

Just A Closer Walk

Colossians 1:9-14 NIV

What would you do if a close friend came to you and said, “You won’t believe what that Bobby Joe is doing. You know that he moved clear across the country, and now he is involved in one of those crazy cults. What am I going to do? I can go out there.”

Paul found himself in a similar situation. The church in Colosse was getting mixed up with some crazy cult stuff, but Paul couldn’t go there. He was under house arrest in Rome, waiting his say before Caesar.

Without a cell phone or high speed Internet, it was time to ink up the quill. Though a good report about the church from Epaphras, a fellow minister with Paul, we are not told any specific problem. Some suggest a combination of mystery cults, exclusive philosophies, and Judaism that later lead to what was known as Gnosticism in the second century.

Gnosticism involved the worship of angels as mediators to God, emphasized some special or deeper knowledge, stressed the special privilege and “perfection” of those select few who belonged to this exclusive philosophical elite, and denied the deity of Christ.

If this is the case; if this is truly the beginning stage of this heresy that denies Jesus deity and makes angels his equal as

mediator to God, then, as Barney would say, “It’s time to nip it in the bud.”

And that is what Paul is attempting to do with the help of Timothy and Epaphras.

And that is what you would do for your friend and Bobby Joe, isn’t it? You know that Bobby Joe is young in the faith, and now he is far away. And you know that there are many out there everywhere just looking for those of whom they can take advantage. You can’t let that happen, if you can help it.

So, you and your friend get on the phone, or get an address, e-mail, however you can get a hold of Bobby Joe to warn him of the danger of mixing worldly philosophies with God’s word.

The first thing that he needs to know is that people back home still care. So you tell him, “**We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you.**” (Colossians 1:3) He needs to know that people care enough about him to pray for him; that even though he is far away, he is still part of the team; still family.

You remind him of the hope of heaven that came from the word of truth, the gospel that he already knows, and this gospel that is bearing fruit and growing in him just as

your friend explained to him that it would. (1:5-7)

You remind him that your friend is a faithful minister of Christ, and knows of his love in the Spirit. (1:7-8)

And now, you let Bobby Joe know that everyone needs assistance for a closer walk in the Spirit. And just as Paul told the Colossians;

⁹For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. ¹⁰And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. ¹³For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:9-14)

It was a joy for your friend, just like Epaphras with the Colossians, to see Bobby Joe take the first steps of faith. And joy

continued as your friend watched constant growth; seeing him walk stronger.

As we all know, sooner or later, our disciples are going to have to walk on their own. Now it is time on our part for intercession, praying qualities through the power of the Holy Spirit into the lives of those who will now influence and teach others.

We know that in our own spiritual life we need constant assistance with our walk. We begin by admitting that we are weak. Our plea to Jesus: Just A Closer Walk With Thee.

Our plea on the behalf of others: Just A Closer Walk With Thee.

Bobby Joe needs to know, just as the Colossians did, that our walk is defined by bearing fruit (v 10), not by some secret knowledge or repetitive tradition, but by walking closely in the steps of Jesus.

And as we walk, as we put our faith into practice, we are growing more and more into full knowledge of God with each step, being empowered by the Lord. And throughout our walk, as we bear more fruit, we continue ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

(Colossians 1:12) This is not some mans philosophy, Bobby Joe needs to know that this is the power of God to direct his steps.

During the time with your friend, discussing what to send to Bobby Joe, you remember a checklist that you found to be helpful. On this checklist are seven items that could apply to physical needs as well as spiritual:

1. **Daily food: not just milk but solid food of God's Word... solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. (Heb 5:14) He rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:13-14)**
2. **Fresh air: prayer is oxygen for soul; Praise be to God who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love for me. (Ps 66:20)**
3. **Regular exercise: pick up our cross & follow Jesus. If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. (Matt 16:24)**
4. **.Adequate rest: Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. (Matt 11:28)**
5. **Clean surroundings: let not my heart be drawn to what is evil, to take part in wicked deeds with men who are evildoers; let me not eat of their delicacies.(Ps 141:4)**
6. **Loving care: If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ²then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. (Phil 2:1-2)**

7. **Periodic check-up: Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord. (Lam 3:40)**

Going through this checklist reminded you why this list was given to you. There was this person, a fellow Christian, who just rubbed you the wrong way. They were just so childish; if they would just grow up in the Lord, life in the church would be so sweet. Ministry would be so much easier. If the Lord would just grow this person up or move them out of the way, your walk with the Lord could really blossom.

The person who gave you the list then reminded you of James and John, the sons of thunder, the Lord called them. Luke tells about a time when the sons of thunder wanted to nuke a Samaritan village.

⁵¹As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. ⁵²And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; ⁵³but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. ⁵⁴When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them^[b]?" ⁵⁵But Jesus turned and rebuked them, ⁵⁶and^[c] they went to another village. (Luke 9:51-56)

Just like James and John, you wanted obstacles moved out of the way. But, that's not how it works, is it. The Lord gives you power to work through the obstacles.

Some think, like James and John did at one time, that the freedom that they found in their walk with the Lord could be used as a license to do what they want. But

that glorifies self. James and John learned, as you did, that freedom in Christ is not a license to do what you want, but power to do what you should. That glorifies God.

You learned that focusing on the irritations in life is like having an open wound in your spirit. Focusing on the irritations does not bring about a closer walk with the Lord. The Philippian passage in the list that your friend gave you helped you focus on being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

Now this list is going to Bobby Joe, along with some other encouragement, and you hope and pray that it helps him like it helped you.

Do any of you remember the old electric buses that some cities used? Did you ever ride on one? Portsmouth, Ohio, had electric buses. As a kid, I remember going to town with mom and seeing those old buses, with the two connections sticking up like antenna. The network of wire overhead fascinated me. How the buses made the turns, and how they went through the intersections where the wires crossed. Every time they went through an intersection and the connections from the bus crossed the intersecting wires, sparks would fly.

Thinking back on those old buses, I'm sure that there were many obstacles to face with keeping those things running. Back then, maybe the bus drivers were required to have a solid prayer life. And that's what kept them on the road.

Well, the old electric buses are gone, replaced by gas and diesel, and now those are being replaced by new electric buses with

battery technology. Things change. And with every change, new obstacles emerge.

Bobby Joe moved away. And now he is facing some obstacles that could wreck his faith. You and your friend are going to do what you can to see that his faith stays solid.

Paul did the same for the Colossians. Though he was in chains, he would do all that he could to see that they live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way. Someone did the same for you.

Praying God's word into other people's lives. Sending a message of encouragement, telling them that you care, that they matter, that they are not forgotten.

Paul did this not only for the Colossians, but also for the Ephesians and the Philippians.

Ephesians 1:15-23; Philippians 1:3-11.

Read through these prayers and do me a favor, pray these things into my life. I need all the help I can get. Pray these things for the church. Pray these things for our missionaries, our leaders, our service men and women. Can you think of anyone short of the devil and his crew that couldn't benefit from God's word being prayed into their life? Never underestimate the power of the Holy Spirit to deliver and preserve the word.

I want to close with part of the prayer that Jesus prayed for believers recorded in **John 17.**

²⁴"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

²⁵"Righteous Father, though the world does

not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

Those who belong to Jesus, the church, are a community that grows in love and then multiplies. Jesus is still reaching out, through you and me, to rescue men and women lost in sin.

There is, of course, one source and one source only for the strength we need to live a God-glorifying life. This is our walk with Jesus Christ. Jesus lived in union with the Father, drawing on Him for strength and power. As we pray, just a closer walk with Jesus and the Father, praying and helping others with their walk, then the world will know that Christ has sent us and that He came to seek and save the lost.