

My Goal is God Himself



Learning by Living (Part 10)
by Derek Prince

It's good to be with you again, as we draw near to the close of another week. Today I'll continue and complete the theme that I've been following for the past two weeks, "Learning by Living." I trust you have found it helpful and inspiring.

I based my talk yesterday on the opening words of the Bible, "In the beginning, God…" I emphasized there is only one place we can rightfully give to the true God. That's the first place. He has to be "in the beginning," He has to be the starting point, He has to be the basis of everything in our lives. Any life that is not built on that basis is going to suffer tremendous problems.

In my talk today, I am going to present the opposite side of the same coin: God as the end and goal of all living. Any life that is not firmly directed toward God as its goal, is misdirected and it will end in frustration.

In Revelation 22:13, the Lord says this:

> "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."

In three different ways, the Lord tells us that as He is the beginning, so He, too, must be the end. Our lives must take their source in Him and find their consummation in Him. Alpha, the first letter of the Greek alphabet; Omega, the last. We must begin with Him, we must end with Him. He must be the goal towards which our lives are directed. He's the first and the last, the beginning and the end. God is both source and consummation of all true life.

I want to take now a number of statements that Paul makes in the epistle to the Colossians. I want to show you how he emphasizes again and again that all there is of God is available to us in Jesus Christ, there is no other starting point, there is no other ending point and how careful we must be never to deviate from the pathway that begins and ends with God and with Jesus Christ.

This is what Paul says in Colossians 1:15–19 about Jesus. He makes seven successive statements that put Jesus

absolutely, uniquely, in a class by Himself. If you can grasp these statements, you could never begin to put Him on the same level with Buddha or Socrates or any other human philosopher or teacher or religious leader. Paul says this:

> "He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him [Jesus] all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy [the preeminence or the first place]. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in Him [Jesus]."

The totality of God is in Christ.

Just notice the seven statements that Paul makes here in connection with Jesus. Five of them relate to His eternal being and nature as God and the last two relate to His redemptive work of salvation. The first five (relating to His eternal nature):

1. He is the image of God. Do you remember in His earthly life, He said, "He that has seen me has seen the Father." If you want to know what God is like there's only one place to look—that's Jesus. That's why God doesn't permit any images of Himself because He has His own divinely appointed image which is Jesus.

2. He is the firstborn before or over all creation. He is not created. It's an error to teach that Jesus is created. He was before all creation. All creation took place through Him.

3. All things were created by Him.

4. He is eternally existent before all things.

5. In Him all things hold together.

If we once grasp these truths about Jesus how could we ever deviate from our loyalty and commitment to Him to any other person?

And then the two final statements relating to His redemptive work:

6. He is the head of the body, which is the church.

7. The firstborn from the dead.

Those are the two great facts that make Him the redeemer of mankind. He died but He rose from the dead the first and He is the head of His people, the Body, the Church.

And then Paul sums it up and says: "All God's fullness dwells in Him." How important that we never deviate, that we never get tricked or turned aside.

Paul goes on in this same epistle to warn us against this. In Colossians 2:2–4, he says:

> "My purpose is that they [the believers] may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding [Notice that, the 'full riches of complete understanding'], in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments."

Now, I was a professional philosopher before I met the Lord Jesus. I was seeking wisdom and knowledge. But when I met Him I knew instantly I had met the answer and I said to myself, "Why should I go on, rooting around in the garbage dumps of human wisdom when all the treasures are contained in one person, Jesus Christ? I'll settle for the treasures. You may keep the rest of the garbage, but I'm going for the treasures."

And then in the same chapter of Colossians, chapter 2, verses 8–10, Paul goes on with this warning:

> "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, [What a breath-taking statement!] and you have been given fullness in Christ…"

That's my aim. It's to enter into the fullness that has been given to us in Jesus Christ. I don't want to deviate one hair's-breadth to the right or to the left. I don't want to look in any other direction for my ultimate goal and satisfaction but Jesus Christ Himself.

I've been explaining to you that God is the beginning and the end—the starting point of all true life, the goal and

consummation of all true life. Now I want to illustrate this by a simple kind of parable from the tabernacle of Moses as it is described in the Old Testament—a truth that has become so vivid to me over the years.

The tabernacle was a structure that was in three sections: the outer court; and then inside the first curtain, the Holy Place; and then beyond the second curtain, the Holy of Holies. Now, you can distinguish them in various ways but one simple way is by the light that is available in each. In the outer court, the light is natural—the sun, the moon, the stars. Once you go inside the first curtain there is no more natural light and inside the first curtain, in the Holy Place, the light is provided by the seven-branched candlestick in which the oil that is ignited and burns in the bowls provides light. Now that means that once you get inside there, you are not living by your senses, you are living by faith. And for me, also, that first curtain corresponds with being identified with Christ in His resurrection. But beyond the second curtain, this is a remarkable fact, there was no light at all. It was extremely dark and I believe the second curtain is being identified with Jesus Christ in His ascension. Paul teaches us that we are raised with Him, we are also seated with Him in heavenly places on His throne. I believe that's the ultimate destination of the Christian pilgrimage. It's behind the second curtain, it's in the heavenlies. But listen, in that place there was only one item of furniture, the Ark with the cherubs on top of it. And there was no light. Why would you want to go there? The answer is you wouldn't want to go there except for one reason: to meet with God. And you see, when a man with a true heart went in beyond that second veil it became gloriously illuminated with the supernatural presence of God which we tend to call the shekinah. You see, that's the goal—that's the ultimate. There's nothing to entice us beyond that second veil, that second curtain, except God. He doesn't provide a lot of counter-attractions, a lot of alternatives—it's God or nothing. If God doesn't come, you're in total darkness.

That is the way I see the Christian life. That's the way I seek to live my life, my goal is God. And I believe that it means being single-hearted, having no alternatives, no other options, no other attractions. It's God Himself and God alone. That's the way I picture the Christian life. My destination is behind that second curtain identified with Jesus not merely in resurrection but in ascension. And the light that I seek is not natural, it's not artificial, it's supernatural—it's the very presence of God Himself.

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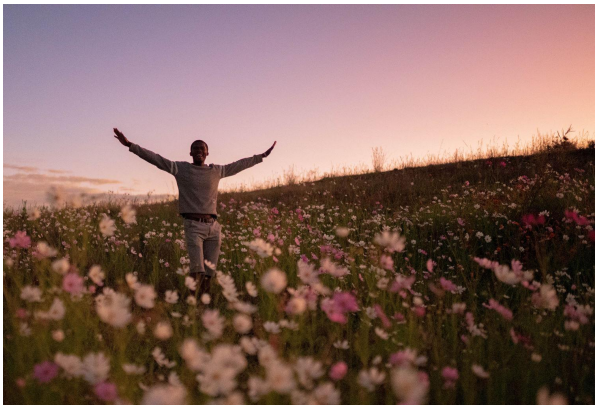

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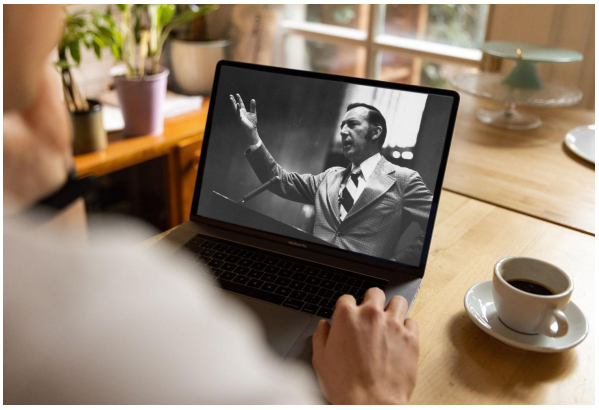

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