

LESSON THREE

THE SUPREMACY PRINCIPLE

The Supremacy Principle

Part 1 (of 2 parts)

University Objectives... (Reviewed)

_____ the Word!

_____ the Word!

_____ the Word!

Semper Vivus: _____

“This _____ is _____!”

“University” Defined:

“An institution of _____ at the highest _____.”

Principle Three (of 12)

The _____ Principle

I can find ultimate purpose in life only by learning the essentials of allowing Christ to be supreme in all I think or do. I must draw from His strength continually to live a life of purity and purpose so that I might bring Him the greatest glory. I hereby resolve to choose this course of action daily, and in God’s power I consider it done.

Primary Passage...

He [Christ] is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Colossians 1:17-18 (NIV)

Foundational Premise...

“Premise” Defined:

“A proposition upon which an _____ is based or from which a _____ is drawn.”

Premise...

The believer’s ability to _____ to full _____ in Christ and to maximize his or her _____ in Him is proportional to that person’s _____ and _____ of Christ’s supremacy in all aspects of life.

“Supremacy” Defined:

“The quality or condition of being supreme; supreme in _____ or _____.”

“Supreme” Defined:

“Greatest in power, authority or rank; paramount or _____; _____; final.

Scripture:

He [Christ] was supreme in the beginning and—leading the resurrection parade—he is supreme in the end.

Colossians 1:18 (MSG)

Understanding and Knowing Christ

(His Centrality and Supremacy)

Timeless Insights

“Christ is all infinite and boundless. That’s the language of supremacy. It is similar to the language of God’s messianic-era promise to Jerusalem in Zechariah 2:5: ‘I... will be a wall of fire around her (circumference) and I will be its glory in her midst (center).’”

—E. Stanley Jones
Missionary to India

Centrality and Supremacy

(A Christology of Christ)

Dual Definitions

From David Bryant (author of *Christ Is All!*)

1. _____ is about Christ’s right to be kept at the _____ of who we are, where we are _____, all we are _____ and how we are blessed.
2. _____ speaks of so much more. It proclaims Christ’s right to keep us at the center of _____. He is, where _____ is headed, what He is _____, and how He is blessed.

Timeless Insights

“I must surrender my fascination with myself to a more worthy preoccupation with the character and purposes of Christ. I am not the point. He is. I exist for Him. He does not exist for me. Is there a passion to be consumed with the work of Christ, a passion to know Him as Lord?”

—Dr. Larry Crabb

The Centrality and Supremacy of Christ

Biblical Distinctions

1. Distinction One:

CHRIST IS... the _____ and
_____ of Christianity.

Scripture:

Christ is all [supremacy] and in all [centrality].

Colossians 3:11 (NIV)

Timeless Insights

“‘Christ is all’ (Colossians 3:11)—These three words are few, short and soon spoken; but they contain great things. These three words are the essence and substance of Christianity. These three words give to Christ His rightful place.”

—J. C. Ryle (c. 1870)

2. Distinction Two:

CHRIST IS... the _____ of God's
_____ to all humankind.

Scripture:

...One Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things [supremacy], and we exist through Him [centrality].

1 Corinthians 8:6 (NASB)

Timeless Insights

“Jesus is not merely the agent through whom the knowledge of God is communicated. He is himself the very content of the communication. Where Jesus is preached, the very glory of God shines through. Thus God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.”

—Dr. Christopher J. H. Wright

3. Distinction Three:

CHRIST IS... the _____ of eternal life, not a _____ to achieve the _____ of eternal life.

Scripture:

...I press on so that I may lay hold of that [centrality] for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus [supremacy].

Philippians 3:12 (NASB)

Timeless Insights

“Anyone who reads even a smattering of Paul’s writing recognizes early on that his devotion to Christ was the foremost reality and passion of his life. ‘For me to live is Christ; to die is [to] gain [Christ].’ Christ is the beginning and goal of everything for Paul, and thus is the single great reality along the way.”

—Dr. Gordon Fee

4. Distinction Four:

CHRIST IS... the One who produces _____ through me, not I the one who produces _____ through Him.

Scripture:

...He who abides in Me [supremacy] and I in Him [centrality], he bears much fruit...

John 15:5 (NASB)

Timeless Insights

“Jesus is my God, Jesus is my Spouse, Jesus is my Life. Jesus is my only Love, Jesus is my All, Jesus is my Everything. Because of this I am never afraid. I am doing

my work with Jesus. I am doing it for Jesus. I am doing it with Jesus; therefore, the results are His, not mine.”

—Mother Teresa of Calcutta

5. Distinction Five:

CHRIST IS... the divine _____ of the _____ of all biblical theology.

Scripture:

Seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness [centrality], through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence [supremacy].

2 Peter 1:3 (NASB)

Timeless Insights

“Christology is the true hub round which the wheel of theology revolves, and to which its separate spokes must each be correctly anchored if the wheel is not to get bent.”

—Dr. J. I. Packer

Additional Notes:

Talk Back Time:

(Share what you've learned with your small group.)

Discuss what you believe is the difference between the centrality and supremacy of Christ. What are some of the practical steps one might take to make Christ supreme in his or her life?

Pray Back Time:

(Pray what you've learned in your small group.)

Think of specific circumstances, issues or desires in your life in which you would like to see Christ become "supreme." Turn those particular items into focuses for these moments of prayer.

The Supremacy Principle

Part 2 (of 2 parts)

Timeless Insights

“Jesus Christ, by coming into this world, has changed the sunsets of time into the sunrises of eternity.”

—Clement of Alexandria (3rd Century)

What the Bible Says About... Christ’s Supremacy and the Believer’s Victory

Victory Over Sin

(Seven Biblical Observations)

1. Only in Christ...

...can the follower of Jesus _____ the
_____ against the _____ and sin.

Scripture:

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has become a child of God. And everyone who loves the Father loves his children, too. We know we love God’s children if we love God and obey his commandments. Loving God means keeping his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome. For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. And who can win this battle against

the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

1 John 5:1-5 (NLT)

2. Only in Christ...

...is there _____ from sin and the _____ of God's joy!

Scripture:

"Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight. Yes, what joy for those whose record the LORD has cleared of sin"... He [Christ] was handed over to die because of our sins, and he was raised to life to make us right with God.

Romans 4:7-8, 25 (NLT)

3. Only in Christ...

...was there a supreme _____ to God for the full _____ of our sins.

Scripture:

For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT)

4. Only in Christ...

...and His supreme _____ is there _____ over every kind of sin.

Scripture:

He [Christ] gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds.

Titus 2:14 (NLT)

5. Only in Christ...

...and through His sinless _____ could all the sins of humankind be carried to the _____.

Scripture:

For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you. He is your example, and you must follow in his steps. He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone... He personally carried our sins in his body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By his wounds you are healed.

1 Peter 2:21-22, 24 (NLT)

6. Only in Christ...

...could there be a once-and-for-all _____ for all our _____.

Scripture:

Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit.

1 Peter 3:18 (NLT)

7. Only in Christ...

...and through His supreme sacrifice is there a guarantee of _____ over all _____ sin.

Scripture:

My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous.

1 John 2:1 (NLT)

The Supremacy of Christ and The University of the Word

An Axiom of Supremacy

ax•i•om (âk'sē-om)

n.

1. A self-evident or universally recognized truth; a maxim.
2. A self-evident principle or one that is accepted as true without proof...

A Supreme Axiom...

All of God's Word is in all of Christ and all of Christ is in all of God's Word. Christ is the living Word. Christ is God! Therefore, to be saturated in God's Word is to be saturated in, with and through all of Christ.

The Testimony of John the Apostle:

"In the beginning [before all time] was the Word [Christ], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God Himself. He was present originally with God. All things were made and came into existence through Him, and without Him was not even one thing made that has come into being."

The Testimony of Saint Augustine:

"The one who has Christ has everything. The one who has everything except for Christ really has nothing. And the one who has Christ plus everything else does not have any more than the one who has Christ alone."

The Testimony of Charles Spurgeon:

"From every text of Scripture there is a road to Christ. And my dear brother, your business is, when you get a text, to say, 'Now, what is the road to Christ?' I have never found a text that did not have a road to Christ in it."

The Testimony of Timothy Keller:

“If we ever tell a particular Bible story without putting it into the overall main Bible story (about Christ) we actually change the meaning of the particular event for us. It becomes a moralistic exhortation to ‘try harder’ rather than a call to live by faith in the work of Christ. There is, in the end, only two ways to read the Bible: Is it basically about me or basically about Jesus?”

Principle Three Reviewed

I can find ultimate purpose in life only by learning the essentials of allowing Christ to be supreme in all I think or do. I must draw from His strength continually to live a life of purity and purpose so that I might bring Him the greatest glory. I hereby resolve to choose this course of action daily, and in God’s power I consider it done.

The Supremacy Principle

Primary Passage...

He [Christ] is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

Colossians 1:17-18 (NIV)

Passages for Further Study

(See following page for an example.)

Look up these passages in your Bible, underline key phrases or put a box around them. Put a number “3” in the margin of your Bible by that passage and circle it. Then, go back to your primary passage (Colossians 1:17-18) and in the margin write these verses beside it or at the bottom of the page. In this way you will begin to cross-reference your Bible.

- Colossians 1:17-18
- Revelation 22:13
- Colossians 3:11
- 1 Corinthians 8:6
- Ephesians 3:8
- Philippians 2:9-11
- 1 Corinthians 15:27-28
- Revelation 1:4-8
- Hebrews 1:1-4
- Hebrews 1:8-12
- John 1:1-5
- Hebrews 3:1-6
- Hebrews 5:7-10
- Hebrews 12:1-2
- Hebrews 2:9-10
- 2 Corinthians 4:4
- Ephesians 1:18-23
- Revelation 15:2-4
- Revelation 17:12-14
- Revelation 19:11-16
- John 8:12
- 1 Corinthians 15:45-47
- Acts 10:36
- Romans 14:9
- John 3:16-18
- John 1:18
- John 6:32
- John 11:25
- Luke 1:32-33
- 1 John 5:20

COLOSSIANS 1, 2

Principle 3
Primary Passage 1479

everything has been created through him and for him.

17 He existed before everything and holds everything together.
18 He is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, the first to come back to life so that he would have first place in everything.

③
Primary Passage

Rev. 22:13
Col. 3:11
1 Corth. 8:6
Eph. 3:8
Phil. 2:9-11
1 Corth. 15:27-28

¹⁹God was pleased to have all of himself live in Christ. ²⁰God was also pleased to bring everything on earth and in heaven back to himself through Christ. He did this by making peace through Christ's blood sacrificed on the cross.

²¹Once you were separated from God. The evil things you did showed your hostile attitude. ²²But now Christ has brought you back to God by dying in his physical body. He did this so that you could come into God's presence without sin, fault, or blame. ²³This is on the condition that you continue in faith without being moved from the solid foundation of the hope that the Good News contains. You've heard this Good News of which I, Paul, became a servant. It has been spread throughout all creation under heaven.

Rev. 1:4-8
Heb. 1:1-4
Heb. 1:8-12
John 1:1-5
Heb. 3:1-6
Heb. 5:7-10
Heb. 12:1-2
Heb. 2:9-10
2 Corth. 4:4
Eph. 1:18-23
Rev. 15:2-4
Rev. 17:12-14
Rev. 19:11-16
John 8:12
1 Corth. 15:45-47
Acts 10:36
Rom. 14:9
John 3:16-18
John 1:18
John 6:32
John 11:25
Luke 1:32-33
1 John 5:20

Paul Describes His Work

²⁴I am happy to suffer for you now. In my body I am completing whatever remains of Christ's sufferings. I am doing this on behalf of his body, the church. ²⁵I became a servant of the church when God gave me the work of telling you his entire message. ²⁶In the past God hid this mystery, but now he has revealed it to his people. ²⁷God wanted his people throughout the world to know the glorious riches of this mystery—which is Christ living in you, giving you the hope of glory.

²⁸We spread the message about Christ as we instruct and teach everyone with all the wisdom there is. We want to present everyone as mature Christian people. ²⁹I work hard and struggle to do this while his mighty power works in me.

¹I want you to know how hard I work for you, for the people of Laodicea, and for people I have never met. ²Because they are united in love, I work so that they may be encouraged by all the riches that come from a complete understanding of Christ. He is the mystery of God. ³God has hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Christ. ⁴I say this so that no one will mislead you with arguments that merely sound good. ⁵Although I'm absent from you physically, I'm with you in spirit. I'm happy to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

⁶You received Christ Jesus the Lord, so continue to live as Christ's people. ⁷Sink your roots in him and build on him. Be strengthened by the faith that you were taught, and overflow with thanksgiving.

Beware of Requirements Invented by Humans

⁸Be careful not to let anyone rob you of this faith, through a shallow and misleading philosophy. Such a person follows human traditions and the world's way of doing things rather than following Christ.

⁹All of God lives in Christ's body, ¹⁰and God has made you complete in Christ. Christ is in charge of every ruler and authority. ¹¹In him you were also

Talk Back Time:

(Share what you've learned with your small group.)

Discuss why Christians believe that only in Christ and through His death upon the cross was a supreme sacrifice paid for our sins. What do you think it means to be fully free from all sins?

Pray Back Time:

(Pray what you've learned in your small group.)

Ask God to do a special work in your life and church to give greater emphasis to the supremacy of Christ. Pray that Christ will become more real in practical aspects of both corporate worship as well as in everyday living.
