

BUILT 2 BLESS #4



Focused Living Ministries

In June of 1978 I (Perry) made a very foolish decision but learned a vital life lesson. While living in Portland, Oregon I invited 20 young men from my college ministry for a weekend of wilderness back packing at 8,500 feet on the snow-covered Northern side of Mt. Hood (11,250 ft). We got a late start that Friday, and it was dark with no moon by the time we reached the parking area at the beginning of the trail. Instead of spending the night there and hiking in the morning light, I unwisely decided to make the 5 mile trek at night on a well marked but

unfamiliar trail. I must have told each of the men 1000 times to stay close, follow my lead and above all....

“Stay on the trail!” After a few hours we safely arrived. The next morning I was horrified to discover that a ¼ mile stretch of the trail on which we hiked the night before was no more than 3 feet from a 700 foot drop off, and we didn’t ever realize it! Any man who would have even slightly veered off the path would have experienced certain death.

Unlike foolish Perry, the very wise Apostle Paul knew that the young followers of Christ at Colossae were being lured off the path of truth by a dark culture (Col 1:13-14; 3:2, 5) and false



teachers (2:8; 18-23). They needed real help to stay on the right spiritual trail in order “*walk in a manner worthy of the Lord*”

(1:10). So Paul prays specifically asking God to keep them on the path (3:8; Matt 7:13-14) as they care for one another (3:12-16), love their wives (3:18), lead their families (3:20-21), serve at work (3:22-4:1) and reach their friends for Christ (4:2-6). **What foolish decisions have you made lately that have taken you off path? What wise moves got you back on course?**

STAYING ON THE PATH

Colossians 1:9-14

(3,9) “*Praying always...we have not ceased to pray for you and ask*



(beg, crave, deep desire).” Who is on my prayer team and for what specifics are they praying? Whose prayer team am I on and what am I specifically asking God for them? No prayer, no power to say on path. Seven daily 3x5 cards. (I Thess 5:17; Luke 5:16; Rom 8:26, 34)

(9) “*Filled.*” (plyroo = crammed full, overflowing, complete. 1:19; 25, 2:2, 9-10; 3:16; 4:12; 17) When pressures and adversity squeeze my life what comes out? With what good things of God am I being filled? What negative or even neutral things am I allowing to fill my life? How can I get rid of them? Are there any ways I am chasing fulfillment in life apart from God? How is my spiritual fuel gage? Full? Fumes? With what has God designed me to be filled? (Eph 3:14-21; Acts 6:1-8. Bike tire.)

(9) “...with knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.” Am I seeking God’s will for my life not just in the big dramatic decisions but, more importantly, in the daily ones? Where am I going and how often during the day am I crying out for His wisdom on finances, priorities, relationships, goals, problems, temptations or direction? When obstacles arise or pressures come do I seek God first or only after I have exhausted all my resources? How can I go do Him first? Where is my life being transformed by the renewing of my mind? (Rom 12:1-2; Prov 1:7; 3:7; 9:10; James 1:5)

(10) “Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects.” Lately has the Lord been

my only audience of One or have I been trying to please people in order to gain approval? Has it been my ambition this week to be pleasing to Him in my thoughts and motivations for doing what I do (Luke 5:10-11; II Cor 5:9)?

(10) “*Bearing fruit in every good work.*” Am I more like Christ in character than I was 3 months ago? Where do I see the Holy Spirit producing an unconditional **love**, consistent **joy**, deep **peace**, selfless **patience**, compassionate **kindness**, sincere **goodness**, gracious **gentleness**, abiding **faithfulness** and unwavering **self control** (Gal 5:23-24)? How would your wife/kids/closest friend answer this question? (I Tim 4:12)

(10) “Increasing in the knowledge of God.” What aspect(s) of God’s majestic character most has your attention as of late? Are you sufficiently blown away and awed by His character or has something else got you more excited? How specifically is His character changing the way you think, respond, act or speak? (Psalm 73:25-28)

(11) “Strengthened with all power according to His glorious might.” Where do I most need God’s strength to experience victory, accomplishment and growth? (Psalm 16:8; Zech 4:6; 2Cor 12:7-10)

(11) “Attaining all steadfastness and patience.” Where do I need God’s endurance to finish a task, relationship, season well? Am I about to cave in, give up, take a shortcut or

go with the flow? With whom or where do I need patience (macrothume = suffer long)? Will I grind it out on my own power and with my own resources or will I cry out to God and humbly receive the help of others? (Eph 6:10; Neh 6:10)

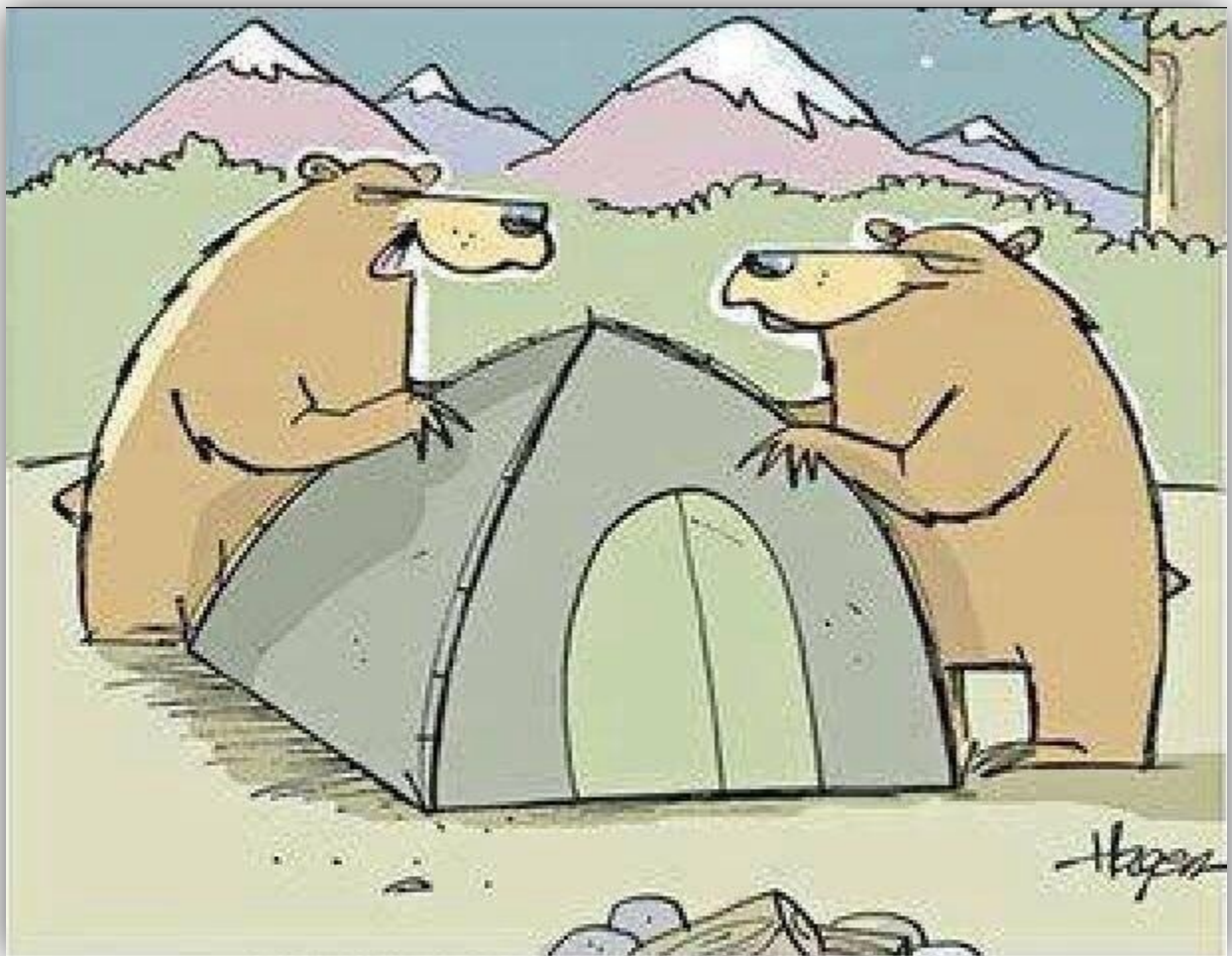
(11-14) “Joyously giving thanks to the Father....Who rescued us... transferred us to the kingdom of His Son...redemption... forgiveness of sin.” Understanding that selfishness (self focused) is the opposite of thankfulness (Savior focused), is there an overflowing attitude of gratitude each day as I come to the Cross to be reminded yet again of what the Father has done for me? Is my mindset one of being entitled to rights or entrusted with the responsibility (honor) of serving others? Do I realize that today is yet

another fantastic opportunity to bless others with all that God has built into me? (James 1:17; 1Thes 5:18; Luke 6:38)

(Col 4:16; Rev 3:1-22) Like the church at Laodicea, where might you likely find yourself if these principles of staying on the path are ignored?

TAG TEAM DISCUSSION Which part of the Paul's prayer encourages or challenges you to stay on the path towards Christ? Why? As sinners we are all lost or off God's desired path? Who has he put in your life and what truth from His Bible is He using to help draw you back?

ASSIGNMENT Using the same prayer that Paul prayed for the Colossians (1:9-14), slowly and thoughtfully pray for your wife, family member, friend or TAG Team member sometime this week.



**“Just love how they come individually wrapped to seal in the flavor.”
(Hagan)**

BUILT 2 BLESS PRAYER

Using the same prayer that Paul prayed for the Colossians (1:9-14), slowly and thoughtfully pray for someone in your TAG Team as well as for your wife, family member or friend sometime this week. Insert their name when you see a blank.

9 God please give

_____ complete

knowledge of Your will and give

him spiritual wisdom and

understanding. 10 Then the way

_____ lives will always

honor and please You, Lord, and

his life will produce every kind of

good fruit. All the while,

_____ will grow as

he learns to know You, God,

better and better.

11 I also pray that

_____ will be

strengthened with all Your glorious

power so he will have all the

endurance and patience he

needs. May _____

be filled with joy, 12 always

thanking You. You, Father, have

enabled _____ to

share in the inheritance that

belongs to Your people, who live

in the light. 13 For You have

rescued _____

from the kingdom of darkness and transferred him into the Kingdom of You dear Son, Jesus the Christ, 14 who purchased his freedom and forgave his sins.

I pray this for him in Jesus' name,

Amen