



**FIGHT**  
THE **GOOD**  
**FIGHT**



**ontrack devotions**

**DECEMBER**

**2018**

GALATIANS -  
COLOSSIANS

# MONTHLY PRAYER SHEET

"...The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." James 5:16

Reach out...

How I will do it...

How it went...

Other requests...

Answered

How it was answered...

# MONTHLY COMMITMENT SHEET

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

This sheet is designed to help you make personal commitments each month that will help you grow in your walk with God. Fill it out by determining

1. What will push you
2. What you think you can achieve

If you need help filling out your commitments, seek out someone you trust who can help you. Share your commitments with those who will help keep you accountable to your personal commitment.

## **Personal Devotions:**

How did I do with my commitment last month? \_\_\_\_\_  
I will commit to read the OnTrack Bible passage and devotional thought \_\_\_\_\_ day(s) each week this month.

## **Church Attendance:**

How did I do last month with my attendance? \_\_\_\_\_  
I will attend Youth/Growth Group \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) this month.  
I will attend the Sunday AM service \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) this month.  
I will attend the Sunday PM service \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) this month.  
I will attend \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) this month.  
I will attend \_\_\_\_\_ time(s) this month.

## **Scripture Memory:**

How did I do with Scripture memory last month? \_\_\_\_\_  
I will memorize \_\_\_\_\_ key verse(s) from the daily OnTrack Devotions this month.

## **Outreach:**

How did I do last month with sharing Christ? \_\_\_\_\_  
I will share Christ with \_\_\_\_\_ person/people this month.  
I will serve my local church this month by \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## **Other Activities:**

List any other opportunities such as events, prayer group, etc., that you will participate in this month. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever had someone step into your life and begin telling you what to do when you felt they had no right to do so? Could this church have been wondering the same thing about Paul? Did he have the right or authority to write this letter? He gives the answer in verse 1 and then illustrates the answer in verses 13-24. Paul did not just write general thoughts down and send them to this church. Nor was he sending a letter that someone else wanted him to write. He had been sent by Jesus Christ and, to show them how this all came about, he shared his story with them. Having read what God had done in Paul's life, the church would know that what he wrote was from God. The church in Galatia would find Paul credible because his life, both past and at the time of the letter, demonstrated that he was a man sent from God. How do the people in your world respond when you have something to say? Does your life give credibility to what you say? In what ways have you recently hurt your credibility? If you struggle in this area, begin now to make the changes necessary to become one whose actions give credibility to his words.

### SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

### SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

### NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

### THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

**PROVERBS 18**

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE | WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES | HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE

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Why was Paul so upset with Peter in this passage? Was it really such a big deal? Paul was upset because Peter was being legalistic. And yes, being legalistic is a big deal. Legalism is judging one's spirituality by a list of rules created by man, not those found in the Bible. Legalism says a person is spiritual if he listens to certain kinds of music, wears his hair or clothing in a particular way, etc. Peter was doing the same thing to the Gentiles in this church. He separated himself from the Gentiles because they did not behave exactly the way the Jews did. The problem with legalism is that it causes people to feel that spirituality is gained by living according to a list when, in reality, it is gained by a relationship with Christ. We aren't justified by doing the things on someone's list. Spirituality is gained by having a right relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Legalism destroys our joy and freedom in Christ. Is there someone in your world you have judged as unspiritual because he does things differently than you do? Never judge someone's spirituality based on your standards, but on the standards of Scripture alone.

### SAY WHAT?

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Observation: What do I see?

### SO WHAT?

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Interpretation: What does it mean?

### NOW WHAT?

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Application: How does it apply to me?

### THEN WHAT?

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Implementation: What do I do?

## GALATIANS 3:1-14

## MOTIVATION

**SAY WHAT?**

How can you determine what your motivation is for serving God?

**SO WHAT?**

How can you determine whether your spiritual growth is through your effort alone or by God working?

**NOW WHAT?**

What conclusions have you come to about your motivation for serving God?

**THEN WHAT?**

What personal commitment can you make based on today's reading?

How can we become all God wants us to be? What are the keys to spiritual growth? In this passage, Paul gives us one very important key--our motivation. Paul begins by condemning those people who are trying to gain spirituality by human effort (legalism). Although they were genuinely saved through faith in Christ, they were now being led to believe they could grow and become Christ-like only through their own efforts. Paul reminded them that they did not receive the Spirit of God because they lived according to a specific standard or did the right things, but because they believed what God said was true. Instead of serving God out of a heart of love, they were serving Him in order to gain His favor. One of the problems with legalism is that people often serve God with the motivation of gaining favor. They don't serve with a heart of love and gratitude, but to earn God's approval. What is your motivation for serving God? Is it to gain His favor or because of your love and commitment to Him? It is sometimes difficult to determine our true motives, but God will reveal them to us if we ask Him to. Your motivation is key to real growth.

**X**TRA READING  
GALATIANS 3

Have you ever wondered if you can lose your salvation? Is there a sin you could commit that would cost you your position as a child of God? If you have, you will find comfort in today's reading. Paul included in his letter to the church in Galatia an important fact to confirm to them, and to us who read this, that our salvation is secure. The church was being taught by false teachers that their inheritance, which is salvation, was dependent upon completely observing the Law. They felt their salvation could be lost by failing to follow just one part of the Law. Paul corrected the error and explained that their inheritance does not depend on the Law or their ability to abide by the Law. It depends upon a promise. Their inheritance is secure because of what God said, not because of what they have done. He closes this chapter by telling them they are sons through faith alone, in Jesus Christ alone. They are not sons because of what they have done or continue to do, but because of what Christ did. God does not want our service to Him to be motivated by gaining His favor but because we love Him. We serve Him because we want to, not because we have to.

### SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

### SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

### NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

### THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

**XTRA READING**  
GALATIANS 3



## GALATIANS 4:1-7

## DADDY

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

What does the word "Abba" mean, and why would Paul use it in this chapter? This is an excellent word that reveals some comforting elements of our relationship with God. There are many names we use for fathers, and all those names communicate how we see them. "Abba" is an informal Aramaic term for "father," communicating intimacy, tenderness, dependence, and the complete lack of fear or anxiety. Words today for "father" that would be similar to this word would be "Daddy" or "Papa." It is a term usually used by a young child who looks into the eyes of the one he trusts when he needs help or is frightened. It is the term used when a child needs to talk to the one he knows loves him. Paul uses that word to communicate to us the kind of relationship we can have with God through Jesus Christ. We can have a personal, intimate relationship with our "Daddy." We can go to Him at any time with any problem and know that He will always hear and always care. When you talk to Him today, remember He is your "Abba Father!" He loves you and is waiting for you. There is nothing you need to do to earn His love and affection.

**X**TRA READING  
GALATIANS 4

If we are not to live according to lists of right and wrong, how are we to know what behavior is right and what is wrong? Can we do whatever we want since there is no way to gain favor with God by what we do? Not according to Paul. Paul tells us not to live by human lists, but by the Spirit. He realizes that it is possible for some to interpret his statements as a license to do wrong. These people really use their freedom in Christ to do what their sinful nature wants to do. Then, they say they are free from legalistic laws and able to do what they want. Paul teaches that while we do not live by lists conceived by man, we are to fulfill the principles of Scripture, and we are to be guided and led by the Holy Spirit. Knowing these principles of Scripture will then allow the Holy Spirit to guide us. If we follow this pattern, we will not gratify the desires of our sinful nature. We will live by Biblical principles, implemented by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Are you successfully "living by the Holy Spirit?" Use today's questions to help determine if you are living by the Holy Spirit and what can help you develop sensitivity to the Holy Spirit's work in your life.

### SAY WHAT?

How are the acts of the sinful nature demonstrated in my life? (5:19-21)

### SO WHAT?

In what ways do I see the fruit of the Spirit in my life? (5:22-26)

### NOW WHAT?

How can I limit the acts of my sinful nature and maximize the fruit of the Spirit in my life?

### THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment should I make in light of today's reading?

## GALATIANS 6:1-10

## PAYDAY SOMEDAY

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

Did Paul intend verse 7 in today's reading to encourage us, or to cause us concern? It seems most of the sermons that are preached from this text have a strong negative message as the main point. When this passage is taught, it is usually to say that if we sow sin, it will produce negative consequences in our lives. Reaping the consequences of sin is an undeniable and necessary message we need to hear. However, they must know that the positive side of this passage is equally important. The principle is that we will all reap what we sow. Therefore, if we do good and serve God faithfully, we will also reap good things. Even when it looks like the effort you are putting into your spiritual walk and the good you are trying to accomplish in your church and home is accomplishing nothing, you will reap the positive results from your efforts one day, "if you don't give up." Remember, "A man reaps what he sows." Therefore, do not become weary in doing good! In what area of your life right now do you need to apply verse 9? Remember that the "proper time" will come. When it does, it will be worth waiting for.

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

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VERSE | WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES | HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE

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## EPHESIANS 1:1-14

## EVERYTHING

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

What if my present situation does not work out? What if it just gets worse and never gets better? Have you ever been haunted by those thoughts? Maybe today you are in the midst of a situation that looks tough, and there seems to be no way out. All you see ahead is more pain and difficulty. It looks like it will never change, and you have concluded that there is no hope. If that describes you, then you must have found today's reading motivating. Why? Because Paul tells us that we have been chosen by the one who works out "everything" in conformity to His will. Think about that for a moment. What in our life is not included in "everything?" Is your present situation included? God knows exactly what is going on in your life, and He wants you to know that it will work out exactly as He has planned. You must trust Him and realize "everything" includes what you are presently facing. Ultimately, God's will is going to be accomplished even if right now it might not seem like that is possible. Trust Him, and be amazed at what He does. God knows what He is doing, and His plan is right on schedule.

What kinds of things do you pray for? If God answered your prayers, what would happen in your life, or in your youth group, as a result of your requests? If you ask for the kind of things Paul asked for in today's reading, your life and your youth group would never be the same. Look at some of the things Paul asks God to do in people's lives in this passage. In verse 18, he prays that their eyes would be opened so they could see three things. He knew that if the Ephesians could see these as clearly as God intended, they would never be the same. First, Paul wanted God to open their eyes to the hope they had. Second, he asked that they see the riches of the inheritance God had waiting for them. Third, he wanted God to open their eyes to the power that was available to them. Think what would happen in your life or in your youth group if you and others really began to see these three things the way God sees them. Start today and ask God to open your eyes to all you have in Him. Ask Him to do the same for others. Ask Him to do what will really change lives. You and your church will never be the same!

### SAY WHAT?

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Observation: What do I see?

### SO WHAT?

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Interpretation: What does it mean?

### NOW WHAT?

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Application: How does it apply to me?

### THEN WHAT?

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Implementation: What do I do?

## EPHESIANS 2:1-10

## CHARACTERISTICS

**SAY WHAT?**

How does one act who is manifesting the characteristics listed in this passage?

**SO WHAT?**

How does one act who is not?

**NOW WHAT?**

What do those two lists reveal about your own life?

**THEN WHAT?**

What personal commitment can you make in light of today's reading?

What does it mean to be "dead in your sins?" In today's reading, Paul gives four characteristics of someone who is not saved. Knowing them will help us have a greater burden for the unsaved and a greater appreciation for our salvation. First, he says that those who are dead in their sins follow the ways of the world (vs2). They live by its value system--it sets their goals. Second, they follow Satan (vs2). They live according to his goals and can't resist his temptations. They have no power over sin. In fact, they are his slaves. Third, they gratify the cravings of their sinful nature (vs3). They do whatever makes them feel good and is comfortable. They are controlled by their desires. They have no self control. Fourth, they follow the desires and thoughts of their sinful nature (vs4). This characteristic literally means they willfully choose to go against the will of God and follow the world. Thankfully, God saw us in this condition and made us alive through faith in Jesus Christ. Why? That He might show the incomparable riches of His grace. Who in your world is living as one who is dead in his sin and needs to be made alive?

Racism and prejudice are despicable. Nobody who truly understands and follows Biblical teaching will engage in prejudice of any kind. This passage shows us why. Paul explained to this church, made up of mostly Gentiles, that at one time, they were outside of God. They were not part of God's promise. Jesus Christ came and abolished what divided the Jew and the Gentile. He made it possible for all people to become part of the body of Christ. There are no longer foreigners or aliens. The power of the gospel goes beyond race or nationality and makes people of all races and nationalities one. We are all members of one body. We should not need black churches, white churches, Hispanic churches and Oriental churches. Our churches ought to be an example to the world that the gospel of Jesus Christ breaks the walls that divide us and that we are all one in Him. Does your life demonstrate you believe this? Is your church an example of this to your community? Jesus Christ broke down the walls that divided the races. Do not be a part of building them up again. Look at your friends and evaluate your life.

### SAY WHAT?

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Observation: What do I see?

### SO WHAT?

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Interpretation: What does it mean?

### NOW WHAT?

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Application: How does it apply to me?

### THEN WHAT?

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Implementation: What do I do?

**XTRA READING**  
EPHESIANS 3



## EPHEISANS 4:1-16

## WALKING WORTHY

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

What does it mean to live a life “worthy” of your calling? Christians today have lost credibility in the eyes of the world because we do not understand what this word means and fail to follow what it teaches. We Christians talk a big talk, but it seldom matches our walk. The word Paul uses, here translated worthy, addresses that very issue. The word worthy is a term which originally had to do with scales. If one wanted the scale to balance, he would place an equal weight on the other side. When it was balanced, it was “worthy.” Paul wrote in the previous three chapters about what we have since we’ve trusted Christ. For the rest of the book, he will tell us how we ought to act in light of this truth. On one side of our scale is what Paul described in chapters 1-3. Paul now says the other side, our behavior, must balance or be “worthy” of what is true of us. Do you walk “worthy” of who you are in Christ? Does your conduct balance with what Christ has done in you? Does your walk match your talk? What changes do you need to make to walk “worthy”? Remember, the world is watching!

In today's reading, we find a crucial section of Scripture that explains how to become mature and godly in our faith. It contains the pattern for putting into practice all Paul has discussed in chapters 1-3. It is called the "replacement principle." Paul teaches us that growing spiritually is more than just stopping wrong behavior. For those who struggle with lying, just stopping is not enough. Maturing involves replacing wrong behavior with right behavior. A liar must not only stop lying, but start telling the truth. A person who steals should not just stop stealing, he must start to do something positive with his hands. If we struggle with our thought life, we cannot just stop thinking bad thoughts, we need to replace those thoughts with good, pure thoughts. Often we make decisions to "put off" wrong behavior or thoughts but never follow through in "putting on" the right behavior and thoughts. When we determine what to "put off," we must then "put on" what Scripture tells us is the right behavior. In what area of your life do you need to replace the wrong with what's right? Use today's questions to help you get started "putting on."

### SAY WHAT?

What specific attitudes and/or behaviors do you need to "put off"?

### SO WHAT?

What specific behavior and/or attitudes do you need to "put on" in order to replace the wrong ones?

### NOW WHAT?

What plan can you develop to make sure you "put off" sin and "put on" what's right?

### THEN WHAT?

What personal commitment should you make in light of today's reading?

**PROVERBS 20**

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

VERSE | WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES | HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE

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After spending time with you, would an acquaintance know whose child you are? Have you ever had someone who did not know you ask you if you were your parents' child just by observing how you act? Would someone know you belong to Jesus Christ after watching you for a while? He would if you are successful in doing what Paul asks us to do in today's reading. He explains that we need to be imitators of God. We see people everywhere who imitate someone. At basketball games, players wear their clothing exactly like their favorite NBA or college player. They're imitating those individuals. People imitate their favorite heros in dress and hair styles. Paul stresses that we, as Christians, need to be imitating God. We need to act, on the court and in the field, like He would. While doing our job at work, we need to do it as He would. When people see us, they need to see Jesus Christ. Who are you imitating? Do your actions, attitudes, dress, etc, demonstrate that you are striving to be like Him? Can people see Him in all you do? If not, concentrate your efforts on imitating Him and no one else. Let the people in your world see Christ in everything you do.

### SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

### SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

### NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

### THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

## EPHESIANS 6:10-20

## OUR SWORD

**SAY WHAT?**

In what ways is Satan currently attacking you?

**SO WHAT?**

What specific verses can you memorize to help you fight those attacks?

**NOW WHAT?**

Write some of them here to begin the process of memorizing them.

**THEN WHAT?**

Pick one and memorize it today.

When He was on earth, did Jesus use the armor of God to stand against Satan's schemes? What examples can you think of? In one example, Luke tells how Jesus used a piece of the armor we find here and demonstrated how we can use that piece of armor, too. In verse 17, Paul tells us to take up the "sword of the Spirit." The word for "sword" here is not a large sword pulled out of the belt, but a small dagger-like sword used in hand to hand combat. It had a very specific purpose and target. He then says that for us, this sword is the Word of God. Paul wasn't referring to the Bible in general, but "specific" passages of the Bible that deal with particular situations. Our sword, in hand to hand combat against Satan's schemes, is "specific" verses of Scripture that attack "specific" schemes of Satan. When Satan strikes us with fear, we strike back with verses like Philippians 4:6-7. That is what Christ did in Luke 4:1-13. We need to arm ourselves with "specific" verses that address the "specific" scheme Satan is using against us. Remember, the best defense is a good offense. What verses do you need to memorize in order to stand against Satan?

If you had to make a choice between something that is good, better, or best, which one would you choose? Most would say that they would want the best, but often they are more than willing to settle for better or good. Our world seems to be very satisfied with just getting by or just being "good" enough. We are satisfied with "good" grades, a "good" game, or having a "good" job. Is that what God intended for Christians? NO! If God never intended us to settle for good, then how do we make sure we have "best?" We find the answer in Paul's prayer. He asked God to grant two requests. We find them in verse 9. The first is that their love would abound more and more in knowledge. This means to be learning new Biblical information. Secondly, he asks for depth of insight. This is a "gut feeling" about something being right or wrong. Paul knew that if they were growing in their knowledge of God's Word and gaining insight on how to apply it, they would choose what was best. The same will be true of us if these two requests are granted by God in our lives. Are they? If not, like Paul, ask God to give them to you as well.

### SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

### SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

### NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

### THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

## PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

## THE SAME AS...

**SAY WHAT?**

In what areas do you find it difficult to have an attitude like Christ's?

**SO WHAT?**

Why is it hard for you to have Christ's attitude in these areas?

**NOW WHAT?**

How can you begin to demonstrate an attitude like Christ's?

**THEN WHAT?**

What personal commitment can you make in light of this passage?

What words would describe your attitude most of the time? Are you known for humility or a prideful attitude? According to today's passage, your attitude should be just like Jesus Christ's. Paul tells us that Jesus Christ was in every way God, but didn't demand or fight for the advantages or rights of being God. If He had, He would not have left the throne room of heaven to become a man. Instead, He was able to make Himself nothing and become a man. He not only became a man, but a servant, and was obedient to death. However, it was not just any death. He became obedient to death on a cross, the most humiliating way to die in that culture. Why? Because He cared about your needs above His own. Are there areas of your life in which you demand preferential treatment? Are you willing to put aside your position and what might come with it in order to serve others? "I deserve better" is not something a person with Christ's attitude would say. Is God speaking to you about an area in which your attitude is not like Christ's? To have an attitude other than one like His is to sin. Make a plan to begin changing it today.

**XTRA READING**  
PHILIPPIANS 2

What does "to work out your salvation" mean in this passage? We know that it certainly does not mean that you can earn your salvation, because that would contradict what Paul taught in the book of Romans and several other places in his writings. A close look at verse 13 explains Paul's meaning, and gives us one of the greatest promises in all of Scripture. Paul tells them to work out, in the living of their lives, the results of their salvation--to make sure that their lives demonstrate fruit from their salvation. Why could he expect them to be able to see those results in their lives? Because, according to verse 13, "it is God who works in you to will," (the want to), "and to act," (the ability to carry it out), "according to His good pleasure." In other words, it is God who gives you the desire to do what is right and also the ability to carry it out. Success in the Christian life is possible for everyone who is saved. For example, if you want to be more faithful in your devotions or witnessing, ask God to give you the "want to," and the "ability to." In what area of your life right now do you need the will to do what is right? Start by asking God to give it to you!

### SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

### SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

### NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

### THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

## PHILIPPIANS 3:1-11

## CONFIDENCE

**SAY WHAT?**

What evidence do people look for to determine whether or not they are saved or doing well spiritually?

**SO WHAT?**

What is evidence that you are saved or doing well spiritually?

**NOW WHAT?**

What does Scripture identify as the confirmation of one's salvation or spiritual growth?

**THEN WHAT?**

What personal commitment should you make in light of this passage?

Why would Paul, at one time in his life, feel he was right with God, even though he was not? The answer? He put confidence in the wrong things. At one time he thought he was righteous because of his heritage. He had been born into a Jewish family and had followed all the Jewish regulations and laws. He was a Hebrew of Hebrews, which meant he had come from a family that avoided all assimilation into the popular culture of the day. They remained true to the Law. He became a Pharisee. He kept the Law and lived according to strict standards. He had so much zeal for God he even persecuted the church. According to Jewish standards, he was faultless. But, he wasn't saved. He felt he was righteous because of the "spiritual things" he had done and because of the family into which he had been born. Could you be making the same mistake? Do you feel all is well because you live in a Christian family and do "Christian" things? What have you put your confidence in? What helps you know where you are spiritually? Use today's questions to direct your self-examination. Like Paul, it might change your life.

**XTRA READING**  
PHILIPPIANS 3

The book of Proverbs was designed to help us in "attaining wisdom and discipline; in understanding words of insight; in acquiring a disciplined and prudent life, doing what is right and just and fair; in giving prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young." As you read through this chapter, write down the verses that are most significant to you in your present circumstances.

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VERSE | WHAT TRUTH IT COMMUNICATES | HOW IT IMPACTS MY LIFE

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## PHILIPPIANS 3:12-21

## ONE THING

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

Could you squeeze everything you do into "one thing?" Or, is your life filled with so many things that to describe what you do, you would have to say "five things" or "ten things?" What an amazing statement the Apostle Paul makes in today's reading! He says in verse 13, "one thing I do." The one thing he did was to press on toward the goal to which God had called him. No matter what he did in his life, it could all be boiled down into "one thing." How did he do it? By forgetting the past and straining toward the future. Why is it important to forget the past? First, the past can cripple you with guilt over past sin or failures. Secondly, the past can make you proud. You can look back and become satisfied with what you have done and no longer strive for what is ahead. So, if Paul wanted to achieve his "one" goal, he had to forget the past and strive for the future. Guilt and pride would prevent him (and you) from moving forward. What is your "one" goal? Is it to win the prize God has for you? Forget the past, its failures and its successes, and strive for what is ahead. The past can be a dangerous place, so leave it there! Make life about the "one thing."

**X**TRA READING  
PHILIPPIANS 3

Today is an important day for the believer, a day we celebrate the greatest gift that was ever given, Jesus Christ. As you read that incredible account, reflect on how your life has changed because of that gift. In the space provided, write a thank you note to God for the gift of love He has given. Take some time today to share your letter with Him in prayer. He will be pleased with your time together. Instead of making this day only about gifts from others, and how those gifts will impact your life, take the opportunity to reflect on the greatest gift ever given to you.

Many years ago You gave to me the greatest gift ever given. Today, I want to thank you for that gift and for its impact on my...

On this Christmas day, I want to give you a gift as well. So this Christmas I give to you...

With a grateful heart,

## PHILIPPIANS 4:1-9

## ANYTHING &amp; EVERYTHING

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?

One of the beautiful things about Scripture is how God's choice of words make it perfectly clear what He expects of us. Today, we find a verse that does exactly that. Did you notice it? Paul tells the church in Philippi not to be anxious about "anything," and in "everything," to present their requests to God. That is all-inclusive. God does not want us to worry about one thing, no matter what it is. We should not fret or worry about "anything." Instead, when we face something that could make us anxious, we are to take it to God in prayer. We must not only take it to God, but take it with a thankful heart. We must be thankful for the certainty that He will always provide and will always meet our needs. He will either take care of what concerns us, or He will give us grace to allow it to strengthen us. Therefore, in "everything," take your concerns to God. What are you anxious about today? What are you concerned might take place? Whatever the circumstances, do not be anxious. Instead, give it to God in prayer. Ask Him to take care of it. Then His peace will guard your heart. Why not take it to Him right now?

**X**TRA READING  
PHILIPPIANS 4

When you pray, what do you pray for? As you have read through these four books, known as the Prison Epistles, hopefully you have learned a great deal from observing the way Paul prayed. In this passage, we have another one of his prayers to more closely examine. It gives us an example of how to pray, as well as the results of our prayers in the lives of those we pray for. Paul prayed that God would fill the people in the church of Colosse with the knowledge of His will through spiritual wisdom and understanding. We find that there are six results from this prayer. Number them in your Bible. "They will live a life worthy of the Lord (vs10); they will please God in every way (vs10); they will bear fruit in every good work (vs10); they will grow in the knowledge of God (vs10); they will be strengthened with all power (vs11); they will joyfully give thanks to God (vs11)." Who would not want these items to characterize their spiritual life? Imagine what would happen in your church when these six results begin to show themselves in people's lives. Like Paul, why not ask God to give these characteristics to you and to those you pray for. You will be amazed by what He does!

### SAY WHAT?

Observation: What do I see?

### SO WHAT?

Interpretation: What does it mean?

### NOW WHAT?

Application: How does it apply to me?

### THEN WHAT?

Implementation: What do I do?

## COLOSSIANS 1:24-29

## HIS ENERGY

**SAY WHAT?**

How can you tell if you are only using the human energy that God has given to everyone?

**SO WHAT?**

In what ways can you tell if you are using the supernatural energy God provides?

**NOW WHAT?**

How can you be sure to use the supernatural power of God?

**THEN WHAT?**

In light of this passage, what personal commitment should you make?

Have you noticed, as you read your Bible, how important certain words are? Change one seemingly insignificant word, and the whole meaning of a verse or passage changes. There is one of these words in today's reading. It could be easily overlooked or missed. Look at the pronoun Paul uses in verse 29. He talks about how he is striving to admonish and teach them with all wisdom that he might present them in every way perfect to God. It sounds like hard, tiring work, doesn't it? How can he do that? He tells us by the pronoun he uses. Circle the word that states whose energy he was using. If we are going to accomplish what God wants for us, we must also learn to operate with HIS energy. Paul operated in God's power, not in his own human strength. You may be struggling because you are trying to accomplish things in human strength only, not HIS. Allow God's unlimited energy to strengthen you today. Stop trying to live the Christian life in your own effort. Take time today to surrender your will and let God have complete control.

As you read this chapter, can you feel the emotion Paul had as he wrote? He was very concerned about what was happening in this church. There were some who came into the church and taught that people needed to live according to a set of human-established lists in order to be spiritual. In other words, they were being legalistic. According to verse 22, they had made up rules not found in Scripture, but based on man's wisdom and teaching. Paul's concern was that, while they had an appearance of wisdom, living by those standards gave them no power over sin. Examine your life. Do you have power over sexual temptation both mentally and physically? When people wrong you, do you have the power to forgive and move forward? If not, it could be that you are living according to human standards that give no power. Spend some time today honestly examining your life. Tomorrow's reading will tell you how to change what you find.

### SAY WHAT?

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Observation: What do I see?

### SO WHAT?

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Interpretation: What does it mean?

### NOW WHAT?

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Application: How does it apply to me?

### THEN WHAT?

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Implementation: What do I do?

## COLOSSIANS 3:1-17

## NOW WHAT?

**SAY WHAT?**

In what ways can you begin to allow the peace of Christ to rule in your heart?

**SO WHAT?**

In what ways can you begin to allow the Word of God to dwell in you richly?

**NOW WHAT?**

How can you begin to do everything in the name of God?

**THEN WHAT?**

What personal commitment can you make in light of what this passage teaches?

We arrive at today's reading eager to learn how to put into practice yesterday's text. Paul tells us that since human standards and regulations do not give us any power over sexual sin, we are to set our hearts on Christ. How? He explains the process to be able to accomplish this task in this chapter. First, we must have our hearts set on things above. Our ambition needs to be to please God alone. Second, we need to think about those things. As we think about them, we will desire them and then seek to "put off" greed, evil desires, anger, rage, malice, filthy language, etc. Not only will we stop doing them, but we will replace them with the qualities he lists in verses 12-15. He then closes with three keys to success in this area. Put numbers next to them in your Bible. First, we accomplish this by letting the peace of Christ **RULE** in our hearts (vs15). Second, by letting the Word of Christ, the Bible, **DWELL** in us (vs16) and, thirdly, by **DOING** everything in the name of God (vs17). How are you doing in this process? Use today's questions to help you create ways to begin changing these areas in your life. It will change you!

**X**TRA READING  
COLOSSIANS 3

How many opportunities, in a typical day, do you have to impact others? How many opportunities do you have to give a word of encouragement to someone who is discouraged? How many people will you see who are ready to give up, even though they may not appear so? How many opportunities do you have to plant a seed that will help someone make an important decision in his future? How many opportunities do you have to share something about your faith that will encourage an unsaved friend to think about his relationship to Christ? How many opportunities do you have to demonstrate the difference that Jesus Christ makes in your life to someone who is watching? If you are honest, you would have to answer all of those questions with the word "many." With that knowledge in mind, Paul closes this letter with an important admonition. He tells them to make the most of "every" opportunity. What a great prayer it is for you each day. "Please God, help me to see the many opportunities I have to influence my world and to make the most of every opportunity to impact others on this day." What a great prayer to begin a new year!

**SAY WHAT?**

Observation: What do I see?

**SO WHAT?**

Interpretation: What does it mean?

**NOW WHAT?**

Application: How does it apply to me?

**THEN WHAT?**

Implementation: What do I do?





 PILGRIMAGE



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