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“Psyched Up” for God

You are a player in the great game of life. As a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, victory is within reach. You need to be...



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By Dr. Robert A. Cook



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Every high school kid is well acquainted with the expression, to be psyched up – “psyched up” to win the game, “psyched up” to pass the test.

In simple terms, this means to be mentally stimulated toward the reaching of a desired goal.

“Psyched” immediately calls to mind our word “psychology” with its related terms. To the young athlete, however, it has more than an academic meaning; it has driving force with a purpose.

The same word, translated “heartily,” appears in Paul’s letter to the Colossians:

“Whatsoever ye do, do it HEARTILY [“psyched up”] as to the Lord, and not unto men” (Col. 3:23).

What does this word “heartily” mean for the child of God? The most elemental requirement is the recognition of the absolute lordship of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Must Be Lord

“Christ is all and in all” (Col. 3:11).

The whole thrust of the third chapter of Colossians-is this: What ought to be the result in my daily life of my having died with Christ, and having been raised with Him, so that my whole existence is now *“hid with Christ in God” (Co1. 3:3)?* When “Christ is ALL” I am:

... DEAD to all of the old nature that convicted and embarrassed and plagued me. DEAD also to the so-called respectable sins, such as anger and an unforgiving spirit.

... ALIVE by faith to the new nature imparted by the Lord Jesus Christ by whom I am “renewed” day by day.

A similar thought is found earlier in the same chapter:

“Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Col. 3:17).

Everything you say or do is to be for the sake of, by the authority of, in the enabling power of, and for the ultimate glory of your Lord Jesus Christ. That truth probes the most sensitive areas of life: wives Submitting, husbands loving, children obeying, employees working, employers dealing justly.

It is hard for a wife, especially if she is smarter than her husband, to say, "What do YOU think, dear?" It is hard for husbands to put away that residual resentment that many a husband feels because of some injury or slight or imagined—that he has carried in memory for years. It is hard for children to say, "I don't like this command, but I will obey because you are my parents and I am obeying because I love Jesus." All HARD, yes; but gloriously possible when Christ is LORD of your life.

The writer to Colossians pays special attention to the relationship between slaves ("employees," in our day) and their masters (employers). He enjoins them:

"OBEY in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers"... (Col. 3:22).

The key words here are OBEY and ALL. Do a thorough job. Give your employer full time, not some shortcut. Follow orders cheerfully. Paul seems to be saying "Christ is the Chief Supervisor. He is here all the time." If He is truly LORD of your life, you will welcome His presence, His direction, His approbation or correction.

Daily Life Must Be Transparent

Not with eyeservice (Col. 3:22).

Many a workman abhors supervision and seeks to get away with as little work as possible.

Years ago when I was a student I had a parttime job painting dormitory rooms. One of the members of our crew was very resourceful in this matter of shifting responsibility. Our procedure was to paint the ceiling, then the walls and the trim. The baseboard came last.

The painting of the trim can be an arduous task, as you painters know. You need a brush small enough to cut a straight line along the window pane without smearing paint on the glass. The same type of "cutting in," as we called it, was required on the edge of the woodwork, to avoid smudging the painted wall. All this took time.

When it came time to do the trim on the room in which we were working, this particular young man said, as he often did, "Now, fellows, you just paint the window trim and I will do the baseboard."

Then he lay down on the floor, propped his head on one hand, dipped his brush in the paint

can, and slowly-very slowly-painted the baseboard. It took him as long to get around the room in this fashion as it took a couple of the others of us to paint two or three windows and the door frame.

Then the boss came in! He took one look at our languishing crew member. "You'd better get up!" he stormed. And that was the end of that novice's lazy ways.

Your lifestyle reflects your true relation to Jesus Christ, whether or not He is LORD. Let me give you another illustration of the same truth.

In the church where I once served as pastor, there was a young lady who worked in a local factory. Her job was to operate an automatic machine into one end of which were fed great quantities of fine steel wire about a sixteenth of an inch thick. Out of the other end of the machine (after the wire had gone through the stamping process) came millions of tiny cap screws used in the manufacture of time pieces of many kinds.

This woman's job was to sit all day long at that machine making sure that there was enough wire feeding into one end and that the millions of cap screws coming out of the other end showed no defect-and that the machine didn't jam up.

To me, that would be one of the most boring jobs in the world.

One day I ventured to say to her, "Mary, you must get very bored with the work you have to do at that machine."

She gave me a beautiful smile and replied, "Well, Pastor Bob, often when I am sitting here and life seems pretty dull I just whisper softly, 'Dear Lord Jesus, I am doing this for YOU.' And my heart fills with joy and I am not bored at all."

You get the point. This dear soul was "psyched up," she was serving her Lord "heartily."

Have you tried that procedure on any boring task you have to perform? The next time you face some task that is totally uninteresting-or perhaps even frightening- I recommend to you the plan of my parishioner in the factory: Look up and say, "Lord Jesus, I am doing this for YOU."

The apostle cites other ways of becoming "psyched up" for God. Among them is the practice of straight thinking.

Motives Must Be Uncomplicated

Singleness of heart, fearing God (Col. 3:22). Look at the element of singleness. Whom do you love more than anyone else? Who-if any one-inspires you with a sense of respect, even awe?

These are questions to ask yourself if you really want to know whether you actually “fear God” in the New Testament sense of the word.

It must be admitted, to our shame, that we often put other people and other things ahead of our Lord.

Many years ago I was talking with an erring church member about his lack of faithfulness to the Lord and to his church.

“You know,” I said, “it has been a long time since you came to church or that you gave anything to the Lord. Why is that?”

“Well,” he replied, “you see, Preacher, God does not go after me as hard as my creditors do.”

He had more respect for the human beings to whom he owed money than to Almighty God to whom he owed his very life.

What about this matter of “the fear of the Lord”? Is He to be dreaded, shunned, placated? Is He someone to be afraid of?

No, never!

God is your Father, if you have received His son, Jesus Christ, as your Saviour. His love for you is measured by His gift at Calvary. We read that “His tender mercies are over all His works.”

But He is also to be given a very special kind of respect and awe-inspiring trust. Is it hard for you to get hold of that concept? No wonder! We live in an age when respect is largely unknown and almost totally unpracticed. Respect for parents, respect for the law of the land, respect for the flag-these are concepts seldom emphasized today. Therefore, respect for God is also often omitted.

Do you wonder why so many of us who call ourselves Christians serve God in a dull, routine, uninspired manner? We go through the motions all right, but there is little enthusiasm,

no thrill.

One reason for our lack may be that we have lost-if indeed we ever had-a strong motivating sense of the almightiness of God, of His absolute sovereignty, of His perfect holiness. What we need is "the fear of the Lord" respect born of reverence, obedience, love and trust.

Rewards Must Be Visualized

"Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance" (Col. 3:24). Any kind of work done here on earth loses its shine and becomes boring if you are at it long enough. That being the case, it would seem that the admonition to do ALL things "heartily" is a very tall order indeed! Who can be powerfully stimulated, that is, "psyched up," to work at top intensity all the time?

That all depends on what you KNOW - about the job and about the Paymaster.

The Prospect Is Exciting

If you KNOW beyond the shadow of a doubt that "payday" is coming-not some Friday when a check is handed to you, but when you stand before your blessed Lord and hear Him say, *"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord"* - then all the intervening days will be marked by keen anticipation and great joy.

If you are a child of God, you are not working merely for some earthly employer . You are a member of a family business: God and Jesus and you (and me, too!). You are scheduled to step up some day on the management scale to a post of authority. That knowledge and that perspective will profoundly affect all of your performance of everyday tasks.

Let us suppose that here is a man who owns a large trucking business. One day he takes his eight-year-old son with him to the plant. They go to the shop where half a dozen big trucks are on the lift, being serviced by a crew of mechanics. Then he takes the boy to the warehouse where great quantities of goods are being loaded to be shipped to customers. Next they stop at the office, full of people working on accounts and answering phones.

Finally the father looks at the boy and says, "My son, some day all of this will be yours. Now-empty the wastebaskets."

What connection is there between an eight year-old boy emptying the wastebaskets and

the possibility of his inheriting the firm? The boy, at that tender age, may not know there IS any connection. But when it dawns on him that everything he does is building toward the day when he will be president of this ABC Trucking Company, his attitude toward the job will be entirely different from what it would be if he saw himself as a hired hand.

You, my friend, are a member of a heavenly family. It is a big, big firm. God has a place for you in it. He has "raised you [us] up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:6)." When Christ shall appear, "then shall ye also appear with Him in glory (Col. 3:4)." You are going to see the One with whom and for whom you have been working, the real Paymaster. All this time you have been "laborers together with God."

What a prospect! The mere thought of it makes our mundane tasks easier to perform.

The Plan Is Understandable

When you trust in and obey Jesus as LORD, you share in everything the Lord Jesus Christ is and has. But nobody drifts into this relationship. Individual action is required. Philippians, chapter 2, offers some suggestions. Let me make the matter personal. If Jesus is to be LORD of my life:

I make Him Lord of my MIND - *"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil.2:5)."*

I make Him Lord of my ATTITUDE, all the time - *"Do all things without murmurings and disputings" (v. 14).*

I make Him Lord of my REPUTATION - *"Blameless and harmless" (v. 15).*

I make Him Lord of my TESTIMONY - *"Holding forth the word of life" (v. 16).*

If Christ truly is LORD, He is Lord of everything that concerns me. In a few words, Paul describes the focus of the believer's life: *"That in all things He (Christ) may have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18).* That is to say, He is to be first in everything - a position that I consciously give to Him.

He must be Lord as I try a case, if I am a Lawyer; as I treat a patient, if I am a doctor or nurse; as I teach a child, in the home or classroom; as I deal with customers, if I am a salesperson; as I add and subtract, if I am using figures.

It is a common question: What do I get out of all this? O Beloved, in this matter of making Christ LORD of your life, you get much more than you give. You receive, day in and day out “the peace of God that passes knowledge.” You enjoy God’s guidance at every step:

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he SHALL direct thy paths” (Prov. 3:5, 6).

Oh, yes, God keeps His part of the bargain. *“No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly,”* that is, who honor Jesus as Lord.

The portion we have been considering is very precise about the practical ways in which the lordship of Christ is to be manifested in daily life. If you are a Christian, don’t think you can hide under the supposed lordship of Christ and at the same time goof off on the job, or practice manipulation or untruthfulness. You have to face the consequences of your actions. God the Father will graciously forgive you, if you admit your sin to Him (1 John 1:9). But that is not to say that so-called “easy grace” is to be condoned.

Colossians 3:25 states: *“He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.”*

My father Once told me of someone he knew (it may have been himself), and the story is applicable here.

There was this little farm boy who had certain bad habits his father wished to correct.

After talking with the boy very seriously the father said, “Now, Son, every time you do thus-and-thus, we will drive a nail in this stake, near the front gate.”

As little boys often do, the youngster forgot what the parent had said, and the wrongdoing was repeated several times. Each time this happened, the two of them would drive a nail in the stake.

Finally the lad was “good” for quite a long period of time.

One day the father said, “I think you have learned your lesson. It is time for you to know you are forgiven and that I will not remember any of the things you did wrong.”

Then he added, “Here, Son, you may pull all of the nails out of the wood.”

The lad went to work in a hurry. In a moment the nails were out-every one. He looked at the mutilated stake. "Father," he said, "the holes are still here!"

Oh, yes, you can be forgiven for even the worst of sins. Thank God for His wonderful grace. But memory, though it may be sanctified so that you no longer wince because of it, is still with you. The holes are there!

We need ever to be reminded of the richness of "the reward of the inheritance" belonging to those who truly make Christ LORD in every phase of life, but also of the results-often distressing-when that lordship is only partial, and even faked.

Prayer Must Be Constant

We have been talking about the importance of the believer being strongly motivated, inspired to live for Christ enthusiastically "psyched up," as we say, for Him and by means of His enabling.

We come to Colossians 4, where persons addressed are "masters," that is, employers (v. 1). It is presumed that these individuals are Christian employers though the meaning is far broader; it includes all of us who claim to be followers of Christ.

Why should the apostle say to these employers, "continue in prayer"? It is because of the great danger for a person in management, when he gets to know his job and its potential, to forget to seek God day by day.

I remember a dear friend of many years. During World War II his business expanded rapidly. He had about a hundred engineers working for him. Then he launched into manufacturing. As his business grew, he bought property and a warehouse and machinery for the production of items vital to the war effort. He was making money hand over fist.

One day after he had received a huge order, had hired people and bought additional equipment to do the work, a telegram came from Washington saying the order was cancelled.

What was he to do? He had borrowed all that he could borrow. He had huge fixed costs. Ultimately, he went broke.

He was heard to remark later, "What I should have done-and didn't-was to pray about all these things."

I suppose that is the story of many another person. If you are in business, even a small one, don't forget to pray yourself through the day. Pray before you answer the phone. You don't know whether it is a customer, or a complainer out to give you a bad time. Pray before you open a letter. It may be either a check or a bill. Pray before you make a decision to buy or to sell, to expand your work force or to reduce it. Pray before you hire or fire or transfer somebody. Make God your business partner and you will have far less to regret afterwards and far more to rejoice about.

Pray-Watching

"Continue in prayer, WATCHING in the same with thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2). The word "watch" applies in two directions: outward and upward. It was our Lord Himself who referred to the outward aspect when He said to His sleepy disciples:

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation" (Matt. 26:41).

We have been talking about employers, in this matter of being "psyched up" for God stimulated, energized, motivated. But the truth has meaning for all of us. Life does not need to take us by surprise.

We are still hearing discussion of the investigation that was called for following the terrible tragedy that took the lives of seven astronauts. It has developed that on several levels of authority there was less than full alertness on the part of decision-making personnel. They did not pay enough attention to the total project.

"I didn't know that was going on," is the way The New York Times quoted the response made by some key individuals.

Prayer has an upward thrust as well. We are to look attentively for God's answer to the matters we pray about.

Let us suppose that there are people in your employ (or anywhere) who do not know how to get along together. They are a hindrance to the work of the staff. You see no method of reconciliation that would help them, and you have no place to reassign either one of them. BUT YOU PRAY. It is time now to WATCH to see what God will do in answer to your praying.

Many times I have found our blessed Lord giving me answers to "people problems" while I was on my knees and I looked up to praise Him for His perfect solution to my troubling situation.

Pray-Giving Thanks

“Continue in prayer ... with THANKSGIVING” (Col. 4:2). What is there to be thankful for? Well, first of all we should thank God for the problem itself, because it furnishes opportunity- and desire-to pray . We are prone to be wrapped up in our own ,interests. Anything that turns our thoughts and our decisions in the direction of God is very much worthwhile.

Then, thank Him for every opportunity for developing sensitivity to human need. We are dealing with people, with hurts and griefs and broken hopes, not mere depersonalized computer printouts. Thank God for anything that gives you entrance into the thoughts and feelings of fellow human beings, for only then can you minister to them in any true and meaningful way.

You may be saying, “Preacher, my situation is terrible. All I can do is ask God to change it.”

No, Beloved, that is not ALL you can do. The Father’s word to you is “IN everything give thanks;” that IS, “in,” not merely “for.” You can thank God for who He is and what He is doing, although you may not understand His ways at the moment. You can thank Him for the blessed continuing relationship that you have with Him through faith in Jesus Christ. You can thank Him that He is in command of everything that concerns you-and that He never makes a mistake.

Removing us from the field of testing might very well rob us ‘of unspeakably precious lessons that would enrich our lives. The thrust of the message in Isaiah 43:2 is that God will take us “through.” The hymn writer, Annie Johnson Flint, expressed this truth so well:

*When thou passest THROUGH the waters,
Deep the waves may be and cold, But Jehovah is our refuge
And His promise is our hold;
For the Lord Himself hath said it,
He, the faithful God and true
When thou comest to the waters
Thou shalt not go down, but THROUGH*

Added to earlier suggestions about living for God enthusiastically and “heartily”, is one involving our testimony in the presence of others.

Witness Must Be Clear

There are two things that you and I, as Christians, should be doing if we are to honor God

and make an impact upon our generation. In the process of our doing these things, our own souls will be stirred and blessed and we shall be, as we say, “psyched up” for God.

Wisdom Is Involved

“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without”[the unsaved] (Col. 4:5). “Walk” means to live every moment of every day. You have knowledge, much or little. “Wisdom” is the ability to know what to do with what you know. Wisdom is God’s gift to you.

“If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (Jas. 1:5).

That kind of sovereign guidance, that you receive and display as a gift from God, is easily spotted by onlookers. Those who are observing your life, but who do not yet share your faith in the Saviour I cannot possibly fake or duplicate the divine direction when they see it manifested in your life before their very eyes.

Not everybody who works for or with you is a Christian. But each of these individuals watches you because he or she knows you ARE a Christian.

Thus it is that the divine direction for decision-making, that you receive from God in answer to prayer and faith, will become a great factor in influencing others Godward. The best recommendation for your way of life is the effect it has on other people. You and I should live the kind of life that will make others hungry for Jesus.

Daily Life Is Involved

Redeeming the time (Col. 4:5). Here and there, through the years, I have found people capable of tremendous output. When I have inquired how this was possible I have learned that while these individuals were not slaves to a schedule, they had mastered the art of making every moment count.

Would you give some thought to asking yourself now and again the question, “How will what I am doing right now honor my Lord and win souls for Him”? Remember, you are not required to be religious about everything . You can, thank God, live your life as a normal, garden-variety human being who is highly sensitive to the importance of the building blocks of time that have been entrusted to you.

As an aside, have you discovered that nonreligious acts may often produce spiritual , results? For example, the paying of a bill on time may convince a person to whom you owe

money that you are what you say you are, a Christian. A sincere apology to someone you have wronged may be used, without any preaching at all, to convince another person that your Jesus is indeed real and not just a profession.

Notice that this injunction concerning redeeming the time is set in the context of an “evil world.” We are not talking about God’s creation, the beautiful world that we see about us. The “evil world” is the world system, dominated by Satan, “the prince of the power of the air.”

Everybody relates to this world system in one of three ways. You can run away from it (or attempt to do so) and become a recluse. Or you can fight everybody who speaks of it. Or you can live your life in quiet strength provided by your blessed Lord, becoming a constant testimony to the miracle power of God in you. You yourself make the choice of which of these positions you will take.

Paul instructed young Timothy, and all of us:

“Be thou an EXAMPLE of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12).

When these conditions obtain, and the bubbling “joy of the Lord” that is “strength” touches every facet of your being, on-lookers will take notice and your testimony will bear fruit.

Be an “example” - a walking demonstration In word - daily speech

In conversation - an old English word meaning lifestyle

In charity - Calvary love In spirit - enthusiasm

In faith - outreach

In purity - practical holiness

Each day of your life you are going into the “game” of life. For you, as a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ, winning is not only possible but also assured.

The coach gives you a pep talk, but all the while you KNOW that you are “more than conquerors, through him that loved us. “ *Your strength is His strength-imparted to you, made perfect in [your] weakness.*”

Live that way, Beloved.

Live “psyched up” for God.

