

Colossians

Message Three: Christian Maturity in the Fullness of Christ

Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone *mature* in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me. For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face...[Colossians 1:28–29; 2:1](#) (See also [Col.4:12](#); [Eph.4:10-13](#))

The Hallmarks of Christian Maturity

Paul has already connected his ministry of admonishment (warning) and teaching with a divine *wisdom* that produces maturity ([Col.1:28](#)); we have noted that Paul in chapter [1:9-12](#) has fleshed out this spiritual wisdom and understanding as a walk that expresses itself in four distinct ways:

1) *Bearing Fruit* in every good work 2) *Increasing* in the Knowledge of God 3) *Strengthened* with divine power for endurance and patience 4) Joyfully *giving thanks* to our Father who has secured us a Kingdom. Let us now explore the Christological emphasis in our maturing process.....

A) Jesus as the *Model and Mindset* of Maturity- Discerning *Jesus in Everything* is a wonderful description of our walk that led us to the highest summit of Christological revelation ([1:15-20](#)).

1) Supreme over both Creations ([1:17-18](#))

2) The Hidden Treasure House of all Wisdom and Knowledge ([Col. 2:3](#); [John 1:1-3](#); [21:25](#))
[Hidden, of course, implies the vast deposits of his unfathomable wisdom and knowledge which must be extracted by earnest effort]

Looking at Wisdom as a Person ([1st Cor.1:24](#); [Isaiah 11:2-9](#); [Proverbs 8:1, 6–22, 29-31](#))

[Wisdom/Knowledge in the OT are moral and relational terms that whenever adopted transforms a person, society or kingdom. Furthermore, whenever wisdom is exercised joy breaks out!]

3) The Great and Rich Mystery Revealed among *the Gentiles*: Christ in us, the Hope of Glory ([Col. 1:25–27](#); [John 17:26](#)...the never ending story); [Zech.8:22-23](#) (Jewish Prejudice)

4) In Whom the Whole Fullness of *Deity* Resides and we are filled in Him ([Col.2:9](#))
[*deity* = *theotes*, Godhood in its essence; the state of being God; deity dwells abidingly in Jesus; versus *theiotes*, in [Romans 1:20](#), his Divine attributes or characteristics; the quality of being God]

5) The Fulfillment of all Types and Shadows ([Colossians 2:16-17](#))

6) Conqueror over all Rulers and Authorities ([Col. 2:15](#); [Psalm 92's theme of enemies crushed](#); [1st Cor. 15:24-25](#); [John 12:31-32](#); [16:8-11](#); [Rev.12:7-9](#); [Romans 16:20](#))

7) Source of our Spiritual Circumcision – Putting off of the Body of the Flesh ([Col 2:11](#); [3:9](#); [John 7:22-24](#))

[We are now '*in Christ*' versus '*in the flesh*' i.e, clothed in his identity and empowered to regain our former 'honour and glory' as the bearer of his image, as per [Col.1:15-20](#); [3:9-10](#))

B) The *Context* of our Maturity (Community of the Saints)

1) Fellowship of the Saints ([Col.1:4, 8](#); [2:2-3, 19](#); [Eph.3:17-19](#); [4:12-13](#))

2) Full Participants in the Body ([Col.2:18-19](#); [Ephesians 4:15-16](#))

C) The *Attitude and Disciplines* of Maturity

1) Tenacity under Persecution ([Col.1:11, 23-24, 29](#); [2:1](#); [4:18](#); [Phil.1:29-30](#); [Acts 14:22](#))

2) Faith – Hope – Love ([Col.1:4-5, 8, 23, 27](#)); this overlaps with the *Context of Maturity (B)*

~ Faith – ([Col.2:5-7, 12](#))

~ Hope – *Living Hope* ([1st Peter 1:3-9](#)); *Blessed Hope* ([Titus 2:11-14](#)); *Confident Hope from a Non-lying God* ([Titus 1:1-3](#)); *Hope the enters into the Most Holy-The Ultimate Presence* ([Hebrews 6:18-20](#))

~ Love - [Col.3:14](#)

3) Prayer ([Col 1:3, 9](#); [4:2-4, 12](#))

D) The *Battle* for Maturity: Discerning False Forms of Spirituality (Avoiding Captivity: *POW*)

[Colossians 2:6-23](#)

This section ([Col.1:6-15](#)) has many parallels with Chapter One: 1) The person and work of *Christ* is the crowning centre ([1:15-20 with 2:9-15](#)) 2) The Believer's *walk* is the analogy ([1:10-12 with 2:6-7](#)) 3) Jesus' *headship* is stressed ([1:18 with 2:10, 19](#)) 4) Jesus' superiority over *angelic beings* is stressed ([1:16 with 2:10,15](#)) 5) Ultimate *victory* is assured ([1:20 with 2:15](#)); the difference between the two chapters is that chapter 1 centres on the Father's deliverance through the Son with the believer's walk as their worthy response whereas chapter 2 focuses on the believer's engagement with falsehood in their journey of faith

1) **Philosophies and Traditions of Man** ([2:8](#))

a) ***The Threat***

The threats to a believer's faith are 3-fold, introduced by '*see to it*' (or '*beware*' or '*look out for*') and followed by let *no one...take you captive* ([2:8](#)).....*pass judgment* ([2:16](#)).....*disqualify you* ([2:18](#))

b) ***Its Incapacity*** to Penetrate the Divine ([1st Cor. 1:18-25; 2:4-10](#))

c) ***Its Deceptive Character*** 'hollow and deceptive philosophy' (TNIV is interpretative), yet a single article governs both ([Hosea 7:9; Heb.3:13; Eph.4:22](#))

d) ***Its Teachings***: [Col.2:8](#) According to ***Human Tradition*** According to ***Elemental spirits*** (or ***Elementary principles***) 3) Not According to ***Christ*** (The Centre/Sum)

~ ***Traditions***, can be used positively, but here it reflects [Matthew 15:6-9](#), the ***voiding*** of God's word:

~ ***Elemental spirits*** (or ***Elementary principles***) [Greek = Stoicheion}

Stoicheion was used of the alphabet letters, notes of music or geometry rules; or fundamental components of the universe (Philo/Josephus) i.e. fire, water, air and earth etc. The Greek mind often associated spirit beings with nature's constituent parts yet '***stoicheion***' wasn't typically used of spirit beings until the 3rd Century. However [Galatians 4:3, 8-9](#) does connect it to their previous world of gods (and Jews weren't immune to this association, sun, moon and stars [Deut.4:19](#)); Colossians also deals with angelic being as influencing this culture ([2:18](#) = worshipping of angels)

However one views this word, Paul viewed it as ***weak*** and ***beggarly/impooverished/worthless***, for the human mind is disqualified ([Romans 1:28](#)) and its observations are upon a fallen groaning creation, which they view as the primary world, and thus their conclusions are warped from the outset: Clouds without rain, trees without fruit and wandering stars ([Jude 12-13](#))

e) ***Its Practices***

(i) ***Legalism*** and its Pride...and failure (See Galatians); matters of personal outward performance and not inner transformation, bolstering pride of accomplishment ([Rom.10:2-4; Col.2:16-17, 21; Acts 15:10-11; Gal.3:10-11; Rom.3:20](#))

(ii) ***Hyper-Spirituality*** and its Pride...and failure ([Col.2:18; Matt.23:24; Ecclesiastes 7:16](#))

(iii) ***Asceticism*** and its Pride...and failure ([Col. 2:22-23](#))

