



2026 Q1 Christ in Philippians and Colossians

Lesson 2 Reasons for Thanksgiving and Prayer

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

Read Memory Verse:

- Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Philippians 1:6 NIV84.

What does this text mean to you?

What is the good work that God has begun in us?

From the Remedy:

- I am completely confident of this: God, who began his good work of healing and restoring you to his original ideal, will continue healing you right up to the day Jesus Christ returns to take us home. Philippians 1:6 REM

Having been won to trust and having accepted Jesus as our Savior and been reborn with the Holy Spirit, do we then finish the work our salvation by our own effort at law keeping?

Having been won to trust and having accepted Jesus as our Savior and been reborn with the Holy Spirit within, does God finish the work in us without our active intelligent and purposeful participation—in other words do we just go about our business like we took an antibiotic and something will happen inside of us but we don't really need to do anything? Or, despite the work being finished by Christ the author and finisher of our faith, do we have an active work to do in our own salvation?

Just a few verses later in Philippians Paul writes this:

- Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Philippians 2:12-13 NIV84.

What does this mean? Who is doing the work in our salvation?

Can God use His might and power to save a person against their will? Why or why not? If God used His divine power to force a change in a heart/mind against their will, 1. He wouldn't be the God of truth and love that we can trust but an abuser of power who doesn't give us real freedom and 2. is like Satan has alleged and 3. it would destroy the individuality of the person and replace them with a robot.

So God cannot save a sinner by His power alone—it requires their willing participation.

However, can a person use their power of choice, their strength of will, ingenuity or any other ability and save themselves without God involved in their life? Why or why not?

- Is it because such self-centered focus makes God mad and then He packs up His resources and goes home?
- Is it because God is against them is seeking to punish them for sin and there is nothing we have to pay Him to not seek to punish us?
- Is it because despite God's love for them and not being against them they don't have the proper legal payment so God is restricted by His law from helping them until they legally ask Him by presenting His Son's blood?
- Or is it simply reality—they don't have life in themselves and the life with which they were born is the life Adam corrupted with fear and selfishness and that life is terminal, that life naturally distrusts God, is afraid of God, and actively runs away from God who is the source of life; and therefore, a person who seeks to save self without God only accelerates their death, for their very actions put greater and greater spiritual distance between themselves and God cutting themselves off from life?

There is no work we can do to save ourselves because we don't possess as sinless, holy, righteous spirit, life, breath of life. We must receive that from God.

Thus the Bible is correct it is God's work that saves us, but we must work with Him to be saved—is that confusing or is it that we have separate works to do that the other cannot do?

What is God's work in human salvation? Fixing, healing, restore humanity into perfection and sinlessness—this was first done in the person of Jesus, who as we discussed last week, became a real human being and eliminated the spirit of fear and restored in the spirit of love and trust and developed a perfect, sinless, mature, human character. Jesus is the Remedy to sin. Jesus is the means of salvation. Jesus is the way God reconciles the world to Himself. Jesus is the way, truth, and life.

And Jesus is not only human, He is fully God! So God worked in and through Jesus to save the species human without one thread of fallen humanity's contribution.

But God also works for our individual salvation in many other ways such as, by holding back the principalities and powers of darkness, His protections, grace, mercies, consistent maintenance of the laws of nature, His providences, His presence in our lives, His power of truth and love, His healing and recreative power and so much more. God's work is to be the constant source of all good, truth, love. He Created life, He sustains life, He reveals truth, He oversees events and intervenes for the

advancement of truth, love, freedom, healing, restoration and the elimination of sin all within the bounds of His design laws of truth, love, and freedom.

Thus God's work is:

- Suspending death and implementing the plan of salvation when Adam and Eve sinned
- Revealing truth
- Interceding in our hearts by placing enmity between us and Satan, placing in human hearts a dissatisfaction with sin, a longing for something better
- Holding back the powers of darkness
- Sending Jesus to restore humanity into His original ideal and unity with Himself.
- The destruction of Satan and death and sin from the universe in such a way it will never arise again, which required revelation of truth that exposed the lies and restores trust and the elimination from humanity the spirit of fear and selfishness and replacing it with the Spirit of love and trust.
- And today, His work is to reveal truth to hearts and minds, bring conviction, and leave us free to decide and then once we choose truth and open our hearts in trust, God provides His divine power to succeed. The truth is Gods, the new life is God's, the empowering Spirit is God, the choice is ours! And we do not receive the divine power to overcome until we make the choice!

So, how I paraphrased this is:

- Therefore, my friends, as you have always followed my instructions in applying God's Remedy to your lives when I was with you, it is even more important now, that I am gone, that you continue to apply God's methods to your lives with reverent admiration and humility, because it is God himself working in you to heal, restore and recreate you perfectly in his image, enabling you to understand the truth and empowering you to do what is right — all in perfect harmony with his will. Philippians 2:12-13 REM

One of the founders of the SDA church wrote this commentary:

- We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13). *Mind, Character, and Personality* vol. 2, p. 694, emphasis mine.
- **There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies--** divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not**

dishonor the human understanding, but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus...** Ye are labourers together with God. *Our High Calling* p. 310, emphasis mine.

This is the only way for an individual to be saved. Jesus saved the species in His own person, by His own initiative, by His own work, by His own trust in His Father, by His own sacrifice, without any work on the part of us. But our individual salvation requires our full investment in working with God. We do not provide the remedy, the truth, the love, the grace, the power, all of that and more comes from God, we provide the active, intelligent, purposeful, committed, response, the work of choosing who we trust, and putting that into practice by choosing what we believe, what we value, what we prioritize with our time, money, application of the talents God has given us all of which either aligns with and is ennobled and empowered by God thereby transforming us, or is hostile to God and obstructs His work in our lives.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph,

- Paul established the church in Philippi; thus, we can see the warmth of Christian fellowship pervading his letter. Though separated by hundreds of miles, Paul, chained and imprisoned, carries the church and its members on his heart; he longs for them “with the affection of Jesus Christ” (Phil. 1:8, NKJV); he gives thanks to God for them. Paul’s prayer of thanksgiving even gives a glimpse of Jesus’ intercession for us in heaven. *Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philippians and Colossians*, p. 13.

What does it mean to carry people in your heart?

Doesn’t it mean we have an emotional, heart-felt, connection with them, that they are important to us?

Paul wrote elsewhere,

- Even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. 1 Corinthians 5:3 NIV84.

Is this the exact thing as having someone in our heart, or not quite?

Paul is speaking of being with the Corinthians in spirit, which is understood by the tenor and content of his letters, to be the spirit of love and trust, consistent with the Holy Spirit. And when we are reborn with God’s spirit we do connect with others in spirit and that spirit fills our hearts with love for others.

But there is another spirit, the spirit of fear and selfishness, the evil and satanic spirit. And if people are not reborn, they can have their hearts filled with envy, jealousy, hatred, disdain for others and carry

those others in their hearts as enemies, objects of torment, like many in our society do with a certain political figure, sometimes people describe this with words like, “living rent free in their head.”

So we can carry people in our hearts in love, animated and motivated by the Holy Spirit, which will be manifested by our desire for their good, rejoicing in their successes, always embracing and appreciating truth, or we can carry people in our hearts animated and motivated by the spirit of Satan which will be manifested by our anger, anxiety, dissatisfaction, and our desire for their fall, their ouster, their humiliation, and disgrace.

What does the lesson mean by: “Paul’s prayer of thanksgiving even gives a glimpse of Jesus’ intercession for us in heaven”?

Let’s read the prayer:

- And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God. Philippians 1:9-11 NIV84.

What glimpse of Christ’s intercessions in heaven does Paul’s prayer give us?

What is Paul praying for?

If Paul is praying for the love of people to increase more and more in knowledge and increasing insight into the truth, the reality of who God is and how His kingdom and design law function, so that people will mature and be sealed in heart and mind with loyalty to God so that their characters may be purified and they will be blameless and filled with the righteousness of Christ thereby giving glory to God—what is Paul praying for Jesus to do in His heavenly ministry?

If Paul’s prayer is to be accomplished, if sinners are to become the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21), if we are to grow, mature, be cleansed and purified where must Jesus do His work—in record books or in hearts and minds?

I think the lesson hit the nail on the head with this statement. Yes, Paul’s prayer gives us a glimpse of the work of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary and that work is NOT a legal work, it is not a pleading with His Father to influence His Father to help us work; it is a cleansing work! And what needs cleansing from sin? It is not inanimate record books, or things made out of gold or silver because inanimate materials cannot sin. What needs cleansing from sin are people, hearts and minds need to be purified, cleansed, renewed, made blameless. This is what the Bible teaches that Jesus does when He comes to His temple just prior to the second coming:

- “See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking **will come to his temple**; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the LORD Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can

stand when he appears? For he will be like a **refiner's fire or a launderer's soap**. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; **he will purify the Levites** and refine them like gold and silver. Malachi 3:1-3 NIV84.

Jesus is right now in heaven, directing all the agencies of heaven, for the completion of the plan of salvation, which means the cleansing of the hearts and minds of all who have placed their trust in Him. What is causing the delay in His appearing—why has the bridegroom delayed? Because the bride, the church, we the people who claim Him as our Savior, have not cooperated with Him to make ourselves ready to meet Him.

Why have we not cooperated? Most Christians believe that they have cooperated, but both Jesus and Paul warned that at the end of time most Christians would be deceived, have a form of godliness without power who do not know Jesus. So, haven't most Christians cooperated with Jesus for their full cleansing from sin?

Because they have been tricked into choosing and engaging a false system of beliefs that interferes with the cleansing work Jesus wants to do. They have been tricked by a legal Christianity that teaches them that God's law functions no different than human law, made up rules requiring imposed punishments. That false legal system teaches God is the source of pain and death inflicted as punishment for sin and therefore God is required to use His power to kill sinners. They are taught that salvation, therefore, is getting someone, in this case Jesus, to pay their legal penalty so God won't kill them. And they are taught they are saved not by becoming the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21), not by being cleansed from sin by the indwelling Spirit, but by claiming a legal payment applied to books in heaven so that the books in heaven are cleansed of recorded sins while they remain uncleansed of actual sinfulness, while they continue to live animated by the spirit of fear and selfishness.

God is waiting for the true gospel to go to the world, the good news about Him and what He has accomplished in Jesus that wins to genuine trust in Him, so that we open the door of our hearts and Jesus enters in the Person of the Holy Spirit who comes with the full power of the Godhead, the power of truth and love and recreates within us the life of Christ. We receive a new spirit, a new motivation, a new life, and the old sinful life dies, is cut out of our souls as the controlling power, and we come alive in Christ to live new lives of love and trust. This is salvation—it is real, it is actual, it is experienced within the heart, mind, and character of the sinner, and because God is the God of reality, of truth, when sinners experience in heart, in mind, cleansing, renewal, rebirth, purification, the records of reality, the heavenly records record this because it is real, actual, accomplished.

Read the second paragraph,

- On the high priest's breastplate were 12 stones representing the 12 tribes of Israel. The people were to be "on his heart" as he interceded for them (Exod. 28:29, ESV). In an even greater way, as our High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary, Jesus carries the names of His people with Him before the Father. *Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philippians and Colossians*, p. 13.

What do you understand the symbolism of the breastplate with 12 stones means? And what does it mean to carry them before the Father?

When God set up the sanctuary service with all its symbolism, it was a theater, a play, a drama, to enact through symbols and ceremonies the plan of salvation. There was nothing in the Levitical law, the priestly system, the OT sanctuary props, costumes, or ceremonies that provided any salvation. None of that could heal anyone. It was all symbolic representations of reality to lead hearts and minds to the truth so they would experience the reality—which ultimately is accomplished in Jesus.

No animal sacrifice could remove the spirit of fear, selfishness, and distrust in God and replace with a new sinless life, a new spirit, of truth, love and trust. Jesus did that.

The High Priest does represent Jesus in His work after His resurrection and ascension. His work before His incarnation is represented by Moses—who is a type of Christ. Moses went into God’s presence and from there came out to the people and set up the sanctuary system. Jesus went into the Father’s presence in heaven and from there left heaven and came to earth to build His temple. Yes, He came to earth to build His temple—this should be a profound thought to those who believe there is a structure in heaven that the tent Moses built is modeled after. There is something in heaven that the tent Moses built is modeled after, but it is not a building made out of inanimate materials. Bible verse for this idea?

- This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Here is the man whose name is **the Branch**, and he will **branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD. It is he who will build the temple of the LORD**, and he will be clothed with majesty and **will sit and rule on his throne**. And he will **be a priest on his throne**. And there will be harmony between the two.’ Zechariah 6:12-13 NIV84.

Who is the Branch that branched out from his place to build the temple of the Lord? Jesus—and what does it say He will do? He will leave His place in heaven for the purpose of building the temple of the Lord—if the temple was already built and in heaven and made out of inanimate material like gold and silver, what does this mean then?

So what did Jesus leave heaven to build?

- Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, **built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone**. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a **holy temple in the Lord**. And in him **you too are being built together** to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-20 NIV84, emphasis mine.
- As you come to him, **the living Stone**—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him— you also, **like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house** to be a holy

priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 2:4 NIV84, emphasis mine.

So Moses represents Jesus before His incarnation, the sacrificial animal represents Jesus during His incarnation, and the High Priest represents Jesus after His ascension.

The stones represent the 12 tribes—but what do the 12 tribes represent? All the people of the entire world—every nation, kindred, tribe, and people. In the Levitical system the saved, the righteous, are represented by the Levites, those with white robes. And the Levites set up their tents between the sanctuary and the rest of the tribes. We, who have accepted Jesus, who are reborn and have the righteousness of Christ are renewed and cleansed and wear the robe of His righteousness and are the agents of God who go out the world to bring those who don't know God to Him for their cleansing. So carrying the 12 stones symbolizes Jesus who carries the entire world upon His heart, for God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, and His actions are sufficient to save every single person if they would choose to trust Him.

MONDAY

The lesson focuses on specific elements of Paul's prayer he wants the believers to experience.

Read third paragraph,

- Love to abound more and more. Paul doesn't just pray for more love but for love guided in a specific direction: "in knowledge and all discernment" (Phil. 1:9, NKJV). The reference to knowledge is not to merely intellectual knowledge but implies a knowledge of spiritual things that can be gained only by fellowship with God and study of His Word (see Eph. 1:17, Eph. 4:13, 1 Tim. 2:4). *Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philipppians and Colossians*, p. 14.

What does godly love look like and how is it connected to knowledge and discernment?

Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 states love rejoices with the truth—what does this mean?

How can people think they are loving others but in realty rather than loving them they are harming them?

The word "love" can mean many things, it can refer to strong feelings of attraction, longing, attachment, compassion, and concern for others, but love can also refer to conduct, action, choices, do we love internally, with emotional fondness, or do we love operationally with actions and deeds that are objectively good, a blessing, beneficial to others?

I explore this in a blog posted October 23, 2025, [Why God Doesn't Love Everyone the Same?](#)

In that blog I unpack the difference between emotional love, the love that someone has in their heart for another and functional love, the love that grows and deepens and acts within a relationship and brings about transformation and change.

John was called the beloved, the one Jesus loved. Does that mean within the heart of Jesus He had less love for the others? No, God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit have infinite love for every single person. So this does not mean Jesus plays favorites. It means that John, who was the youngest, responded to Jesus' love more fully, trusted more deeply, and returned love and affection to Jesus more completely than the others, thus Jesus was able to functionally pour more love into John, connect on a deeper level with John than the others. And this resulted in Christ's love doing a deeper transforming work in John as evidenced by John being the only disciple who did not run away and hide on crucifixion weekend. Why not? Because perfect love casts out fear—John had more love in his heart and therefore the fear, concern for self, the survival principle had been eclipsed by functional love that led to action in the life of John. On crucifixion weekend the other disciples had love for Jesus, but they still had significant fear for their own safety as evidenced by their running away.

So Paul is desiring for the love of God to grow in them to do its work to transform, to deepen—this will cause a deeper emotional strength, but more importantly it will have a deeper functional result, we will become ever more Christlike as His love works in us and we choose to act out that love and stop acting out the motivations of the spirit of fear and selfishness.

And this requires knowledge what kind of knowledge? John 17:3, life eternal is knowing God, not knowing about God, but experiencing and knowing God in relationship, an experience with God, knowing He is good and knowing we can trust Him, not just with salvation, but with the immediate stresses of life.

And how does love grow? By exercise—by engagement, by application.

What about discernment? What enhances discernment? Knowledge of the truth and character of God, understanding His design laws, how reality is designed to function, how love actually works, how truth transforms, and freedom to choose its application. A person convinced against his will is of the same opinion still.

Thus, our discernment increases as we know God—His character of love and truth and His design law methods and choose to trust and apply His truth to our lives, all of which leads to greater wisdom in how reality actually works.

If one has the right doctrines with the wrong law and the wrong motivating spirit of fear and selfishness then they can pursue what they think is the right doctrines, religion, with the wrong motive and become like the Pharisees who crucified Christ—legalistic religionists who Jesus described as blind guides that had no discernment.

Do you see this type of legalistic blindness today—religious leaders using the Bible, often promoting factually true doctrinal truths, claiming to support God's law and Jesus but being blind to how reality

works because they present it all under the false imposed law construct with a god who is the source of death?

What about being sincere? Can one be sincerely wrong? The word sincere does not bring across the best connotation, the lesson points this out in the fifth paragraph,

- Being sincere. The word in Greek means “judged by the sunlight” and refers to an untainted purity of action: “Everything that Christians do should be as transparent as the sunlight.”—Ellen G. White, *Reflecting Christ*, p. 71. *Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philippians and Colossians*, p. 14.

Being sincere in this context is describing people who honestly want to know the truth and therefore are eager to have their errors corrected by the light—and the Pharisees and the legalists in the church today are not open to having their ideas corrected. They fight against advancing light and truth and this was the problem in the SDA church at 1888 GC—the leadership resisted and closed their hearts and minds to the advancing truth, particularly that God’s laws are design laws and righteousness by faith is not legal, it is actual, occurring within the believer. If you would like documentation to confirm this see our magazine [The Lie That Deceived Angels, Infects Christianity, and Delays the Second Coming of Christ](#).

As Paul wrote to the Thessalonians,

- They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 2 Thessalonians 2:10 NIV84.

Paul did not say they didn’t love their churches, doctrines, religion, but they didn’t love the truth and thus they refused to advance with unfolding truth and thereby cut themselves off from the Spirit of truth. And when one rejects truth on any subject the only thing left to believe is lies.

What does it mean not causing offense?

Does it mean the distorted and perverse application of so-called love we see by the perpetrators of evil in our society today who tell us if we love people who are destroying themselves we won’t seek to save them, we won’t speak truth to them because that could upset them, hurt their feelings, and that is an act of violence. So instead these perverts of God’s design, advance the lie that if you love someone you don’t point out their violations of God’s design laws, instead, encourage them in their sickness, disease, dysfunction, and tell them that their feelings define truth, it is their truth, and we love them too much to challenge their truth with objective facts that could save them.

This is NOT love! If we love people who are running headlong to their own destruction we do all we can to graciously, kindly, gently, lovingly, but **truthfully** warn them of the danger and results of their choices. And we do NOT allow their emotional response, their hurt feelings, their false claims that by speaking truth in love we have injured or harmed them because they claim offense. No, we do not

collude with their delusions, but leave them free to accuse us falsely, and we are wise enough to know when and to whom we speak truth and when we shake the dust off our feet.

Consider this:

- Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. What goes into a man’s mouth does not make him ‘unclean,’ but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him ‘unclean.’ ” Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that **the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?**” Matthew 15:10-12 NIV84.

The disciples went to Jesus and informed Him that what He was teaching, speaking, saying was offensive to the Pharisees—does that mean Jesus was wrong? Does it mean Jesus should have stopped teaching what He was teaching so those people wouldn’t take offense?

Why were they offended? Because Jesus spoke objective truth and the truth exposed their fantasy, lies, perverted beliefs, the uselessness of what they valued, and undercut their security (in rule-keeping), and undercut their manipulation and power over others.

What we see happening in many places in the world today is the same. We at this ministry seek to teach objective, reality-based, truths. God’s design laws on how things are built and function, and while it is true that people are free to believe anything they want it is NOT TRUE that all beliefs are equally healthy—they are not.

Our goal is to teach people reality, the laws life is built by God to operate upon, engaging people to think and reason for themselves—but this will always bring truths home to hearts and people who are out of harmony with God’s design laws will be faced with things in their own lives that need correcting. If the heart is hostile to truth, if the spirit of fear and selfishness has solidified a defense with various lies, distortions, fantasies, then when truth starts deconstructing those false systems of belief such people will take offense and accuse the light bearers of being offenders—we are not and we must not give in to this.

Let me give an analogy. There is a person who has grotesque pustulating lesions all over their face, and rather than acknowledging this and doing the painful work of lancing and healing them, instead they hire a painter to go with them and paint over every mirror they encounter with a beautiful picture of themselves. What happens when a person stops the painter or begins cleaning the mirrors in the community and that individual begins to get a true glimpse of themselves? Do they thank the one washing the mirrors or instead get angry and accuse that person of trying to make them look bad? The mirrors in the analogy are people who give feedback to others in how they treat them. Truth lovers do not allow their minds to be painted over by the lies of the world and will seek to share truth that cleans the minds/hearts of others in the community.

This is what is happening in our society today and it has been going on for awhile. It happened during COVID when people like me spoke the truth and were attacked, and are still attacked as being offensive to people by calling this out. And the accusations that I am offensive, don’t love people,

want to kill people etc., are intended to get me to collude with the lies, to stop being a clear and honest reflector of truth.

It happens when I call out the same methods of those who deny objective realities like male and female. It happens on the other side when I call out the lies about God's law being like human law imposed rules that require God to use His power to kill the wicked in the end.

Those who speak truth will be accused of offending—but the offense is not from them, it is from those who are deviating from God's design and who live in denial of reality. They are the offenders.

TUESDAY

The lesson focuses on spiritual discernment, and specifically in the case of Paul's imprisonment how he had a positive attitude about it. Paul saw that though his imprisonment was unjust, it nonetheless provided opportunity for Paul to share the gospel with Caesar's household.

Can you think of another positive to Paul's imprisonment?

What about the writing of these epistles? Paul had already demonstrated in his ministry that he liked to travel to the churches and talk to them directly. Had he not been imprisoned is it possible he might not have written these letters, but might have simply gone and preached to them? And has something good come from the epistles he wrote while imprisoned?

WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph,

- Paul also emphasizes that the gospel is trustworthy because it is based on “the word of truth.” This is an expression Paul uses elsewhere in reference to the inspired word of God (see 2 Cor. 6:7, 2 Tim. 2:15). Unlike “the word of men,” it works “effectually” in those who believe (1 Thess. 2:13) and accomplishes God's will (Isa. 55:11). So, when the gospel is proclaimed, the power of God is manifested through the work of the Holy Spirit on the hearts of the hearers, and people respond. The gospel itself produces the fruit because it is “the word of life” (Phil. 2:16). *Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philipians and Colossians*, p. 16.

The lesson states that the gospel is reliable because it is based on the words of truth—what does this mean?

Truth is authoritative—but what makes something true? Is it true because God says it, or does God say whatever He says because it is true?

This is not semantics, it actually makes a difference in how we think, choose, believe, and who we trust.

Is the Sabbath holy because God said it is holy, or does God say it is holy because it is somehow objectively different from the other days and holy in some manner?

When God said it is not good for Adam to be alone—was it good for Adam to be alone until God said it and as soon as God said it is not good, then something happened in Adam that caused things not to be good? Or was it already not good by God's meaning of that statement, in that it was still incomplete and God's statement didn't cause it to be that way, His statement acknowledge, proclaimed, revealed the truth that it was in fact that way?

So truth is reliable but again, is truth truth because God speaks it or what God speaks is truth because it is that way?

If we believe truth is truth because God uses His power to make it that way, then if someone convinces us that God is speaking, or the message is from God, we are vulnerable to believing it to be so because God's word makes it so.

Satan, who tried to deceive Jesus, tried this in the desert when he pretended to be an angel from heaven, a messenger from God, who was quoting the Bible. God has said it, that makes it true, believe it and do it.

If one takes this approach they are not required to think about the idea itself, to consider what it means, whether it is objectively true, consistent with the evidences built into reality that God has given, all they need to think about is whether they believe the message is from God or not. If they believe it is from God, then it must be true.

Satan is going to impersonate Jesus one day, many people will believe him to be Christ and when he speaks, they will accept it without thinking through whether what he is saying is true. They won't examine what he has says because once they are convinced it is Jesus, then if Jesus says it, it must be true—so they will be deceived. The righteous are those who have developed by practice the ability to discern right from wrong, and they will recognize the truth because they understand reality, God's design laws built into the operations of life, and God's character and will know that love only operates and exists in freedom and imposed laws with imposed punishments are not part of God's kingdom, they are the methods of creatures and inflicting punishments for lack of love and trust only causes the destruction of love and trust.

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph,

- Paul prays “that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will.” Paul describes knowing God’s will as “wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col. 1:9, NKJV). Wisdom comes, first of all, by trusting God fully, being willing to do His will (John 7:17), and not leaning on our own understanding (Prov. 3:5). But the question often arises, “What is God’s will for me in this situation?” There are four main sources from which we may learn God’s will as we seek it prayerfully: *Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philippians and Colossians*, p. 17

The lesson states that,

Wisdom comes, first of all, by trusting God fully, being willing to do His will (John 7:17), and not leaning on our own understanding (Prov. 3:5).

Do you think if we met Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road before he met Christ and asked him if he trusted God fully, was willing to do God’s will, and not lean on his own understanding—what do you think Saul would have said?

I suspect he, along with Caiaphas and the Pharisees that rejected Christ, would all agree with this statement. I don’t know of people who are working against God in the church, what we would say are the tares, Satan’s agents in the church, who would say that they distrust God, are not willing to follow His will, and are leaning on their own understanding.

So while this statement is beautiful and also true and necessary, it doesn’t seem to really differentiate the religious people who don’t know God from those on God’s side. This statement could potentially differentiate the outright deniers of God, the purposefully evil from the righteous, but not the pretentiously pious legalists in the church from the righteous.

So, what is necessary to be able to do this in reality?

We have to actually know God, not know about Him—not know facts like:

- God is Creator
- God is all powerful
- God is love
- God is truth
- God is sinless
- God is good
- God is the giver of the law
- God’s law is perfect and flawless

- Jesus is fully God
- God provides salvation in and through Jesus

The devils believe all these facts and more and it doesn't save them.

What saves is knowing God to the point we actually trust Him, surrender our fear-ridden selfish lives to Him and are reborn with the life of Christ and then we walk with Him, we engage our God-given reasoning powers to understand how God built life to operate, how love actually functions, how truth functions, and why God cannot win by might and power but only by the Spirit of truth and love.

When we know God, are won to trust, are reborn and enlightened by the Spirit of truth to understand God's design laws for reality, then we know what sin is, it is a breach of trust based on lies that severs the bonds of love and instills fear and selfishness cutting one off from God, the source of life, resulting in death. We then begin to grow in wisdom, the application of knowledge and facts in harmony with the laws of life that bring about reality based positive results.

But none of this is legal, and no amount of rule-keeping changes hearts heals minds and results in development.

Read the third paragraph,

- Paul prays that the Colossians may “walk worthy of the Lord” (Col. 1:10, NKJV). Of course, no one is inherently “worthy,” but God counts us worthy by His grace and calls us to live in accordance with that high calling (Eph. 4:1, 1 Thess. 2:12, NKJV). Paul uses the verb “walk” or “walked” three more times in this letter alone (Col. 2:6, Col. 3:7, Col. 4:5). It means to live and act in accordance with God's law (Exod. 18:20), which is possible only through the work of the Holy Spirit (Ezek. 36:27). *Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philippians and Colossians*, p. 17.

What do you think of this sentence:

Of course, no one is inherently “worthy,” but God counts us worthy by His grace and calls us to live in accordance with that high calling (Eph. 4:1, 1 Thess. 2:12, NKJV).

Does this mean we are inherently worthless? We have no worth, no value, only by Christ do we have value or worth?

What does worthy mean? Do we have worth by creation, by God's act to create humanity in His image in Eden?

Has our worth, value, to God been lost because of Adam's sin or, because we remained valuable, full of worth to God that He loved us so much He sent His Son to save us?

So this idea of worthy is not about inherent value or worth—that is ours by creation. But our inherent value or worth as human beings created in the image of God—does not negate the fact that God’s design has been marred, humanity infected with the spirit of fear and selfishness and in a terminal state in need of healing, cleansing, renewing, saving.

And it is because we have worth to God that He sent Jesus. But our inherent worth as His children by creation—doesn’t make us healthy, cured, healed, saved.

And we can bring nothing to the situation that can fix this problem, we cannot do something to remove the spirit of fear and selfishness, we cannot provide a sinless spirit of love and trust to replace the sinful one. Thus, while we have worth by creation, we are also infected, sick, and dying and we have nothing of worth to fix, cure, heal, or save us. That is Jesus, that is what Jesus does for us because He loves us and values us and we have worth to Him, he provides all we need to cleanse and save us from sin and restore us to unity with Him, His Father and His original intention for us in creation.

FRIDAY

Read question 3:

- In light of Colossians 1:6, 23, discuss the following statement : For forty years did unbelief, murmuring, and rebellion shut out ancient Israel from the land of Canaan. The same sins have delayed the entrance of modern Israel into the heavenly Canaan. In neither case were the promises of God at fault. It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord’s professed people that have kept us in this world of sin and sorrow so many years. Had the church of Christ done her appointment work as the Lord ordained, the whole world would before this have been warned and the Lord Jesus would have come to our earth in power and great glory.” E.G. White, *Last Day Events*, p. 38. In what ways might we today be guilty of the same things? *Adult SS Guide 1st Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philipians and Colossians*, p. 18.

The key indictment of this paragraph is: “It is the unbelief, the worldliness, unconsecration, and strife among the Lord’s professed people”

So what does this mean in practical terms, what does this look like today?

Does this mean not believing the 28 fundamental beliefs, or believing the wrong Sabbath, or believing the wrong lists of foods?

No, this means distrust of God—and what is the cause of the distrust of God?

Worldliness—but what does this mean? This is typically presented to mean things like, worldly entertainments in music, movies, gaming, drinking, drugs, and sexual infidelity. And these are

certainly a manifestation of worldliness, but in my view not the core problem, not the root to the worldliness that causes unbelief or distrust in God.

The worldliness or world-like-ness is the penal legal theology that is based upon the lie that God's law is like that of the world's and God justice is the justice of the world and God uses power like the world, and God's wrath is that of the world's.

In other words, the true worldliness that has infected the church is the penal legal theologies that make God out to be worldly in character, the source of inflicted pain suffering and death. And it is this worldliness that causes the distrust or unbelief. Because in this legal theology, people are taught not to trust in God directly, not to enter boldly into His presence by faith, but to trust in all the various legal mechanics designed to hide us and protect us from God—paying the Father with the blood of a human sacrifice to propitiate His wrath; covering us with the robe of Christ's righteousness so the Father cannot see our wickedness because if He saw it He would be required to kill us; having a legal pardon entered into a legal registry in heaven; having mediators of various kinds Jesus, Mary, the saints, in heaven pleading to the Father on our behalf to protect us from His wrath and justice.

All of this worldliness directly causes people who believe it to distrust God, to not believe in His goodness, mercy, love; they don't trust Him, they trust something being done to Him to protect them from Him. And that leads directly to their unconsecration, which means they are not cleansed in heart, renewed, reborn, purified, because they keep their hearts closed behind the legal lies because they really don't trust God and don't want Him examining them in truth because they believe if He saw them it would offend Him, He would get angry, wrathful, or would be required by law to kill them. And all of these distorted beliefs, prevent hearts from being reborn, so the religious people continue to live motivated by the spirit of fear and selfishness (Pharisees) and that lead to the infighting and strife in the church, the constant theological arguments, rule making, policing, enforcing, and the subsequent divisions of various groups who don't agree with one's legal interpretations.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God of Reality: Separating Truth from Fiction Seminar: August 13-16 2026 Orlando, Florida—More information coming soon.

AFRICA: Our first shipment of resources has arrived in Kenya, *Could It Be This Simple?* Wycliffe has been passionately sharing this end-time message about God with great success and Jacques van den Heever, our Come and Reason Ministries Director in South Africa has been able to produce and get him these resources. It is through the support of you our friends that he has been able to do this. If you are in Kenya or know someone there who would like this book email kenya@comeandreason.com Also Jacques has been translating many of our materials into Afrikaans for some time, but has now just provided our first blog translated into Swahili. More will be coming. If you want to access any of our ministry website and click the languages tab.

New Pamphlet: *The Trap of Perfectionism and The Fear of Making Mistakes*. These are available for free shipped to any US Postal address, they will also be in our resource section under the publications to print and share. You can read this online, download pdf, share with others, print your own. If you are not in the US, we anticipate our various hubs (Australia and South Africa) will eventually get this in print also, but until then, please use the online resource.

New Come and Reason Distribution Hub in England: If you are interested in connecting with our team in England you can contact Michael Dragoyvich and his wife Billie Jordan at uk@comeandreason.com