God’s Word dwelling (living) in us so that we can live out our faith in our daily walk. Take a moment to notice that the characteristics of someone who is filled with the “Word of Christ” are identical to the characteristics of someone who is “filled with the Spirit” (see Ephesians 5:18-21). Living in “fellowship” goes beyond just how we live and act in church. It reaches into our marriages, our parenting responsibilities, and even our relationships at work. Christians are to be Christ-like all the time and in all places.

Prayer Emphasis: Continue reading from God’s Word every day. **Allow** God to be the “decision maker” in all concerns and disputes. **Exhibit** Christ in all that you do. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Fifty-Nine:** *Christians should exhibit the characteristics of Christ in all their relationships and responsibilities.*

Day 40: Colossians 4:2-18

“Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” (Colossians 4:5-6)

Some Final Instructions

As Paul closes this letter, he leaves his readers with some important, final instructions. First, they are to “Continue earnestly in prayer” (v. 2). Then, they are to “walk in wisdom” (v. 5). This meant that they were to act wisely toward those who were outside the church, being mindful of their personal witness to them. They were also to be “redeeming the time” (v. 5). Some translations use the phrase, “Make the most

of every opportunity.” Paul then adds that our “speech” should “always be with grace” and be “seasoned with salt” (v. 6). This means they were to be knowledgeable so they could provide correct answers to those who became enquirers about the faith. When Christians *exhibit* the characteristics of Christ in every aspect of their lives, people around them will begin to *enquire* about what they see and hear. Paul closes with some greetings and kind remarks about some fellow servants of the Lord. Notice how Paul seemed to really know these people. He expressed words of endorsement or encouragement for each one of them. He then asked that this letter be circulated to other churches and that these Christians read the letter that the church at Laodicea was currently reading. As we read and obey God’s Word, may we, like Archippus, “Take heed to the ministry” that we have “received in the Lord” (v. 17).

Prayer Emphasis: Exhibit Christ by **encouraging** others on a regular basis. **Kingdom Policy Number One Hundred Sixty:** *Every believer has a work to complete for God.*