



CAPITOL COMMISSION

One of the Most Important Phrases in the Bible

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My prayers are with you all as the busyness of the session gives way to the hectic pace of a campaign season (for many of you). May you prioritize your lives well in the coming months and seek the Lord for wisdom and guidance. Our nation pauses today, rightly so, for a National Day of Prayer. I encourage you to take part as well, as a state leader, to acknowledge God's sovereignty over all things, including all things political. God ordained government for the good of society, but it will only function in the right way when people in leadership understand Him and His ways, then carry out His purpose for governing. The only way to do that is to look to what He has revealed in the only book He ever wrote.

During the 2010 session, we unpacked Colossians chapter 3 to find many instructive, practical applications for our lives and also considered Bible characters who exemplified those lessons. The next phrase in this passage is one of those landmark places in Scripture. Let's not miss the import of the first nine words of Colossians 3:16 – "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly".

LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY

The small word that opens this phrase is not an insignificant one. What happens when we let something happen? How does "letting" actually take place? We can let a situation play out with our passivity, indifference or inaction. We can take our hands off and let nature or gravity or behavior or whatever take its course.

In a different sense, though, we let things happen in an active way, by our intention and volition. I could let my daughter eat nothing but burgers and fries (which she would love me for, by the way), but I would rather let her have more balance in her diet with limited junk food. There is a parenting and nutritional choice there, but in both it can be said that I let them happen.

When it comes to the choice of what we fill our minds with, we are faced with choices. Discerning what is healthy for our minds is the key here, for whatever we "let" in the gate of our mind will affect us afterward.

Joshua 1:8 - This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.

That underscores the importance of our phrase. What is in our minds determines what kind of person we are.

LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY

John 20:31 - But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The "word of Christ," used only here in the New Testament, is Christ's teachings, not only during His earthly ministry but also in all of Scripture.¹

When we cooperate with God's plan for filling our minds with the right content we aren't left without help. God's Word was revealed so that humans would have direction and a blueprint to follow. In its pages we are shown how and what to think, and therein lies the problem.

Letting the Word of Christ in our mind is a matter of authority. For the most part, we don't like to be told what to do. Jesus has demands, though. As we read Scripture, we see that we are sinners, that we are accountable to God for those sins and that repentance is required to be forgiven and released from those sins. It's not our plan. It's His, on His terms.

2 Timothy 3:16, 17 - All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.

To go to the Word of Christ and accept it is to relinquish authority. At that point, we can't depend on our own thinking and standards of right and wrong or fairness or justice. We can't lean on human philosophy or religious man-made tradition. The Word of Christ is the only source that leads to true wisdom, peace and salvation. I love the example of the first-century Bereans:

Acts 17:11 - Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY

An unopened Bible benefits no one. For the person who loves and follows God, however, spending time in the Word of Christ is a joy, something to be savored and lingered over.

BIBLE STUDIES

FRIDAYS @ 12:00 P.M., ROOM 153, HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING (DURING SESSION)

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That's the idea of the word "dwell" here. It literally means "to be at home". This is no passing relationship, but a life-long living arrangement. Spending our years immersing our minds and hearts in God's truth molds us, our actions, our minds, our careers, our families, everything.

The first chapter of the Psalms list characteristics of the person who truly, passionately makes God the Lord of his life. His worldview is not shaped by conventional wisdom of his society,

Psalm 1:2 - but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

Is the Word of Christ something you desire? Do you look forward to hearing from God regularly from His book?

WHAT DWELLS IN YOUR MIND? I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT WHATEVER IT IS, IT WILL DETERMINE YOUR ACTIONS, PRIORITIES, WORLDVIEW, AND ULTIMATELY, YOUR ETERNAL DESTINY.

LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU **RICHLY**

Plousios ("richly") could also be translated "abundantly or extravagantly rich." The truths of Scripture should permeate every aspect of the believer's life and govern every thought, word, and deed.²

That which fills us will eventually come out. For example, in Luke 6:45 Jesus said, "***The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.***"

This is why this phrase is among the most important for us to follow. In His word, we find the mind of the Lord and as we read it, meditate on it, digest it, and study it we lay the foundation over years of knowing God. Not just knowing about Him, but understanding what it is to walk with Him, to have our outward behavior reflect what has been happening inwardly long before we make our decisions.

There is a danger today, as there was in Paul's day, that local churches minimize the Word of God. Far more interest is shown in movies, musical performances,

and various entertainments than in God's Word. Many saved people cannot honestly say that God's Word dwells in their hearts richly because they do not take time to read, study, and memorize it.³

James 1:25 - But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

When God's Word is at home in our inner being, it can't help but show. Kindness grows, anger subsides, error is detected. Our sin isn't removed, but we are much better equipped to display the perfections of the Author. And after all, we are first of all accountable to Him.

2 Timothy 2:15 - Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

CONCLUSION: THE EXAMPLE OF DAVID

Our example for this study was a wise politician, the second King of Israel, David. All we have to do is read through a psalm he penned which personifies what it means to have the Word of Christ dwell in us richly. It is the longest psalm, Psalm 119, and it is a tremendous exhortation to have a high view of Scripture.

Psalm 119:10, 11 - With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

I encourage you to read the whole psalm to see how crucial God's Word is to knowing Him, loving Him and pleasing Him. David was not a perfect man, but he was called a man after God's heart (Acts 13:22). That was because of his attitude toward God's Word, God's ways and God's authority. Let's learn from David's example and let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly.

¹ Tom Constable. (2003). *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Col 3:16). Galaxie Software.

² John MacArthur, *Colossians and Philemon* (Moody: Chicago, Ill., 1992), p. 159.

³ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Col 3:16). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.