

**RECEPTIVITY AND RESPONSE
PERSONAL GROWTH IN 2011
COLOSSIANS 2:6-7**

CHRISTIANS ACCEPT CHRIST AS THEIR LIFE (COL. 3:3-4)!

1. Paul exhorted the Colossian Christians in verses 2-5 of chapter 2 to be...
 - a. Encouraged in their **salvation**
 - b. **Settled** in their convictions about Jesus' deity and sufficiency
 - c. Firm against false **teaching**
2. "Therefore", these Christians should **walk** in **Jesus** every day (Col. 2:6).
3. Our daily conduct in Christ means to have an **active**, visible **faith** (Col. 2:7).
 - a. Conducting myself as **Jesus** would in each conversation and situation
 - b. Living in **union** and partnership with **Jesus** (John 15:4-5)

KEY THOUGHT: Walking in Christ means to **live exactly** as He would (1 John 2:6).

I. "HAVING BEEN FIRMLY ROOTED" (COLOSSIANS 2:7)

- A. "Rooted" means to take nourishment from **God** as a plant's roots do from the **soil** (Col. 2:7).
 1. Christ becomes the **source** of our spiritual nourishment, our growth, and the **fruit** in our lives (John 15:4-5).
 2. Our partnership (union) with Christ is **absolutely necessary** (John 15:4-5).
- B. Spiritual **disciplines** are essential to spiritual growth.
 1. You **cannot** attain salvation by personal discipline; it is a gift of God (Eph. 2:8-9).
 2. Discipline is the **fruit** of salvation, not the **root**.

KEY THOUGHT: The alternate beats of the Christian heart are **receptivity** and **response** – receptivity from God and response in work from us (Col. 2:7).

II. “NOW BEING BUILT UP IN HIM” (COLOSSIANS 2:7)

“**built up**” = we build up as one builds a house; the building of character and life by disciplined effort

Jesus was the most complete Man to ever live on earth. Jesus illustrated this receptivity and response rhythm for us. No one was ever so absolutely dependent on God, and no one so disciplined in their personal habits.

- A. Jesus read the Word by habit (Luke 4:16).
 - 1. When you expose your thinking to God, you expose yourself to God.
 - 2. The Bible is the medicine that will heal our lives if we only take the prescription.

- B. Jesus prayed by habit (Mark 1:35; Matt. 14:28; John 6:15).
 - 1. Prayer is a conversation with God that refreshes us.
 - 2. Prayer is the source of the disciple’s power.
 - 3. We are as spiritual as we are prayerful.

- C. Jesus passed on to others what He had found (Col. 1:28-29; 2 Cor. 9:10).
 - 1. God gives seed to those that sow it.
 - 2. Those who do not pass on what they learn become empty themselves.

KEY THOUGHT: The life of a disciple withers and fades unless it is nurtured by discipline and passed on to others.

FOR FURTHER STUDY AND PERSONAL GROWTH

January 2, 2011

SUNDAY: *The disciple of Jesus lives like Him every day (Col. 2:6)!* The word “disciple” occurs 269 times in the New Testament. “Christian” is found only three times and was first introduced to refer precisely to the disciples. The New Testament is a collection of books about disciples, written by disciples, and for the disciples of Jesus Christ.¹ The disciple of Jesus is not the deluxe, super heavy-duty model of a Christian. A disciple is the standard issue vehicle of the Christian life. The owner’s manual is the Bible, and the key example to follow is Jesus. After Paul exhorts the Colossian Christians to be encouraged in their salvation, settled in their convictions about Jesus, and firm against false teaching, he transitioned immediately to walking every day like Jesus (Col. 2:6). What is a *disciple* of Jesus to you? Are you a disciple of Jesus? Disciples work hard, and you can see “spiritual sweat”. Make the commitment right now to be a disciple of Jesus Christ this year. Confess your weaknesses to the Lord and ask for His strength to walk one foot in front of the other, one day at a time. ***May this be the breakthrough year in your life as a Christian!***

MONDAY: *The disciple chooses to live exactly like Jesus each day (1 John 2:6)!* A disciple lives an active faith that is visible to everyone around him/her. As a disciple, you will conduct yourself as Jesus would in every conversation and situation. You will choose to live in union with Jesus as your constant partner every day (John 15:4-5). Your sin will be addressed immediately to prevent it from damaging your union with Christ and disrupting your walk with the Lord. Choose not to participate in your favorite sins. Accept the leadership of the Holy Spirit throughout your day. This means you must choose to be receptive to what the Holy Spirit says, and then respond as biblically commanded. Walking in Christ simply means to live exactly as He did in each situation (1 John 2:6). Commit yourself to the total involvement of the Lord and the Holy Spirit in every aspect of your life. Pray for the wisdom to be receptive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit and to respond according to the Bible. ***May your decision to become receptive to the leadership of the Holy Spirit have far reaching effects in your life and in others!***

TUESDAY: *The disciple decides to be rooted in Jesus and receive his nourishment from Him (John 15:4-5)!* Colossians 2:6 tells disciples to be “rooted” in Christ. Just as a plant receives its nourishment from its roots, disciples are to receive their nourishment from their relationship with Jesus (John 15:4-5). This union with Jesus is absolutely necessary! It appears that discipleship in the local church has become a program option rather than an absolute necessity. Jess Moody says that churches today are filled with “undisciplined disciples”.² Most of the problems in the contemporary church today would be eliminated if members decided to become disciples of Christ. Most Christians I know desire to be closer to God than they are, so this is the logical decision. What specifically is holding you back from making the decision to be a disciple of Jesus? This is the time to fall on your knees before God and call out for His help. The Lord God will respond to you! Accept His help and move forward immediately. ***May your decision to step forward to walk like Jesus become a precious moment in your life!***

¹ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines* (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1991), as quoted in *Devotional Classics* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 13.

² *Ibid.*, 14.

WEDNESDAY: ***Spiritual disciples are the fruit of salvation (Col. 2:6)!*** The spiritual growth you desire will require the assistance of spiritual disciplines. The discipline to use these disciplines is fruit of your salvation. However, the time to devote to these spiritual disciplines will demand adjustments to your lifestyle. The Apostles knew the cost to be Jesus' disciple. Simon Peter exclaimed, "Look, we have left everything and followed You!" (Mark 10:28). Family and occupations were deserted for long periods of time to go be with Jesus. Disciples have to be "with Jesus" to learn from Him. The alternate beats of the Christian heart are receptivity and response – receptivity from God and response in work from the disciple (Col. 2:7). Agree with God to step forward, and then let it unfold one day and week at a time. ***May the decision to be receptive and to respond bring basket loads of fruit into your life and others' lives around you!***

THURSDAY: ***Reading the Word of God is an essential discipline for a disciple (Luke 4:16)!*** Disciples are "built up" like one would build a house: board by board, step by step. Jesus was the most complete Man to ever live on earth. Jesus demonstrated the receptivity and respond rhythm for us to follow. Jesus read the Word of God (Old Testament) by habit (Luke 4:16). It was Jesus' "custom" to read aloud the Word of God in public. For the disciple, reading the Bible exposes the mind and the heart to God. The Bible is the best answer to everything in life and the best prescription for anything that ails a person. Devote yourself to the reading of the Bible and recording what God tells you in a journal of some kind. Make the simple decision to read your Bible every day in 2011. Commit this to the Lord today, and ask for His strength and courage to get through the difficult days that will come during the year. ***May the joy of knowing the words of Jesus and the mind of God be yours as you read the Bible this year!***

FRIDAY: ***Prayer is like breathing for a disciple (Mark 1:35)!*** No one was ever more dependent on God, and no one so disciplined in his personal habits as Jesus. Jesus practiced prayer as a habitual discipline. Prayer is a conversation with God that refreshes the disciple. Sins are washed away; hope is renewed; and wisdom is dispensed through the disciple's discipline of prayer. Prayer is the source of power for the disciple. The disciple is only as spiritual as he/she is prayerful. The prayer life of the disciple is ground zero for spiritual power. Stop and ask the Lord to reveal why your prayer life is not what you want it to be? Make a list of the reasons and choose one or two on which to focus this week. Keep turning this list over to the Holy Spirit at least once a day, and you will begin to see the problems erode away one by one. They will stay away as you evoke the power of God against them. When prayer fades, power fades. ***May the consistent growth of your prayer life bring stability and power to your life as a disciple!***

SATURDAY: ***A disciple passes on what he/she knows to others (Col. 1:28-29; 2 Cor. 9:10)!*** The disciple receives truth from God through reading the Bible, biblical preaching, and teaching the same truth to another disciple (2 Cor. 9:10). Jesus constantly passed on biblical truth and divine wisdom to those willing to listen. God will give you seed to sow in the lives of others. If you stop sowing, God will stop giving you seed. Those Christians who do not pass on what they learn will become empty. Cultivate the three spiritual disciplines of Bible reading and journaling, prayer, and passing on what you learn to others. Be receptive to the Word of God and respond by living it and teaching it to others. Remember, the life of a disciple withers and fades unless it is not nurtured by discipline and passed on to others. Commit yourself in every way you can think of to the Lord in prayer. ***May this be the most exciting year of your life in Christ!***