

## Further Bible Study Questions

- A) Does a follower of Jesus Christ really have to “grow deeper” in their relationship with Jesus Christ? I mean you are already saved from sin and the punishment for sin (eternal Hell), is there any compelling reason why you need to “do more?” Is it possible for a person to be saved, and then never really grow? Can Jesus be Savior, but not really Lord? What has your experience of this been in your life? Try and think of some area of your life where Jesus has saved you, but He does not have “Lordship.”
- B) The Bible teaches that if a person is truly saved, then Jesus is the Lord of their life and they will consistently, constantly, and gradually be molded to the image of Jesus Christ. This is the picture the Bible portrays of a Christian, a “Christ” follower. Yet, in every person’s life, there are areas which are easier to relinquish control to the Lord, and others which are tougher. Take some time to think of the areas in your life where Jesus has transformed you over the years. Can you look back and see change in your life? Do you look more like Jesus today than you did when you were first “converted?”
- C) What is one area of your life (just one), where you feel Jesus would like greater control of you? Is it something in your thought life, your attitudes toward another person, a selfish or greedy spirit, a lack of satisfaction with one thing or another? Is there an area of sin which is obvious to you which needs change? Rather than make a bunch of promises or “put your nose to the grindstone” in self-effort, take a look back at Colossians 1:15-18... Meditate on these verses, maybe even memorize them. How does this view of Jesus Christ make a difference in the areas of your life where you need change?
- D) I have found that I seldom change my most stubborn behaviors without good old-fashioned accountability to a friend or mentor. Are you truly ready to change? Then share your “growth area” with another “fellow follower of Christ” who can pray for you and keep you accountable!

# Reaching The Summit

Long Beach Alliance Church • July 29<sup>th</sup>, 2007 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**HE IS BEFORE ALL THINGS, AND IN HIM ALL THINGS HOLD TOGETHER. HE IS ALSO HEAD OF THE BODY, THE CHURCH; AND HE IS THE BEGINNING, THE FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD, SO THAT HE HIMSELF WILL COME TO HAVE FIRST PLACE IN EVERYTHING.**  
~**COLOSSIANS 1:17-18 (NASB)**

## **1) Trusting The Truth**

- A) The Apostle Paul has already commended the followers of Christ for their response to “the word of truth, the gospel” (Colossians 1:5).
- B) Paul has also exhorted (encouraged) the Colossians to make sure their actions (1:9-12) flow from a relationship with the person of Jesus Christ (1:13-14).
- C) The emphasis in Colossians is that “the forgiveness of sins” (1:14) has not come through human effort, but through a relationship with the “beloved Son” (1:13), Jesus Christ.

- D) What Paul has adequately described up to this point is a knowledge of God, Christ and Holy Spirit which is **sufficient for salvation** (1:1-14). Unfortunately, this is where the knowledge of God ceased for the Colossians!
  
- E) This lack of knowledge about Jesus Christ, the source of salvation, was dangerously stunting the growth of the Colossians and opening them up to all sorts of mystical and clever-sounding heresies (2:6-7).
  
- F) Paul's challenge (and our own) is to be continually growing deeper in our knowledge of Christ so that we will develop as mature disciples of Jesus (1:15ff).

## 2) Conversion = Born Again, Growth = Discipleship

- A) Jesus described becoming a Christian as being "born again" (John 3:3). Paul refers to the same thing when he says Christians are "transferred" from one kingdom to the kingdom of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:13).
  
- B) However, the goal of the gospel is NOT to make converts, but to make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). The call of Jesus Christ is not one of conversion ONLY, but one of discipleship. Following Jesus means being His disciple!
  
- C) All believers in Christ must move past the initial step of becoming a disciple (conversion) and continue to grow by developing their knowledge and relationship with Jesus Christ. This is Paul's goal beginning in Colossians 1:15!

## 3) Reaching The Summit

- A) **Jesus Reveals God.** God, who is spirit (John 4:24) and is invisible (John 1:18, 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 1:17), is "seen" in the image of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:15). Jesus is the radiance of God (Hebrews 1:3), the exact representation of God's nature.
  
- B) **Jesus Is Lord Of All.** Jesus is supreme (firstborn) over the creation (1:15). He is the creator of all things, those things we can see and those we cannot see (1:16). He is in control of all things, including all powers and authorities on earth (cf. Romans 13:1ff).
  
- C) **Jesus Is The Personal "Force" Which Holds The Universe Together.** The creation of Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:16) is in a state of "constancy," In other words, Jesus did not "create the world and then let it run its course." Rather, He is constantly 'holding it together' (1:17).
  
- D) **Jesus Receives First Place.** The creation functions best when Jesus Christ is given His rightful place as supreme (first) over all the creation (1:18). Whether in death or life, Christ is to be first in all things!

\* πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως. If "image" (εἰκών) emphasizes Christ's relation to God, then the second title, "firstborn of all creation" (on the omission of the article before "creation" see *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament*, BDF, paragraph 275) designates his relationship to the creation. Stripped from its context and from other Pauline statements about Christ this phrase might be understood to include him among created things (as simply the "eldest" of the "family": at Rom 8:29 πρωτότοκος appears to be used in this inclusive sense). But the context makes it plain that the title cannot refer to him as the first of all created beings since the immediately following words, which provide a commentary on the title (ὁτι), emphasize the point that he is the one by whom the whole creation came into being. Further, apart from the incompatibility of this thought with the teaching of Paul in general about the person and work of Christ, such an understanding is not required by the word πρωτότοκος ("firstborn") itself. Within the NT "firstborn" (πρωτότοκος), which occurs in the plural at Hebrews 11:28 and 12:23, always refers in the singular to Jesus Christ. In most of these contexts while priority of time is in view (Rom 8:29; cf the parallel expressions in 1 Cor 15:20 and Acts 26:23; Rev 1:5) the notion of supremacy or priority of rank tends to dominate. Excerpt from Peter O'Brien, *Word Biblical Commentary #44, Colossians & Philemon*, page #44.