

# UNCERTAIN GROUND

## THE LESSON: COLOSSIANS 2

In the year 1662, a then-new section was added to the Prayer Book called “Forms of Prayer to be Used at Sea”. These prayers were specifically written with the dangers and struggles of sailors in mind. But you don’t have to be a sailor to appreciate this collection of prayers, because you don’t have to be a sailor to understand the temptation to give up when things get hard, or the loneliness of being away from home, or the danger of facing down “enemies”. Throughout our lives there are seasons of transition, uncertainty and crisis; times of loneliness and longing. In all of these moments, wherever we are, we can turn to God, the one who will “never leave us nor forsake us” (Hebrews 13:5).

When life is at its most turbulent, it is then that we need to have roots that go deep. How do we get these “deep roots”? We spend time each day with God in prayer and in his Word, and we keep as close as possible to other faithful believers who can offer us encouragement and accountability.

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While the Apostle Paul was in prison he wrote several letters to churches which we now call “the prison epistles”. These letters are filled not with concern for himself, but for the churches, that even in his absence the believers would be “rooted”, “built up”, and “established”.

## AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER](http://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER).)

At the end of the Catechesis in the Prayer Book is a “Supplementary Instruction”. And at the end of the “Supplementary Instruction” we find the following words (below). *It should be noted that the words “he” and “him” are meant to refer to everyone, including the “shes” and the “hers”.*

*Every Christian man or woman should from time to time frame for himself a RULE OF LIFE in accordance with the precepts of the Gospel and the faith and order of the Church; wherein he may consider the following:*

*The regularity of his attendance at public worship and especially at the holy Communion.*

*The practice of private prayer, Bible-reading, and self-discipline.*

*Bringing the teaching and example of Christ into his everyday life.*

*The boldness of his spoken witness to his faith in Christ.*

*His personal service to the Church and the community.*

*The offering of money according to his means for the support of the work of the Church at home and overseas. (BCP PAGE 555)*

Take some time this week to review this list, and seek God’s guidance in establishing (or re-establishing) for yourself a “rule of life”.

- AND/OR -

Leaving home for the first time, perhaps for post-secondary studies, can often be a time of “uncertain ground”. The following prayer comes from the “Family Prayer” section of the Prayer Book and is simply called “For One Leaving Home”. Take some time to pray with the words of the prayer, adding aloud the names of anyone known to you for whom you’d especially like to pray:

*O God, the refuge and strength of all who put their trust in thee: Unto thy gracious care and keeping we commit thy servants \_\_\_\_, now going forth from us. Give them courage, prudence, and self-control; raise up for them good friends; preserve them from loneliness; keep them, we beseech thee, under the protection of thy good providence, and make them have a perpetual fear and love of thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP PAGE 733)*

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## COLOSSIANS 2: **ROOTED. BUILT UP. ESTABLISHED.**

<sup>1</sup>For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, <sup>2</sup>that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, <sup>3</sup>in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. <sup>4</sup>I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. <sup>5</sup>For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

<sup>6</sup>Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, <sup>7</sup>rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

<sup>8</sup>See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. <sup>9</sup>For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, <sup>10</sup>and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. <sup>11</sup>In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, <sup>12</sup>having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup>And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup>by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup>He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.