

“Live Rooted & Built Up in Christ”

Colossians 2:6-8

INTRODUCTION

At school one day the mother of one of your students excitedly hands you a book. “It’s a great read. I’m sure you’ll like it!” It’s the latest book on the religious best-seller list.

One month later that book is still on your nightstand unread. Finally you peruse it, mainly to put a stop to the owner’s incessant questioning, “Have you read it yet?” The book contains some nice thoughts, but basically it’s fluff. And there are definitely some things in it that go beyond or even flat-out contradict what the Bible says. But that’s today’s idea of “religion”—feel-good sentimentality with a do-good emphasis.

Now, what are you going to say to that dear soul when you hand the book back?

BACKGROUND

Epaphras, the pastor at the church in Colossae, made the 1300-mile journey to Rome to visit Paul in prison because he is concerned for his congregation. It seems there is a looming heresy which combines Jewish ceremonial law and pagan mysticism. Epaphras isn’t sure how to combat this error and seeks Paul’s help. So Paul pens a letter which proclaims *the all-sufficiency of Christ*.

COLOSSIANS 2:6-8

⁶So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, ⁷rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. ⁸See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

Verse 6

just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord: The word for “received” is the equivalent of “believe” (cf. John 1:11,12).

continue to live in him: “Continue to live” is literally translated “keep on walking around.” We get our English word *peripatetic* from it (also in Colossians 1:10).

- What does this verse say about the faith-status of the Colossian congregation?
- What does this verse say about their congregation’s teacher? (cf. verse 7, “as you were taught”)
- How is our faith-life an ongoing walk?

Called workers are often tempted to think they are “too busy” for personal devotion. They rationalize that they are already teaching God’s Word to God’s children. Later on, however, they feel guilty for not being in the Word more. What Gospel comfort does this verse offer? What encouragement does this verse give a child of God?

Analyze the following hymn stanza. What are its spiritual truths and how can they apply to my daily life?

Let us ever walk with Jesus, Follow his example pure,
Flee the world which would deceive us And to sin our souls allure.
Ever in his footsteps treading, Body here, yet soul above,
Full of faith and hope and love, Let us do the Father’s bidding.
Faithful Lord, abide with me. Savior, lead; I follow thee.

— Sigmund von Birken, 1653; tr. J. Adam Rimbach, 1900 (*Christian Worship* 452:1)

Verse 7

What word pictures does Paul paint with the following participial phrases? How do they relate to each other? How do they keep us living in Christ?

- *rooted...in him*
- *built up in him*
- *strengthened in the faith*
- *overflowing with thankfulness*

Confirmation means “strengthening.” What can we do to remember our confirmation vows? How can we prepare our students for their confirmation vows? How can we encourage our former students to remember their confirmation vows?

Agree or Disagree? Ingratitude is a denial of faith.

Verse 8

see to it: A word of warning, like “watch out” or “beware.”

that no one takes you captive: A term for piracy, fraud or identity theft.

through hollow and deceptive philosophy: Like a huge present in a department store display, it looks good on the outside but inside it’s empty.

which depends on human tradition: Literally a “handing down.” Not only is our sinful selfish nature handed down from parent to child, but we are also nurtured in a work-righteous society.

and the basic principles of this world: This is difficult to translate. It can mean anything from the ABCs or fundamentals of learning to the elemental substances such as in the periodic table to even heavenly bodies or spiritual forces.

rather than on Christ: Jesus is the only way, the only truth, the only life (cf. John 14:6).

- List some of the hollow and deceptive philosophies that are trying to steal the hearts and minds of both you and your students. What do they have in common? How are they different from Christianity?
- How can we protect ourselves from spiritual identity theft? How can we protect our students?

Agree or Disagree? You don’t need to study world religions and fad philosophies in order to fight them. All you need is to study God’s Word and understand the person and work of Christ, because “the best defense is a good offense.”

CONCLUSION

Go to the “self-help” section of any bookstore and you will find rows and rows of shelves stocked with “how to” books. Some of them are quite practical; others are filled with humanistic nonsense. There are so many of these self-help books because so many people are so very desperate to find answers to their +problems.

We, too, may have many questions in life. But thank God that we already know that the ultimate answer is *Christ*. Jesus is everything we need, for he has done everything for us!

Continue to live rooted and built up in Christ. Continue to teach your students the immutable truths about Jesus so that they may be strengthened in faith and overflowing with thankfulness. In this way can we together proclaim Jesus Christ is Lord—all to the glory of God!

CLOSING PRAYER

Wisdom’s highest, noblest treasure, Jesus, can be found in you.

Let me find in you my pleasure; Make my will and actions true,

Humility there and simplicity reigning,

In paths of true wisdom my steps ever training.

If I learn from Jesus this knowledge divine,

The blessing of heavenly wisdom is mine. Amen.

– Johann H. Schröder, 1697; tr. Frances E. Cox, 1841 (*Christian Worship* 290:3)