

# The Indwelling Word

By Jim Davis

Did you know that God's word has the power to heal? When we yield to God's prescription for life it provides good mental, spiritual, and physical health. The Apostle Paul addressed some false teaching in the church at Colosse that threatened the spiritual growth of the church body. Paul, concerned for the good health of believers, provided some principles of growth. "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you." We are to exercise our mind and meditate within the heart upon God's word.

"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God." (Colossians 3:16)

## The Exercise of the Mind

Teach and admonish one another with all wisdom. This is a group activity that is to take place within the local church. Good spiritual health requires teaching and instruction. It is like medicine for the sick. Spiritually, sin is much like physical sickness. There is a need for diagnosis and treatment since "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). The word of Christ is the only antidote.

God's word teaches us how to live. Life within the church is contingent upon clear teaching and persistent admonishment in the truth. Teaching has to do with the proclamation of the truth while admonishment is hands on instruction. The proclamation of God's word diagnoses our sinfulness. The Word of God discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. At the very core of our being the light is turned on and sometimes we may find the most frightening things. Admonishment is the treatment of the illness. It is the application of the principles of God's word to the practical experience of the person.

If we were to think of it in terms of teaching our son to throw a ball, the teaching part would be what we tell him in the house and the admonishing would be instruction we demonstrate in the back yard. The pastor teaches that husbands should love their wives as Christ loves the church (Ephesians 5:25). He explains what it means to love sacrificially even to death. Within the church body there are men who are learning how to take that truth and apply it to everyday life and they are demonstrating the principle. Older men instruct younger men and give them the benefit of their experiences which in turn creates good health. Notice the verse says to teach and admonish with "all wisdom." Wisdom comes with the exercise of the truth into our experience. It is skill in living. As the word of Christ dwells within the church body in abundance there is spiritual growth and good health.

Listen to the words of the psalmist in Psalm 107:17-20.

"Fools, because of their rebellious way, and because of their iniquities, were afflicted. Their soul abhorred all kinds of food; and they drew near to the gates of death. Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble; He saved them out of their distresses. He sent His word and healed them..."

If the rebellious way and the crooked path describe your life and if you are suffering affliction due to the consequences, you will need God's word to heal you.

There is one requirement that should be addressed. It is God's only requirement. We must believe. It transcends trusting some words in a book, as though it were some incan-

tation. Trust in the character of the person who has given the instruction. If God said it, then it is the Truth and we can rely upon it.

Exercising our mind upon the principles of God's word has a transforming effect in a person's life. As we begin to view life through God's word, our perspective on things changes. Healing is available for those of us who meditate upon the Scripture and apply them to our lives.

### **The Meditation of the Heart**

The word of Christ is to indwell us richly. It not only involves the exercise of the mind upon the principles of God's word but also the mediation of the heart upon the truth and beauty of God's word. Remember that His word is inseparable from His character and His reputation. What He has promised He will do; Christ is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God by Him.

Basically, Paul's instruction in the second part of this verse is to sing to God with thankfulness in our heart. The heart represents the central control room of the person. Our actions or deeds spring forth from the seat of our thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, and affections; that is from our heart. Our singing to God is prompted by the thankfulness that is there. When God's word is richly indwelling our heart we are thankful. There is peace when we consider His promises. There is great joy and satisfaction when we meditate upon the spiritual wealth that we have in Christ Jesus.

What better way to be controlled by a spirit of thankfulness than with singing? We are instructed to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Although we may have to speculate somewhat about the definition of these different categories, one thing is certain, God's truth set to a melody is beneficial. Psalms may well have been the Old Testament poetic writings put to music. Hymns may represent particular passages from the New Testament set to music. Spiritual songs may represent songs of testimony about God's faithfulness.

There is nothing like meditation on God's word when it is set to a beautiful melody. A song we hear on Sunday can take up residence in our heart and prompt us to meditate upon the words all week long. Our hearts will freely generate thankfulness as we meditate upon God's promises, His faithfulness, His character, and His instruction for our lives.

If we are having trouble with our thought life, good music is a gift from God. As we learn what the Bible teaches and we receive instruction in our local church, we should supplement our week with music that causes us to meditate upon Scripture and the principles of the Bible. Many filthy minds have been cleaned up with the memorization of Scripture and many hearts have been transformed when the word of Christ takes up abode within.

Multitudes have gone to the Psalms in the Old Testament in times of great sorrow. The words of the psalmist are like ointment bringing comfort and healing to the wounds of the afflicted. The Bible records that Paul and his traveling missionary companion, Silas, were imprisoned in the city of Philippi during Paul's second missionary journey (see Acts 16). After they were beaten with rods they were thrown into a dungeon and their feet were fastened in stocks. The Bible says that about midnight they were praying and singing hymns of praise to God. Paul was not speaking outside of his personal experience when he commanded the Christians at Colosse to sing to God with thanksgiving in their hearts.

### **Conclusion**

The exercise of our minds upon the principles of God's word transforms our perspective on life. To see life through the grid of Scripture is to see life from God's view. When we

apply the instruction with wisdom to our everyday lives, it brings good health. The meditation of a thankful heart is a powerful weapon against despair and anguish and other human afflictions. Singing to God with thankfulness in our hearts sires victory.

May the word of Christ richly dwell within us. It provides comfort and strength for our life. It brings healing for the wounds of affliction. It cleanses our minds when our thoughts are bad. It comforts us when we are overwhelmed with trouble. Joy springs forth over sadness. Thanksgiving replaces bitterness. Hope conquers despair. God's word provides good health to our spiritual lives.