



The Laying Foundations (Phase II) materials is divided into 3 series: 1) Knowing God, 2) Understanding People and 3) Growing Spiritually. Each series contains Teaching Outlines, Pocket Principles, Small Group Studies and Devotions. Inside you will find.

- ◆ *Teaching Outline excerpt from Knowing God*
- ◆ *Pocket Principle excerpt from Growing Spiritually*
 - ◆ *Table of Contents of all Teaching Outlines and Pocket Principles*
- ◆ *Small Group Study excerpt from Understanding People*
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- ◆ *Sample page from a devotion*

Excerpt from Teaching Outline Lesson #10 (Knowing God)

Knowing God

SUBJECT: Relationship with God
THEME: The reciprocal nature of knowing God
PROPOSITION: Our relationship with God is reciprocal in nature.

Introduction: You are now on a journey to know God, but did you know that He knows you and wants to relate to you, commune with you, be with you?

- A. Our relationship with God is a reciprocal one—God and man both have responsibility in it.
- B. There are fundamental differences between God and man which impact the relationship. (Not the same as human relationships)
 - 1. He is infinite; we are finite. (There are limits to our understanding.)
 - 2. He is the Creator; we are the “created”.
 - 3. He is invisible; we are visible.

Transition Sentence: We can better understand the reciprocal nature of our relationship with God by understanding our different roles.

- I. **God takes the initiative in the relationship with us.** (Psalm 139:1-16)
 - A. Psalm 139: 1-4: God knows us intimately; has taken the initiative to know us.
 - B. Psalm 139: 5-6: God protects and shields us; He is our security.
 - C. Psalm 139: 7-12: God is completely attentive to and involved with us regardless of our circumstances.
 - D. Psalm 139: 13-16: God initiated and sustains our being: external (physical) and internal (emotional, spiritual)
 - 1. We are made in His image.
 - 2. He has foreordained how long we will live.

Man's Role in Spiritual Growth

“God, make me good, but not yet.” - St. Augustine

The quote above attributed to one of the early church fathers, while perhaps tongue in cheek, contains a significant element of truth. Our goodness (growth in holiness) depends on God, but it also depends on us. God will not make us good until we are ready and willing to partner with Him in the process.

We have focused previously on God's role in our spiritual growth and meditated on the magnificent resources available to us. Now, we turn our attention to the flip side of the equation and focus on what is expected of us. The truth is that the believer plays a significant role in his own spiritual growth.

Consider, for example, the building of a garden shed. You may think about what you want the shed to look like, and you may draft plans for the structure. You may even secure all the necessary tools and materials to build the shed. However, at some point you have to actually get to work—to saw boards and hammer nails or the shed will never get built. Successful completion doesn't depend on your grand dreams or your good intentions. It comes about only through hard work. So it is with the Christian life. God has placed everything we need for

growth at our disposal but, until we actually start to use what we have been given, we will not make progress.

Paul wrote to his young charge Timothy that he should train himself to be godly (1 Timothy 4:7). Paul uses an athletic analogy to convey to Timothy that effort will be involved. The Olympic athlete dedicates himself to countless hours of rigorous training, all the while refraining from otherwise acceptable enjoyments to maintain discipline, all for the sake of achieving his goal. So, too, the follower of Christ must engage in certain activities and refrain from others in order to achieve the goal of increasing Christlikeness.

A word of caution as we delve into this topic.

The Christian life is a marathon rather than a sprint. It takes time to develop the endurance necessary to run a marathon. It doesn't happen overnight. Some believers hear of great Christian saints who read many chapters of the Bible or pray for several hours each day. Inspired by their example and determined to imitate their dedication, they try to maintain the same habits. Rare is the

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person who can immediately achieve that level of discipline. Most of us never do. And that's okay. As we will see below, God does call us to study His Word and to pray. But it is far better to start slowly and develop consistent habits than it is to try to do too much too soon and give up discouraged and disillusioned.

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Teaching Outlines and Pocket Principles

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Excerpt from Small Group Study #2 Understanding People

THE UNIQUENESS OF EACH PERSON

Leader

GOAL:

For a disciple to appreciate his own positive uniqueness as a person created in the image of God.

GETTING STARTED:

During our teenage years, our bodies and personalities undergo significant development and change. During your teenage years, what uniquely set you apart from your peers?

- The style of your hair
- The pitch of your voice
- The car you drove
- Your extra-curricular activities
- A special talent
- Your personality
- The clothes you wore
- Other: _____

Transition: In today's lesson, we will learn to appreciate the unique way that God has created each of us.

STUDYING TOGETHER:

Read Psalm 139:13-15

1. What do you think David meant by "inmost being?" *The term that David uses means "kidneys." This is a Hebrew idiom that refers to the center of our emotions and also to our moral sensitivity. Not only did God design my outward appearance, but He was also shaping my personality.*
2. Why did David praise God in verse 14? *He praised God for the way he was formed in His mother's womb. David gave praise because he knew God didn't see him as an afterthought, but rather a wonderful creation.*

3. David considered God's creative "works" as "wonderful." As you think about your personality and the way your body functions, would you consider God's creative work in you as "wonderful"? Why or why not?

4. Even though all people are made in God's image, we are all unique. Which of the following categories of differences apply to all people and which ones apply only to Christians? *Spiritual gifts and spiritual calling apply to Christians. The others apply to everyone.*

- roles
- personality
- spiritual gifts
- passion
- talent
- spiritual calling
- physical appearance

Note: At Phase II we mention spiritual gifts, but do not emphasize them or talk with disciples about finding their spiritual gifts. Believers need to get grounded in their relationship with Jesus before thinking about their gifts used to serve the Body. If a question arises, it should be answered but an in depth discussion should be deferred until later.

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Introduction to Colossians

The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the believers at Colossae from prison in about A.D. 60. The Colossian church was probably started by Epaphras after he became a believer under Paul's ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19:10).

Paul wrote the letter because Epaphras sent news that false teachers were telling the church in Colossae that their beliefs were incomplete. These false teachers had mixed together parts of Judaism, Greek philosophy and Christianity to form a new religion. Following are some of the features of their teachings:

1. They included forms of ascetic practices (extreme physical self-denial), angel worship, and pride in superior wisdom and knowledge.
2. They taught that there were spirit-powers that controlled the natural world and were to be revered as mediators between God and His creation. The separation between God and His creation could only be bridged by recognition of and reverence paid to these "elemental spirits."
3. One could show reverence to these spirit-powers by being delivered from the evil influences of material things. There were two routes a person could take: a) asceticism or b) the observation of the Jewish holy days (Sabbaths, feast days and new moon celebrations), circumcision and the Jewish dietary laws.

In this letter to the Colossians Paul seeks to address this heresy by using the ideas and language of the false teachers and showing that Christ is the fulfillment they are seeking. There is no other mediator between God and man other than Christ, and the way these false teachers propose is wrong and ineffective.

Interpreting Colossians

In order to correctly interpret this book it is especially important to understand the historical and cultural background of Colossians. Otherwise, many of the words, phrases and allusions Paul uses will be meaningless.

QUESTIONS FOR COLOSSIANS PASSAGES

OBSERVATION (Facts)

For chapters 1 and 2 only:

- What are Paul's actions and attitudes toward the Colossians?
- What does Paul say about his relationship to God?

For all chapters:

- Who is Jesus?
- What has Jesus done for the Colossians?
- What are Paul's instructions (and reason for instructions) to the Colossians?

INTERPRETATION (Meaning)

- What is the main idea(s) the author is trying to communicate?

APPLICATION (How this applies to my life)

- What does the main idea in the passage mean to me?
- What kind of response do I need to make?

REMEMBER: Not all questions are applicable to every passage. Just answer the questions that "fit" the passage, and ignore the rest.

READINGS IN COLOSSIANS

Week 1

- 1 1:1-8
- 2 1:9-14
- 3 1:15-20¹
- 4 1:21-23
- 5 1:24-29²
- 6 Psalm 23

Week 2

- 1 2:1-7
- 2 2:8-15³
- 3 2:16-23⁴
- 4 3:1-4
- 5 3:5-11
- 6 Psalm 25:1-11

Week 3

- 1 3:12-14
- 2 3:15-17
- 3 3:18-25
- 4 4:1-6
- 5 4:7-18
- 6 Psalm 25:12-22

¹ **“thrones, powers, rulers and authorities”** (vs16): angelic powers both good and bad. The names stand for different ranks.

² **“mystery”** (vs26): refers to that which God has revealed openly (an open secret) (unlike the popular religious view which means something that is hidden from all but a few.)

³ **“circumcision/uncircumcision”** (vs 11-13): Circumcision is a covenant sign given to Israel signifying their special relationship with God. Uncircumcision refers to the Gentiles (all who are not Jews).

“written code” (vs 14): God’s righteous standard reflected in moral law.

⁴ **religious festival, new moon celebration, Sabbath Day”** (vs 16): Jewish holy days which suggested some aspect of the coming Messiah and celebrated some aspect of their culture.

“shadow” (vs17): Before Christ appeared there were rituals that foreshadowed the true reality found in Christ