

Colossians

Take Root...Bear Fruit

Week Ten

This time has flown by! There's so much more we want to tell you. But the main thing we need to say is this: "JUST DO IT!"

*We mean that in several senses. First of all, Bible Study. We hope you have discovered that you don't have to be "in a Bible Study" to study the Bible. You have all the tools and skills you need to **study the Bible on your own**. Of course, it's more fun and motivating to share with friends. So if you like, get some friends together and JUST DO IT!*

*Also, we mean **spending Time Alone With God**. One main thing we hoped to accomplish with this study, was to give you the confidence that you CAN read God's Word on your own, understand it, and act on it. Bible Study is not supposed to be an academic pursuit, but a spiritual one. It's one of the disciplines of a disciple. If we have produced a class full of Bible Scholars, we have failed. If individuals move down the path as they follow Jesus, Praise God! Follow Jesus—JUST DO IT!*

*Finally, as you study the Bible, see what God says, what He means, how it should work—JUST DO IT! Apply God's word to your life—obey it. Maybe "application" sounds lofty and complicated. **Obedience** is simple. Not easy always, but simple. And really, it's the whole point of Bible Study. James tells us that if we read the Bible, see what it says, and understand what it means, but don't do anything about it; we're kidding ourselves. (James 1:22-25) Too often, that's exactly what we do. We treat Bible Study as a chance to gain knowledge and in the process fall into the sin of pride. (1 Corinthians 8:1) Bible Study should change us, from the inside out. It should pierce us to the core, and judge our thoughts and attitudes. (Hebrews 4:12) In order to become obedient we must be willing to have our heart exposed. We must not only know the Bible, we must know ourselves. And, we must be brutally honest about where the two do not line up.*

Many of us have learned a great deal about obedience (and disobedience) from our children. We know that there are many things we tend to do rather than obey. See if these Substitutes for Application (obedience) sound familiar to you:

- "I Know!"— Knowledge is no substitute for Obedience. Too often, we think that knowing the Bible is good enough. IT IS NOT! We must do what it says. What mother, when correcting her child is satisfied with the answer, "I know"!
- "I know, but..." Rationalization is no substitute for Repentance: We all have reasons why obedience is hard, but reasons are not excuses. Difficult circumstances, painful history, personal obstacles do not remove the responsibility to follow God by obeying His Word.
- "But I already DID!" Superficial Compliance is no substitute for Substantial Life Change: Don't let yourself be satisfied with an application that is easy to achieve, or that you've already mastered. Don't focus on ways you already obey a principle. Rather, always strive for deeper levels of obedience.
- "I said I'm sorry!" An Emotional Experience is no substitute for a Willful Decision: "Being Sorry" is not the same thing as what Paul calls the "godly sorrow that leads to repentance." Feeling guilty is not enough without a decision to act differently in the future.

We're praying that we will all move forward committed to the kind of Bible Study that produces obedient Christ-followers. May we be the kind of people to whom Jesus can say, "Come, follow Me," and we JUST DO IT!

Week Ten/Wrap Up

...Tying it all together

One last time, read the Book of Colossians straight through,

Look over each of the nine focus passages, and write a Bottom Line for each one.

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

Look back...over your responses in the Apply section of each week's homework. What stands out to you? (Maybe it's something that's occurred to you since then.) Sum up this study for yourself with a "take away" application. In other words, what is one way that you believe this study should impact your life? Be SMART about it!