

Colossians

Take Root...Bear Fruit

Week Seven

Do you have friends you know so well that you can finish their sentences for them? You've spent so much time with them over the years, talked and listened, and shared life together, that you know how they think. You know what they mean, even when other people don't. You share inside jokes and sometimes talk to each other in a kind of private shorthand conversation that you have to explain to others. It takes time to develop that kind of intimacy, but it's so rich, isn't it?

*In a way, Bible Study is like that. The more of the Bible we know...the more time we've spent listening to God in different contexts, the better we know how He thinks and understand what He means. On the other hand, if we try to understand what God means based on one passage (or even one book) we'll be at a disadvantage. The Bible is God's Word—His letter to us. All of it. We understand what He says best when we consider all that He has said. In other words, if we encounter something that we don't understand in our Bible Study, we can often find an explanation by in another part of the Bible. Bible Scholars call this tool **Comparison**. We are letting Scripture Interpret Scripture—clearer passages explain confusing ones. The good news is we have a number of ways to find those other passages (called cross references) even if we don't know where they are on our own. Here are three:*

- *Many Bibles include cross references (sometimes labeled "cf") in the margin of the text.*
- *You can often find a concordance in the back of your Bible. This is like a glossary, and lists the important passages that use a particular word.*
- *Websites like biblegateway.com and blueletterbible.org have keyword search functions that let us find every verse that uses a particular word or set of words. (A caution, this option can yield so many passages that we're overwhelmed with "too much" information.)*

Week Seven Homework

Observe (What Do I SEE?)

Pray...Read...Mark up the passage...List 1-2 observations per verse.

Colossians 3:12-17(NIV)

Observations

¹²Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual

songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. ¹⁷And
whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in
the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the
Father through him.

“Lump and Label” ...Go back over the passage and look for 2-4 “lumps” of content that together express one idea. Give each “lump” a “label.” Try to make your labels as brief as possible.

<i>Lump (verses)</i>	<i>Label</i>

List any questions you have about this passage.

Interpret (What Does it MEAN?)

Use Cross References to gain insight...Use one of these methods to find other passages that may further explain a word or phrase from our focus passage.

- Cross references are often listed in the margins of your Bible's text.
- Concordances are found at the back of many Bibles and list passages that use a particular word.
- Websites like biblegateway.com and blueletterbible.org allow us to search for every occurrence of a given word, or set of words.

Record what you find.

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Apply (How Does it WORK?)

Make it practical. Now that you have spent some time looking in detail at God's Word, don't stop! Ask yourself, "How does this work...in general...and for ME?" You may find it helpful to look for...

S—a SIN to avoid

P—a PROMISE to claim

E—an EXAMPLE to follow

C—a COMMAND to obey

K—KNOWLEDGE of God to believe

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