LESSON 10 *February 28–March 6

(page 76 of Standard Edition)

Complete *in* Christ



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Colossians 2; Heb. 7:11; Isa. 61:3; 1 Cor. 3:6; Deut. 31:24–26; Rom. 2:28, 29; Rom. 7:7.*

Memory Text: **"So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ"** *(Colossians 2:16, 17, NKJV)***.**

Have you ever been asked why you keep the Sabbath? Perhaps even this week's memory text was used as "evidence" against it. Yet, the text was written not about the fourth commandment, but in response to errors taught by some false teachers in the church. What were these errors?

First, the false teaching is described as "philosophy," "the tradition of men," "the basic principles of the world," and "not according to Christ" *(Col. 2:8, NKJV)*.

It also involved circumcision and the keeping of Jewish festivals *(Col. 2:11, 16)*, along with Jewish purity rituals and regulations connected with food *(Col. 2:16, 21)*. It involved the worship of or with angels or an attempt to emulate angelic worship *(Col. 2:18)*.

And, finally, it was based on "the commandments and doctrines of men" and possibly involved ascetic practices *(Col. 2:22, 23)*.

These false teachers were clearly religious and sincere, but they also got the gospel wrong. This week we'll see why. And we will see why the memory verse has nothing to do with our keeping the seventh-day Sabbath.

** Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, March 7.*

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The Wisdom and Knowledge of God

Job asked, "Where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?" *(Job 28:12, NKJV)*. Paul answers: in Christ, "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" *(Col. 2:3, NKJV; compare 1 Cor. 1:30)*. If we have Christ, we have everything, even the "full assurance of understanding" the purpose of life *(Col. 2:2, NKJV)*. Through Him the mystery of God, which embraces the entire plan of salvation, has been revealed.

Read Colossians 2:1–7. What is Paul's purpose in writing this epistle?

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The Greek word *paraklēthōsin* means "encouraged" or "strengthened" *(Col. 2:2)*. Paul's desire is not only to help the believers in Colossae recognize false teachings but also to "unite" *(sumbibasthentes)* them in Christian love. The tense used for both verbs—"encouraged" and "united"—indicates Paul's confidence that this epistle will achieve its intended purpose.

He did, however, commend them for "your good order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ" *(Col. 2:5, NKJV)*.

The Greek term *taxis*, translated "order," is used in the New Testament in reference to the priestly orders of Aaron *(Luke 1:8, Heb. 7:11)* and Melchizedek *(Heb. 5:6, 10, NKJV; Heb. 6:20, NKJV; Heb. 7:11, 17, NKJV)*, but Paul applies it to order in the church *(1 Cor. 14:40)*, including here. Sometimes there is a tendency to consider church order and organization as merely an ecclesiastical institution with no theological significance.

But by prescribing proper decorum in worship *(see, for example, 1 Corinthians 11)*, and specifying how elders and deacons should be selected *(1 Timothy 3, Titus 1)*, Paul was very careful to preserve order in the church. Through these measures, God's wisdom and the teachings of the Bible are preserved and promulgated.

As a result of the correct teaching that the Colossians had received from Paul's associates, they had "steadfastness" of faith. It cannot be shaken because it rests on a solid biblical foundation that, if adhered to, would help protect them from the errors being promoted by the false teachers.

What has been your experience with the need for "order" in your own spiritual life?

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Rooted and Growing in Christ

The theme of Colossians is one of the clearest maxims for living the Christian life: "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him" *(Col. 2:6, NKJV)*. We receive salvation by receiving a Person, not just a body of teachings. But receiving Jesus also includes accepting all His teachings, as given through the apostles and prophets of the Bible *(see Eph. 2:20)*.

More than anything else, accepting Christ means a death to self, a complete surrender of self to the living Christ.

The Living Word (Jesus) cannot be separated from the Written Word (the Bible). They are two sides of the same coin. In fact, only through Scripture can we know Jesus. We "walk" or live our lives "in Him," meaning that we allow His Word and His Spirit to guide us in all our decisions and practices.

In Colossians 2:7, Paul employs a common biblical metaphor that likens Christians to plants. We become rooted in Christ by accepting Him as our Savior and ordering our life according to His Word. That is how we become "established in the faith."

How do the following passages illuminate the plant metaphor as a symbol of believers? *(See Isa. 61:3, Matt. 3:10, Luke 8:11–15, 1 Cor. 3:6.)*

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Paul clearly delineates the two alternatives open to believers. One is to remain a "planting of the LORD" *(Isa. 61:3)* and continue being complete in Christ by holding on to Him and His teachings. The other could be likened to an artificial plant that may look real but is actually lifeless. By adopting human philosophies and traditions, we are taken "captive" *(Col. 2:8, ESV)*. Although Christ has set us free, it is possible to be enslaved again with a yoke of bondage *(Gal. 5:1; compare Acts 15:10)*.

In short, accepting unbiblical teachings means rejecting Christ, because those who buy into false teachings have, unfortunately, adopted a different gospel and have accepted human authorities over the authority of Scripture *(see Gal. 1:6–9)*. This was a danger in the early church and remains so today.

What has been your own experience with what it means to die to self in order to receive Christ? Why must that be a continual process?

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Nailed to the Cross

Read Colossians 2:11–15. What issues does Paul seem to be combating here?

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How often have we seen these texts, especially Colossians 2:14, misused as an argument against the law and keeping the Sabbath?

To help understand these texts, two main interpretations have been proposed by Seventh-day Adventists: First, the "handwriting" nailed to the cross is the list of charges leveled "against us," similar to the writing Pilate hung on Jesus' cross *(Matt. 27:37; John 19:19, 20)*. Or, second, the ceremonial law written by Moses *(see Deut. 31:24–26)* was nailed to the cross.

When we look at the verse in its larger context, we can see that it is clearly talking about the ceremonial law.

Paul also refers to "circumcision made without hands" *(Col. 2:11)*, that is, "of the heart" *(Rom. 2:28, 29; compare Deut. 30:16)*, in apparent contrast to fleshly circumcision, which was one of the most important stipulations of the ceremonial law *(Lev. 12:3; compare Exod. 12:48)*.

Paul then connects this inward change with "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh" and with baptism by immersion. With this baptism, we identify ourselves with Christ's death and resurrection *(Col. 2:11, 12)*.

This conversion experience is then likened to having been "dead in trespasses" and "made . . . alive" with Christ, who "forgave us all our trespasses" *(Col. 2:13, NRSV)*.

The word "ordinances" *(Col. 2:14)* refers to legal decrees, whether secular *(Luke 2:1, Acts 17:7)* or ecclesiastical *(Acts 16:4)*. This Greek word's only other occurrence in Paul's writings refers to the ceremonial law, which formed a wall of separation between Jews and Gentiles *(Eph. 2:14, 15)*.

Because Paul has already referred to the forgiveness of sins and the inner change symbolized by baptism, it is unlikely he would return to that topic again with a different metaphor not used anywhere else in Scripture. Rather, Paul seems to be emphasizing a similar point as made in Ephesians: that the Gentile believers in Colossae need not worry about keeping the ceremonial law, including circumcision, nor about the purity laws that went with such a commitment *(compare Acts 10:28, 34, 35)*.

Clearly, Paul was not suggesting that the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross, not when elsewhere he defines sin as violation of the Ten Commandments *(Rom. 7:7)*.

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Shadow or Substance?

Read Colossians 2:16–19. What Jewish-Christian practices are highlighted here by Paul?

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To this day, scholars do not agree on exactly what the issues were that Paul was addressing here. What we can be sure of is that Paul's epistle itself provides quite a bit of information on what seems to have been a Jewish-Christian divisive influence on this predominantly Gentile church *(Col. 2:13)*. That is, the Jewish believers were pushing things that were not necessary for the members to follow.

Clearly, Colossians 2:16 lists a number of regular Jewish practices that were apparently continued among some Jewish converts to Christianity. But even the elements in Colossians 2:18 fit the same context. Jesus criticized pretensions to humility among the religious leaders *(for example, Matt. 6:1, 5, 7, 16)*. From the scrolls of Qumran, we learn that angels featured prominently in some Jewish conceptions of worship. So, the problems that Paul was confronting in Colossae were most likely similar to those he confronted elsewhere.

Since Colossians 2:16 is so often misunderstood, it is important to consider it in greater detail. Notice these points:

Paul's use of "therefore" *(ESV)* signals that this is a conclusion drawn from what he has already said. Previously, the need for literal circumcision was dismissed because it is the inward change of the heart that matters *(Col. 2:11–15)*.

"Food and drink" refer to the meal and drink offerings that the Israelites brought to the temple.

The specification of "a festival or a new moon or sabbaths" *(Col. 2:16, NKJV)* apparently alludes to Hosea 2:11, where the same sequence of ceremonial days are referred to, which includes ceremonial sabbaths *(see, for example, Lev. 23:11, 24, 32)*.

Crucial to our understanding of this verse is Paul's own interpretation: that these "are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ" *(Col. 2:17, NKJV)*. These ceremonial days, like the sacrifices, pointed to the work of Christ *(see 1 Cor. 5:7, 1 Cor. 15:23)*. The seventh-day Sabbath, in contrast, was instituted in Eden, before sin, and long before the ceremonial sacrifices of the sanctuary were adopted; therefore, it was not a shadow to be done away with after the Cross.

Although the seventh-day Sabbath is not at issue here, how might you apply Paul's counsel about not passing judgment on others?

Commandments of Men

Read Colossians 2:20–23. How do you understand Paul's admonitions in light of the other elements discussed in this chapter?

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As in his epistle to the Galatians, Paul characterizes the concern over keeping Jewish ceremonies as "the basic principles of the world" *(Col. 2:8, 20, NKJV; compare Gal. 4:3, 9)*. In other words, like the earthly temple, these things belong to the earth, but our citizenship is in heaven. We need not be encumbered with the ceremonial law because it merely foreshadowed the reality that we now enjoy through Christ. That is, even though originally given by God, these ordinances, having served their function, are no longer needed.

Because all these regulations were done away with at the Cross, as indicated by the divine hand rending the temple veil *(Matt. 27:51; compare Dan. 9:27)*, Christians (including Jewish-Christians) are not subject to these regulations. By submitting to them, we would actually be identifying ourselves with this world, which is passing away, in contrast to the new world promised us in Christ.

After all, we look forward to "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" *(2 Pet. 3:13)* and not merely a renovation of this old one.

Besides the fact that Pharisees and scribes had added additional human requirements on top of the Mosaic regulations *(see Mark 7:1–13)*, the perpetuation of Old Testament ceremonies, which had been fulfilled by Christ, could no longer be considered divinely required, but only as humanly imposed duties. Indeed, it seems that they were becoming a burden to faith, as opposed to something that would enhance it. It's so easy to start to look at doing all these things as not only making oneself superior to those who don't, which is bad enough, but also perhaps even subtly as somehow being meritorious for salvation, a trap into which we don't want to step.

Throughout Christian history, Bible experts have succumbed to the temptation to make religious pronouncements, usurping the role of the Holy Spirit in guiding believers as to what the text means. Christ Himself is the fountain from which springs the truth of the Scriptures as taught by Paul and the other Bible writers.

How can we make sure we understand that our only foundation for salvation is from what Jesus has done for us, outside of us, in place of us—regardless of whatever He does in us?

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Further Thought: "As in the days of the apostles men tried by tradition and philosophy to destroy faith in the Scriptures, so today, by the pleasing sentiments of higher criticism, evolution, spiritualism, theosophy, and pantheism, the enemy of righteousness is seeking to lead souls into forbidden paths. To many the Bible is as a lamp without oil, because they have turned their minds into channels of speculative belief that bring misunderstanding and confusion. The work of higher criticism, in dissecting, conjecturing, reconstructing, is destroying faith in the Bible as a divine revelation. It is robbing God's word of power to control, uplift, and inspire human lives. By spiritualism, multitudes are taught to believe that desire is the highest law, that license is liberty, and that man is accountable only to himself.

"The follower of Christ will meet with the 'enticing words' against which the apostle warned the Colossian believers. He will meet with spiritualistic interpretations of the Scriptures, but he is not to accept them. His voice is to be heard in clear affirmation of the eternal truths of the Scriptures. Keeping his eyes fixed on Christ, he is to move steadily forward in the path marked out, discarding all ideas that are not in harmony with His teaching. The truth of God is to be the subject for his contemplation and meditation. He is to regard the Bible as the voice of God speaking directly to him. Thus he will find the wisdom which is divine."—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 474, 475.

Discussion Questions:

❶ What does it mean that in Christ "dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily," and that He "is the head of all principality and power" *(Col. 2:9, 10, NKJV)*? See also John 1:1, Hebrews 1:3, and 1 Peter 3:22.

❷ We've all probably heard Colossians 2:14–16 used as an argument against the seventh-day Sabbath. What other problems, besides what the lesson this week brought out, come with the use of these texts to argue that we no longer need to keep the fourth commandment?

❸ How do you deal with those who insist that we *must* keep the ceremonial laws as well? Though, perhaps, one could find some spiritual or theological blessings in keeping them, what problems arise from insisting that they must be kept?

❹ Ellen G. White wrote above that we should regard the Bible "as the voice of God speaking directly" to us. Why must we, then, guard ourselves diligently against anyone or anything that would weaken our faith in the authority and inspiration of *all* Scripture, even the parts that, in places, might make us uncomfortable?

Risking Prison or Death

After six months of going to church on Sabbaths, Rene was summoned by his boss. "The other accountant doesn't work as well as you," he said. "Can I ask you a favor? Can you work for at least one hour on Saturday?"

Rene remembered he had prayed for two years, "God, if You give me a chance to go to church on Saturday, I will keep the Sabbath holy until I die."

He shook his head. "I cannot," he said.

"You have to," his boss said. "Only one hour. What time is your church?"

"Eight to 12."

"Then in the afternoon. You can come at one o'clock."

"But it's Saturday."

"It's OK."

"It's not OK with me."

Rene's boss looked at him long and hard.

"It's up to you," he said, and left.

Six weeks later, the boss gave an ultimatum with a thinly veiled threat. "What's your final decision?" he asked. "You have to work this coming Saturday. If you don't, I don't know what I will do."

Rene knew he was working in a country hostile to Christianity. People didn't have the right to exercise their religion. He had heard about people being imprisoned and facing death for their faith.

Back at home, he cried, "Lord, it seems like I have a lot of problems. Do You want me to die here?"

Three days later, Rene went to church on Sabbath. He lived in an apartment located in the same building as his office.

As he left the building, a coworker asked, "Are you not coming in today?"

"I will not come," Rene replied.

Rene had a company cell phone, and he switched it off. He didn't want to be tracked when he went to church.

That afternoon, his boss made a surprise visit to the office. He repeatedly called Rene but couldn't reach him on the phone.



Later, the coworker told Rene, "The boss was like the devil. His eyes were very red, like he wanted to eat you. He might want to send you to prison. Please don't get us in trouble, too."

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Part I: Overview

Key Text: *Colossians 2:16, 17*

Study Focus: *Colossians 2*

In the conclusion of Colossians 1, Paul expresses his desire for his audience to grow in maturity in Christ *(Col. 1:28)*. In Colossians 2, he elaborates on this idea. Colossians 2:1–5 sets the basis for what comes next. Paul wants his readers to "knit together in **love**" *(Col. 2:2, NKJV, emphasis added)*, to attain "to all riches of the full assurance of **understanding**, to the **knowledge** of the mystery of God" *(Col. 2:2, NKJV, emphasis added)*, and to strengthen their **faith** in Christ *(Col. 2:5; emphasis added)*. In short, Paul wants his readers to grow in their faith, in their knowledge of the mystery of God, and in their love for Christ and for one another. In essence, Paul is exhorting his audience to be "complete" in Christ or, to use a different term, to demonstrate "maturity" in the exercise of their faith. In Colossians 2:6–23, Paul gives more details on how this goal can be accomplished.

This week's lesson emphasizes two major themes:

1. Completion in Christ involves knowing Him and growing in Him. This protects us from being misguided by false teachers.
2. Completion in Christ also involves trusting solely in Him for salvation, not in regulations. It is important to note, however, that the Cross makes the ceremonial law unnecessary, not the moral law. The Old Testament ceremonial events were but shadows of the future work and sacrifice of Christ. These types came to an end with His death. The Ten Commandments, nevertheless, including the seventh-day Sabbath, are still valid for Christians.

Part II: Commentary

Illustration

"When James Garfield, later to become President of the United States, was principal of Hiram College in Ohio, one father asked him if the course of his [son's] studies could not be shortened so that his son might be able to complete his studies in less time. 'Certainly,' Garfield replied. 'But it all depends on what you want to make of your boy. When God wants to make an oak, he takes one hundred years. When he wants to make a squash, he requires only two months.' "—Michael P. Green, *1500 Illustrations for*

Biblical Preaching (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2000), p. 356.

Paul said, "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" *(Phil. 1:6, ESV)*. Commenting on David's spiritual journey, Alan Redpath expresses the same idea: "The conversion of a soul is the miracle of a moment, the manufacture of a saint is the task of a lifetime."—Redpath, *The Making of a Man of God: Lessons From the Life of David* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 2013), from the Foreword.

Knowing Christ and Growing in Him

From reading Colossians, we can conclude that Paul was very worried about the infiltration of false teachers into the church. This concern is likely expressed by the sentence "What a great conflict I have for you" *(Col. 2:1, NKJV)*. In this context, the term "conflict" probably means "anxiety" or "concern."—William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), p. 17. The Greek word translated as "conflict" is used elsewhere in reference to a struggle against human or spiritual opposition *(for instance, 1 Thess. 2:2)*. In this context, it is employed to describe the apostle's "untiring labor—an intense wrestling and struggle for the spread, growth, and strengthening of the faith as the goal of his mission."—David J. Williams, *Paul's Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1999), p. 290.

The term "conflict" comes from the context of sports, more specifically from the athletic contests. Thus, it suggests the idea of excruciating effort. These data indicate that Paul did not view dealing with false teachings as a minor matter. Should we? Very likely, by his conflict or struggle for the Colossians, Paul intended his prayers to be for them. Paul prayed that their hearts might be strengthened so that they would not be misled by false teachings. Paul wanted them to be "knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ" *(Col. 2:2, ESV)*.

The concept of knowledge is very important in Colossians. Throughout the letter, Paul wants his audience to have knowledge of "the grace of God in truth" *(Col. 1:6, NKJV)*; God's "will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" *(Col. 1:9, NKJV)*; "the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you" *(Col. 1:27, NKJV)*; "the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ" *(Col. 2:2, NKJV)*. Thus, in short, Paul shows that the antidote against false teachings is knowledge of God and Christ *(Col. 2:1–4, 8)*. This knowledge comes from the Word of God, as Paul hints in Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" *(NKJV)*.

Christ, Our Only Hope of Salvation

In Colossians 2:11–15, Paul extols Christ's saving work for us. In Christ, we were circumcised "with the circumcision made without hands" *(Col. 2:11, NKJV)*, meaning the work of Christ in our heart. We were "buried with Him in baptism" and "raised with Him" *(Col. 2:12, NKJV)*. In other words, God made us alive with Christ and "forgave us all our sins" *(Col. 2:13, NIV)*. In short, Paul is saying that Christ is our only hope of salvation.

However, some of Paul's statements in Colossians 2, especially from Colossians 2:11–23, are used by many today to suggest that the apostle is talking about the cancellation of the Ten Commandments; more specifically, it is argued that the seventh-day Sabbath is no longer valid, nor binding upon Christians. Contrary to this assertion, Colossians 2 is not about the cancellation of the Ten Commandments. Paul implies several times throughout his letters, in Colossians and also elsewhere, that the Ten Commandments are valid for Christians, as one can see in the following passages.

Paul quotes the fifth commandment in Ephesians 6:2, 3; the sixth, seventh, and eighth in Romans 13:9; and the tenth in Romans 7:7 *(and also in Romans 13:9)*. In Colossians 3:20, he repeats an exhortation that is found in Ephesians 6:1: "Children, obey your parents" *(NKJV)*. Based on Ephesians 6:1–3, one can conclude that the exhortation "Children, obey your parents" *(both in Eph. 6:1 and Col. 3:20)* is grounded on the validity of the fifth commandment *(Eph. 6:2, 3; compare with Exod. 20:12)*. In all these passages, it is implied that the Ten Commandments remain mandatory for believers under the new covenant. Additionally, the vice and virtue lists in the Pauline Epistles—and specially the vice list found in Colossians 3:5–9—are backgrounded by the Ten Commandments (see David W. Pao, *Colossians & Philemon*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012], p. 220).

A non-Adventist scholar recognizes, "There are good reasons for believing . . . that the Ten Commandments . . . are still binding on us. When Jesus, for example, talks about 'the commandments,' it is clear that it is the Ten Commandments he has in view *(Luke 18:20)*. Similarly, when Paul talks about the law in Romans 7:7, he is referring to the Ten Commandments."—Iain D. Campbell, *Opening Up Exodus, Opening Up Commentary* (Leominster, UK: Day One Publications, 2006), p. 83.

Regarding the seventh-day Sabbath, the evidence from the New Testament points out that it is binding for believers under the new covenant. Like Jesus, Paul was a Sabbath keeper *(see Luke 4:16, Acts 17:2)*. In Revelation 14:6, 7, an allusion to the fourth commandment underscores the validity of the seventh-day Sabbath for Christians. Similarly, when Paul and Barnabas protested against being worshiped by idolaters, they called attention to the worship of "the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them" *(Acts 14:15,*

NKJV; see Exod. 20:11). It is also possible that in his portrayal of Christ's preeminence in Colossians 1:15–20, Paul has both Genesis 1 and 2 and Exodus 20:8–11 in mind. These two passages have in common the theme of Sabbath (see John K. McVay, "Colossians," in Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, ed., *Andrews Bible Commentary: New Testament* [Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2022], pp. 1745, 1751–1753).

Given that Paul was a Sabbath keeper, he clearly cannot be arguing for the cancellation of the Ten Commandments in Colossians 2:11–23. Thus, the "handwriting of requirements" *(Col. 2:14, NKJV)* nailed on the cross is not referring to the moral law. Instead, it may be a reference to the ceremonial law or a sort of debt certificate. Likewise, Colossians 2:16 is not discussing the weekly seventh-day Sabbath. Instead, the text may refer to (1) the ceremonial sabbaths, (2) the sacrifices offered during Jewish festivals or, perhaps, (3) keeping the seventh-day Sabbath for the wrong reasons. For details, see John K. McVay, "Colossians," in Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, ed., *Andrews Bible Commentary: New Testament* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2022), pp. 1752, 1753.

Part III: Life Application

Meditate upon the following themes. Then ask your students to answer the questions at the end of the section.

Philippians 1:6 is certainly one of the most well-known passages in the Bible. We love this promise: "He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ" *(NKJV)*. It is essential to remember that completion in Christ involves the process of getting to know Him through His Word. Indeed, there is no way to remain in Him unless His words abide in us *(John 15:7)*. From the Word of God we receive nourishment for spiritual growth *(1 Pet. 2:2)*, which includes growth in faith *(Rom. 10:17)*. As the psalmist says, "And those who know Your name will put their trust in You" *(Ps. 9:10, NKJV)*. The knowledge of God and His Word prevents us from being misguided by false teachings.

The true knowledge of God naturally leads to submission and faithfulness to Him. In that regard, the moral law plays a critical role, since it teaches us about God's character and reveals His will to us. Yet, some people say that the law is an obstacle to the gospel. Nothing, however, could be further from the truth. The reality is quite the opposite. In the words of Joe M. Sprinkle, a non-Adventist scholar, the moral law "is a prelude to the gospel" in the sense that it "points to Christ who is the fulfillment of the law."—Sprinkle, *Biblical Law and Its Relevance: A Christian Understanding and Ethical Application for*

Today of the Mosaic Regulations, quoted in Roy E. Gane, *Old Testament Law for Christians: Original Context and Enduring Application* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2017), p. 4, footnote 2.

Questions:

1. **Share a favorite Bible text with the class. In what way has this text nourished you, strengthened your relationship with God, or protected you from false teachings?**

2. **How does the moral law point to Jesus? How is Jesus the fulfillment of the law? Why is it false to says that the moral law is an obstacle to the gospel?**

Notes