

5-Day Devotional: Complete in Christ

Based on Colossians 2:11–15

Day 1 — United to Christ

Scripture Readings: Colossians 2:11–12, Romans 6:3–6, Galatians 2:20, Philippians 3:3

Paul begins this passage by taking us to the heart of the Christian life: union with Christ. He says that believers have been circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, buried with Christ in baptism, and raised with Him through faith. In other words, salvation is not mainly about turning over a new leaf or cleaning up our image. It is about being joined to Jesus Himself.

That is why the Christian life is so much more than behavior management. We are not simply people trying to act better. We are people who have died with Christ, been buried with Christ, and raised with Christ. Our old life in Adam has been decisively dealt with. The rule of sin has been broken. We still fight sin, of course. Temptation does not vanish overnight, and old habits do not politely leave the room. But sin no longer sits on the throne.

That truth matters because many Christians still think of themselves mostly in terms of who they used to be. They remember old failures, old loves, old patterns, and old shame. But Paul tells us to think differently. If we belong to Christ, our story is now defined by Him. His death counts for us. His burial counts for us. His risen life is now at work in us. We are no longer in the old realm where sin ruled unchecked. We are in Christ.

This also means that we do not need to go looking for fullness somewhere else. We do not need Jesus plus some secret spiritual technique, some religious performance, or some polished image of holiness. Christ is not the beginning of our salvation with the rest left to us. He is our life from start to finish.

So today, do not look at yourself first. Look at Christ. And then remember: if you are trusting Him, you are united to Him. That changes everything.

Reflection Questions:

1. Do I think of the Christian life mainly as improvement, or as life in union with Christ?
2. In what areas am I still thinking of myself more by my old life than by my identity in Christ?
3. How does union with Christ strengthen me in the fight against sin?

Practical Application:

Take a few minutes today to write down three true statements about your identity in Christ from Colossians 2:11–12. Read them aloud and thank God for them.

Prayer:

God our Father, thank You that my salvation is not built on my effort, my record, or my ability to clean myself up. Thank You that by Your grace I have been united to Christ in His death and resurrection. Help me to stop thinking like my old life still owns me. Teach me to live as one who belongs to Jesus, and let His life shape my thoughts, desires, and obedience today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 2 — Made Alive with Christ

Scripture Readings: Colossians 2:13, Ephesians 2:1–5, John 5:24–25, Titus 3:4–7

Paul says something in Colossians 2:13 that leaves no room for self-congratulation: “And you, who were dead in your trespasses... God made alive together with him.” Before Christ, we were not merely struggling, confused, or spiritually underperforming. We were dead. That is not flattering, but it is honest. And until we are honest about our condition apart from Christ, we will never really understand the beauty of grace.

Dead people do not revive themselves. They do not cooperate in their resurrection. They do not contribute a little effort so God can meet them halfway. Paul’s point is simple and humbling: if you are alive in Christ today, it is because God gave you life. He came to you in mercy. He awakened your heart. He opened your eyes. He made you alive together with Christ.

That truth should both humble us and steady us. It humbles us because salvation is all of grace. None of us can look down on another person and think we were wiser, stronger, or more spiritually sensitive. We were dead, and God made us alive. But it also steadies us, because the God who gave us life is not weak or uncertain. He does not begin a work like that and then walk away.

This truth also helps when the Christian life feels impossible. Sometimes newer believers, especially, hear sermons on holiness and obedience and quietly panic. They think, How am I supposed to live like that? The answer is not found in personality, resolve, or spiritual theatrics. The answer is that the same God who raised Christ from the dead gives life and power to His people. The Christian life is not lived by pretending we are stronger than we are. It is lived by trusting the God who raises the dead.

If you are in Christ, you are not spiritually stuck in your old condition. You are alive. That does not make the battle easy, but it does make obedience possible. You are not trying to become alive enough to follow Jesus. You are following Jesus because He has already given you life.

Reflection Questions:

1. How does remembering my spiritual deadness before Christ deepen my gratitude for grace?
2. Where am I tempted to rely on my own strength instead of God’s resurrection power?
3. How does this truth give hope for growth in holiness?

Practical Application:

When you feel weak or discouraged today, stop and pray, “Father, I am alive in Christ. Help me to live from the life You have given.”

Prayer:

God our Father, thank You for making me alive together with Christ when I was dead in my sins.

I could not rescue myself, but You came to me in mercy and gave me life. Keep me from trusting in my own strength. Help me to live by faith in Your power and to walk today as one who has been raised up by Your grace. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 3 — Forgiven All Our Trespasses

Scripture Readings: Colossians 2:13, Psalm 32:1–5, Isaiah 1:18, Ephesians 1:7, 1 John 1:9

One of the sweetest phrases in Colossians 2:13 is this: “having forgiven us all our trespasses.” That word all is a comfort strong enough to carry the weight of a tired conscience. Paul does not say some of our trespasses, most of our trespasses, or the manageable ones we feel safe mentioning in public. He says all.

That matters because many Christians believe in forgiveness in theory but struggle to live in it in reality. We know the right answer in Sunday school form, but when it comes to our actual sins, our actual failures, our actual shame, we start acting as though God is still sorting through the paperwork. We imagine Him reviewing the file again, reconsidering the verdict, sighing at our weakness. But Paul says God has forgiven us all our trespasses in Christ.

Forgiveness is not God pretending sin did not happen. It is not God waving His hand and deciding holiness no longer matters. It is God dealing with our sin through the sacrifice of His Son. Jesus bore what we deserved so that we could receive what we never could have earned. That is why forgiveness is both free and costly. Free to us, because grace is grace. Costly to Christ, because our pardon was purchased by His blood.

This truth should reshape the way we respond to sin as believers. Yes, we should confess our sins. Yes, we should grieve them honestly. Yes, we should repent quickly. But we should not live in self-condemnation. Conviction that brings us back to Christ is a gift. Condemnation that chains us to ourselves is not. Some Christians have been forgiven by God and still refuse themselves peace. That is not humility. It is unbelief wearing a sad face.

So when the memory of old sin rises, or when fresh failure stings, run toward Christ, not away from Him. His forgiveness is not thin, reluctant, or fragile. If you are in Him, your sins are not waiting to be considered. They are forgiven.

Reflection Questions:

1. Do I really believe that God has forgiven all my trespasses in Christ?
2. Am I confusing conviction with self-condemnation?
3. What would it look like to live today with the peace of a forgiven sinner?

Practical Application:

Confess one lingering guilt to the Lord today, then thank Him specifically that in Christ it is forgiven. Do not stop at confession; go all the way to gratitude.

Prayer:

God our Father, thank You for forgiving all my trespasses through Christ. Thank You that Your mercy is greater than my sin and that Your pardon is not partial or uncertain. Help me to confess

my sins honestly, to turn from them quickly, and to rest in the forgiveness You have given me in Your Son. Keep me from living under a burden You have already lifted. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 4 — The Debt Has Been Canceled

Scripture Readings: Colossians 2:14, Romans 3:23–26, Romans 8:1, Galatians 3:10–13, Hebrews 10:11–14

Colossians 2:14 gives us one of the clearest pictures of justification in the New Testament. Paul says God canceled “the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands,” and that He set it aside, “nailing it to the cross.” The image is courtroom language. We were not just inwardly broken; we were objectively guilty. The law of God stood against us. The debt was real. The charges were not exaggerated. We owed what we could not pay.

And then Christ stepped in.

The good news of justification is not that God lowered the standard, ignored the evidence, or looked for some spark of moral promise in us. The good news is that Christ paid the debt in full. At the cross, Jesus bore the condemnation that belonged to us. The record that stood against us was taken out of the way, nailed to His cross, and answered by His death.

That means if you are in Christ, your standing with God is not fragile. You are not on probation. You are not waiting to see if enough future obedience will secure your acceptance. You are not loved on a sliding scale. You have peace with God because Christ has satisfied divine justice on your behalf.

This is where assurance has to live. If your peace with God depends on your best week, your strongest prayer life, your cleanest motives, or your current emotional state, then you will either become proud or miserable. But if your acceptance with God rests on Christ crucified, then you can be both humble and secure. Humble, because you brought nothing to your justification but your guilt. Secure, because Christ brought everything needed for your peace.

So do not keep acting as if the case against you is still open. The record has been canceled. The debt has been paid. The cross did not almost work. It worked. Rest there.

Reflection Questions:

1. What do I tend to look at most when I think about my standing with God—my performance or Christ’s cross?
2. How does this picture of canceled debt help me understand justification more clearly?
3. In what ways am I living as though I am still on probation with God?

Practical Application:

When feelings of spiritual insecurity rise today, answer them with Romans 8:1 and Colossians 2:14. Speak the truth back to your own heart.

Prayer:

God our Father, thank You that the record of debt that stood against me has been canceled

through the cross of Christ. Thank You that my acceptance with You is not based on my performance, but on the finished work of Your Son. Teach me to rest in justification, to reject false guilt, and to live in the peace that Christ has secured for me. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 5 — Christ Has Triumphed

Scripture Readings: Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 2:14–15, Romans 8:37–39, Ephesians 6:10–12, 1 John 4:4

Paul ends this section with a note of triumph: “He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.” The cross was not only the place where our sins were forgiven. It was also the place where our enemies were defeated.

That matters because spiritual warfare is real. The devil is not a metaphor. Temptation is not imaginary. Accusation is not harmless. Death is not a small thing. The powers of darkness are not pretend enemies in a children’s pageant. Scripture does not speak lightly about them, and neither should we. But Paul also refuses to let Christians live as though those powers are ultimate. They are real, but they are defeated.

At the cross, Christ broke the power of accusation. At the cross, He answered the guilt Satan exploits. At the cross, He began the public shaming of the enemies that once held sinners in fear. And in His resurrection and exaltation, He now reigns over every ruler and authority. That means believers do not fight for victory as though the outcome is uncertain. We fight from victory because Christ has already won.

That truth is deeply practical. Some believers live with a constant low-grade dread. They fear temptation will finally win, fear Satan is stronger than grace, fear darkness is closing in, fear their failures will undo them, fear the future because evil seems loud and near. Paul tells us to remember our King. Jesus Christ is not barely hanging on. He is risen, enthroned, and triumphant.

That does not mean the battle is easy. It means the battle is not final. The Christian still resists sin. The Christian still puts on the armor of God. The Christian still walks through suffering and groaning in a fallen world. But none of that changes the headline: Christ has triumphed.

So do not treat defeated enemies like reigning kings. Christ is on the throne. And if you are united to Him, His victory is not merely something you admire. It is something you share.

Reflection Questions:

1. What fears or spiritual pressures most often tempt me to forget Christ’s victory?
2. Do I tend to act naïve about spiritual warfare, or terrified by it?
3. How does Christ’s triumph give strength for today’s battles?

Practical Application:

Name one fear that has been looming over you, and bring it deliberately under the reign of Christ in prayer. Remind yourself that your Savior is not struggling for the throne.

Prayer:

God our Father, thank You that through the cross and resurrection of Jesus, my enemies have been defeated. Thank You that sin, accusation, Satan, and death do not have the final word over me. Help me to resist fear, to stand firm in faith, and to remember that Christ reigns over every power that would trouble my heart. Teach me to fight from His victory and to rest in His triumph. In Jesus' name, Amen.