

A LIFE FULLY PLEASING TO GOD; COL. 1:10b-12a (Ed O'Leary)

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ WE CONTINUE ~ THIS NEXT SECTION OF COLOSSIANS, ~ CHAPTER 1, ~ verses 9-14.

LAST TIME ~ WE LOOKED AT ~ VERSES ~ 9 THROUGH 10a.

▶▶ Recall ~ that ~ in these verses ~ Paul let the Colossian believers know that he ~

▷▷ and his missionary team ~ had been continually praying ~ for them.

▶▶ As we know, ~ the prayer consisted of two requests.

▶▶ And from these two requests, ~ we saw that ~ all believers ~ ¶¶

▷▷ need these two things ~ that Paul and his team prayed for on their behalf.

▶▶ 1st, ~ we, ~ believers, ~ need ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the knowledge and a profound understanding ~ of how the Lord wants us ~ ¶¶

↳↳ to daily conduct our lives ~ in thought, ~ word, ~ and action ~ ¶¶

→→ as we live out our lives ~ in this fallen, ~ sinful world.

▶▶ 2nd, ~ believers need spiritual discernment.

▷▷ I.e., ~ the ability ~ to clearly distinguish ~ ¶¶

↳↳ between ~ truth and error, ~ good and evil, ~ right and wrong, ~ ¶¶

→→ and to always choose what is true, ~ good, ~ and right. ¶¶ 1/13

▶▶ Then Paul pointed out why believers need these things.

▷▷ And i.e., ~ to know ~ how to live a life ~ that is fully pleasing to the Lord.

▷▷ IOW, ~ we, ~ believers, ~ need the knowledge ~ ¶¶

↳↳ and a thorough understanding of God's will ~ for the daily conduct of our lives ~ ¶¶

→→ and also spiritual discernment ~ for this purpose.

↪↪ In order ~ to know how ~ to live a life ~ that is fully pleasing to the Lord.

AND THAT BRINGS US TO VERSES ~ 10b THROUGH 12a, ~ WHICH WE'LL LOOK AT THIS morning.

▶▶ In these verses, ~ most likely ~ to help us understand what a life that is fully pleasing to Jesus involves, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ Paul gives us a snapshot, ~ an illustration, ~ of what this type of life ~ looks like.

↳↳ He lists ~ four characteristics ~ (obviously not the only) ~ ¶¶

→→ four characteristics ~ of a life that is fully pleasing to the Lord.

▷▷ Most time on first two. ~ Least on the fourth, ~ explain why when we get there.

WE FIND ~ THE 1st CHARACTERISTIC ~ OF A LIFE THAT IS FULLY PLEASING TO Jesus ~ in verse 10b.

BEARING FRUIT IN EVERY GOOD WORK.

▶▶ Basically, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the point here is that ~ good works ~ in the life of the believer ~ please God. ¶¶ 2/13

▶▶ Good works ~ in the life of the believer ~ please God ~ because good works ~ are God's plan for the believer

▶▶ We see that from [Ephesians, ~ chapter 2, ~ verse 10](#), ~ which we're going to look at part of ~ in a minute.

AND THAT ~ LEADS US ~ TO A VERY IMPORTANT DIGRESSION.

▶▶ Because ~ it's important to understand the role of good works ~ when it comes to salvation.

▶▶ In [Ephesians, ~ chapter 2, ~ verse 10a](#), ~ to which we just alluded, ~ Paul writes, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "For we are his workmanship, ~ created in Christ Jesus ~ for ~ good works."

▷▷ Notice the order.

↳↳ Good works ~ follow ~ becoming a new creation in Christ.

→→ Good works ~ are not the means of earning salvation.

↳↳ Just recently talked about this

▷▷ No, ~ good works ~ are not the means of earning salvation.

↳↳ They are ~ a natural result ~ and proof of ~ it.

▶▶ In [chapter 2, ~ verses 14 through 26](#), ~ of his epistle, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ James makes a very detailed argument ~ showing this to be the case.

↳↳ We'll just look at a couple of the verses.

→→ And then you can study the full context of the paragraph on your own. ¶¶ 3/13

▷▷ In *verse 14*, ~ James asks, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ "What good is it, ~ my brothers, ~ if someone says he has faith but does not have works ~ ¶¶

→→ [i.e., What good is it, ~ my brothers and sisters, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ if someone says he has faith ~ but doesn't show it by his actions]? ~ ~ ¶¶

↳↳ Can that faith ~ [or, ~ that kind of faith] ~ save him?"

↳↳ The Greek text ~ slants the question ~ to expect a "no" answer.

→→ "Can that kind of faith save him? ~ ~ Of course not," ~ James implies.

↳↳ Saving faith will always result in good works.

▷▷ In *verse 17*, ~ he says, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ "So also faith by itself, ~ if it does not have works, ~ is dead."

↳↳ Unless faith produces good deeds, ~ it is dead and useless.

▶▶ To recap: ~ ~ Good works ~ follow ~ becoming a new creation in Christ.

▷▷ Good works are not the means of earning salvation.

↳↳ They are ~ a natural result ~ and proof of ~ salvation.

↳↳ TPID, ~ genuine saving faith in Christ ~ results in ~ and is proven by ~ good works.

▶▶ Abraham and Rahab

OK, ~ GETTING BACK TO THE FIRST CHARACTERISTIC OF A LIFE PLEASING TO THE Lord. ¶¶ 4/13

▶▶ The point Paul is making here ~ is that ~ good works in the life of the believer ~ please God.

▷▷ And Good works ~ in the life of the believer ~ please God ~ ¶¶

↳↳ because good works ~ are God's plan for the believer

▶▶ The Greek grammar indicates ~ that being engaged in good deeds ~ ¶¶

▷▷ is to be a continual ~ activity ~ in a believer's life.

▷▷ There is no minimum requirement to meet ~ or quota to fill ~ and then we're done with good works.

↳↳ Whenever ~ we have the opportunity, ~ we should perform a good deed.

▶▶ In *Titus*, ~ chapter 3, ~ verse 14, ~ Paul calls us ~ to learn ~ to devote ourselves to good works.

▷▷ And Paul goes on ~ in that verse ~ to indicate ~ that in doing so ~ we will not be unproductive in our lives.

AND WHO ARE TO BE THE TARGETED RECIPIENTS OF OUR GOOD DEEDS?

▶▶ Believers and unbelievers alike.

▶▶ Even unbelievers who hate us. ~ So it's quite comprehensive.

▶▶ But, ~ as we'll see, ~ we should give special attention ~ to those who are in the family of faith.

▶▶ Paul says in *Galatians*, ~ chapter 6, ~ verse 10, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "So then, ~ as we have opportunity, ~ let us do good to everyone, ~ and especially ~ to those who are of the household of faith." ¶¶ 5/13

▶▶ In Luke, ~ chapter 6, ~ verse 27b, ~ Jesus tells us ~ 77

▷▷ to "do good to those who hate you."

▶▶ And in Romans, ~ chapter 12, ~ verses 19 and 20, ~ Paul writes, ~ 77

▷▷ Beloved, ~ never avenge yourselves, ~ but leave it ~ to the wrath of God, ~ 77

↳↳ for it is written, ~ "Vengeance is mine, ~ I will repay, ~ says the Lord." ~ 77

→→ To the contrary, ~ "if your enemy is hungry, ~ feed him; ~ 77

↳↳ if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; ~ 77

↳↳ for by so doing ~ you will heap burning coals on his head."

▷▷ This is a quotation from Proverbs ~ 25, ~ verses 21 and 22.

▷▷ The coals on the head ~ may refer ~ to an Egyptian tradition ~ 77

↳↳ of carrying a pan of burning charcoal on one's head ~ as a public act of repentance.

▷▷ By referring to this proverb in Prov. 25, ~ Paul is saying ~ 77

↳↳ that we should treat our enemies ~ with kindness, ~ 77

→→ so that they will become ashamed ~ and turn from their sins.

▷▷ But even if they don't, ~ we are doing right ~ when we do good to our enemies.

WE FIND ~ THE 2nd CHARACTERISTIC ~ OF A LIFE THAT IS FULLY PLEASING TO the Lord, ~ in verse 10c.

INCREASING ~ IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. 11 6/13

▶▶ The Greek grammar indicates that "increasing in the knowledge ~ of God" ~ means ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "increasing in the knowledge ~ about God."

▶▶ Greek grammar also indicates ~ that "increasing" ~ puts emphasis ~ on habitual action.

▷▷ IOW, ~ we are to ~ continually ~ grow ~ in our knowledge about our Triune God.

▶▶ Our Triune God ~ is pleased ~ when believers continue to grow in their knowledge about him.

THERE ARE 2 BASIC WAYS TO LEARN ABOUT THE LORD.

▶▶ The Bible of course is the most important, ~ detailed ~ and informative way.

▷▷ Bible = Special Revelation.

▷▷ As we continue to study his word, ~ we get to know the Lord better and better.

▶▶ The 2nd way is through creation. ~ General Revelation.

▷▷ In Romans, ~ chapter 1, ~ verse 20a, ~ Paul writes, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ "For his invisible attributes, ~ namely, ~ his eternal power and divine nature, ~ ¶¶

→→ have been clearly perceived, ~ ever since the creation of the world, ~ in the things that have been made."

↪↪ Ever since the world was created, ~ people have seen the earth and sky.

→→ Through everything God made, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ they can clearly see his invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature. ¶¶ 7/13

▷▷ And in Ps. 19, ~ verses 1 through 4a, ~ David declares, ~ ¶¶

↳↳ "The heavens declare the glory of God, ~ and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. ~¶

→→ Day to day pours out speech, ~ and night to night reveals knowledge. ~¶

→→ There is no speech, ~ nor are there words, ~ whose voice is not heard. ~¶

↻↻ Their voice goes out through all the earth, ~ and their words to the end of the world.

↳↳ The heavens and the sky, ~ David says, ~ proclaim the glory of God and his craftsmanship.

→→ Day after day they continue to speak; ~ night after night they make him known.

↳↳ They speak without a sound or word, ~ David says; ~ their voice is never heard.

↻↻ Yet, ~ their message has gone throughout the earth, ~ and their words to all the world.

GOD WANTS OUR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF HIM TO CONTINUE TO grow ~ to a greater and fuller extent.

▶▶ He is not content, ~ nor does He want us to be content, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ with us having a surface or basic knowledge and understanding of Him.

▶▶ In Hosea, ~ chapter 6, ~ verse 3a, ~ Hosea exhorts us, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ "Let us know; ~ let us press on ~ to know the Lord."

↳↳ "press on" ~ is literally, ~ "pursue or chase."

▷▷ Then verse 3b says ~ that God will respond favorably ~ to such a pursuit. ¶¶ 8/13

↪↪ "his going out is sure as the dawn; ~ he will come to us as the showers, ~ as the spring rains ~ that water the earth."

▶▶ So my brothers and sisters, ~ "let us press on to know the Lord."

▷▷ Let us ~ pursue ~ more and more knowledge about Jesus.

▷▷ And let us be assured ~ that He will respond positively ~ to our pursuit of knowledge about Him.

↪↪ "he will come to us as the showers, ~ as the spring rains that water the earth."

→→ He will reveal more and more about Himself to us.

↪↪ And just as the spring rains refresh the earth and cause things to grow, ~ ¶¶

→→ along with growing in our knowledge about Jesus, ~ we will be refreshed ~ and grow spiritually.

NOW, ~ WE MUST NOT MAKE THE MISTAKE ~ OF THINKING ~ THAT THE LORD IS ON some kind of ego trip here.

▶▶ You know, ~ like someone who constantly talks about himself, ~ wants you to know everything about him, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and has zero interest in knowing anything about you.

↪↪ You know, ~ like most of the human race.

▶▶ No, ~ it's not like that at all.

▷▷ Our gracious, ~ merciful, ~ and loving Triune God ~ wants us ~ ¶¶

↪↪ to continually grow in knowledge about him ~ for our own good. ¶¶ 9/13

▷▷It is to benefit us ~ not himself.

↳↳And he's definitely very interested in us.

▶▶In Hosea, ~ chapter 4, ~ verse 6 (NIV), ~ God points out the danger of lacking knowledge about Him.

▷▷Through Hosea, ~ God says, "my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge."

↳↳I.e., ~ from lack of knowledge of God's laws and his ways.

▶▶Lack of knowledge about Jesus ~ opens us up ~ to being taken in by false teachers, ~ ¶¶

▷▷to stagnate in our spiritual growth, ~ ¶¶

↳↳and ~ to fall victim to Satan, ~ our sin nature, ~ and this evil world

▷▷In brief, ~ ¶¶

↳↳if we are not continually growing in our knowledge about the Lord, ~ ¶¶

→→we will be destroyed spiritually.

WE FIND ~ THE 3rd CHARACTERISTIC ~ OF A LIFE THAT IS FULLY PLEASING TO the Lord, ~ in verse 11a.

BEING STRENGTHENED WITH ALL POWER, ~ ACCORDING TO HIS GLORIOUS MIGHT, ~ for all endurance and patience.

▶▶The basic point here, ~ I would suggest, ~ is this.

▷▷A life ~ that is fully pleasing to Jesus ~ is one ~ ¶¶

↳↳in which there is total dependence ~ on his power ~ rather than our own ~ ¶¶

→→in order to endure and to be patient. ¶¶ 10/13

▶▶ Generally in Scripture, ~ "endurance" ~ refers ~ to difficult circumstances in life ~ which must be endured.

▶▶ And ~ "patience" ~ is often used ~ in describing one's dealings ~ with difficult people.

LIFE ~ IS OFTEN DIFFICULT AND CHALLENGING.

▶▶ At times, ~ circumstances are less than friendly.

▷▷ At those times ~ we need the ability to withstand them.

▶▶ At times, ~ we encounter difficult people.

▷▷ At those times ~ we need patience, ~ 77

↳↳ the capacity to be long-suffering with people ~ 77

→→ and not retaliate when we are wronged or irritated.

TO RELY ON OUR OWN STRENGTH AT THESE TIMES ~ 77

▶▶ not only ~ does not please the Lord, ~ it is utter foolishness to even try.

▶▶ Clearly an implication here ~ 77

▷▷ is the utter inadequacy ~ for believers ~ 77

↳↳ of even trying ~ to endure and be patient ~ through our own meager efforts.

FURTHERMORE, ~ TO RELY ON OUR OWN STRENGTH AT THESE TIMES ~ is also ~ sinful.

▶▶ It is sinful, ~ because we are telling the Lord ~ that ~ we are stronger than he is, ~ 77

▷▷ that ~ we don't need his help. 11 11/13

▶▶ We are putting ourselves ~ above him, ~

▷▷ which is called, ~ I believe, ~ idolatry.

▶▶ Reliance on one's own strength is pridefully telling the Lord, ~ 77

▷▷ "I don't need you, ~ thank you very much. ~ 77

↳↳ "I'm quite content and can handle things on my own."

▷▷ But it never quite works out the way we think it will ~ when we adopt that attitude, ~ does it?

ONE FINAL POINT FOR VERSE 11.

▶▶ There's a wonderful promise implied here.

▷▷ And i.e., ~ the Lord will enable us to endure and to be patient.

▶▶ When we admit ~ that we can't handle these things on our own ~ & ask him for help, ~ 77

▷▷ he will lovingly, ~ graciously, ~ and mercifully ~ 77

↳↳ infuse us ~ with his inexhaustible power ~ 77

→→ that will enable us ~ to endure and be patient. ~ Praise be to God!

CONCLUSION.

NOW LET'S LOOK AT THE FOURTH CHARACTERISTIC OF A LIFE THAT IS PLEASING TO God.

▶▶ Verses 11b-12a. ~ with joy ~ giving thanks to the Father. 11 12/13

▶▶ And we'll close with a brief look at this characteristic, ~ 77

▷▷ since we're going to come across this theme of thankfulness quite a few more times.

▷▷ Five more times to be exact.

↪↪ So, ~ we'll be spending a lot more time on this in the future ~ than we are today.

→→ Look at today ~ as an introduction ~ to the theme of thankfulness.

▶▶ I.e., ~ believers please God when they are joyfully giving thanks to the Father.

▶▶ Joy with [verse 12](#)

▶▶ The Greek grammar shows that this thanksgiving ~ should be habitual with believers.

▷▷ I.e., ~ joyfully and continually giving thanks to the Father is pleasing to him.

▶▶ The text describes this as heartfelt, ~ genuine thankfulness ~ 77

▷▷ that grows out of ~ the experience of salvation.

▶▶ When we, ~ believers, ~ continually consider all that God has done for us, ~ what he has rescued us from, ~ 77

▷▷ what he has promised for this and the life to come, ~ loved ones, ~ 77

↪↪ how could we not ~ joyfully and continually ~ give our heavenly Father thanks?

LET'S PRAY 13/13