

Week 9: "A New Position in Christ"

Memory Verse

But then the right time came, God sent his Son. A woman gave birth to him. He was born under the authority of the law. He came to set free those who were under the law. He wanted us to be adopted as children with all the rights children have. Because you are his children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts. He is the Holy Spirit. By his power we call God "Abba." "Abba" means Father.

So you aren't slaves any longer. You are God's children. Because you are his children, he gives you what he promised to give his people. Galatians 4:4-7 NIRV

Day One

Sunday, December 15, 2002

"A New Position in Christ"

Read: Colossians 2:6-10 (p. 1376) and Commentary: (p. 1377)

Reflect: : How do we usually introduce ourselves who we *are* or what we *do*? Why?

What prevents us from thinking of ourselves as being *in Christ*?

Dig: What might some of the "human traditions" be that Paul is referring to? See verses 16-19 of this same chapter. What are some current day "human traditions" which promise spiritual growth and deliver frustration instead?

What is Paul's advice about growing in the life of God?

What does verse 9 teach about the Trinity and Christ's place?

What does verse 10 teach about the extent of our spiritual power to overcome?

Apply: Our lesson today states "as believers we are not trying to become children of God; we already are children of God-becoming like Christ." Compose a prayer based on the fact that you are already a child of God becoming more like Christ.

Now live your day as if you were already IN CHRIST...because you ARE!

Day Two
Monday, December 16, 2002
"Crucified with Christ"

Read: Galatians 2:19-20 (p. 1346) and Commentary (p. 1347)

Reflect: What do you wish would change in your inner life...that is, what habits of heart would you wish would just die out?

Do you have any hope that they will?

Dig: In verses 19 and 20 there are four occurrences of the personal pronoun "I" and three occurrences of the word "me". In each case, what time in the life of a believer are these pronouns referring to? Look up Romans 6:6-8 for some clarification.

What does the phrase "live by faith" mean in verse 20? (hint: see Galatians 3:1-5 for an answer).

How does this text expand your understanding of your freedom in Christ?

Apply: What sins and sinful attitudes are you "dead" to? Ask God to give you the power to understand and live out this new reality.

Compose a prayer around the phrase "who love me" from today's text and go out and practice your freedom in Christ today!

Day Three
Tuesday, December 17, 2002
"A New Identity in Christ"

Read: Genesis 32:28-32 (p. 39) and Commentary (p. 40)

Reflect: Conversion from unbeliever to child of God is often described in almost violent terms: wrestling with God, being "born again." Does "wrestling" describe your relationship with God? Why or why not?

Dig: What lessons did Jacob learn from this midnight wrestling encounter? What was the change in his character?

Who initiated the wrestling match? (see John 15:16 p. 1222 to draw some conclusions about the way that God interacts with all of us)

How does this encounter and name/character change also change the way that Jacob (now Israel) interacts with others? (see next chapter and especially notice vs. 10-11 of chapter 33).

Apply: Use the list on page 41 to renew your mind to the truth of who you are in Christ. Compose a prayer based on this renewed image of who you are, thanking God for the freedom that comes from a new identity.

Day Four
Wednesday, December 18, 2002
"Saints in Christ"

Read: Romans 1:7 (p. 1279) and Commentary (p. 1280)

Reflect: In today's culture, how is the term "saint" used? What sorts of people or what sorts of actions are portrayed as saintly? Why?

Dig : Reflecting on Romans 1:7, is this a common way for Paul to address his people? (see I Cor. 1:2, p. 1305 and II Cor. 1:1-2, p. 1328)

Especially taking a look at the first text, would you say that believers are holy or are becoming holy?

This statement is made in the commentary: "Telling Christians they are sinners and then disciplining them if they don't act like saints is counterproductive at best and inconsistent with the Bible at worst." What is the wisest and most biblical way to handle behavior in the body of Christ which is not obedient to God's ways? (see Matt. 18:15-18, pg. 1102)

Apply: Since "believing who we are in Christ determines what we do," ask God for a heart which is attentive today to whom God has called you to be. Then act like who you are: a saint (and quickly ask for forgiveness when you act out of character).

Day Five
Thursday, December 19, 2002
"A New Person in Christ"

Read: Colossians 3:9-10 (p. 1378) and Commentary (p. 1379)

Reflect: What illustrations can you come up with that picture transformation? (For

example, the story of The Ugly Duckling or the transformation of a caterpillar to a butterfly). What other illustrations can you think of?

Dig: The command "do not lie to each other" is preceded by other commands in chapter 3. What main commands do you see in chapter 3? (hint, check out verse 1 and 5). Are you obeying these commands? How?

What truth must we trust if we are going to obey these commands? (hint, what is the main point of this week's lesson?)

What does the introduction to Colossians (p. 1372) have to do with the truth of today's lesson?

Apply: Ask God to help you with some specific area of growth in "taking off your old self" by praying a prayer denouncing that sinful pattern and then asking God for the power to put on a new way of life.