

**Enablers**  
Colossians 3:11

*If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault. And it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt. Because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.*

I have come to two undeniable conclusions about the prayers I have prayed over the course of my short, 47-year, existence on this planet. One: God has heard each and every prayer I have ever prayed and will continue to do so. Two: He's answered each and every prayer I have ever prayed, but seldom in the way I wished Him to answer them. I've asked God for wisdom more times in my life than a panhandler raids the cardboard recycle bin. If God answered them in the way I wished, I would be Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, King Solomon, and my wife's marital adviser friends all rolled into one by now. I've asked the Lord for strength more times in my life than the Waffle House makes waffles. If God answered those prayers for strength the way I wished, then the Incredible Hulk would start calling me for fitness training. Had He answered all of my prayers for rest the way I desired, then Rip Van Winkle would have had to wake me up for sleeping too long. Had God answered all of my prayers for blessing and prosperity the way I wished him to, not only would the cattle on a thousand hills now belong to me. But so would JP Morgan's banks, Cornelius Vanderbilt's railroads, Henry Ford's flux capacitors, Andrew Carnegie's steel, and John D. Rockefeller's political lobbying firms.....But "seldom" doesn't mean "never." It means that on occasion God grants to you precisely what you ask of Him. When it comes to health, rest and prosperity, I seldom get what I asked for. But when I ask the Lord to show me blind spots in my life that are hidden to man but known to Him, he always manages to answer with one word. It's a word that doesn't appear egregious to me. But it strikes a nerve with Him on occasion. It doesn't appear corrupting to me. But He sometimes considers it contributing to another's delinquency. It actually appears virtuous to me. But what can appear virtuous to you or others can actually be a vice from His perspective if used incorrectly. It's the word "enable.....Enabling can be positive when you act in a way to help someone accomplish something that cannot be done alone; such as teaching your pastor how to separate light clothes from dark ones so that they may be able to one day use a washing machine without oversight. But where enabling becomes egregious to God is when the act of helping people perpetuates their problems instead of solving them.....For too long since their founding, the Colossians had the problem of a false view of Jesus. The Laodicean Church was nearby and they said nothing; thereby enabling it to continue. For too long since their founding, the Colossians had a problem of allowing wolves with a spiritual vocabulary to reign over the sheep unopposed when their founder, Epaphras, joined Paul on his missionary endeavors. But Archippus, instead of standing up to them, but bullied by them; thereby enabling it to continue (Colossians 4:17). Consequently, the Colossians found themselves in a situation where they had to have someone, the apostle Paul, they've never met enable them the right way specifically because they had surrounded with people who enabled them the wrong way.

When can enablement help? When can it hurt? When can it solve problems? When can it perpetuate them? When is it a saintly deed? When is it a sinful one? I want you to turn to Colossians 3:1-10 to notice the enablement contrasts.

*<sup>1</sup>Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup>Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. <sup>3</sup>For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup>When Christ, who is your<sup>[a]</sup> life, appears, then you also will appear<sup>[a]</sup> with him in glory. <sup>5</sup>Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup>Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.<sup>[b]</sup> <sup>7</sup>You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. <sup>8</sup>But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. <sup>9</sup>Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices <sup>10</sup>and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. <sup>11</sup>Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.*

**When Enablement Hinders:**

### **1. Rescuing others from rightful consequences**

**Hoarders Is The Greatest Show On Television:** (1) Not only because it only takes one episode to notice the type of trash an individual is capable of refusing to depart with; (2) But also because when the garbage people come, it's just amazing how those who hoard become experts at what they can fix to justify keeping it; (3) That's an "I can fix this or that mentality"; (4) When applied to people who put themselves in destructive circumstances, that's a Messiah complex; (5) And you are not the Messiah.

**Main Idea of the Point:** When you continually intercede and rescue others going down a destructive path, you actually perpetuate the problem.

**What the False Teachers Were Saying:** (1) Education above written revelation (we're smarter); (2) If Jesus is God, he couldn't have walked this earth because the world is evil. He was merely spiritual; (3) Therefore spirituality is most important. Behavior and ethics are less important.

**What Was Going On:** (1) Church defending them and protecting them because they liked the sound of it; (2) because it was belief without any demands on one's life.

**Paul's Response:** (1) You are enabling and because you are; (2) You've just become as much of a problem as those you are listening to; (3) Wrath of God was satisfied by the Messiah for those who repent and believe and bear fruit in accordance with repentance; (4) It remains for those who don't; whether teacher or otherwise.

**App:** Only one person in this world has ever successfully rescued others from their rightful consequences. And you are not that person. Nor do you have to be.

### **2. Reject speaking honestly in favor of silence or pacification**

**The Addendums to the 8<sup>th</sup> Command That Would Make It A Little Easier to Follow:** (1) You shall not bear false witness/lie; (2) An addendum would make that easier to follow in two specific areas: (a) Someone else's cooking (it might taste like a wet dog; but it is ok to say it was good); (b) When your wife asks you your opinion of her new outfit (if you want to continue breathing when you fall asleep, it behooves you to say great)

**Main Idea of the Point:** On many occasions, the biggest form of enablement that hinders is unintentional enablement. Enablement that happens when non-confrontational, good natured, virtuous, people notice something wrong. Instead of honesty, they pacify for the sake of peace; or choose silence for the sake of avoiding confrontation.

**Something Else Was Going On In Colossae That Makes the Rest of the Book Makes Sense When You See It:** (1) There was a guy in the church named Archippus; (2) Paul tells him in the letter: "see to it that you complete the work of the ministry you have received in the Lord" at the end (Col 3:17); (3) He came in as the pastor sometime after Epaphras left; (4) And chose silence and pacification because he was a good man and loved people; (5) When he should have put an end to it.

**So Paul Does What Archippus Didn't in 3:7:** (1) You used to live like this when you didn't know Jesus; (2) Then you came to know Jesus; (3) Now you are acting like you don't know Jesus again; (4) Confrontation was the only way to curb the churches behavior; (5) And Paul did it because Archippus wouldn't.

**App:** Confrontations from confrontational people wouldn't have solved this issue. Confrontation from a non-confrontational person would have because that's how God uses people in their weakness. The same is true with you. Don't enable unintentionally.

### **When Enablement Helps:**

#### **3. Redirection of another's heart and mind**

**If You've Never Been to the Grand Canyon, There's A Poor Man's Version of It In Georgia:** (1) Tallulah Gorge in the North Georgia, Mountains; (2) If you look closely at both sides at the top, you see the remnants of two iron bases; (3) These bases held a tight rode for Kurt Wallenda; (4) This cat decided it wasn't pretty enough to look at; (5) He had to walk across it on a rope; (6) He didn't just set his mind on the things above, his feet went with him.

**Main Idea:** The best form of enablement happens when we encourage those who think about the things above and below. Both guide our courses of action.

**How to do It (1):** "set" your heart and mind on what is "above;" meaning higher things as opposed to below; (2) Paul is essentially saying "I don't care how smart or spiritual you think you are, if your knowledge produces the things below, it's worthless; (3) If it produces Christlike character, you are on the mark.

**The Mind and Heart Below Produces (8):** *anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips*

**The Mind and Heart Above Produces (12):** *compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience*

#### **4. Reeducation of reality**

**Evolution of Video Games in My Lifetime:** (1) Atari Pong; (2) To Super Mario Brothers; (3) I stop there; (4) But it keeps going; (5) Now virtual reality headsets; (5) My kids walking around with them acting like they just ate an oak barrel full of sugar

**Main Idea:** We drift from Jesus when we start taking directions from the things “below,” (or of the world not Jesus). When that happens, we need a redirection of reality

**How It Crept Into the Church:** (1) Culture said there were cultures that were higher and lower (Colossian Culture vs World); (2) In the church, Jews viewed themselves as higher; Gentiles were lower; (3) Educated literate (literacy was rare in most cultures in the Ancient World were higher, commoners were lower. (3) The “I am better” cultural cues we see in our culture can devastate the Body of Christ if allowed to remain.

**How Paul Set Them Straight:** (1) In Christ is the great equalizer; (2) We are all equal at the foot of the cross