

## December Issue 2015- Parker & Megan Ask

### Did they live with passion?

What a way to celebrate this Christmas season, right? This isn't going to be your typical holiday or Christmas newsletter. And sorry if you were looking for this, but we won't be sharing the Christmas story of our Savior's birth. I think we all know how special that day was and still is to all of us. We want to drive your faith a bit deeper this season.

As a new year comes and the old one passes, we all make resolutions, or changes that may or may not actually hold firm in the following year. Our hopes are that this message will help you to put a foot in front of the other; to get it started, and to help aid in the perpetuation of further footsteps. So we are going to look in Colossians, chapter 3 verses 1 through 17. As we look at a new year we want to put on the new self. So in order to do so we need to understand who we are.

*"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is; seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God." Colossians 3:1-4*

Understand who you are. Your external life needs to reflect your internal identity. Because of our acceptance of Christ, we are found anew. Even though this journey is on the cusp to begin in the essence of physically going; we have already started. We have learned so much about you- our partners- and about how God plans to consume us as well as seeing how He has used us.

*"When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you..... On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away; anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all and in all." Colossians 3:5-11*

Even starting with this duty we have been called to serve, we to have been guilty of putting ourselves on a pedestal (we are missionaries, selling all our possessions to do God's work); as we have felt others have done this for us also. We are but two humble humans, with flaws and faults; called by God to share His heart, His grace, and His mercy with others. We still have bad days, good days, horribly dark days, and abundant days. We still suffer, experience pain, been lied to, and struggled with our own sins. We have learned to be transparent over the past couple years. We will continue to be transparent with you; otherwise how else can we truly be brothers and sisters in Christ? How else can we seek aid if we aren't true with ourselves and our partners?

*"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint*

*against another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*” Colossians 3:12-14

Adapt the new you! We must. We must. We must make allowance for everyone's faults. This is something, that yes, even missionaries struggle with. However; we are always thankful for God's compassion in us. Mercy is difficult. We are called to give mercy; a must as a follower of The Way. Who needs your forgiveness this time of the year? Where is there still bitterness in your heart? These are hard questions to ask yourself and to ask God to open your wounds. But like it says, a must. Here is what may help put you at ease- at least a little bit. Forgiving isn't justifying others actions. Forgiveness does not equal trust. We are to forgive, in our hearts, out loud to God, and most times it is needed to be said to the foe. Forgive; otherwise we are being rendered useless. “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy....” John10:10. To steal, kill, destroy, render useless; like a lamp that is unplugged. It's still a lamp, just not doing lamp things.

*“And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in wisdom, signing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts 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.”* Colossians 3:15-17

The sound of the season, Peace and praise. Live with Peace and praise. Give thanks through God, this is how we live with peace and praise. The results of letting go are: a place, which is thankfulness. Peace is not fighting for greed or through anger. Peace is always the time of the present. Whereas fear is a negative feeling that takes place in or for the future. How can we avoid fear in the future? Well, it's difficult not to- we are still humans- but there is praise. Praise gives gratitude towards what you have for what God has done with your life.

May the Christmas spirit lead you this season, and bless you and your family. We pray that healing is sought and your relationships begin the mend. It isn't going to be easy, but when has anything worth having in this life been? And if you are not changing, you are not growing.