

Thanksgiving is upon us, and with it comes what some people describe as the crush of the holiday season. These Scrolls are designed to help us stay in daily study of God's word, working in tandem with our Sunday services to enhance what God wants to teach us. The Scrolls are best used with a Spiritual Life Notebook, which is available Sunday mornings at FBC's Information Table. The Scrolls, along with small group materials, are also available online at www.fbcdavis.org.

Fleas and Thank You

Corrie ten Boom and her family hid Jewish people from the Nazis during World War II. For this, they went to prison. The German authorities eventually sent Corrie and her sister Betsie to a concentration camp far from their Dutch home. On arrival, Betsie insisted they give thanks to God for bringing them there safely. Skeptical, Corrie bowed to her sister's wishes. But when Betsie's prayer turned to thanks for the very fleas in their straw mattresses, Corrie balked.

"Must we give thanks for the fleas?"

"Yes," Betsie insisted gently, "even the fleas, Corrie."

Corrie had managed to bring her Bible with her into the concentration camp, despite careful searches to confiscate all of the prisoners' belongings. Betsie and Corrie organized a Bible study that met in their barracks. Night after night they met, expecting all the while to be found out and punished, perhaps even killed. But the guards never came, and Corrie and Betsie gratefully carried on bringing God's word to women from countries all over Europe.

Finally one day, Corrie learned the answer to the question of the guards' failure to patrol the barracks. The fleas that infested the mattresses and every person in the barracks, the inescapable fleas for which Betsie (obediently) and Corrie (reluctantly) had given thanks, were so bad that the guards refused to set foot in the room unless forced to do so. God used these tiny creatures to guard Corrie, Betsie and the rest of the women from the human guards who posed such a threat to those who gathered to study God's word.

Monday – Thanks, Thanks, Thanks

"To be grateful is to recognize the Love of God in everything he has given us – and he has given us everything. Every breath we draw is a gift of his love, every moment of existence is a grace, for it brings with it immense graces from him.... For the grateful person knows that God is good, not by hearsay but by experience." Thomas Merton

1. Please read Colossians 3:15-17. Paul insists on thankfulness three times in this short passage. Begin by locating the three references to thankfulness.
2. In what circumstances is he saying to be grateful (see also 1Thessalonians 5:18; Romans 8:28)?
3. Do you find it difficult have a thankful attitude? Sometimes? Always? What do you think might keep you from being grateful to God? What steps can you take to developing a thankful lifestyle?

Tuesday – Peace and Rest

"Oh to live above with saints I love, that would be glory. But to live below with saints I know, that's another story." Glen Snyder

1. Read Colossians 3:15 and Matthew 11:28-30. According to Jesus, where are we to go to find rest? And according to Paul, how are we to obtain peace? How are rest and peace related?
2. Look closely at verse 15. Paul says we are to let Christ's peace rule in our hearts because we are called to peace as members of the Body of Christ (the Church). Sometimes we find this difficult as we rub shoulders with one another because our rough edges can hurt others. What is involved in living peaceably with others in the Body of Christ?

Wednesday – Rich Living

"He who dies with the most toys wins." Bumper Sticker.

1. The world measures reward and wealth one-way. God measures it another way entirely. Take a look at Psalm 19:7-11 and the first half of Colossians 3:16. What are the benefits of the word of Christ? Have you ever experienced one of the benefits listed in Psalm 19?
2. What does it mean to "let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly?" How do you do that?

Digging Deeper - Verse 11 of Psalm 19 talks about a great reward. What reward from God's Word have you personally received? Follow the instructions of Col. 3:16 by giving thanks to God for the gift of his Word.

Thursday – Sing, sing, sing

"...biblically formed people do a lot of singing as they worship. 'Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs' (Col. 3:16), not theological or Hebrew and Greek word studies, provide the primary language for embracing and savoring what God does and who God is...." Eugene Peterson – Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places.

"The best way to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear!" Will Ferrell as Buddy, in the movie "Elf."

1. Apparently the author of Psalm 150 felt the same way about praising God that Buddy felt about spreading Christmas cheer. Psalm 150 is a very short chapter with a lot of vivid and powerful language about singing and music. With that passage in mind, what do you think of the instruction Paul gives in the second half of Colossians 3:16?
2. When has a song of faith helped you express gratitude to God from your heart?

Friday – In Word and Deed

1. Please read Colossians 3:17, as well as 1 Peter 4:11. How does the 1 Peter verse help us to understand what Paul is saying in Colossians 3:17? According to Peter and Paul, what should be the purpose of our every word and action?
2. Compare the phrase "word and deed" in Colossians with the words "speaking" and "serving" from 1 Peter. Both appear to focus on what we say and what we do. Think about the people you will speak to today and the things you will do. If you were to apply these two verses to your life, what would you say or do differently?

Digging Deeper – Consider writing one of these two verses on a 3x5 card or piece of paper and take it with you today. Let it remind you of the attitude you can have in all that you do.

Over the weekend – In this week's passage from Colossians 3, Paul tells us many things: in peace, we are to be thankful (v. 15); when active, we are to be thankful (v. 16); whatever you do, do it in Jesus' name and be thankful (v. 17). Focus on gratitude to God this weekend, and see if it becomes a habit. It became one for Betsie ten Boom.