

**Book of Faith Bible Study**  
**Colossians 3:16-17**

*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

Someone discussing the ELCA's Book of Faith initiative made a marvelous insight that became an invitation. She said, "let us become fluent in the first language of our faith — the language of Scripture."

In his words to the Colossians, I hear Paul extending a similar invitation: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."

I am forever thankful that I was raised in a family in which we dwelt richly in the word of Christ. Long before I could read the Bible, I heard the Word as it was read to me, as we sang and prayed the Scriptures.

As excited as I was when the car was packed to go on a trip, before leaving we would gather in the living room reciting together the 121st Psalm. After supper, before going out to play or do homework, we would sing the names of the New Testament books. Yes, the language of Scripture was becoming the mother tongue of my Christian faith.

As I am with people throughout this church for whom English is perhaps their second, third, maybe, even fourth language, it is fascinating to observe what happens when that person meets someone who speaks their mother tongue. There is great joy, lively and animated exchanges, expressions of gratitude, the sharing of memories and hope.

**As you consider opening Scripture individually or with others, you may wish to consider these general questions:**

*How does the Bible feed your daily life?*

*How does the Bible feed the life of this community?*

*How are we renewed, empowered, and enlivened by the Word?*

*What stands in the way of our opening the Bible and joining the conversation?*

Could that be similar to what Paul is describing occurs when the word of Christ dwells richly in us and we dwell richly in the word? Paul's invitation is profoundly personal — spoken to each of us. Yet it is also communal — a description of our life together as the Word of Christ dwells richly in us. Together we will be singing spiritual songs and expressing thanks to God, together we will be sharing our joys and struggles as we will teach and admonish one another in all wisdom. And everything we do will be in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Did you hear that — everything in word and deed done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him? Oh, my, that means my parenting and preaching and response to those in poverty, our marriage, our money management, our gathering in worship around the means of grace, and our caring for God's creation will all be in the name of Jesus and in gratitude for God's grace and mercy in Christ Jesus.

It can sound like a daunting command. But I hear it as a description of what occurs when through the Holy Spirit we accept the gracious invitation to let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly.”

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**In addition to questions found in the studies, here are general questions that can be used for each of the texts:**

*What is God saying to us through this passage?*

*What does this passage tell us about God?*

*How does this passage speak to us as individuals and to us as a community?*

*What does this passage teach us about our neighbors and our world?*

### Questions on Colossians 3:16-17

- *How do we dwell in the Word?*
- *Is Scripture our first language of faith?*
- *What would we like to see happen in our community to help Scripture become our first language of faith?*