We trust that you all had a great Thanksgiving with family/friends. Besides the Turkey… what was your favorite food or dessert?

Whenever we set out to cook something, we want it to turn out great…, Amen?!

So we follow the instructions carefully and add all of the ingredients that are called for… and hopefully we don’t leave anything out.

Should our approach to building a life be any different? We all want a great life! Amen?!

The definition of which may vary wildly by generation… LOL!!

* To get a college degree and a higher paying career, one must be willing/able to sacrifice the additional 4, 8 or more years of reading books, writing reports and taking tests…
* To own your own home, one has to say no to self on some level and sacrifice to save for a down payment.
* Then once you have a home… To keep it so others can enjoy it with you… that requires hard work & sacrifice…

Saturday mornings was our dedicated day that Dee & I and family cleaned and did yard work together as a family…

The recipe for Godly living (that will be desirable to some…), can be found in the Scripture.

When we devote ourselves to learning & following the instructions provided by our Creator and don’t try short-cuts/work arounds…

He has an AMAZING life, with fewer regrets waiting…,

So, how can we get there?

Colossians 3:12-14

The context

God inspired Paul (a former persecutor of Christians, turned follower of Jesus) to give this set of instructions to a group of “new believers” who had given their lives to follow Jesus in a place called Colosse (in Asia minor)… (V9-10).

Living up to it’s name, Colosse had a large population and it was famous for it’s wool trade.

Paul encouraged them to grow Spiritually by making the difficult and demanding decision to take of their “old self” with it’s deeds (*Praxis –* practices)…

Paul mentioned lying as one of their old practices, so it must have been bad there for word to get back to him.

Either that or Paul knew from personal experience how deeply rooted “lying” is in mankind’s “old” human nature that we’re born with.

How could they escape such a relationship killer as untruthfulness? V10

By putting on the “new self” *(with it’s practices).*

To be sure, Paul isn’t telling them to “turn over a new leaf”… because the sin that the leaf is covering is still present… it’s just hidden…

Imagine this book as a detailed record of every lie the Colossian believers ever told…, every ungodly thought…, every ungodly deed they’d ever done in their life.

Does God love them? Yes, but because God is also Holy & Just, He must punish sin…

Isaiah 53:6, Romans 6:23

His love for us offers Salvation (forgiveness), but then He enables & empowers His people to live differently (holy lives)…

The “new (born again) self” that receives the free gift of Christ by faith – 1st work of grace)… V10, but that second work of grace is what gets us off the rollercoaster of sin & defeat, leading to victory in Jesus.

2 Thessalonians 2:13

“Inviting the Holy Spirit to cleanse the heart from it’s natural born desire to sin against God” (violating the known Law of God. (His Word))

The decision to allow the Holy Spirit to do this renovating work can be made in an instant, but the work of maturing in the image of the Creator is a daily, lifelong process of listening to & following the Holy Spirit…

Romans 8:4-5

The youth sometimes tell us how much they love Dee & I.

Our prayer is that they look up to us and respect our walk with Christ & our marriage/relationship not just as something that benefits them now, but a lifestyle to be chosen, that will benefit & bless the rest of their lives.

Where the struggle may be for them is, they don’t actually see the work that goes into it every day…

The daily Bible study & prayer time that we have every morning…

talking & listening to God to hear the direction that He has for our lives…

Which sometimes requires difficult changes that are necessary to grow and share Him with others.

There are no short-cuts… no work arounds…to the Holy Spirit’s process.

It maintains harmony, unity, peace & joy in our relationship, that makes it possible to take root in our “new” relationships that we’re making with others…

I praise God that another person on my list this week came to me and gave their live to Christ…

Remember that we only volunteer to let the Holy Spirit do the work, He is the One who does great things… so never forget to give Him thanks… He has the power… we submit.

In V11, Paul says “here”… Where is here? Colosse?

No, “here” as in being renewed (renovated) in Christ-likeness/holiness…

Paul reminds them first that…

1. You are not alone…

There are all kinds of people in the Christian community who either have or need to voluntarily (sanctify) set themselves apart to let the Holy Spirit do God’s will…

* Gentile & Jew
* Circumcised & uncircumcised
* Barbarian (non-greek foreigner) & Scythian (savage)
* Slaves (Doo-los, someone who voluntarily works for another)

& free (people who are free from working for others (retired)…

They all exist together in the community of believers called the “Church” (Ekklesia – called out ones)… They are FAMILY.

So, believers are guaranteed to find people who are not like themselves… People who are opposite, for many different reasons…

But that doesn’t make them bad, wrong or any less important…

Think about the great things that happen when opposites like cocoa & sugar are combined for the purpose of making something good…

Great things happen! Because “Christ is all and is in all”…

Paul continues to give the recipe for a beautiful, delicious, double chocolate layer cake “Godly life”…

1. The recipe - Colossians 3:12-14 NASB

12 So, as those who have been chosen of God…

(Be certain that God wants all to be saved. The chosen are the ones who give their lives to serve & follow Jesus)…

To them he says: “holy and beloved, put on…

* A heart of/bowels (spleen/filter out the nasty things) thru compassion.
* Kindness (especially when people are unkind to you) boy is that one ever difficult… but needed to have a great life…

Think about how detrimental the “old” “eye for an eye” mentality is to winning people to Christ and growing His church.

* Humility – when you know you’ve done wrong or been wronged… (especially in the face of people exalting themselves over you)…
* Gentleness (being careful and sensitive toward people, especially when they’ve hurt you…) and
* Patience (Macro-thumea) Macro - long/a lot/ big & thumea (thumos - thermos) hot; Now patience doesn’t mean staying hot towards someone for a long time…

It means staying cool during the seasons of life that heat up…

Like Arizona in the summer, but toward people…

13 bearing (holding oneself up against… (or suffering) with one another, and forgiving each other…, whoever has a complaint against anyone (and they will);

All of that may seem impossible to us… and it is without what Paul says next…

just as the Lord forgave you…,

so also should you forgive. (Even if they think they’re right,

they’ve disrespected you, abused you and don’t ask for forgiveness!)

14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

His POWERFUL love for people is the “activator” that makes it happen.

1. The result (when we do)

Being the kind of Christian Paul is talking about (at church, at home, and work/school)…

No longer lying to ourselves by living a duplicitous lifestyle (living differently out there than we do here).

Becoming someone who prays & seeks opportunities to reach out to others thru the compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness and love that we ourselves have received from Christ.

Instead of simply maintaining, we become “world changers”… allowing the Holy Spirit to work thru us for God’s glory… leading others to Him.

There we have it! The recipe for the “Godly life” that will bless you, your children, grandchildren and generations of people you won’t meet until we all get to the New Heaven & New Earth.

Remember we are never alone… we have His Spirit and each other…