

# ROOTED

## A Themed Devotional Series

*For CVM Professionals*

*By CVM Staff*

This series of devotionals was created around CVM's annual theme of "Rooted" from Ephesians 3:17-18. We hope you enjoy getting to know the CVM staff better while learning to be Rooted in Christ's love. We encourage you to prayerfully journey through the study with your Bibles open, looking up the *scriptures* (in italics) and contemplating the **questions** (in bold).

The devotionals are really just intended to be a jumping off point to go deeper in God's Word.

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**Christian  
Veterinary Mission**

## Rooted

### *Experiencing the Extent*

*“And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.”*

– Ephesians 3:17-18

As God’s people, even with His power, and rooted and established in His love, how can we ever grasp how long Christ’s love is? How far does it extend?

Our good friend Mukti was born and raised in a high caste Hindu farm family in the mountains of Nepal. He had heard of Christians but never met one, nor was interest in Christianity tolerated in his home. Honor your father and mother includes respecting their religious traditions and obeying their rules. As the eldest son, he had even more responsibility to model this for his younger brothers and sister.

After high school, Mukti went to live in the city with his uncle to attend college. While there, he visited the local church out of curiosity. At first, his uncle tolerated this curiosity, but as Mukti began to attend church regularly, his uncle demanded he stop and respect his parents by not associating with Christians. He threatened to throw Mukti out. But Mukti was intrigued by the church and its teachings and continued to attend and to read the Bible. So, his uncle threw him out. It was a very hard time for Mukti. Without his uncle’s support, he was forced to drop out of college and find part-time work. But Christ’s love was wide enough for Mukti to be worth the hardships.

After coming to faith, he was baptized in a river near the church. When he was baptized, his family disowned him completely. He was no longer the oldest son and heir to the small farm.

Mukti continued to be mentored by the church and eventually got a job as an evangelist and church planter. Christ’s love embraced Mukti and the church helped him arrange a marriage with a lovely Christian woman. Mukti founded churches with an unreached tribal group of hunter and gatherers in the jungle. And Christ’s love was deep enough to support Mukti’s depth of grief one dark Easter Sunday when he learned of his sister’s murder during the civil war.

Mukti became pastor of the church and then president of the regional church association. He led the Christian churches in their response to the massive earthquake in Nepal in 2015, caring for neighbors, hauling food to Hindu villages that had lost everything, including his parents’ village. His family home was damaged and his father, already ill, died shortly after the earthquake, never accepting Mukti back as a son. His parents would not even allow him or his wife into their home nor see their granddaughter.

This spring we received word that Mukti’s mother, who had lost her husband, her daughter, and her home, who had refused to attend Mukti’s wedding and the birth of her granddaughter, had finally come to faith and been baptized. TWENTY-SEVEN years after Mukti’s baptism, and after 27 years of prayer for her, his mother has been reconciled with him and joined the eternal family of Jesus Christ.

## Rooted

### *Experiencing the Extent*

The certainty of God's faithfulness has never wavered. His promises do not fail. Even when we give up, or lose faith, or don't understand the "why" of so many things, God breaks through our limited expectations with a miracle of new life.

*"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."* -2 Peter 3:9

The love of Christ reaches wide enough to embrace a poor disowned farm boy in the hills of Nepal. It is deep enough to support our depths of pain and grief. It is high enough to overcome barriers to reach a previously unreached people group with the good news of the gospel. And Christ's love is long enough to reach across 27 years of rejection to bring a mother home to God's family.

- Where have you seen God's love extend beyond where common sense would tell us it could go?
- When have you doubted the reach of God's love? Or thought someone or some problem was too far for God to ever reach?
- How can we tap into that power that will enable us to grasp the dimensions of Christ's love?



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## Rooted

### *Rooted in Community*

*“And I ask him that with both feet planted firmly on love, you’ll be able to take in with all followers of Jesus the extravagant dimensions of Christ’s love. Reach out and experience the breadth! Test its length! Plumb the depths! Rise to the heights! Live full lives, full in the fullness of God.” - Ephesians 3:17-19 TM*

Did you know that trees communicate with one another through their root systems? To the naked eye every tree in a forest might look independent, fighting for its portion of sunlight and space to survive. But there’s another story being told underground, where trees of the same species are communal. They share water and nutrients in a back and forth exchange depending on need, and even communicate through their connected root networks. If there’s a drought or a dangerous insect colony attacking, they send distress signals to one another. They even form alliances with fungi and trees of other species to live in cooperative, interdependent relationships—how cool is that? (<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/the-whispering-trees-180968084/>; <https://e360.yale.edu/features/exploring-how-and-why-trees-talk-to-each-other/>)

Like trees, we humans are all much more connected and interdependent than we’d sometimes like to believe, especially in the modern Western world. Many of our goals involve personal successes, pulling yourself up by your bootstraps and paving a new way in the world. There’s even a certain amount of romance and ideation around the idea of being a wanderer; a lone ranger. But is this really preferable? Sustainable? Is it even possible? Where does community fit into this picture?

A quick online search for the word “community” in the Bible pulls up 85 occurrences in the NIV translation—no small number! That doesn’t even include the references to believers as a body or the examples of community set by Christ and His Apostles. It would seem the concept of community and sharing life together is important to God.

Perhaps you find yourself right now in a new place, a new job, a new school, searching for community. Maybe you’ve arrived in this spot tired, overwhelmed, or at a loss for where to start. Maybe you’ve been hurt by community in the past and you’re not really motivated to jump in again.

I get it. To be honest, I’m also a little in that place. My husband and I have been searching over a year now for a church community that feels like home. He didn’t grow up in church, and I grew up in a very conservative church that has left some scars. What I’ve learned through this process is that community can look like many different things, and it comes both organically and intentionally. What I mean is—Sunday morning church and a weekly bible study can be wonderful and soul-filling. Community though can also look like a hodge-podge tribe of people rooted in Jesus but spread all over, committed to growing together. You may come across people in your life that you immediately bond with. They might be similar to you- kindred spirits- and the friendships and mutual support may happen naturally. Others you need to seek out. Be intentional about building your tribe, about finding a community of people that accept you, challenge you, encourage you, and expect that back in return. It takes effort and energy, but the reward is so rich. This tribe you are intentionally building— through church, through your CVF

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### *Rooted in Community*

group, through shared passions or interests—they are the ones who will show up when you need them the most. As long as you are showing up for them, also.

#### Reflections & Actions

- When and where in your life have you felt the most at home in community? What specifically about that time or group caused you to feel that way?
  - If you are currently experiencing life-giving community, make a point to thank the Lord for this gift and find a way to verbally or tangibly express gratitude this week (homemade cookies for bible study, anyone?)
  - If you are currently searching for community, ask God to show you people or causes in your life you can invest in right now. Be intentional to engage when He places someone or something on your heart.
- What do you need in a tribe? Maybe it's honesty. Maybe it's the ability to ask questions and express fears or doubts. Maybe it's the chance to laugh together. If you feel any of these things are missing from your current community, ask yourself how you can intentionally bring these qualities to the group.
- Pick someone in your life to encourage this week. Write their name down and pray for them daily. Maybe send them a quick text or give them a call just to chat and let them know you're thinking of them. It's amazing the impact prayer and a small amount of effort can have!



*With a background in International Community Development, communications and fundraising, Lauren Scofield now has the pleasure of working with CVM Short-Term Mission volunteers, helping to equip and empower them for holistic, responsible, and effective service overseas and domestically. She and her husband enjoy living in and exploring the beautiful PNW and are looking forward to adding a baby boy to their tribe in July 2020. Email: [lscofield@cvm.org](mailto:lscofield@cvm.org).*

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### *Rooted by a Stream*

*“But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in Him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.”*

-Jeremiah 17:7-8 (NIV)

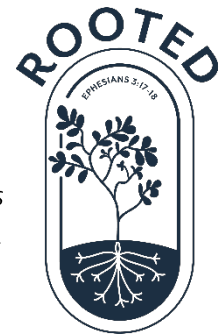
This is one of those passages in scripture that just lowers my blood pressure.

Recently, I was at a park with my husband, dog, and four kids. There are a lot of people in this family, and they know all my buttons! The 3 and 5 year-old boys in particular had been driving me up the wall that day, but when the park's trail took us down beside a peaceful creek, I felt all the tension in my body ease. No sound machine setting quite captures the tranquility of God's babbling brooks.

As I'm writing, we are still in the thick of the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic. I hope and pray that when you read this we will be resuming some semblance of normalcy, but I know you will all clearly remember the anxiety of quarantine, and likely stressful adjustments of re-opening to a new normal.

How we handle these challenges depends on where we're rooted. If our roots are shallowly buried in sandy desert soil, we're likely to dry up when the droughts of this world hit us, whether they be seasons of final exams or global pandemics. But imagine if we plant our roots deeply near a stream. Our ability to stay hydrated and continue to bear fruit is so much greater when we trust in the Lord. When the heat is on, we can maintain our confidence in Him and leave all our worries at His feet.

As I ruminate on our theme of Rooted and the image of a plant growing simultaneously both up and down as well as expanding outward, I can't help but think of God's love in Ephesians 3:18. That you *“may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.”* Not only does God's love stretch in all these directions like a thriving plant, but it's a beautiful image of a healthy Christian's growth as well.



A plant's growth that we typically think of is upward toward the sky, many flowers and leaves even turn in the direction of the sun as they grow. This year, we were blessed with our fourth child, a baby girl who we gave the middle name Girasol, which is Spanish for sunflower. We were naming her after our oldest daughter, whose original name was Girasol when she lived in Bolivia. In Spanish "gira" means "turn" and "sol" means "sun," so "Sunflower" means "Turns to the Sun." We love the idea of our children turning their lives toward the Son, the source of all Light, Jesus Christ.

As we mature as believers we grow vertically, reaching toward Heaven, fixing our eyes on Jesus. But we also grow vertically in depth, anchoring or, as it says in Ephesians 3:17, establishing our roots in love. That foundation in Christ's love is what keeps us from being driven and tossed by the winds (*James 1:6*) of this world, of our culture, and of the stresses of veterinary medicine.

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### *Rooted by a Stream*

Our roots grow firm in Christ as we go deeper in His Word and in prayer, but roots also expand out horizontally. I think of this outward growth underground as Christians being established in the love of a faith community. We reach out and connect with others who we support and who support us, much like the root systems of trees that share nutrients and water. The veterinary profession can be isolating and so draining. Are you being nourished by a community of believers? Is your church feeding you? Have you taken full advantage of all the fellowship and connection your CVF group has to offer? Or maybe you need to be the catalyst for a much-needed support network in your group.

And finally, there is the plant's growth above ground; the bearing of fruit, the color of the leaves, the parts that people see. When our roots are planted by a stream, and we are being nourished in community, the results are visible to all; our *"leaves are always green...we never fail to bear fruit."* And this is our witness to the world. With a healthy root system our lives grow horizontally above ground as well, reaching out toward others with His love flowing through us.

This side of heaven, I doubt we will ever truly *"grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,"* but our own love can also grow wide and long and high and deep as we trust in Jesus and the living water that only He offers.

- In which direction of growth do you feel the strongest: vertically toward God and established in His love, horizontally rooted in a community with other believers, or reaching out to others who don't yet know about His love?
- Which direction do you need to turn your attention to, what are some ways you could do that?
- What about your CVF group, are there ways it could improve as a support network or at helping your members grow in these directions?



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### *I Can*

Have you ever felt that your life was moving in slow motion?

Time seemed to slow to a halt for me on Christmas, 2019. On Christmas morning, my seemingly healthy husband Derek pulled me aside saying he didn't feel right and needed to go to the ER. They ended up admitting him for "heart issues." That was the beginning of my slow-motion living.

If someone would have told me on Christmas Eve, that I would experience all the things I did between Christmas 2019 and Easter 2020, I would not have believed them. And I honestly never would have thought that I would have made it. I would have told you, "No way, I'm not strong enough to handle that!"

Derek ended up having serious heart issues. He started with a triple bypass surgery followed by an LVAD (Left Ventricular Assist Device) surgery. Then he contracted E-coli throughout his heart and lungs – nearly killing him numerous times. All told, he had 13 surgeries, spent 65 days in the ICU and 104 total days in the hospital.

I hate to admit it, but my faith was challenged to the core. When the doctors would give Derek a 10% chance of surviving a surgery or call in the middle of the night getting my approval to shock his heart back to rhythm or let me know that E-coli was running rampant and even the doctors didn't know what to do next; it left me drained and weak. I was totally out of any control whatsoever. I felt helpless. At times all I could muster was to say the name of Jesus and try to stay strong enough for my kids so that they wouldn't feel the full weight of our reality. A friend of mine said, "There are things that we don't know we can do until we do them." And I can say now with experience that statement is true.

Paul wrote in Philippians 4:11-13, *"I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through Him who gives me strength."*

I have heard it said that God will not give you more than you can handle. I'm not sure I necessarily agree with that. If I didn't go through the struggle and see God's hand in the outcome, I wouldn't have learned. And I needed to learn the "secret." That's why our relationship with God is so important. When you are rooted in Christ, you can do more than you ever imagined you could.

People tell me all the time lately what a strong woman I am to still be standing after battling for my husband's life. But I can honestly tell you that none of that strength came from me. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 says *"...My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."* His power is made perfect in MY weakness.

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### *I Can*

What an amazing thing to behold – to watch how God gave His power and His peace to me and my children. To see how God walked through the darkest time of my life with me and answered my prayers. To see God protecting and healing Derek in front of the doctors’ eyes. To see the thousands of people around the world partner with our family in prayer over Derek. To see our families come closer together like never before for each other. To increase each of us in our faith – to bring us to the next level of understanding and nearness to our Heavenly Father.

I am more rooted in Christ than I have ever been. My roots (faith) had to grow deeper, I allowed trusted friends to walk alongside me, and I gathered my nourishment from the Lord, the only One who could give it. I don’t believe this growth would have happened unless I went through this trying time. I don’t know why God chose to allow my family to go through what we have. I prayed for God to heal Derek as soon as we heard of the seriousness of his illness. Instead of immediate healing, God taught me the value of relying on Him. In my extreme weakness, God was glorified. He helped me every step of the way. I will never forget this time in my life. I know that by His grace “I Can” make it through the next time my faith is tested.

We are in the “recovery” chapter in Derek’s healing. He is now home and the recovery is extensive. The first week alone was so much harder than expected. I questioned myself again, saying I don’t know if I can do this. But because “*I have learned the secret,*” I was able to remind myself where I am rooted. That power comes from the Lord. That Christ’s love for me is wide, long, high, and deep. And that sustains me now and through my unforeseen future.

- How do we learn to be content in all circumstances? (Phil 4:11)
- How would you explain to someone the concept of “*in my weakness, He is made strong*”?
- Trials and tests are meant to form our faith, not destroy our faith. Why do some people fall apart from trials and others are strengthened as a result of them?



Krista manages the CVM Marketing & Fundraising Initiatives as well as the CVM hosted events which include Real Life Real Impact and the upcoming faith-based CVM Veterinary Conference in 2020. She also serves a local church in Seattle with her husband Derek, who serves as a senior pastor. She has 4 children and 1 grandbaby. *Email:* [kforseth@cvm.org](mailto:kforseth@cvm.org)

## Rooted

### *Where is Your Identity Rooted?*

Have you ever been the guest of honor at a banquet or celebration? I used to travel to Juarez, Mexico with my church in California for short term missions. One year, I went alone to really immerse in the culture and spend time there with my beloved sisters and brothers. I visited them over my birthday. They threw me a big surprise fiesta complete with cake and balloons. The whole youth group gathered around me, the honoree! I felt loved, significant, and appreciated on that fun evening.

When I returned to CA and my veterinary practice, I was bombarded with catch-up work and long overnight shifts. I suddenly felt small and isolated from my church family. I often struggled with my abilities as a veterinarian. Was I qualified to take this GDV to surgery at 2AM or perform a c-section on this high dollar show dog? I was a new veterinarian struggling to find my place and worth in our profession. Many nights I wished so desperately to be back in the little church in Juarez where I felt I belonged.

This was probably one of the first times as an adult when I really started to consider the age-old questions: “Who Am I?” and “What Am I Doing Here?”

Each one of us through life, veterinary school, and into our professional careers experience these highs and lows of learning who we are and where we belong. In a recent sermon series, our pastor John Pryor, explained that as human beings we all desire some basic things. Why? Because we are made in the image of God! (*Genesis 1:27*) We all crave: Life (to the fullest), Health, Responsibility, Belonging, and Significance. Because of sin twisting these basic wants, we also share some core fears: Death, Suffering, Loss of Control, Isolation, and Humiliation.

Generally, we also fear failure and missing out. The grass is always greener elsewhere, right? These fears influence WHO we believe we are (our identity) and thus, our reality.

**Do you struggle with any of these basic fears? Do you fear failure?**

Pastor Pete Briscoe (TX) defines *identity* as this: I live **who I believe I am**. He follows that our tendencies lead to actions, which lead to consequences. These outcomes thus produce our reality. If our identity is placed in the fact that we are veterinary students, we HOPE our reality is that we are successful, pass boards, and find a job. However, many times our reality looks more like this: I am not cut out for this. I am an imposter. I am worried that I will fail.

Pastor Briscoe says that these negative and unwanted realities are born out of “Lie-dentities.” A term that he coined to illustrate what happens to our identity when we start to believe lies about who we are. Where do these lies come from? John 8:44, “...*He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies.*” Jesus is talking to His disciples and reminds them that when the enemy speaks, he is a liar, all the time.

The only way to overcome a “lie-dentity” that may be producing an unwanted reality is to root our identity in Christ. We do that by believing that what HE says about us is true. Because Jesus

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### *Where is Your Identity Rooted?*

took our sin upon Himself at the cross, when God looks at us, He sees Christ's righteousness in us.

In the following passage, see how Peter describes us as **CHOSEN** and **SIGNIFICANT**:

1 Peter 2:9-10: *"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."*

The Message translation of verse 10 uses this phrase: *"from nothing to something, from rejected to accepted."*

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"* 2 Corinthians 5:17. It is the Holy Spirit living in us and Christ's sacrifice that has given us new life, Amen! No matter how many times we fail today or tomorrow, God sees us as His chosen people, co-heirs to the Kingdom of Heaven with Christ. That knowledge must root itself in our hearts and remind us every day that we ARE accepted, significant, and secure in the eyes of God. It matters most what HE thinks about us. HE determines our reality.

In Psalm 23:5, David is speaking of God: *"You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows."* God delights in seeing us as a royal priesthood, guests of honor at His banquet. Not a small meal in the dark of night but an exquisite feast, even in the presence of our enemies who want to see us fail. God loves us, welcomes us and makes our cup OVERFLOW with His goodness. His provision and care as our Father will never end. Our identity is fixed, not in what we have done, but in what Christ has done for us.

- What "Lie-identities" shape your reality?
- If your identity were rooted in Christ, what would your reality look like?
- Read Romans 8: 1-2, 15-17, and 35-39. How can these truths encourage you in your current circumstances?



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## Rooted

*“Rooted” means “Us”*

*“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”*

- Colossians 2:7

Rooted means us. You, me, and others, together. We often gravitate toward a meaning in Scripture that is for ourselves and our personal faith but being rooted needs to be viewed as a communal venture. It's plural - not singular. When Paul wrote these words above to the church in Colossae, he did not go to the post office and address the letter to 'Steve at the Colossian Church.' He wrote this letter to address the whole church. And it may be that these letters were read aloud in front of the whole church (which could get awkward if someone was being corrected!). The importance of being rooted in the faith together is emphasized by the fact that Paul also wrote very similar words to the church in Ephesus as well, which is the CVM theme verse for this year: “And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.” – Ephesians 3:17-18

Like many things in following Jesus, this can be easy to understand but hard to apply. What if I am a solo practitioner in a rural area? What if I don't have time for my CVF group and I really need to study? What if I haven't found a church I like in my area? Look, I get it. My first position after undergrad was serving in the local church, and I have continued to serve in pastoral roles ever since. I remember one of my first Sundays after I joined CVM when I did not have to get up on a Sunday morning. When the alarm went off, my body instantly made the argument “You've worked all week – why take some of your weekend for church?! And, since you left the church you have been serving, you aren't really connected anywhere else – so what are you missing?” But the Spirit within me also reminded me of those 12 years serving pastorally and how ‘the gift of presence’ is one of the best gifts anyone can give. No one likes leading a Bible study where no one else shows up. And I have rarely, if ever, heard someone say, “you know, church/CVF group/small group wasn't worth it today – I wish I had slept in/studied instead.” The words of a mentor kept echoing in my mind “if you don't find a church you like, start one.” Luckily, I found a church I liked and didn't need to start one, but either way, I know I didn't have a valid excuse. I know that I need others for my faith to flourish. Faith isn't meant to be practiced alone.

Being rooted together provides opportunities to help and be helped. Picture a tree in the middle of a wide-open field, rooted alone. In reality, most trees that are thriving are together. Trees that are rooted alone are less protected when the storms roll in, as winds begin to blow, or lightning begins to strike. Trees that are rooted together can weather storms better and provide protection and stability for one another. Look at churches that are thriving – they are likely more than 1-2 people. Our CVF groups operate better when groups of students gather to share life together. Our short-term mission trips are effective because they are rooted together in a common purpose. One day, we may need to be encouraged and helped along by someone in the group. The next day, it may be us who is providing what is most needed. But if we are alone, we are not being blessed or being a blessing, to the faith community.

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*“Rooted” means “Us”*

Finally, being ‘rooted together in Christ and established in the faith,’ as it says in Colossians, means putting our roots down in Christ. Being rooted in Christ means that we will produce good fruit in this world. Whatever we are rooted in will affect how we grow. By being rooted in Christ, we can bloom wherever we are planted. Even as some of us read this, we may not know where we will be living in a few years, especially if you are a student. So how can we stand firm and remove some of the anxiety of the unknown? By being rooted in Christ, knowing that we will grow just fine if we are planted in Him. God desires all to be rooted in Him. As 2 Peter 3:9 states, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” God’s work continues so that more may come to the saving power of his work on the cross. When Christ said, “It is finished” - it was! (John 19:30) All we need to do is accept His work on the cross for us and be rooted in His love. Christ is enthroned in heaven already – it is finished – and those of us who follow Jesus can provide glimpses of this truth on earth. We are meant to be salt and light. But this only works if we are rooted together in Christ. So, as Paul says to the Colossians, words that are also for us today, “Let us continue to live our lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.”

- What are some of the challenges you have encountered in gathering together regularly with other believers? What can help us to overcome these challenges?
- What do you find most encouraging about your current community? How might each of you take a step to invite others and be ‘salt and light’ to those around you?
- When is a time that another believer was there for you when you needed it? When is a time you sensed God using you to be salt and light to someone else?



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## Rooted

### *Rooted in Prayer*

The CVM theme of “Rooted” from Ephesians 3:17-19, invites us to consider this word as a principle in many parts of our faith journey. These verses speak of being rooted and grounded in love. We also root ourselves in the grace given us through the work of Jesus Christ. We root ourselves in His Word. We are to be rooted in prayer. I like the image of roots both providing anchor and stability but also for being the lifeline for the nutrients needed for growth, maturity, and bearing fruit.

In one of my Bibles, this chapter has the heading, “Paul’s Stewardship.” Paul, in writing this letter to the church in Ephesus, gives us a great charge. We are to steward the amazing grace we have in Christ Jesus. Paul rejoices in the gift of this grace, as well as in the charge to share this gift of grace with others. Our journey of faith starts with receiving this grace. As we draw on this grace for our own strength and renewal, we can share it with others.

*“So that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints, what is the breadth and length, and height, and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses all knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God” -Ephesians 3:17-19.*

We accept Christ as our Lord and Savior and He dwells in our hearts through faith. In that relationship we are rooted and grounded in love. Our spiritual journey draws us deeper into Him and fills us with His love. We, in turn, are instruments of that love with others. Our desire to be rooted in that love also drives us to want to stay connected with God. It drives us to pray.

*“Be cheerful no matter what; pray all the time; thank God no matter what happens. This is the way God wants you who belong to Christ Jesus to live.” -1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (Message)*

No matter what! I think that means all the time, everywhere, with everyone! You’ve got to be kidding, you mean I am supposed to be cheerful all the time, everywhere, with everyone? And, am I really supposed to pray at all times? I am also charged to be thankful at all times! Yes, this is our journey, as we are rooted and grounded in love, we are cheerful, we pray, stay connected all the time with God through the work of His Spirit and we live a life of thanksgiving.

Paul would remind the church in Colossae, *“Devote yourself to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving.” -Colossians 4:2.* To be rooted in love, we must be devoted to prayer and keep an attitude of thanksgiving.

One of the first verses I had come to mind when we chose this theme of “Rooted” was Isaiah 37:31. Isaiah, the prophet of God speaks to King Hezekiah. *“Because you have prayed to me...” - vs 21.* God will deal with the enemy of Israel because of prayer, and then in vs 31 he says, *“The surviving remnant of the house of Judah will again take root downward and bear fruit upward.”* We are remnant people and we are charged to take root downward and bear fruit upward. A key

## Rooted

### *Rooted in Prayer*

element of this process is our purpose to pray. Prayer is so important for us to stay rooted in His love and kingdom purposes. It seems that our flesh seeks to drive us to take root elsewhere. We need prayer to stay connected with God. Consider some of these quotes on prayer:

"Our prayers may be awkward. Our attempts may be feeble. But since the power of prayer is in the one who hears it and not in the one who says it, our prayers do make a difference." -Max Lucado

"Prayer is not asking. Prayer is putting oneself in the hands of God, at His disposition, and listening to His voice in the depth of our hearts." -Mother Teresa

"Prayer makes a godly man, and puts within him the mind of Christ, the mind of humility, of self-surrender, of service, of pity, and of prayer. If we really pray, we will become more like God, or else we will quit praying." - E.M. Bounds

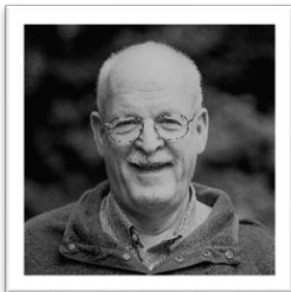
Think of your journey of faith. What are some of the joys and challenges you have lived through? Could it not be said of you, "Because you have prayed..." To be rooted in the love of Christ we must be men and women of prayer.

Reflect on these verses in prayer. **What steps of faith in your prayer life is He asking you to consider?**

*"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us."* -1 John 5:14

*"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* -Philippians 4:6-7

- Do you have someone to pray with, to encourage you to be rooted in prayer?
- Who do you have that prays faithfully for you?
- Do you keep them informed as to how they can be effective in that prayer?



*Kit is a 1978 graduate of Colorado State University. He served as a veterinarian in the US Air Force and in private practice in Panama City, FL before going with his wife Jan and daughters, Molly and Missy, to serve with CVM in Kenya from 1985-1990. Kit then returned to Seattle to serve in the CVM home office and has served as the Executive Director since 1993. He and Jan are the proud grandparents to seven grandchildren and are blessed to walk their calling out in the CVM family. Email:*

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## Rooted

### *Rooted in Transforming Love*

How much does your experience influence your beliefs?

I grew up in dry Eastern Colorado. Unless you lived near the river or an irrigation ditch, trees could be few and far between. My grandfather loved that part of Colorado for that reason. He grew up in Southern Illinois, all his free time as a child was spent digging stumps out of the fields that his dad was trying to establish for planting corn. He grew to dislike stumps and the trees that caused them so much that it was one of the reasons he said he loved SE Colorado, “you could see for miles and not see a single tree!”

Even though not many trees grew in our area they were desired in important places like shade for your house on the hot 100° summer days, or to provide a wind break to stop the snow from drifting over the roads and livestock. So as a young man my life was very different than my Grandad’s as I spent a lot of time planting and caring for trees trying to get them to grow in the environment that was not very receptive to them. As we transplanted trees to the area we always tried to get as big a root ball as we could manage. I was always told the more roots you had the better chances of the tree surviving. Are you starting to see how upbringing affects you? Grandad hated roots and I did everything I could to preserve and nourish them.

In 1995, I joined CVM and moved to Uganda with my beautiful wife and 3 children. About a year after being there, I was helping people to establish citrus trees in their yards for food. There was a local Ugandan who raised and grafted the trees that you could buy and transplant. I was excited to help with this project and went to pick up a load of trees. I selected some 3-4 foot tall trees and he pulled out his shovel, dug them up, shook the dirt off the roots, trimmed the roots back to 4-6 inches long then turned the tree over, pruned off some of the branches, and pulled all the leaves off. I was horrified. I had grown up trying to get as big a root ball as possible and he just did the opposite. He told me how to plant the trees and said they would be just fine. I was afraid they all would die, so I talked him into going with me to plant them. We got them all planted, and he told me how to water each tree with one 20-liter jerrycan each day for 3 weeks. I did just as he described, and soon little buds appeared on the stems and leaves started coming out. To my surprise all the trees lived. I was amazed, but realized the roots were given time to establish and then they started to put on new leaves that the tree could support. In the next year, we started to get oranges and grapefruit! My experiences changed my beliefs, I began to understand how important well-established roots were to support a healthy plant growth. Once the roots were established the tree flourished but being well rooted was critical to the tree having life and producing fruit.

Paul in Ephesians 3:17 uses the metaphor of being rooted and grounded in love to explain the mystery (3:3,4) that is part of God’s eternal purpose (3:11) and that surpasses knowledge (3:19). Wow, this sounds very important. That mystery was being revealed in the church in Ephesus that every person (Jew and Gentile) derives their origin or name from God. All people were separated from God or dead in their trespasses (2:1) and through Christ were adopted (1:5) or chosen by God, and through Him we are redeemed (1:7) or bought back to relationship with God, through the forgiveness of our sins that were paid for with the blood of Christ (1:7). This was God

## Rooted

### *Rooted in Transforming Love*

choosing to redeem His “own possession, to the praise of His glory” (1:14). That even though we were dead or separated in our trespasses God, through His love, has made us alive in Christ (2:4-5). This reuniting with God was not something we earned but was a free gift through faith that brings us back into fellowship with God (2:8-9).

How does this relate to being rooted and grounded in Christ’s love? Often as people we focus on our outward actions or appearance as a way to earn favor or acceptance with God. For the early Jews, they had grown up trying to fulfill the law in order to earn righteousness. For us today, we may try to earn favor through good actions or spiritual disciplines. But Paul stresses in Ephesians 3 that if Christ dwells in our heart through faith that our focus will be God’s love rather than our actions. By living in our spirit, Christ is the new source of our new life. Then we experience something so much greater, a love that comes from God and has no limits. Steve Walker, Canyon Hills Community Church Pastor explained God’s love in Ephesians 3:17-18 as:

- Wide enough to include all of us
- Long enough to last forever
- Deep enough to cover over my worst sins
- High enough to bring us all the way to heaven

The greatest transforming experience we can have in life is to experience the redeeming love of Christ and the power of His Spirit in us that reunites us with God. As we are grounded or rooted in His love through faith we are filled up with the fullness of God. We no longer focus on our actions and behavior but on His loving redemption. When Christ dwells in our heart our identity is based on what Christ did for us rather than what we do for ourselves. Then we are like a well rooted tree that begins to flourish, drawing on the richness of God to produce leaves and fruit. This experience can surpass all we understand and fill us with the fullness of God.

*Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever.” -Ephesians 3:20-21*

- Because God loves us what actions did He take to show His love in Ephesians 1?
- Based on the description of God’s love, is there anyone who could not experience it?
- How has your experience influenced your beliefs?
- Why does being rooted in love transform our actions and motivations?



*After getting saved in college God led Brad to New Zealand where he met his wonderful wife Angela. They returned to Colorado where Brad completed his DVM and Angela her RN. Brad has served with CVM as a Student Leader, Faculty Rep, Long-Term Staff, and now a Director of CVM International Programs. Brad and Angela have 8 Children and are actively involved in pre-marriage counseling and youth ministry. Email: [bfrye@cvm.org](mailto:bfrye@cvm.org)*

## Rooted

### *Where Are You Rooted?*

*Jesus said, "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. And as he was sowing,*

- 1. Some seed fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured it.*
- 2. Some fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly because the soil was shallow. But when the sun rose, the seedlings were scorched, and they withered because they had no root.*
- 3. Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the seedlings, and they yielded no crop.*
- 4. Still other seed fell on good soil, where it sprouted, grew up, and produced a crop—one bearing thirtyfold, another sixtyfold, and another a hundredfold.*

*They who have ears to hear, let them hear." - (Mark4:3-8)*

Dezesheesh, in the remote bush of southwestern Ethiopia, was an enclave of thieves and murderers. Even government soldiers didn't go there. Once they attempted to go in and arrest a murderer—but few came out alive. Not a safe place to visit!

But they cautiously allowed Sharon, our courageous nurse to begin health clinics there, and she always included Bible stories. Over time, God worked. A few people responded and wanted teaching. So, one Sunday, Vicki and I hiked into Dezesheesh. We sat with the few believers on a hillside in the cool morning, in the shade of an acacia tree, next to their mud-daubed, grass thatched granary on stilts, beside a somewhat rocky field of new-sprouted corn. They could see the parable right in front of them, and they had "ears to hear." Do we?

The seed is the Word of God. The soil is us. Where are you rooted?

**Unrooted:** Some people who hear the Word of God are like seed falling on a hard path; they don't receive it or absorb it-- and Satan comes and takes it away. These are people who say, "That Word is not for me, it's for someone else." Going into all the world is a good cause—for someone else. Selling all I have and giving to the poor and following Jesus? God isn't calling me to that. If they persecuted Jesus, they will persecute me? Nah—this is America; I have my rights. Or how about, "Ho-hum, heard that passage before; I don't want to meditate more on that one." How long will it be before you happen to read or hear "that one" again? Satan takes it away. Do we have ears to hear—today?

**Shallow rooted:** Some, like seed sown in rocky places, joyfully receive the Word, but wither away when trouble or persecution burns like the sun. They are more fans of Jesus, than fully committed followers. They like the idea of following Jesus more than actually doing it—as long as it fits their comfort, security, affluence, entertainment and convenience. Jesus left heaven, suffered horribly to death, even went to hell in our place, because "*God so loved the world...*"- John 3:16. Who or what shares the throne of our hearts, a throne that belongs only to Jesus?

**Competitively rooted:** Weeds compete for nutrients, leaving a garden unfruitful. Some people are like seed sown among weeds, which Jesus defined as life's worries, the deceitfulness of wealth, and desires for other things.

## Rooted

### *Where Are You Rooted?*

Weed genus 1. We stress and find ourselves so busy—even with good things, that we don't have time to ponder what's important, fruit bearing.

Weed genus 2. The more we own, the easier it is to trust our own resources and forget it all came from God. Instead we grip it tightly, afraid to lose it—as if should we lose it all, the Provider couldn't provide it again (See Job 42:12).

Weed genus 3. We pursue our passions, position, power (1 John 2:15-17), and boast of our academics, athleticism and affluence (Jeremiah 9:23-24).

These are weeds that suck away our time, energy, attention, worship, and resources: a heart divided, choked, unfruitful.

**Deeply rooted:** Some, like seed falling on good soil, hear and accept the Word and bear fruit. They chew on the Word, appropriate it. I have found that whatever part of the Word I ponder and study—often becomes my current favorite. God's Word is so rich, like cheesecake! And the Holy Spirit reveals more and more—even decades after first reading it. His Word endures forever; it doesn't get old. Instead, it just gets more and more precious. When you memorize it—you can ponder it whenever the Lord brings it to mind. Psalm 1 paints a picture of someone who delights in the Word, meditates on it day and night—and becomes like a tree with deep roots by streams of water, not worried about burning drought or competitive roots. Such a person bears fruit in season, because the roots have already grown deep ahead of time.

Where are you rooted?

- Who's the farmer? (Galatians 6:7-10)
- Are we only called to safe places? To comfort, security, affluence, entertainment and convenience? Is Luke 9:23-24 for others, or for you?
- Can you be just as much at peace without everything you own, as you are with it? If not, what are you really trusting besides God? (*"You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions."* -Hebrews 10:34)



*One month after vet school graduation (WSU, 1983), Fred Van Gorkom went to Ethiopia with Christian Veterinary Mission. While working in veterinary projects, famine relief, refugee and discipleship ministries he met Vicki, also a veterinarian (OSU, 1982). They married in 1986, returning immediately to remote southwestern Ethiopia where they raised their four children while doing community development and church planting. In 2008, they moved to CVM Seattle where they both serve to help mobilize others for the privilege of international missions. Email:*

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## *Rooted*

### *Growing to Love Like Jesus*

*“And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ.”*

– Ephesians 3:17-18

When we moved into our house, the previous owners had planted an ornamental grass in the flowerbed at the back of the house. That was fine until the grass decided to escape the flowerbed and invade the grass lawn. I decided to dig it out and didn’t realize the job that it was going to be. This grass had deep intertwined roots that sent out “runners” horizontally about 10 inches underground. You needed to follow the root and its branches along underground to the rhizome tip to know you were at the end of the root system. Even now about 4 years later, I still see bits of that grass poking up here and there.

Just as this grass has a tenacious root system, we need to be rooted in Jesus. There are many ways we can do that: being daily in the Word, prayer, worship, private and corporate Bible study. Our goal should be to become more and more like Jesus and the main trait that Jesus exemplified for us is LOVE. I don’t think we can totally “*grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ*” for us, but we are encouraged to “*love the Lord your God with all your heart (passion), with all your soul (will), with all your mind (intelligence), and will all your strength (effort).*” -Mark 12:30 NKJV

Sometimes, we get impatient and want this to growth to happen overnight. We must learn to practice patience. Another amazing root system is that of the oak tree and I am reminded of the oaks (also called terebinth) of Mamre in Genesis where Abraham lived. (Genesis 12:6, 13:18, 14:13, 18:1). Oak trees have a massive root system; an oak’s chief support, the taproot, grows vertically before branching out. These branches spread to occupy a space four to seven times the width of the tree’s crown and can represent a system that is hundreds of miles long. Root hairs, located on the smaller roots absorb water and minerals and can even share the root system of an adjacent oak. This amazing root system supports an oak tree that can live for hundreds of years and grow to be eighty feet tall and wide.



Although an oak can grow to be a massive tree, this growth doesn’t always occur at the same rate. We may also have seasons in life where we feel that we aren’t maturing as Christians. In “The Complete Green Letters”, Miles J Stanford reminds us that “God does not hurry in His development of our Christian life. He is working from and for eternity. Sometimes, we feel we are not making progress unless we are constantly forging ahead, but this will not continue if there is to be healthy growth and ultimate maturity. God Himself will modify the pace.” Moses was 40 years in the wilderness while God prepared him to lead the Israelites. Even Paul took 3 years after his first testimony. It is said, a theology student asked if there was a shorter course he could take and the college president replied, “Oh yes, but then it depends upon what you want to be. When God wants to make an oak, He takes a hundred years, but when He wants to make a squash, He takes six months.” A. H. Strong also points out that growth is not uniform in

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### *Growing to Love Like Jesus*

the tree or in the Christian. In some months there is rapid growth and then during the rest of the year there is solidification, without which the green timber would be useless.

Our main goal should be to grow to love like Jesus loves. We need to learn to live in grace and walk in love. Jesus loved everyone he met, even those that we would consider unlovable. He loved the uneducated fishermen, tax collectors, the blind, deaf and leprous, Pharisees, prostitutes, Samaritans, and children. He loved everyone. Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Jesus (John 21:15-17) and then told him to go feed and care for His sheep. Matthew 25: 34:40 tells us that when we give someone something to eat or drink, clothes to wear, care for the sick or visit those in prison we do it as if for Jesus.

As I'm writing this we are in a time of self-isolation and physical distancing due to Covid-19. Hopefully by the time you read this our lives will have returned much more to normal, but during this time there have been so many instances and stories of people helping others – volunteering to pick up groceries or prescriptions, calling/texting friends they haven't seen in a long time, having group meet-ups on Zoom, dropping off flowers on peoples' porches and even cheering on our essential workers with sidewalk art. I hope that as our life returns to normal, we don't lose this spirit of sharing the love of Jesus.

- **What are you doing to make sure you are rooted in Christ?**
- **Are you in a period of rapid or slow growth right now and how is God using this time for growth or solidification of your faith?**
- **Who is someone that needs love today and how can you share it?**



*Dr. Debbie Hoffele is an OVC 1988 graduate and she has been involved in small animal practice since graduation in Ontario and Nova Scotia. She is married to Dr. Stephen Cheung (Environment Ergonomist at Brock University) and mom to 2 teenage boys. She is involved in missions through the local church and has been on previous CVM trips to India, Mexico, and Honduras. Debbie has served with CVM as STM trip participant, STM trip leader, CVM Canada advisory board and now CVM Canada Executive Director. Email: [dhoffele@cvm.org](mailto:dhoffele@cvm.org)*

## Rooted

### *Guarded in Truth, Rooted and Built Up in Christ*

Our present world seems more than troubled! We are in a unique time in history marked by not only a global pandemic but also an infectious discord between governments, political parties, social classes, ethnic groups, and world views. Intolerance, even hatred for people with differences, appears viral. Our news, regardless from what political bent, seems to be short on truth and long on delusion for the sake of agendas and alternative realities. Even the belief that truth exists is challenged by the promotion of relativism. Yet without truth, it is difficult, if not impossible for people to make sound judgements. In the midst of everything, I hear Pilate's lament to Jesus "*What is truth?*" -John 18:38. Pilate's question is just as valid for today! How do we know Truth? Or Normal? Or does it Matter?

We know it matters! In veterinary school, the professors made sure we knew what normal was and the value of reproducible facts (truth). Our patients' lives depended on it. Jesus said that *the truth will set you free!* -John 8:32. Paul writes in Colossians 2:4, 8 how he "*struggled*" (labored) in praying, writing letters, etc. so that "*no one may deceive (Christians) by fine-sounding arguments*" or take them "*captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy.*" His hope was that Christians would grasp God's gift of knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, and be guarded in Truth! But how do we do that?

God's answer is summarized by three principles. Those principles, though found throughout Scripture, are laid out well here:

*"Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving."* -Colossians 2:6-7

#### Principle 1: Belonging

*"Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord,"* - We have been adopted as God's children through Christ. (John 1:12)

*"so walk in Him,"* - We have been apprenticed to Christ for our life's journey. (Matthew 11:28-30)

*"rooted & built up in Him"* - We have been secured in Christ enabling us to grow, flourish, and bear fruit. (John 12: 24)

Being guarded in the Truth is first and foremost knowing whose we are! It is answering "Jesus" to the following questions. Who has given us life, worth, value, identity and meaning? Who do we love above all else? Who loved us first? Who do we live for? Who do we obey? Who do we trust? Who only do we fear? To whom do we only belong? If we lack a vibrant relationship with Christ (God) we will be dysfunctional and open to being deceived. We will lack the wisdom, knowledge and understanding to embrace God's Will! We will lack God's power, called grace, to find victory in the battle between living righteously in the Spirit or living rebelliously in the flesh -Galatians 5:16-18.

#### Principle 2: Belief

*"established in the faith, just as you were taught"* – we have been taught in accordance with the truth in Christ to put off our old values and put on the new. (Ephesians 4:17-24)

Being guarded in the truth is embracing a new set of beliefs and values that flow from our new identity and relationship with God. We are taught by the Holy Spirit, the Bible, and one another. Our new values are radically redefined. We yearn to know God's definition for what good and right are. Our understanding of love is radically altered from the selfish to the selfless. We join God in prayer to understand His will instead of pushing our personal agenda. We desire for God to transform us into the very image of Christ no matter how stretching and challenging, and it will be stretching and

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### *Guarded in Truth, Rooted and Built Up in Christ*

challenging! To die to self is difficult! Our new beliefs and values are all for God's glory, above everything else.

#### Principle 3: Behavior/Attitude

*"Abounding in thanksgiving."* – we have been wonderfully saved and restored into God's family; our appropriate response is acting like Christ in deeds and attitude. (1 John 2:1-6)

Being guarded in the Truth is doing what God says, even if we do not agree or understand. Jesus said that in doing the will of God we will come to understand – not the other way around. (John 7:17-18). It is an attitude and application of loving God and loving our neighbors. It is doing things that honor and glorify our LORD. It is knowing that in obeying God; engaging in His laws, precepts, commands, statutes, etc., we will be blessed and guarded in the truth. (Psalms 119)

In conclusion: Truth matters! Living in the truth is a matter of life or death. It is hard to decipher through the world's *"fine sounding arguments"* and *"deceptive philosophy"* without truth. Knowledge, wisdom, and understanding are all based upon the application of God's truth. I believe that only in Christianity is the complete mystery of truth fully known. The pursuit of which is a journey of being rooted and built up in a love relationship with Christ who is exclusively the Way, Truth, and Life.

- What does it mean to you to be rooted and built up in Christ? Who is Jesus in your life?
- Jesus said that whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me (John 14:21). Would Jesus say that you love Him? Why or why not?
- Do you believe that God's Word in the Bible is universally the truth? If not, where do you find your standard of truth and how do you know it is truth?
- Paul worked diligently to be knowledgeable, wise, and discerning to overcome the deceptions of this world. What are you doing to be not deceived or deluded; guarded in the truth?
- Who in your life labored (through prayer, conversations, discipleship, writing, etc.) so that you would be a person of truth full of knowledge, wisdom, and understanding for Christ? Who are you laboring for?



*Drs. Monty & Shelley Mathis are WSU veterinary graduates ('86 & '88 respectively). They both came to Christ one year after graduating. WSU's CVF group played an important role in their coming to Jesus. After having their own practice for 10 years Monty & Shelley plus their daughter & son moved to the Himalayas with CVM. 15 years later they returned to the US where Monty serves with CVM in Member Care and Mission Mobilization and Shelley has returned to clinical medicine. Interested in long-term missions – drop Monty an email, he would also love to hear your answers to his questions above: [mmathis@cvm.org](mailto:mmathis@cvm.org)*



## Rooted

### *Waiting Well*

Waiting is hard. At no time has this been a more shared reality than during the nation-wide social distancing and stay-at-home orders. It put to test waiting to visit and embrace loved ones, waiting to enjoy social activities, waiting to travel, waiting for a vaccine, waiting to be restored to pre-pandemic normalcy! Truth is, we're all waiting for something.

What we wait for matters. Those of us who are rooted in Christ strive to restore God's presence on Earth while waiting for His fulfillment of that promise. It naturally implies doing something while we wait - not idly waiting around. Often when we desire something so much and focus on bringing about an outcome that we have waited for, our efforts outweigh our desire for the presence of God. So how we wait becomes important. How we wait matters because God blesses those who wait well.

*Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you;  
therefore he will rise up to show you compassion.  
For the LORD is a God of justice.  
Blessed are all who wait for him! -Isaiah 30:18*

How do we wait well? The parable of the persistent widow in Luke 18: 1-8 teaches us to pray always and to not lose heart.

*Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.' For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'"*

*And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"*

While in the wait, there exists an opportunity to deepen your rootedness in Christ by practicing a spiritual discipline of prayer. Incorporating it into your daily life until it becomes a habit. Inviting Him into your day-to-day in order to draw nearer to Him. A prayer could be as quick and simple as 'Lord, send your Holy Spirit to guide me through this situation.' It could also be as centered and structured as following these steps:

- Become aware of God's presence
- Think back on the day with gratitude
- Review the events of the day – what brought joy? What brought pain?
- What is my response to God in these situations?
- Look ahead toward tomorrow

## Rooted

### *Waiting Well*

Currently, one of my favorite prayers is “Lord, help me know you through your Word and walk with your Holy Spirit. Let me delight in you and your heart (Psalms 119:104a, 105; Galatians 5:25; Psalms 37:4). I trust You will help me walk in Your will (Psalms 23:2-3; Psalms 143:10; Prov 21:1). Reveal what’s honestly in my heart so you can meet me there and change what you need (Luke 22:42; Psalms 139:23-24). Grant me wisdom, discernment, courage, faith and everything I need for the works you’ve prepared (2 Peter 1:3; Ephesians 2:10; James 1:5-6). I live by the words of your mouth. Keep me from conforming to this world. Transform me. Renew my mind (Romans 12:1-2; John 4:34). Do you have a go-to prayer that serves to deepen your roots in Christ?

Pray: obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit, even when they seem inconvenient or insignificant. Call a friend, pause in your work or your studies to pray and read the Word. Fast and pray for your longings. Never underestimate God’s desire to use you for His Kingdom purposes, no matter your age, marital status or career path. Everybody has value. When we wait well, we are used for God’s kingdom purposes and blessed by experiencing Jesus. And in the waiting, God is with us and only he can satisfy. Those who aren’t rooted will miss it.

- What is your heart’s current longing?
- What are you doing while waiting for this longing to come about?
- How do you wait well?
  - For further study on waiting, Genesis 21-22 (Abraham), 1 Samuel (David), the book of Job, the book of Daniel, Luke 2 (Anna & Simeon)
- Will you share your favorite prayer with us? [cvm.org/app/prayer-wall/](http://cvm.org/app/prayer-wall/)



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