

## Continuing in the New Year

Colossians 2: 1-7

Paul has written to the saints in Colosse expressing his joy for their commitment to the Lord and offers encouragement to remain steadfast in what they have received. The church existed among those who embraced the false doctrines of that day. These were exciting times, as well as challenging times for these early believers. Even in the face of adversity, Paul was confident in their ability to be productive in the Lord's work.

Our world has changed greatly since the time of Paul, but we face many of the same obstacles in our day. These are exciting times for us, but there are challenges yet to come. I am thankful for all that the Lord has done for us in the past, but there is still much to be done. We have been blessed beyond measure, but we must continue to labor for the Lord. We cannot grow complacent with a desire to live off of yesterday's blessings. I am looking for even greater things in the coming year. I want to look at the [instructions](#) found in these verses that reveal what is involved in: [Continuing in the New Year](#).

**I. The Effort Described** (1) – [For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;](#) If we are to accomplish anything of value in the coming year, it will require effort. I realize that we serve a powerful Lord who can accomplish what He pleases, but He has chosen to use us for His work. Now I can think about getting things done; I can even talk about what I would like to get done, but nothing actually happens until I put forth the effort of getting it done. What can we learn about the effort described?

**A. A Personal Effort** – Paul was writing from a personal perspective. He was concerned about the church at Colosse. He had labored for them. [Col. 1:29 – Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.](#) Here he speaks of a [great conflict](#), “*a struggle, often used to describe the effort of athletes to ensure victory.*” Paul understood the need for his personal involvement.

- We are the church; it isn't these four walls. The church will only be as strong as those who make it up. There is a need for each of us to do our part in the coming year. I can't do what God has called you to do. Are you committed to doing your part for the glory of God and the good of our church? If you are saved there is a work for you to do. If you've never found that work, this would be a good time to seek God for His will in your life!

**B. A Progressive Effort** – For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; Notice Paul labored for those at Colosse, **and** for those at Laodicea, **and** for those who had never seen his face. Paul was concerned about the body of Christ. He wasn't satisfied with the prosperity of one single group; he was concerned with the work of God.

- It is time for us to broaden our horizons. There is much that we need to do here, but there are also responsibilities to those around us. We need to be determined to reach those who are lost. We need to pray about expanding our evangelistic efforts. There is a lost world out there and we have an obligation to reach them, even to the uttermost parts of the earth! The internal work here is but a part of what God has called us to do. We need to work for men's souls everywhere!

### **I. The Effort Described (1)**

**II. The Environment Developed (2-4)** – We find that Paul desired a specific environment for the church at Colosse. He was aware that if a people were to prosper there needed to be a proper environment. The environment within the church is determined by the people. We are responsible for the atmosphere at Fellowship. Developing the right environment is vital, along with the effort we put forth. So what type environment do we need?

**A. One of Agreement (2a)** – That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love. The people of Colosse faced enormous pressure from society. The church needed to be a place where they could find **comfort**, a place of rest from the difficulties of life. In order for them to find comfort, there had to be unity among the people.

- Paul desired that their hearts be **knit together**. This means “*to come together, a firm union of heart in Christ.*” It requires the love of God. We must maintain a spirit of agreement if we are to be productive for the Lord. In fact, the Lord expects us to come together in singleness of heart, for the cause of Christ. **Ps.133:1 – Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!** If we can't agree on what to do, and work together to get there, we will never achieve anything for the Lord.

- This may require laying aside personal preferences for the good of the church. Paul mentioned this first because nothing will be accomplished without an environment of agreement. Once we achieve unity we can begin to enjoy a multitude of blessings. There is nothing that a united church can't accomplish through the Lord!

**B. One of Abundance** (2b-3) – and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; [3] In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. There may have been days when they felt as if their difficulty far outweighed the blessings, but Paul wanted them to realize the abundance they had in Christ. The world around them was looking to this world for wisdom and direction, but they had the guidance of the Lord. On the surface they may have appeared to be lacking, but they had received something this world could never offer! They had been given something the world could not take away. They were living each day with the benefit of the Lord being near to them.

- Church we cannot measure the abundance that is available to us through Christ. There is nothing that we face that He isn't in control of. We need to seek a more abundant relationship with the Lord, ever growing and maturing in Him. I want to challenge you as an individual and us as a body to grow in the Lord in the coming year and develop a more abundant relationship with Him! Are you as close to God as you could be? We would all benefit from His abundance!

**C. One of Assurance** (2b) – and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; Many in that day were being led astray by false doctrines and believers had to determine what they believed. Paul had shared the glorious gospel; they had heard the truth of Christ and His saving grace. The world may have chosen to reject it, but they could rest assured in their salvation.

- I'm glad that I haven't received a "hope so" salvation. I am confident in what the Lord has done for me and I am assured of His ability to keep my soul. The world around us would have us believe that there is no such thing as absolute truth; what is right for me may or may not be right for you. They reject the notion of Christ being the only way to life eternal, with many even denying life beyond the grave. The attacks upon the church seem to grow more intense with each passing year, but hold fast to what you believe. The bride of Christ will one day be called out and our faith will end in sight.

- There have been times when I have failed my Lord, but I have never doubted who He is. The coming year may bring great difficulty for the church, but we can lift up our heads in full assurance that we are secure in Jesus our Lord! Notice [Vv.9-10](#). Lastly Paul spoke of:

**D. One of Awareness** (4) – And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. Those who taught false doctrine would seek ways of deceiving true believers, [V.8](#). Paul encouraged them to be aware of the tactics of the enemy. [2 Tim.4:3-4](#)- For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

- We need to develop an environment of awareness in our day. Every man who carries a Bible and claims to be a preacher is not called of God! You need to know what you believe and why you believe it. Know the truth and you will be able to recognize heresy. There is a move in our day to water down theology and teach a message that the world wants to hear. We must stay true to the Word of God and stand upon it above all else.
- That isn't popular, but our children are depending on us to ensure sound doctrine is taught here! The world would have you believe that we are just too old fashioned, but I'm more interested in pleasing God than pleasing the world.

### **I. The Effort Described** (1)

### **II. The Environment Developed** (2-4)

**III. The Example Displayed** (5-7) – When we determine to put forth the effort and develop the right environment, those around us will begin to notice that there is something different about us. I desire that for our church. I want folks to come and feel the presence of God and leave knowing that He is in our midst. I want to be effective in letting our light shine. Let's consider what type of example we can display when we are living for the Lord.

**A. A Steadfast Witness** (5) – *For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.* Paul was in a Roman prison when he wrote Colossians, but he was hearing good things from them. He rejoiced that even in his absence they were continuing the work of the Lord. They were committed to remaining a witness.

- Paul spoke of their *order*, which is a military term relating to “*maintaining discipline.*” They were steadfast in the face of persecution; they were persevering even in difficulty.
- Church we need that discipline and commitment in our day. Many have abandoned their faith and compromised with the world. We have established a witness here at Fellowship. I say that only to the glory of God. I have folks tell me all the time that they are hearing good things about us. People are talking about us in a positive manner and we must maintain that witness!

**B. A Sanctified Walk (6)** – *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:* Paul reminded them of whom they belonged. They were the children of God, the redeemed, and had an obligation to be consistent in their walk.

- The Lord has not changed; He is still our Lord and Master. Together we reveal a witness, but that witness depends on individual lives lived for Jesus each day. *1 John 2:6 – He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.* We live in a day when many profess to know the Lord but their lives tell a different story. Let us strive to make Jesus the focus of our daily lives and walk worthy of Him each day. Together we can make a difference, but we will never be the example we need to be if we only walk with the Lord on Sunday.

**C. A Successful Work (7)** – *Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.* The church at Colosse had been established on sound doctrine and faith in the Lord. The people were to continue to build upon that sure foundation.

- There is much that ends in ruin because it wasn't built upon the Lord. We have a solid foundation here at Fellowship and we must continue to build upon that. I thought of the difficulty that Nehemiah faced rebuilding the wall upon returning to Jerusalem. It was a difficult task, with much work to be done. The city lay in ruins and the weeds and briars had grown, but the foundation was still there. It took some work to find it and even more determination to clear out the junk in order to begin rebuilding, but once it was complete it was solid because of its foundation.

- The same holds true for us. There will be times when we allow cares of this life to grow and hide the foundation. There may even be times when we can't see it, but it is still there, solid and secure. We have great potential and opportunity for the coming year if we will commit to continuing the course that is set before us. If we are concerned with doing things the Lord's way, He will make our work to prosper.

- I rejoice in all that He has done through us and for us, but I am in no way satisfied. There is still much to be done. We serve One who deserves the very best that we can offer. I want Him to be pleased with all we do. I pray that you are excited about what the Lord is doing as well as being a part of this church. Together we can see even greater things for the glory of God!

The start of a new year is always exciting. I am anticipating this to be the best year yet for us. The Lord is well able to accomplish whatever He pleases. There is no limit to what we can achieve if we will seek His presence and His power. Are you willing to put forth the effort that this work requires? Are you interested in developing an environment where the Lord's work can prosper and lives are changed? Do you desire to be a positive influence on those around us? These are challenging days, but we can make a difference, one life at a time.