

## **LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY**

**Colossians 3:16**

**By Andy Manning**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. **George Mueller** was a famous pastor in England during the nineteenth century. He founded a denomination, and was the director of an orphanage in which he cared for over 10,000 orphanages in his lifetime. He established 117 schools which offered education to more than 120,000 children. He had a prayer journal in which he recorded over 50,000 answered prayers in his life. How did this man achieve such a fruitful walk with God? He told us. "The vigor of our spiritual life will be in exact proportion to the place held by the Bible in our life and thoughts. I solemnly state this from the experience of 54 years. The first 3 years after conversion I neglected the word of God. Since I began to search it diligently the blessing has been wonderful. Great has been the blessing from consecutive, diligent, daily study. I look upon it as a lost day when I have not had a good time over the word of God."
2. Today I want to talk to you about the place that the Bible should have in your life.

### **II. TEXT**

1. **Colossians 3:16 (ESV)** "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God."
2. What is the word of Christ?
  - i. Not just the "red letters." The entire Bible is the word of Christ.
  - ii. Christ authored the Bible. **2 Timothy 3:16** "All Scripture is inspired by God"
  - iii. Christ is the main subject of the Bible. **John 5:39** "The Scriptures point to me"
3. "Dwell in" means to live in you; to reside in you; to be at home in you.
4. Big Idea: All Christians are commanded to be Scripture-rich.

### **III. SIX WAYS TO BE SCRIPTURE-RICH**

1. **Study its contents.**
  - i. When someone lives with you, you get to know them well. Sometimes too well! To let the word of Christ dwell in you is to study its contents so that you know it well. You know it intimately.
  - ii. "Richly" means abundantly, or extravagantly rich. The Greek word (plousios) "describes incredible abundance, extreme or vast material wealth, enormous affluence, great prosperity, immense riches, magnificent opulence, extravagant lavishness (Precept Austin)." To let the word of Christ dwell in us richly means we need to know all of the Bible, and we need to know all of it very well.
  - iii. **Grant Richison** "The word dwell means to keep house. We should live in the Word of God like we live in our homes. We are familiar with our home where all the closets are, where we have items stored. We must thoroughly acquaint ourselves with the Word. The Word should become so familiar to us that we know it like the back of our hand."

- iv. **Spurgeon** “My dear friends, I should like you so to read the Bible that everybody in the Bible should seem to be a friend of yours. I should like you to feel as if you had talked’ with Abraham, and conversed with David. I can truly say that there is hardly anybody in the world that I know so well as I know David. But do find your choicest friends in the Scripture... Take the whole company of Bible saints home to your heart, let them live inside your soul. Let old Noah come in with his ark, if he likes; and let Daniel come in with his lions’ den, if he pleases; and all the rest of the godly men and women of the olden time, take them all into your very nature, and be on familiar terms with them; but, most of all, be specially intimate with him of whom they all speak, namely, Jesus Christ your blessed Lord and Master.”
- v. Some of you have been attending Church Acadiana for years, so you know me well. But my wife and children know me-know me. They know me on a whole ‘notha level because I live with them. This is how you need to know the Bible.
- vi. The only parts of the Bible that can help you are the parts that you know. The Bible doesn’t help you if it is sitting on a bookshelf, or if it is on your nightstand. It does not help you if you own one hundred Bibles, or very rare and expensive Bibles. It does not matter if your parents or pastor know the Bible very well. The Bible only benefits you if you know it.

## 2. Savor it.

- i. The people that dwell with us are our immediate family; they are the people we love the most. The people who are most important to us. To be Scripture-rich, letting the Bible dwell in you richly, is to savor it. The Christian should love Scripture. It should not just be your favorite book, but your favorite possession in all the world.
- ii. To let the word of Christ dwell richly means to treasure the word. It needs to be the most important thing to you.
- iii. **Job 23:12** “I have not departed from the commands from his lips; I have treasured the words from his mouth more than my daily food.”
- iv. The Bible is God’s love letter to you. It is a scholar to give you wisdom. It is a sculptor to mold your character. It is a searchlight to help you stay on the right path. It is a sedative to give you peace. It is a sign when you have made a wrong turn. It is a sword to fight temptation. It is a shelter during the storms of life. It is a shower to wash away your sins. It is a surgeon to give you a new heart. It is a shield from the lies of the world. It is sandpaper to smooth off your rough edges. It is a pair of spectacles through which to view the world. It is the standard by which to measure all truth claims.
- v. King David wrote Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible. It is about God’s word. David savored God’s word.
  - 1. He delighted in God’s word. **Psalm 119:16** “I will delight in your statutes”
  - 2. He rejoiced in God’s word. **Psalm 119:14** “I rejoice in the way revealed by your decrees as much as in all riches.”

3. He longed for God's word. **Psalm 119:20** "How I long for your precepts!"
4. He loved God's word. **Psalm 119:27** "Since I love your commands more than gold, even the purest gold."
- vi. What if we treated the Bible like our smartphones?
  1. What if we carried it around in our purses in and pockets?
  2. What if we wouldn't go anywhere without it?
  3. What if we flipped through it several times a day?
  4. What if we checked it first thing in the morning and last thing at night?
  5. What if we read it every time we went to the bathroom?
  6. What if we turned back to get it if we forgot it?
  7. What if we begged our parents to get us one for Christmas?
  8. Perhaps if we treated the Bible like our smartphones, that's what it would be like to savor it.

### 3. Submit to it.

- i. To let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, you must let God's word be at home in your heart. God's word needs to feel at home in your heart. God needs to feel at home in your heart. The only way for God's word to feel at home in your heart is if it is king. You must submit to God's word. Let God's word be king. If you are rebelling against God's word, then it is not dwelling in your richly.
- ii. **Matthew Henry** "it must dwell in us, or keep house, not as a servant in a family, who is under another's control, but as a master, who has a right to prescribe to and direct all under his roof."
- iii. **James 1:22** "But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."
- iv. "Richly" means to submit all you to all of it.
  1. Submit to all of God's word. Don't treat the Bible like a buffet, picking and choosing only the parts that you want. Submit to every part of God's word. Submit to God's word about sex, about money, about church, about your language. **John Gill** "His meaning is that not one part of the Scripture only should be regarded and attended to but the whole of it, every truth and doctrine in it, even the whole counsel of God"
  2. Submit all of you to God's word. Let the Bible have unrestricted reign in your life.
- v. The Bible is unlike all other books. It is not a novel merely to be read for enjoyment. It is not a textbook merely to be read for knowledge. It is not a self-help book merely to be read for tips on happiness and success. It is God's law for our lives. We must submit to its authority.

### 4. Search out its meaning.

- i. To dwell in you richly can mean let the word of Christ be fully understood.

- ii. It is not enough to memorize the Bible. It is not enough to read the Bible. It is not enough to know what the Bible says. You need to know what it means.
- iii. **2 Timothy 2:15 (KJV)** “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”
- iv. Every once in a while the kids will lose the TV remote. Since they only get to watch TV on the weekends, this is a big deal. They work together and search for the remote like a mother searching for a lost child. They leave no pillow unturned. That is the way we need to study our Bibles. Our aim must be to search it and discover every ounce of wisdom that the Bible has to offer.
- v. How do we search out the Bible’s meaning? By letting others teach and admonish us; i.e. by sitting under godly, powerful preaching.
- vi. **Colossians 3:16** “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom.”
  - 1. Teaching (Gr. *Didasko*): The orderly presentation of truth for converts so that they may know how to grow (Precept Austin).
  - 2. Admonishing (Gr. *Noutheteo*). Warning, cautioning, gently reproving, exhorting. To counsel about avoidance or cessation of an improper course of conduct or to warn by giving notice beforehand especially of potential danger. (Precept Austin)
- vii. You learn the meaning of God’s word by sitting under Biblical preaching that teaches and admonishes you.
- viii. Many people do not understand the importance of preaching. They think that reading the Bible on their own is enough for a healthy spiritual life. But God has chosen to work through preaching.
- ix. Timothy was the pastor of the church in Ephesus. Paul wrote the letters of 1 & 2 Timothy to train him to be a good pastor. Look at what Paul told him in **2 Timothy 4:2** “Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and teaching.” This verse teaches us the importance of preaching, and the content of good preaching.
- x. Many people do not know what to look for in a preacher. They do not know how to evaluate or judge preaching, but this is the most important factor in choosing a church. They like it when the preacher is funny, or tells good stories, or yells and screams. Some prefer the preacher to jump up and down and wave his arms and run around the stage. What kind of preaching do you need for a healthy spiritual life?
- xi. Six Elements of Good Preaching (the kind of preaching every Christian needs):
  - 1. Bible-based. “Preach the word.” The subject of the sermon is Scripture. The sermon should read the text, explain the text, and apply the text. The focus of preaching is to teach and proclaim the Bible.

2. Correction. Correct false doctrine. The preacher should expose the major false teachings that are threatening the church and refute them with Scripture.
  3. Rebuking. Rebuke sinful living. The preacher should clarify the difference between vice and virtue. The sermon should teach people how to live holy lives in their generation. Some preachers (like Joel Osteen) never correct or rebuke; their “preaching” is all encouragement and comfort. **Thomas Watson** “The word is preached to beat down sin and advance holiness.”
  4. Encouragement. Motivate people to keep going and not give up. Good preaching should give people hope.
  5. Patience. The tone of the sermon should be love, not anger. **Rick Warren** “Be tender without surrender.”
  6. Teaching. The difference between preaching and teaching is that preaching is getting people to do something, while teaching is getting people to understand something. Good preaching includes both. It should not only be focused on getting people to apply Scripture, but helping them to know and understand Scripture.
- xii. To let the word dwell in you richly, you need to sit under good preaching.
- xiii. Tips for Getting the Most Out of a Sermon:
1. Get plenty of rest the night before.
  2. Get to church early so that you have time to sit down and pray before church.
  3. Ask God to speak to you through the sermon.
  4. Sit where you can see the preacher clearly.
  5. Take good notes. You only remember 10% of what you hear ten minutes after you hear it.
  6. Review your notes in your Monday morning quiet time and think about how to apply it to your life.
  7. Put your phone away and turn off all notifications.
  8. Bring a physical Bible so you are not distracted by your phone.
  9. Do your Home Group homework and discuss the sermon in Home Group during the week.

## 5. Share it.

- i. When the word of Christ dwells in your richly, then you will overflow Bible. You will share it with others.
- ii. “Teaching and admonishing one another.” It is essential to sit under a good preaching ministry on Sunday, but the members of the church should also be teaching and admonishing one another.
- iii. Teaching and admonishing others is how to let God’s word dwell richly in you, and it is the result of God’s word dwelling richly in you.
- iv. **Rick Renner** “It is a fact that when the Word of God really comes to feel at home in you, dwelling lavishly inside your heart, it enriches you with the wisdom, the gifts, and the power you need for today. You become so filled

with the riches of God that you automatically find yourself admonishing and encouraging other people in their faith.” (*Sparkling Gems from the Greek*)

- v. Every time you learn a new Bible truth, a new insight, you need to share it. And there are so many ways to do that today. Facebook, Titter, Instagram, Blogging. Share it in an email. Share it in a letter. Share it with someone at church.
- vi. One of the best ways to share what God is teaching you is in Home Group. Home Group is a Bible study discussion. We study the Bible and then discuss its meaning and application. We each share our insights.
- vii. Another way to share what God is teaching you in the Bible is to teach your children. **Einstein** “You don’t really understand something unless you can communicate it in a simple way.” You don’t know whether or not you understand something until you try to explain it to someone else, especially to a child. If you can’t teach it to someone else, then you probably don’t understand it. Sharing the Bible with your children will help you to understand it better yourself.
- viii. And don’t forget to bring your Bible questions to Home Group. As you think of questions about what you are reading and studying in the Bible, bring them to Home Group to see if others might have some helpful insights.

#### 6. Sing it.

- i. **Colossians 3:16** “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”
- ii. Three types of songs are mentioned:
  - 1. Psalms – The book of Psalms put to music. The Jews and the early church sang the Psalms. They were originally written as songs.
  - 2. Hymns – Songs of praise or thanksgiving sung to God.
  - 3. Spiritual songs – Songs of about the Bible and Christian living; perhaps about a person’s testimony.
- iii. To be Scripture rich we need to sing Bible-based, Bible-centered songs to in praise to God.
- iv. We don’t often think of singing as a way to let the Bible dwell in us richly, but that is what it is for. Singing the truths of the Bible to God helps to be Scripture-rich. It helps us to understand, believe, remember, and apply Scripture. Sometimes a song can teach a Bible-doctrine better than any sermon.
- v. Some people don’t like the singing in church. They don’t get it. They would rather skip the singing and just show up for the preaching. But this verse tells us that we need both preaching and singing to be Scripture-rich.
- vi. This passage gives us three instructions about how to sing:
  - 1. To God. We must direct our songs to Him. We must not sing to impress others, but to please God.

2. With thankfulness. Our songs should be of praise and worship and thankfulness and gratitude. Worship should be a time of joy and celebration.
3. From the heart. Sincerity is key. We must not merely mouth the words; we must not let our minds wander. We can become so familiar with a song that we sing it robotically, automatically, rather than sincerely. We must mean what we say when we sing. Think about what you are sing it with feeling, emotion, passion.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

1. Let me give you four tips for reading the Bible.
  - i. Get a modern Bible Translation, such as the CSB, NIV, NLT, or ESV.
  - ii. Use a Bible reading plan, and get in the habit of reading it daily. If you are brand new to the Bible, start with the New Testament, and just read one chapter at a time, and do that several times before you start reading the OT.
  - iii. Use highlighters. Blue – truth to believe; Pink – sin to avoid; Yellow – promise to claim; Green – command to obey or example to follow.
  - iv. Pray when you come across a verse that sticks out at you.
2. I read the story of a young French girl who had been born blind. After she learned to read by touch, a friend gave her a Braille copy of Mark's gospel. She read it so much that her fingers became calloused and insensitive. In an effort to regain her feeling, she cut the skin from the ends of her fingers. Tragically, however, her callouses were replaced by permanent and even more insensitive scars. She sobbingly gave the book a goodbye kiss, saying, "Farewell, farewell, sweet word of my heavenly Father." In doing so, she discovered that her lips were even more sensitive than her fingers had been, and she spent the rest of her life reading her great treasure with her lips.
3. I pray that we will come to have the same love for God's word that this girl had; that we would treasure it and read it with the same passion and devotion.