

Completed in Christ

Colossians 2:11-23

I. Introduction

1. No matter the age, there are those seeking to corrupt or, if possible, destroy Jesus AND His followers. Sometimes this may be because of pure hatred of all that God stands for, but it can also be because of mankind's sin-stained hearts feeding our desires to be our own gods. I am going to take a moment to list several of the main attacks against the Lord and His children...take note of which ones you have experienced:

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- A. Casting doubts on the existence and/or goodness of God;
- B. Casting doubts on the veracity of the Bible;
- C. Minimizing, distorting, or denying absolute truth;
- D. Building doubts, uncertainty, and outright fear via spiritual warfare;
- E. Offering alternative worldviews, philosophies, and faiths often beginning with fostering a distorted sense of reality;
- F. Misrepresenting the Bible; and
- G. Temptation by feeding the prideful hearts of mankind.

2. While some of the methods declare outright war on Jesus, His word, and His church, many are imported using guerilla and trojan horse tactics. In our passage today Paul is primarily addressing efforts to turn Christianity into a Jewish sect via the incorporation of the law into the Colossae church's faith practices.

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3. All these years later, we are reminded by the words of King Solomon in **Ecclesiastes 1:9**: "That which has been is what will be, That which is done is what will be done, And there is nothing new under the sun." The enemy and the world fight a war already won by Jesus. Yet, this is a war for which there will still be casualties as many will simply not receive God's grace in His offer of salvation. As we move through our passage today, I hope you come to faith or find your faith strengthened by the Spirit of God.

II. Colossians 2:11-15: If NOT by Christ, How Will Your Sins Be Forgiven?

1. We first note Paul's focus on circumcision suggesting a likely effort to introduce the Jewish ritual of physical circumcision into the doctrine being practiced at the church in Colossae. While we don't have time to pursue the OT roots of physical circumcision today, for those interested in doing so, **Genesis 17** is a good start.
2. Spiritual circumcision, as Paul focuses on here, also has its roots in the OT in verses like **Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6, and Jeremiah 4:4**. Unlike physical circumcision, which was an outward sign of being one of God's own, spiritual circumcision was not a sign, but the reality of having received God's transforming love as a born-again child who is rejecting the old sinful self.

What's more, while physical circumcision was only for males, spiritual circumcision was/is for both sons and daughters of the Living King.

3. Paul then takes his apologetic deeper as he addresses the central issue at hand. Turn with me to **Romans 6**. While I very much encourage you to read this whole chapter (and even chapters 7-8) in light of what Paul is presenting here in Colossians 2, we are going to focus on verses **1-4 here in Romans 6**. Let's read this passage together, being reminded that sin is death, meaning eternal separation from God:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? ² Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? ³ Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

- Romans 6:1-4

4. Now go back with me to Colossians 2:13-14. In what is one of the most impactful passages of all Scripture, Paul here is revealing that the law is wholly inadequate to save us. Indeed, **Galatians 3:10** quotes **Deuteronomy 27:26** in saying “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them”. So, Paul’s accounting of the sinners debt to God for our NOT keeping the law, as presented in the “handwriting of requirements” debt instrument, is a jarring wakeup call that only One can release us from both the guilt and power of sin.

A. Put simply, it is by God’s grace that our faith in Him brings the freedom found only in Christ Jesus as He fulfilled the law and settled the debt to any giving their lives to Him. That is, there is no secret knowledge, nor Jesus-plus-circumcision, nor Jesus-plus-the-law, nor any Jesus-plus ritual or tradition by which one is saved. No matter how attractive or exciting other ideas may seem, unless one relies solely upon the Jesus of the Bible, and NOT either on a faith or Jesus of their own construction, one cannot be saved!

5. Before we move on, let’s consider Paul’s words here of just what Christ accomplished with His nailing of the Colossians (and our) sins to the cross of Calvary at the end of v14 and into v15. Listen carefully and don’t shortchange what is being shared here. Yes, Jesus defeated the father of lies and all his allies. Yes, Jesus disarmed, humiliated, and otherwise used the cross to triumph over them with utter and complete victory. It is done. Yes, all these things are true, but Paul is wanting you to grasp that Jesus’ victory over sin-and-separation is the Colossians and your victory too!!

In the balance of this chapter, Paul clearly makes known the Christian is NOT to submit to any form of Jewish legalism. First up, he tells them to not receive judgment by those incorporating unbiblical requirements into their faith AND to NOT be cheated by the deceivers that are feeding their own pride by destroying or at least corrupting Jesus’ church.

III. Colossians 2:16-19: If NOT in Christ, How Will You Grow?

1. Mankind is designed to worship and we also crave for the supernatural...especially supernatural that we can influence or even control. *It speaks to our pride through our emotions and our notions of self-righteousness.*
2. Yet, Scripture reminds us that because the devil counterfeits the work of the Spirit, we are to continuously test the spirits in light of God's clear, unchanging word. *So, because of Jesus' offer that mankind may share in His triumph, we are faced with what to do with the freedom Christ offers us.*

A. Paul offers a clear warning in saying to NOT fall prey to others demands of what you do or don't drink, *what festivals you attend*, and what sabbaths or holy days you observe. *Why?* Because at best they are a foreshadowing of Christ and NOT actually Christ Himself. *These things were given by God that man would, again, know of their need for God and NOT because they, in any way, can save or sanctify us in new life.*

B. Christian, we are NOT to live under the old covenant which Jesus fulfilled, but under the new one won at the cross. *In the book of Romans, Paul says:*

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"Let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. He also who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; while he who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God". - Romans 14:5-6

3. The clear lesson being that Christians are to rest in the person of Jesus Christ and not in religious observances. *It's NOT that observances are necessarily evil, but that they do NOT lead to our maturing in Christ and have often led mankind away from a personal relationship with God.* In fact, they can often be a stumbling block where mankind can think-and-feel that the practice of observances is the same as having a relationship with God.

- A. Imagine if you went to hug your wife, your kids, or other family/friends and your arms went right through them. What if you were to sit on your favorite chair to eat your favorite food and drink your favorite drink, BUT they were all just shadows? You would not find your hunger and thirst being satisfied. Let's not settle for the shadows of a banquet, when God gives us a invitation to attend in person.
4. What's more, Paul specifically points to false humility whereby it appears that the Colossians had allowed their minds to construct a way of worship that was disconnected from Jesus. Their way included angles and mysticism being the things that they had "seen". These things resonated in their hearts in serving an unhealthy dose of pride leading them into a dead, non-maturing, faith in Jesus.
- A. In this, please don't hear me saying that all of the supernatural is evil or non-important. Nothing is further from the truth. Every person in the Trinity is supernatural, the work God does is supernatural, that we can relate to Him is supernatural, and the Bible itself is supernatural. In fact, from a Biblical standpoint, I emphatically believe we need more of the Spirit of God alive and working in/on/through our lives.
- i. I also want to remind us, as is Paul here and in v20 yet to come, that the enemy and his troops also function in the supernatural.
- B. And so, we are presented with a very great warning to be discerning as to whether we are drinking of the living water and eating of the bread of life found EXCLUSIVELY in Christ **OR** if we are, instead, being nourished and grown by the things of Satan and the world.
5. At the end of verse 19, we are presented with the central question that Paul is answering here in verses 16-19...that is, apart from Jesus, how will one grow? Turn with me to 2 Peter 1:2-9 as we

look at one of the many Scriptures offering a clear path of how a maturing faith, one that is growing in Christ, looks:

² Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, ³ as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, ⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.

⁵ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, ⁶ to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, ⁷ to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. ⁸ For if these things are yours and abound, *you* will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹ For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.
- 2 Peter 1:2-9

As Paul is alluding to and as numerous Scriptures (including 2 Peter 1:2-9) testify, a growing faith is one that hungers for the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. *What's more, a maturing faith, as we see in v19, is a vibrant part of the church holding fast to her head, the Lord.*

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IV. Colossians 2:20-23: If NOT in Christ, How Will You Live in Victory?

1. Just the other day, as we were heading to Columbia, we pulled into a gas station to use the facilities. *I took a walk around, looking at the prepared hot foods as I was a little hungry.* Ultimately, the price and the thought of gas station food made me walk away. *I knew there were better options in the restaurants next door.* Yet, just a few minutes later, I went ahead and got something. *I had done it.* I settled for gas station fare when a far better banquet was readily available. *In the moment, my flesh had won out and I had lost.*

2. Paul's message to the Colossians was much the same, albeit for a more important reason. They had already dined at the magnificent table of life with the Lord and YET they were being pulled into settling for the gas station fare that led to a dead-end apart from Him.
3. Paul gets their temptation. The knowledge of the Gnostics and the law of the Jews can be presented in an interesting and compelling manner. With hearts that are easily blackened by pride, we too can easily be attracted to the basic principles of the worldly false religions because they offer us the opportunity to sit on the throne of our lives as we live out lives in comfort, pleasure, and self-righteousness.
 - A. Yet, there is ABSOLUTELY NOTHING the world offers that allowed the Colossians to overcome sin, much less live in freedom from its evil clutches. Neither special knowledge nor following the law can give the Colossians nor us new hearts and transformed minds. That takes a supernatural work of Jesus Himself.
 - B. So often the promises are given – often with great fanfare. Promises to receive great material blessings, promises of healings, promises to cast out demons, promises to be prophetic, promises to overcome lust, anger, fear, and pride, promises to feel and hear God, and so much more are often given. But just like the gas station fare, as many of us have experienced first-hand, they fall far short of the pictures they paint and the promises they give. Don't worry though, if their promises don't stand the test of time, you can be sure they will say it's your fault and not theirs.
4. The world gives directions such as “do not handle, taste, or touch”, yet these are just empty man-approaches and rules with expiration dates. They may sound full of wisdom, resonate in ones heart, and even give the appearance of Godliness, but they serve only to lead people away from the One that already gave the Colossians

(and us) salvation. They replace the supernatural work of an all-powerful, holy God with the fleshly thoughts and works of a broken, sin-filled, and selfish mankind.

5. The Colossian church was being sold lies. The wisdom of Jesus-plus-the-law was simply another form of something we fight everyday...a religion of the-impossibility-of-flesh overcoming-the-evil-of-flesh...here cloaked in, as we read in v23, their “self-imposed worship, false humility, and harsh treatment of the body”. All this does is rob the Colossians of the freedom Christ gave them by saddling them with man-wisdom, man-rituals, man-rules, and man-works which Jesus replaced by His love, grace, wisdom & knowledge (the Word), and presence in our lives.
6. Paul’s point is clear...having received victory in Christ, don’t settle for the “elementary or basic principles” of this world’s false religions and deceitful philosophies which cannot fulfill their empty promises of victory through man’s ways or man-plus-God’s ways.

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V. Closing: Completed in Christ

1. There is NO Jesus-plus-anything, whether the law or extrabiblical knowledge, that will:
 - A. give you salvation, nor
 - B. grow you in maturity in Christ.

Only in Jesus is one made complete for He and He alone is the author and finisher of our faith.
2. So, press into the word with your brothers and sisters in Christ that we may be rooted and built up in our faith. Press into Jesus with thanksgiving and worship with all of your heart, mind, and soul. Press in to His supernatural discernment that we may reject the firehoses full of false promises and false teaching. Press in that, together, we may be COMPLETED IN CHRIST!

Colossians 2:11-23 Completed in Christ

I. Introduction: There is Nothing New Under the Sun

- Methods of corrupting the Gospel and destroying Jesus' followers.

Additional Scripture References: Ecc 1:9

I. Colossians 2:11-15: If NOT Christ, How Will Your Sins be Forgiven?

- Spiritual circumcision.
- Only Jesus saves...there is NO Jesus-plus anything else that saves.

Additional Scripture References: Deut 10:16, 30:6; Jer 4:4; Ro 6:1-4; Col 2:13-14; Gal 3:10; Deut 27:26

II. Colossians 2:16-19: If NOT in Christ, How Will You Grow?

- Don't settle for shadows of Christ.
- Don't settle for the false light of the enemy and the world.

Additional Scripture References: Ro 14:5-6; 2 Pe 1:2-9

III. Colossians 2:20-23: If NOT in Christ, How Will You Live in Victory?

- Be discerning AND don't settle for the false promises of this world.
- Our flesh cannot defeat our flesh. Said, differently, since we are the problem, we can't be the solution.

IV. Closing: Complete in Christ

5-Day Devotional Colossians 2:11-23 Completed in Christ

Day 1: The Sufficiency of Christ Alone

Reading: Col. 2:11-15, Rom 6:1-4

Devotional: The world constantly whispers that Jesus isn't enough—that we need something more to be truly spiritual or acceptable to God. Yet Paul declares that in Christ, we have received spiritual circumcision, a complete transformation of heart. Our old self was buried with Him in baptism, and we were raised to new life through faith in God's power. The certificate of debt that stood against us—every failure, every sin—was nailed to the cross. Jesus didn't just pay part of our debt; He canceled it completely. Today, resist the temptation to add human requirements to God's grace. Your salvation is finished, your acceptance complete. Rest in the sufficiency of Christ alone.

Day 2: Freedom from Religious Performance Reading: Col 2:16-17, Gal 3:10-14

Devotional: Religious observances can become comfortable cages. The Colossians were being pressured to adopt Jewish dietary laws, festival calendars, and ritual practices as requirements for spiritual maturity. But Paul reminds us these were merely shadows pointing to Christ, the substance. Now that the reality has come, why return to the shadow? True spirituality isn't measured by what you eat, which days you observe, or how many religious boxes you check. These things cannot transform your heart or deepen your relationship with God. Christ has set you free from the exhausting treadmill of religious performance. Your spiritual growth comes not from external compliance but from intimate connection with Jesus, who is both the source and sustainer of your faith.

Day 3: Beware of Deceptive Philosophies

Reading: Col 2:18-19, 2 Pet 1:2-9

Devotional: False humility is pride in disguise. The Colossian church faced teachers promoting mystical experiences, angelic worship, and secret knowledge—practices that appeared deeply spiritual but actually disconnected believers from Christ, their head. Today's church faces similar dangers: teachings that emphasize feelings over Scripture, experiences over truth, or human wisdom over divine revelation. These philosophies may sound compelling and feel emotionally satisfying, but they cannot nourish spiritual growth. True maturity comes from remaining connected to Christ through His Word, allowing Him to supply everything needed for life and godliness. Test every teaching against Scripture. Does it draw you closer to Jesus or subtly shift your focus elsewhere? Stay rooted in the head of the body.

Day 4: Dead Religion vs. Living Faith**Reading: Col 2:20-23, Deu 30:6**

Devotional: Man-made religion loves rules: "Don't handle, don't taste, don't touch." These regulations appear wise and promote an image of self-discipline and devotion, but they possess no power to restrain the flesh or transform the heart. Only God can perform the supernatural work of spiritual circumcision—removing the old heart of stone and implanting a new heart that loves Him. You died with Christ to the elementary principles of this world; why live as though you still belong to it? The Christian life isn't about harsh treatment of the body or following human commands. It's about the Spirit's power working within you, producing genuine transformation from the inside out. Stop settling for gas station fare when God invites you to His banquet table.

Day 5: Growing in Christ, Not Shadows**Reading: Col 1:11-23, Heb 10:1-10**

Devotional: As you reflect on this week's readings, consider: Are you pursuing Christ Himself or merely the shadows? The old covenant with its laws and sacrifices could never perfect those who drew near—it was only a shadow of good things to come. But Christ, through one sacrifice, has perfected forever those being sanctified. Your spiritual growth doesn't depend on secret knowledge, strict observances, or mystical experiences. It comes from remaining vitally connected to Jesus, nourished by His Word, empowered by His Spirit, and supported by His body, the church. You are complete in Him. Press into Scripture with hunger. Worship with thanksgiving. Walk in the freedom and victory already won at Calvary. Let Christ be your all in all.

Small Group Study Guide

Colossians 2:11-23

Completed in Christ

Opening Prayer: Begin by asking God to open hearts and minds to His truth, and to help the group grow deeper in their understanding of what it means to be complete in Christ alone.

Opening Question: What's something you were once convinced would satisfy you, but ultimately left you disappointed?

Discussion Questions: Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. What is the difference between physical circumcision (an outward sign) and spiritual circumcision (an inward reality)?
2. Paul describes our sin debt as "nailed to the cross." What emotions does this image stir in you?
3. Why is it significant that Jesus didn't just forgive our debt, but "disarmed" and "triumphed over" spiritual powers?
4. Have you ever been tempted to add something to your faith (good works, rituals, knowledge) to feel more secure in your salvation?
5. What does it look like practically to rest in Christ's completed work rather than striving to earn God's favor?
6. Paul warns against judging others based on food, festivals, or sabbaths because these are "shadows" of Christ. What modern-day "shadows" might Christians be tempted to substitute for a real relationship with Jesus?
7. How can religious observances become stumbling blocks rather than stepping stones?
8. The Colossians were attracted to angel worship and mystical experiences. What are some contemporary equivalents that might distract believers today?
9. How can we discern between genuine supernatural work of the Holy Spirit and counterfeits?
10. According to this passage, what characterizes a maturing faith?

11. What practical steps can you take this week to "hunger for the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"?

Practical Applications: Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. Audit your Faith: Identify any "Jesus-plus" thinking in your life. Are you trusting in Christ alone, or have you added requirements for feeling accepted by God?
2. Deepen your Knowledge: Spend 15 minutes daily reading Scripture (start with Colossians or Romans 6-8) to hunger for true knowledge of Christ.
3. Connect with the Church: Reach out to another believer this week for encouragement and accountability in growing together in Christ.
4. Practice Discernment: When you encounter a spiritual teaching or practice, ask: "Does this draw me closer to Jesus as revealed in Scripture, or is it a distraction?"
5. Rest in Victory: Identify one area where you're striving in your own strength. Confess it to God and ask Him to show you how to rest in Christ's finished work.
6. Reject False Humility: If you've been drawn to mystical experiences or secret knowledge, confess this to a trusted believer and recommit to finding sufficiency in Christ alone.

Closing Prayer:

Share specific areas where group members are tempted to add to Christ or settle for less than Him

Pray for each other to rest in Christ's completed work

Thank God for the freedom and victory we have in Jesus alone

Discussion Questions

Colossians 2:11-23

Completed in Christ

1. In what ways have you encountered teachings or practices that add requirements to the simple gospel of salvation through faith in Christ alone?
2. How does understanding spiritual circumcision as the transformation of the heart change your perspective on outward religious rituals and traditions?
3. Paul describes our debt of sin being nailed to the cross with Christ. How does visualizing this image impact your understanding of forgiveness and freedom?
4. What are some modern examples of 'shadows' or substitutes that people pursue instead of a genuine relationship with Jesus Christ?
5. How can we discern whether supernatural experiences or teachings are truly from God or are counterfeits designed to lead us away from Christ?
6. In what areas of your life are you tempted to rely on self-imposed rules, disciplines, or knowledge rather than depending fully on Christ for growth?
7. Paul warns against being judged by others regarding food, festivals, or sabbaths. How do we balance Christian freedom with honoring one another's convictions?
8. What does it practically look like to remain connected to Christ as the Head of the body, ensuring that our faith continues to mature and grow?
9. How have you settled for 'gas station fare' spiritually when God has invited you to feast at His table of abundant life in Christ?
10. Reflecting on 2 Peter 1:2-9, which qualities of a maturing faith do you sense God calling you to develop more fully in this season?

Dinner Conversation Starters

Colossians 2:11-23

Completed in Christ

1. Discussing Influences

How can we recognize when we're being influenced by philosophies or worldviews that are not aligned with the teachings of Jesus? What are some ways our family can encourage each other to stay rooted in Christ alone?

2. Understanding Spiritual Circumcision

The sermon talks about spiritual circumcision as a metaphor for rejecting the old sinful self. What do you think it means to let go of our "old selves," and how can that transformation look in our everyday lives?

3. Freedom in Christ

Paul talks about freedom in Christ and warns against relying on rituals or traditions for salvation. How can our family find balance between honoring traditions and focusing on the personal relationship with Jesus?

4. Growing in Faith

Paul encourages us to grow in faith through Jesus rather than through religious observances. What are some practical ways our family can deepen our understanding of Christ and grow spiritually together?

5. Victory over Sin

The sermon emphasizes that only through Jesus can we live victoriously over sin. What does living in victory look like for our family, and what steps can we take to fully rely on God's grace in our daily challenges?

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

Colossians 2:11-23

Completed in Christ

AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Recognizing God's Love:** Teach children that they are special because God loves them and they belong to Him.

Discussion Question: When you're feeling upset or someone makes you feel bad, how do you think Jesus might help you feel better?

2. **Understanding Right from Wrong:** Help them differentiate between good and bad choices by using examples like sharing toys versus taking them from others.

Discussion Question: How can being kind like Jesus help others know about God and His love?

3. **Feeling Safe with Jesus:** Reassure children that they can talk to Jesus anytime, just like they talk to a parent, and He will help them.

Discussion Question: What's something you can do this week that shows you belong to Jesus?

AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Standing Firm in Faith:** Discuss how they may encounter friends with different beliefs and how they can respect others while sharing what they believe in about Jesus.

Discussion Question: What would you say to a friend who questions why you believe in Jesus?

2. **Choosing Good Influences:** Encourage children to choose friends who make them feel loved and supported in their faith, comparing how positive friendships help them grow like sunshine helps a plant.

Discussion Question: How can you tell the difference between a good influence and a bad influence in your life?

3. **Wisdom Online:** Guide them to be discerning with digital content, explaining that not everything online is good for their heart and mind, much like how certain foods are better for their health.

Discussion Question: Can you think of a time when you saw something online that didn't feel right? How did you handle it?

AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Identity in Christ**: Help teens affirm their identity in Christ rather than through social media or peer pressure. Discuss how self-worth comes from Jesus, not likes or comments.

Discussion Question: How does knowing that Jesus loves you as you are change the way you view yourself?

2. **Peer Pressure and Convictions**: Prepare them to stand up for their beliefs when faced with peer pressure, using the armor of God as a metaphor for protection.

Discussion Question: What strategies can you use when someone tries to pressure you into something you believe is wrong?

3. **Navigating Online Spaces Responsibly**: Teach them to use discernment in what they share or engage with online, ensuring online digital footprint reflects their faith.

Discussion Question: How can we make sure our online actions show our faith in a positive way?

Tips for Parents

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it's okay to ask questions, even if things don't make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z

Colossians 2:11-23

Completed in Christ

1. Finding Identity in Christ not Likes

Biblical Principle: Colossians 2:10 - "And in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority."

Application: Encourage focusing on self-worth through who they are in Christ rather than social media metrics. Remind them that their real value is eternal and not dependent on digital approval.

Scenario: When you feel pressured to post something on social media to gain likes or fits a trending narrative, remember that your true worth comes from being accepted and loved by Christ.

2. Maintaining Integrity

Biblical Principle: Philippians 4:8 - "Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things."

Application: In relationships, seek qualities that align with biblical values. Encourage Gen Z to look for friends who inspire them to grow closer to Christ.

Scenario: If you're dating or building friendships, prioritize honesty, respect, and encouragement rather than conforming to behaviors that compromise your faith.

3. Resisting Peer Pressure With Biblical Wisdom

Biblical Principle: Romans 12:2 - "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

Application: Equip them with the confidence to say no to peer pressure by aligning choices with God's word.

Scenario: In group settings where others might pressure you to engage in risky behaviors—be it substance use, bullying, or gossip—use God's word as your guide to stand firm.

4. Discernment Online

Biblical Principle: 1 John 4:1 - "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

Application: Teach the importance of discerning truth from lies in digital content. Encourage verification and seeking reliable information before accepting online content as truth.

Scenario: When you encounter compelling messages online that challenge your beliefs, take time to pray, seek biblical confirmation, and consult trusted faith leaders before adopting such ideas.

5. Embracing Spiritual Growth and Community

Biblical Principle: Hebrews 10:24-25 - "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together... but encouraging one another."

Application: Encourage active participation in faith communities online and offline as a source of growth and accountability.

Scenario: Join or start a virtual or in-person study group to share insights and support each other. Encourage others to explore faith and build strong, accountable relationships.

These points aim to empower Gen Z to live out their faith genuinely and courageously in various aspects of their daily lives, reflecting Biblical integrity, compassion, and steadfastness.