

Colossians 2

Colossians 2:6-10 NKJV As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so **walk in Him**, (7) **rooted** and **built up in Him** and **established** in the faith, as you have been taught, **abounding** in it with thanksgiving. (8) Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. (9) **For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily**; (10) **and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.**

Walking in Jesus is to follow Jesus; By faith we know that He is in our hearts therefore we need to allow Him to lead.

Colossians 2:7 NLT Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

By faith we need to settle in our hearts the reality that we are **complete in Him** who is God. The word complete has with it the idea of being fully satisfied through Him.

One of the hardest things to grasp is our identity in Christ. This is all because of a tiny 2-letter word: “in”. It’s easy to understand in the physical realm – we can be in our house or in our car or we have food in our bellies. **But in the spiritual realm who can really understand that we are “in” Christ or that He is “in” us? Or that we are “complete in Him”?**

I issue of identity has reached an all time high. I suppose it is very predictable since Satan takes all that is of Christ and distorts it and usurps it for his evil purposes. So, we now have people running around “identifying” themselves as something they are not. Men who think they are women and vice-versa. And, there have always been men and women, who while not sexually attracted to the same sex, love to dress up as men or women and behave that way. The problem is, there are no boundaries. For example, there’s a man who left his wife and kids because he identifies as a 6-year of girl and then he actually found a family to live with who would “take care of him”. This is all in the “flesh” and the flesh has no boundaries!

So, what does it mean to identify with Christ or to be IN Christ? And, how do we manifest that in our lives?

1. This can be done in the flesh as well. The examples here are when men decide they are **the** Christ. This has been seen in wars when men could not cope with killing. They try act like Jesus, at least the Jesus they have heard about. So, they become gracious, peaceful, unphased and loving. But it’s not based on the reality of Christ who is God made flesh. What they’re doing is trying to make their flesh be God.
2. Since this a spiritual matter it must be by faith.
3. However, that does not mean that it’s a mystical adventure. It means we consider ourselves as being intimately joined with Christ so that what He **did** and what He **does** is what we **are** to do, not in the flesh but in the power of God, the Holy Spirit.
 - a. This doesn’t mean that we live like a 1st century Jew. If you do (and some try), you will fail like those who tried and failed to keep the Law perfectly. These are those who tried

to work their way into heaven or they simply assumed they would be allowed in just because they were Jewish.

- b. However, being in Christ does mean that we are called to live our lives sacrificially for others. We are to show grace and mercy to everyone – even the sinner, the prostitute and the tax collector. This means that we are to forgive others as He forgave us!
4. There are several things we can do to identify with Him.
- a. You must first **know Him!** Therefore, you must **read His Word!** The Old Covenant Scriptures clearly showed WHY He came; The New Covenant Scriptures clearly showed HOW He came and accomplished His mission to save the world from itself.
 - b. Adjust your prayer time to include praise and worship. It's ok to pray about your needs or for the needs of others. But you will learn even more about Him through praising and worshipping Him simply because He is God. Don't neglect thanksgiving because He's pleased by our gratitude.
 - c. Fellowship with like-minded believers enhances our walk. We learn from others and are helped by those who have walked this Way. Being identified in Christ is a process that starts with salvation and ends when we stand face to face with Him.

Armed with these things, Paul has another way of describing “identification with Christ”. He says, “put on”. The Greek meaning of “put on” is to “sink into a garment” (like being poured into clothing which illustrates the closeness between you and the cloth).

(Romans 13:14 NKJV) But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

The idea of identity in Christ and putting Christ on is also conveyed by the phrase “in Him” which is where we started (in Him we are complete). So, let's go on with Chapter 2 starting in verse 11:

(Colossians 2:11 NKJV) In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ,

While our context is “identification in Christ”, it's not a New Covenant idea. And while the OC Scriptures deal with Israel, the principle is the same and it is applicable to us today:

Deuteronomy 10:12-16 NKJV (12) "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,

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(16) Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no longer.

Deuteronomy 30:2, 6 NKJV (2) and you return to the LORD your God and obey His voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul

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(6) And the **LORD your God will circumcise your heart** and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

And like verse 6 in Deuteronomy 30 , this is a work of the LORD in which **we participate**. We humble ourselves and expose our sinful hearts, and He does the cutting. The result is the “putting off” of the sins of the flesh. The goal of sinless perfection is not realistic on this side of Heaven, but don’t use that as an excuse to submit to the LORD for help with obedience.

(Colossians 2:12 NKJV) buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with *Him* through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

The rite of baptism is not concerned with washing but identification: When we are immersed in the water we are to understand His death and burial. When we are drawn out of the water, we experience His resurrection, being raised from the dead. This resurrection is symbolic as well: we are raised in the newness of life. This is by faith in the working of God who will one day raise us up to heaven.

If it’s just a ritual, it has no meaning. This is why we don’t adhere to infant baptism or sprinkling of water.

(Colossians 2:13 NKJV) And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, (14) having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. (15) Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

Paul continues with our identification with Jesus: Before Christ, we were Zombies – walking in the deadness of our sin and the uncircumcision of our flesh: we were alive but truly dead. Because of Christ’s atonement, we are dead but now, truly alive. With the atonement came forgiveness. With the sacrifice, the Law, with its requirements and curses, was nailed to the cross with Jesus. We no longer have to live by the letter but rather we live by the Spirit of God who dwells in us.

Verse 15, to me, is a life-long test of our faith. Am I going to see the evil and wickedness that seems to prevail against the good or I am going to know that thru the Cross, satan and his followers have been disarmed and have no true power over us?

(Colossians 2:16 NKJV) So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, (17) which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

(Colossians 2:18 NKJV) Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in **false humility** and **worship of angels, intruding** into those things which he has not seen, **vainly puffed up** by his fleshly mind, (19) and **not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.** (Colossians 2:20 NKJV) Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as *though* living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations—(Colossians 2:21 NKJV) "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," (Colossians 2:22 NKJV) **which all concern things which perish with the using**—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? (Colossians 2:23 NKJV) These things indeed have an **appearance** of wisdom in self-imposed religion, **false humility**, and **neglect**

of the body, *but are* of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

Colossians 2:23 KJV Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in **will worship**, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

Everything on earth are “shadows” of the heavenly things. Think of the things on earth as a two-dimensional object, just a dim outline whereas the heavenly objects are three-dimensional and in fullness and color.

Since we now have Christ, the shadows have no real meaning other than plain objects that simply represent the eternal objects on which they are based.

We can no longer be satisfied with the shadow. We can only be satisfied with our relationship with Jesus. This is why having rules about foods, festivals, sabbaths, drink and the like are weak and cannot keep your flesh from trying to get its insatiable appetite met. Quite often they are self-imposed yokes of religiosity.

Therefore, there is a spiritual reality that we are to live in: we are in Christ and He is in us. We live according to the leading of the Holy Spirit not the letter of the Law written on stone. Our walk is NOT measured by how well we adhere to man-made regulations concerning food, drink, feasts, holidays and the Sabbath. We walk by faith and truth.

Remember: **John 15:5 NKJV** "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

Remember: **2 Corinthians 12:9A (9)** And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

Remember: **Hebrews 11:6 NKJV** But without faith *it is* impossible to please *Him*, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

And finally, remember that we should not judge anyone who does or does not do the things about which Paul is speaking. If you want to keep Kosher, fine. If you don't want to observe a feast or festival, fine. If you want to commemorate the birth of Christ Jesus, fine. Just understand it's not the doing or not doing that matters, but Jesus who is at the center and is the substance of all these things!

I dealt with this A LOT in Messianic Judaism: Keeping Kosher, Sabbath-keeping, Biblical Feasts etc. There was a spiritual pride in many who did these things. Those of us to didn't do these things were considered to be “assimilated” into the “gentile” world, even if that gentile world was Christian! Nonsense!