

THE WAY TO THRIVE IN 2025

Colossians 1:3-8

- **During our 21 DAYS OF PRAYER/FASTING we are pursuing deepening our relationship with the Lord and asking Him for direction, help and provision for our lives, families, friends and ministry throughout 2025 (www.celebrationchurch.org/prayerfasting).**
- **Epaphras became a Christian during Paul's ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19-20), and then returned to his home in Colossae to start a Home Group (like our Life Groups) with his friend Philemon that became a Church.**
- Paul – *"We always pray for you, and we give thanks to God . . . for we have heard that you trust in Christ Jesus and that you love all of God's people."* (Colossians 1:3-4)
- **Paul was praying for the Christians in Colossae because he knew the challenges they were facing, and because he was thankful for them.**
- ***Who am I really thankful for, and why am I so thankful for them?***
- **The Lord and others will be thankful for us when we live like the Colossian Christians did; and when we do so we will find ourselves "thriving" rather than just "surviving" in 2025.**
- ***What does it take to live a transformed and transformative life?***

Living A Thriving Life Requires:

LIVING A FAITH-FILLED LIFE

- Paul – *"We have heard that you trust in Christ Jesus . . ."* (Colossians 1:4a)
- **We become Christians by placing our faith in Jesus (Ephesians 2:8-9), and the Christian life is to continue to be a life of faith and trust in Jesus Christ.**
- *"Just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must . . . grow in faith, strong and vigorous in the truth you were taught."* (Colossians 2:6-7)
- **Living by Faith leads to *Security* in our Lives.**

    - **Many believers live fear-filled lives rather than faith-filled lives, which causes them to struggle with anger, anxiety, addictions, etc.**
    - *"I know the One in whom I trust, and I am sure that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until the day of His return."* (2 Timothy 1:12)
- **Living by Faith leads to *Ministry* in our Lives.**
    - *"God has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things He planned for us."* (Ephesians 2:10)
    - **All Christians are to be involved in serving God by serving others.**
- **Living by Faith leads to *Generosity* in our Lives.**
    - *"Though they (the Macedonian Christians) have been going through much trouble and hard times, their wonderful joy and deep poverty have overflowed in rich generosity."* (2 Corinthians 8:2)
    - **If we are not faithful and generous givers we cannot claim to be living a faith-filled life.**
- **Living by Faith leads to *Victory* in our Lives.**
    - *"Every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith."* (1 John 5:4)
- ***What steps do I need to take to live more of a faith-filled life?***

Living A Thriving Life Requires:

LIVING A <u>LOVE-FILLED</u> LIFE

- Paul – *"We have heard that you . . . love all of God's people."* (Colossians 1:4)
- Paul – *"Epaphras . . . told us about the great love for others that the Holy Spirit has given you."* (Colossians 1:7-8)
- **According to the Bible, Christians are to love: 1) Our Creator (Mark 12:30), 2) Other Christians (1 John 3:23), and 3) Non-Christians (John 13:35).**
- **We express our Love for others by *Caring for Them.***
    - *"God will not forget how hard you have worked for Him, and how you have shown your love to Him by caring for other Christians."* (Hebrews 6:10)
- **We express our Love for others by *Fellowshipping with Them.***
    - *"They joined with the other believers and devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship . . . and prayer."* (Acts 2:42)
    - **If we truly love others we will spend time encouraging them and ministering to them in *Life Groups*, meetings, and other gatherings.**
- **We express our Love for others by *Serving Them.***
    - *"Don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love."* (Galatians 5:13)
- **We express our Love for others by *Forgiving Them.***

    - *"If someone says, 'I love God,' but hates a Christian brother or sister, that person is a liar; for if we don't love people we can see, how can we love God, whom we have not seen?"* (1 John 4:20-21)
    - **Forgiving others demonstrates to them that we love them, but it also releases us from bitterness and bondages in our lives.**
- **We express our Love for others by *Witnessing to Them.***
    - *"The most important thing is that I tell people the Good News about God's grace."* (Acts 20:24 NCV)
    - **We can't say we love others if we're unwilling to tell them about Jesus, since He's the only way for someone to make it to Heaven.**
- ***What steps do I need to take to live more of a love-filled life?***
- *"Most important of all, continue to show deep love for each other, for love covers a multitude of sins."* (1 Peter 4:8)

Living A Thriving Life Requires:

LIVING A <u>HOPE-FILLED</u> LIFE

- Paul – *"You do this because you are looking forward to the joys of heaven as you have been ever since you first heard the truth of the Good News."* (Colossians 1:5)
- **Real Christians have great hope when it comes to our *Now Life*.**
    - Jesus - *"My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life."* (John 10:10)
    - **Christians should be living more joyous, peaceful, purpose-filled and victorious lives than the people of the world around us.**
- **Real Christians have great hope when it comes to the *Next Life.***
    - Jesus - *"There are many rooms in My Father's home, and I am going to prepare a place for you. . . . When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with Me where I am."* (John 14:2-3)
    - **For Christians, death is no more than a shuttle bus that transports us from this life to God's wonderful life and home in Heaven.**
    - ***What steps do I need to take to live more of a hope-filled life?***

- **When we live with faith, hope and love we will be blessed by God and used by Him to impact people's lives and bring transformation to our world.**
- Paul – *"This same Good News that came to you is going out all over the world. It is changing lives everywhere, just as it changed yours . . ."* (Colossians 1:6)
- **Epaphras lived with faith, hope and love because he was a "faithful servant" (bond-slave) to Jesus Christ (Colossians 1:7-8).**
- ***What is the Lord communicating to me through this message?***