

# COLOSSIANS

## Finding Stability



A Devotional Bible Study  
by Sue LeBoutillier

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## ❧ *Finding Stability — in a Changing World* ❧ *The Book of Colossians*

Dear Friend,

Welcome, as you join us on our exploration of a simple, ancient letter written by the Apostle Paul to a small group of people we now call **the Colossians**. In the day this was written, their world was changing rapidly — and today, we're experiencing the same thing — a rapidly changing world! What a comfort to be reminded that God does not change — not one single bit — He is steadfast, immutable, unchanging, **stable!**

I titled this study "**Finding Stability**" because there is true spiritual, emotional, and intellectual stability to be found by knowing Jesus and thinking accurately about who He is, what He has done, and what that means for ME!

Paul described this blessing as *...stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel that you heard...* (Colossians 1:23)

His desire was that, as Christians focused on Jesus, they would be *...strengthened with all power...for all endurance and patience with joy.* (Colossians 1:11)

The key words in the latter verse: *strengthen, power, and endurance*, express the by-products of *finding stability*. And one of the best avenues toward realizing these traits in our lives is a regular habit of hearing and studying the gospel message in order to find ourselves *filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding* (Colossians 1:9).

As you study through Colossians, I pray that each week's passage will help you *find stability*, help *strengthen your faith*, and give you great *spiritual wisdom and understanding!*

This will be a verse-by-verse Bible study in a four-day-a-week format. As a bonus, over the course of these eight weeks, you'll write out the entire **book of Colossians** in your own hand. So, choose a notebook or pretty journal for writing your verses each day.

When you begin to write, you may want to double space in order to give yourself some extra room for the suggested markings that will be incorporated in this study guide. Colored pencils are suggested, so you might want to grab some of them as well.

Each week's lesson in this study guide is intended to be completed independently **before** you watch or listen to the teaching (except Week One — Introduction). If you're sharing this study with a friend or small group the ideal method would be to...

- 1) study the week's suggested Scriptures on your own (including writing in your journal), then
- 2) listen to the teaching (privately or in your group), then
- 3) discuss the week's lesson and pray together about applying the passages to your life.

May the Lord richly bless you as you study His Word!

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To watch the video teachings for this Bible Study go to:

[ccontario.com/womens-studies](http://ccontario.com/womens-studies)

or

[YouTube.com/calvarychapelontario](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvYchapelontario)

The best translation of the Bible to use is the one you understand best and using more than one translation can be a useful aid in your study! This study guide was created using the ESV (English Standard Version).



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## Week One — Introduction

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The first step in any Bible Study is gathering information in order to gain a *big picture* perspective of the book — that’s what our **Week One Introduction** is all about — background, history, and the purpose of the book of Colossians.

The **Introduction** is intended to be the first thing you do — either by attending our live **Women of the Word Bible Study**, or by watching or listening to the **Week One Introduction** via our website:

[www.ccontario.com/wow/colossians](http://www.ccontario.com/wow/colossians)  
Week One—Introduction

### Notes from Teaching — Week One

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Here are a few questions for you to complete during this *Introduction*, along with a page for your own notes on the right:

Colossians 1:23 “\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_,  
*not shifting from the hope of the gospel.*”

Definition of **Stability**: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

The Christians in Colossae had been evangelized by \_\_\_\_\_.

Paul wrote this letter while he was a prisoner in \_\_\_\_\_.

The main problem for the Colossians was that there were

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ being introduced

and mixed into the thinking of the \_\_\_\_\_ that was

causing instability.



## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. In **v.1**, Paul said he was *called to be an Apostle — by the will of God*. Share with your discussion group one thing that *you are called to 'be' or to 'do' — by the will of God*.
2. Read **1 Thessalonians 5:18** and **1 Peter 2:15**. Discuss how these verses take us deeper than merely thinking about what *'we do,'* and speak to how our character *'is to be'* — by the will of God.
3. One popular notion that most people absorb from our culture is the idea that *'nothing is more important than my happiness.'* How can this idea create instability in a person's life?
4. Most people who trust Jesus as their Savior, and get to know Him through His Word, begin to understand that their purpose in life goes beyond that which makes them happy. How can this create stability in a person's life?
5. Are there any other notions that we absorb from today's culture that war against the basic truth of the gospel? Explain.

And the world is passing away along with its desires,  
but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

1 John 2:17

## Map of the Area Surrounding Colossae



### Tips for a Successful Bible Study

**Remember to Pray** — I want to encourage you to always begin your time in the word by yielding your heart to the Lord in prayer. Think of that phrase, *yielding*, just like the traffic sign. You give preference to the other driver to *lead the way*. That's what we want the Holy Spirit to do in our lives as we investigate His Word — *lead the way*!

**Read the Whole Book** — Once you've gathered your supplies (Bible, notebook and Study Guide); and once you've listened to the Introduction, it would be fantastic if you could take a few minutes to simply read the entire book of **Colossians** before you begin Week Two in this Study Guide. Fortunately, Colossians is only 95 verses long and you can easily read all four chapters in about 15 minutes.

May you be blessed in your study!

*Sue*

## Week Two — Colossians 1:1-14

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It's time to begin our verse-by-verse study of Colossians. The heading for each week (*above*) will indicate the entire passage to be studied during that week. It would be a good approach to begin each day by reading the entire *weekly passage*, and then, as you write your daily verses in your journal, concentrate on the words you are actually writing for each day.

You may or may not keep this little study booklet — but chances are, after investing your time in writing all ninety-five verses by hand, you'll keep your journal or notebook for a long time to come and treasure it!

Let's Begin...

### *Day 1:*

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✎ **READ** and **WRITE Colossians 1:1-2** in your journal.

- ☐ With a purple pencil, underline '*in Christ*'.

The first two verses contain the *greeting* of this letter. In our modern letters we customarily list who the letter is written *to* at the top and who the letter is written *from* at the bottom. But I think there is something quite satisfying in getting it all out in the open at the beginning.

- To whom was this letter written?
  
  
- From whom was this letter sent?

If you have any sort of Roman Catholic background, your perspective of the word *saints* may be quite different than what Paul actually meant in **v.2**. Even if you do a quick online dictionary search for the word *saint*, you will still probably not run into the definition that Paul meant.



Since we want to let Scripture interpret Scripture, let's find a definition of who a *saint* is by reading other passages.

Read **Romans 1:7** and **1 Corinthians 1:2**.

- With those passages in mind, write your own definition of *saint*:

- There are two five-letter words that the Apostle Paul often began (and sometimes ended) his letters with. These words provide a foundation for all of the possibilities that our relationship with the Lord can build upon. What are these two words in **v.2**?

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

## *Day 2:*

 **READ** and **WRITE Colossians 1:3-6** in your journal.

- With a purple pencil, underline '*in Christ*', '*in the word of the truth*', and '*in truth*'.
- With a green pencil, circle '*faith*', '*love*', and '*hope*'.

***Faith, Love and Hope:*** How would you like to receive a letter from someone telling you how thankful they are for you? How grateful they are that you are in the family of God? How they are constantly praying for you? WOW! That would make me feel pretty valued and loved. Especially if they hadn't even met me!

That is what I hear in Paul's heart as he began to correspond with this church body that he had never personally met.

- From **v.4**, what were two things that Paul heard about the people in this church?
  
- What was the reason they possessed those two virtues (**v.5**)?

Having *faith in Jesus Christ* is an obvious requirement and also a privilege of being part of the body of Christ. But Paul also heard about their *love for the saints*.

- Do you think loving others is an automatic part of faith in Christ?

We always thank  
God, the Father  
of our Lord Jesus,  
Christ when we  
pray for you.

Colossians 1:3

Some people claim to *love God*, but they neglect to *love people* in any noticeable way. Read **John 13:34-35** and **Hebrews 6:10**.

- What is the expectation related to loving the saints?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What is our standard or example related to loving the saints?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What does God promise us when we love the saints?

Paul said the gospel was *bearing fruit and increasing (v.6)*. He already mentioned *faith, hope, and love* as fruit, but we can and should expect other positive signs of the gospel in our lives as well.

Read these passages and note other positive changes people may experience when they understand and embrace the gospel:

- Psalm 42:2 —
- Acts 2:42 —
- 1 Thessalonians 1:9 —

### Day 3: \_\_\_\_\_

✞ READ and WRITE Colossians 1:7-10 in your journal.

- With a purple pencil, underline '*in the Spirit*' and '*in the knowledge of God*'.
- With a green pencil, circle '*love*'.
- With a green pencil, draw a box around '*knowledge of his will*', '*spiritual wisdom*', '*understanding*', '*bearing fruit*', and '*knowledge of God*'.

**The Gospel:** Yesterday we read that the *gospel*, or the *good news* of salvation through Jesus Christ, was *increasing in the whole world* and *bearing fruit* in the lives of believers (v.6).

- Who was credited with sharing the gospel of Jesus with the Colossians? (v.7)
- What fond label did this earn him from the Apostle Paul? (v.7)
- What report did he give Paul of the Colossian believers? (v.8)

Who wouldn't like to be described as a *faithful minister*? That phrase inspires me. It challenges me to make it a spiritual goal to also be called a *faithful minister*.

- What opportunities has God placed in your life for you to be a faithful minister?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Is there an area that you have neglected or not fully recognized as an opportunity? What practical changes are needed for you to be termed *faithful*?

**Effective Prayer:** Paul's example of praying for others is inspirational. List some of the concepts for effective prayer you find in **v.9-10** that you can incorporate while you pray specifically for people in your life:

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Who is it that you're praying these things over?

This reminds us that we don't need to ask, "*how may I be praying for you?*" We have a universal model of praying for anyone at anytime and we can help bring stability into other's lives by praying for them.

## Day 4: \_\_\_\_\_

☞ READ and WRITE Colossians 1:11-14 in your journal.

- With a purple pencil, underline *'in the inheritance'*.
- With a green pencil, circle *'power'*, *'endurance'*, *'patience'*, and *'joy'*.
- With a blue pencil, circle *'qualified'*, *'delivered'*, and *'transferred'*.

Take a look at the phrases you underlined in purple this week. They all begin with *'in'* which is a preposition — prepositions show *position*. These phrases describe a *position* or a *relationship* that we can enjoy with the Lord as born-again believers.

Now, list those three words that you circled in blue:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Those words describe what Jesus has accomplished for us in order to possess that relationship.

And finally, take a look at the words circled in green! These are the *benefits* made possible for all believers because Jesus ***"transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son."***

- Which of those benefits are you most thankful for and why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Which of those benefits do you feel in the most need of right now and why?

When we read phrases like ***fully pleasing to him*** and ***bearing fruit in every good work***; we might feel a bit of stress creep over us, or worry that we just can't live up to a standard of Christian character that is expected. That's why **verse 11** begins with such words of assurance: ***...being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might!***

According to **v.11**...

- What are we strengthened with?
- Who does this belong to?
- What are the benefits of God's power working in us?

Read **Ephesians 1:18-20**. According to that passage,

- Who is the *power* for?
- What is the *power* like?

***Giving thanks:*** Paul was giving thanks and also praying that *they* would give thanks — praying they would have hearts of thanksgiving.

**Romans 4:20** tells us [*Abraham*] ***grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God.*** Jot down notes about how you would tell someone what God has done for you that you could not have accomplished yourself, thus giving glory to God and *growing strong* in your faith.

I therefore, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.

Ephesians 4:1-2

## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Paul had heard of *the love* the Colossians had *for all the saints* (v.4). What are some ways that our love for each other could be noticed and reported to someone who didn't know us? In other words—what does love look like in the Body of Christ?
2. If someone had been watching you for the last 30 days, in what ways might they have noticed your *love for the saints*?
3. How does the content of Paul's prayers for the saints (v.9-12) modify how you pray for others in your life?
4. Paul prayed that the believers would be *filled with the knowledge of his will*. Read **Hebrews 5:13-14** and discuss how a Christian can cooperate with this filling.
5. How would you explain to someone the phrase *walk in a manner worthy of the Lord*?
6. Explain how the benefits described in this week's passage (*spiritual wisdom, understanding, endurance, patience*) produce stability in a person's life.





## Notes from Teaching — Week Two

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## Week Three — Colossians 1:15-23

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### Day 1:

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 READ and WRITE Colossians 1:15-17 in your journal.

- With a purple pencil, underline 'He is' (2x).
- With a red pencil, draw a box around 'all things' (4x).

Absolutely everything about Christianity hinges on who Jesus is! But Christianity doesn't stop there — understanding who *I am* and what Jesus has done for me is crucial!

Many people have ideas and thoughts about who Jesus is — they may be right, or they may be wrong. This week we'll see how the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to describe Jesus to the Colossians and to us.

**Who HE is:** Let's list what we discovered about Jesus from this chapter. Begin with the descriptions about Jesus from v.15-17.

- v.15: He is \_\_\_\_\_
- v.15: He is \_\_\_\_\_
- v.17: He is \_\_\_\_\_

Let's investigate that first description — *image of the invisible God*. God cannot be *seen* (John 1:18, Romans 1:20), but He wants a relationship with people like you and me who most easily understand things that we *do see*. This creates a difficulty.

Read John 14:7-11 and Hebrews 1:3.

- Write a short synopsis of God's solution to the above problem.

Now consider the second description — *firstborn over all creation*. We tend to think of *firstborn* as the first in a series of similar beings. Maybe you are the *firstborn* in your family, or you married one, or you gave birth to one. But in this case Paul isn't suggesting Jesus was born *first*, he was declaring Him to be *first in rank or highest in authority*. You may have a *firstborn* who *thinks* they are the *highest in authority* in your family, or *you* may actually think you are highest in authority. So, it's good for us to ponder the fact that Jesus actually IS!

In this text, Paul moved right on to describe Jesus as the *creator*. He is *highest in authority* and also has the *authority* to create and sustain.

**All Things:** What are, and where are, all things that were created through Jesus that we find listed in **v.16**:

- In \_\_\_\_\_ and on \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_
- whether \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_  
or \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

Is there anything you can think of that exists outside of this list?

Three prepositions are used to elaborate *how* and *why all things* were created in **v.16**. List them:

\_\_\_\_\_ him      \_\_\_\_\_ him      \_\_\_\_\_ him

- With a purple pencil, underline those things in your journal.

This is a simple but profound Biblical truth. Our faith is stabilized by allowing this understanding to saturate our minds and our decisions. For example, "*since Jesus created me for his pleasure and his purpose, how should I handle xyz situation?*"

- Consider a situation or a decision you're facing. How might this truth help you with an answer?

## Day 2:

 READ and WRITE Colossians 1:18-20 in your journal.

- With a purple pencil, underline 'He is' (2x), 'in Him', 'through Him' and 'making peace'.
- With a blue pencil, circle 'reconcile'.
- With a red pencil, draw a box around the phrase 'all things'.

**Who HE is:** List two more things that you encountered in today's verses that describe Jesus.

- v.18: He is \_\_\_\_\_
- v.18: He is \_\_\_\_\_

The first description in today's verses is — *head of the body*. What is your opinion about the church? Do you love it? Does it frustrate you? Does it make complete sense that Jesus is the *head*, or do you wish He could be disassociated with the organization?

The phrase *body of Christ* may sound familiar, even common, to most Christians. But today's passage provides an opportunity to set aside familiarity and really consider in a fresh way the implications of *the body* and *the head of the body*.

Read **Ephesians 5:22-32** — as you do, try not to focus on the parallels to marriage, but instead, concentrate on the descriptions of Jesus as *the head* of the body.

- What has Jesus *already done* for His Body:
- What does He do on an *ongoing basis*?
- What should be our response?

The second description seems similar to yesterday's passage, with a slight difference — *the beginning, the firstborn from the dead*.

Something new happened when Jesus rose from the dead on that first resurrection morning — it was a new beginning! In this case, He *was* the *firstborn*! He rose from the dead and paved the way for multitudes who put their faith in Him to experience that same escape from permanent death.

Read **1 Corinthians 15:20-23**.

- What does this passage tell us about why we all die?
  
- What does this passage tell us about how we can be made alive?

Your answers above form a perfect segue to **v.20** in today's text. Complete the important missing words:

*and through him to \_\_\_\_\_ to himself all things  
... making \_\_\_\_\_ by the blood of the cross.*

I don't know anyone who loves to live in hostility or agitation, do you? Humans generally crave peace, yet often try to achieve spiritual peace by almost any other avenue than through Jesus.

- What are some popular misplaced attempts people use to *be at peace* (mentally, emotionally or spiritually)?

In this letter, Paul reminded us that absolutely *everything* hinges on Jesus — even the ability to *make peace* with God.

**We don't make our own peace with God,  
Jesus made peace for us through His work on the cross.**

## Day 3:

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 **READ** and **WRITE** Colossians 1:21-22 in your journal.

- With a pink pencil, put a box around 'and you' (v.21).  
This is a contrast to your previously highlighted phrases 'He is'.
- With a blue pencil, circle 'reconciled'.

Until now, our study has been about who **Jesus is**. Today we have the unpleasant task of looking at who **I am**.

- From v.21, list the things that characterize who **I am**:

Have you ever caught your reflection in a store window, a rear view mirror, or worse, looked at your phone camera and it was looking back at you? You were momentarily horrified! “*Seriously—is this what I look like? Do I have that many chins? Do I always scowl that much?*”

We usually imagine that we look a little better than we actually do. In the same way, this verse holds a sober and accurate view of reality — what we really look like:

Read **Ephesians 2:1-3**.

- What additional characteristics do you find?

Read **Romans 6:17**.

- What was our former condition?

The phrase *slaves of sin* reminds us of the nation of Israel while in slavery in Egypt. It's a parallel to our own condition before Jesus entered our lives and saved us from destruction. We had no ability to free ourselves, and we were helpless without a deliverer to *transfer* us to another reality.

**Good News:** It's so important to fully understand the bad news in order to fully appreciate the good news. So, with our hostile, slavery-inspired reflection in view — let's remind ourselves that Jesus *delivered us* (v.13), *transferred us* (v.13), *redeemed us* (v.14), *forgave us* (v.14), *reconciled us* (v.20, 22); in order to present us to God with what type of new appearances listed in v.22?

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With a green pencil, put a heart over these words in your journal.

Once Israel was *transferred* out of Egypt, they were described as God's *holy people*. Once that was accomplished for you, the same word is used to describe you — *holy*! Not because of your effort, but because of Jesus!

Reflect for a moment on what Jesus has done for you — transferring you from a state of *alienation* — to *reconciliation*! Use these verses as a basis for a prayer of thanks. Remember, ***Abraham grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God. We will too!***

## Day 4: \_\_\_\_\_

 **READ** and **WRITE** Colossians 1:23 in your journal.

With a pink pencil, put a box around the phrase '*continue in the faith*'.

**Continuing in the Faith:** Because Jesus *made peace by the blood of his cross* (v.20), and because I accepted that gift and became one of his children, my appearance before God has changed. Now I'm described as *holy, blameless, and above reproach*.

But today's verse begins with a word that could be troublesome — *if!* Misunderstanding that word could point you in the wrong direction. You could begin to think that your new life in Christ is somehow dependent on your ability to be *stable* and *steadfast*.

So let's lean on other Scriptures to help us make sure we understand.

Read **Ephesians 2:8-9** and fill in the missing words:

*By \_\_\_\_\_ you have been saved, through \_\_\_\_\_  
... not a result of \_\_\_\_\_ it is the \_\_\_\_\_ of God.*

You got into the kingdom through *faith*, and you *continue through faith*. You didn't get in by works, so you can't continue by works.

The key to understanding this verse can be found by asking the question, 'on what was their hope?' Fill in the missing words from **v.23**

*...not shifting from the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_.*

Paul was equipping these saints to **hold firm** to the gospel of Jesus, the gospel of grace, the gospel of faith. It IS a requirement for me to continue to believe that Jesus has paid the penalty for my sins. If I deny that truth, what is left? There is no other gospel!

List the three words in this verse Paul used to describe holding fast. Look up a dictionary definition for each.

S \_\_\_\_\_:

S \_\_\_\_\_:

not S \_\_\_\_\_:

- With a pink pencil, circle these words in your journal.

This is the task set before us —  
accept God's gracious gift and continue in that faith!



## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. The Colossians believed in Jesus, but encountered influence from outside sources that attacked or twisted their core beliefs. Which of the truths in today's lesson do you feel is challenged the most in our culture or in your circle of influence? Explain!
2. Some of the opinions about Jesus, in the Colossian's day, were off base — claiming Him to be an angel-type being, or a subordinate god, or merely a divine *influence* from God. Discuss why it is so important to accurately understand who Jesus REALLY is?
3. Share some implications of Jesus being the *head of the body* that you realized in this week's lesson.
4. Some may read v.23 "*if indeed you continue in the faith,*" to mean '*if indeed you stop sinning and do all Christian things properly!*' How would you explain the truth of that verse to someone?
5. How can "*not shifting from the hope of the gospel*" (v.23) actually bring stability into a person's life?





## Week Four — Colossians 1:24—2:7

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### Day 1:

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 READ and WRITE Colossians 1:24-26 in your journal.

- ☐ With a purple pencil, underline *'His body'*, *'the church'*, *'mystery'*, and *'His saints'*.

**Becoming a Minister:** Last week we explored the preeminence of Jesus Christ, and along the way, we caught a glimpse of our own depravity. We were reminded of Christ's relationship, love, and nurturing toward His own Body — the Church. (The words that you underlined in purple all relate to the church.)

Now we'll note the ministry of the Apostle Paul to that same Body:

- How did he describe himself in **v.23** and **v.25**?
- Paul's gift was given by God for whose benefit in **v.25**?
- How did he describe his purpose in **v.25**?
- What word did Paul use to describe the church and the ministry of the gospel in **v.26**?

The believers reading this letter did not personally know Paul. They had heard about Jesus from his spiritual offspring — Epaphras. But now they could hear Paul's passion for the saints as he described his calling to spread the gospel. I would guess they were inspired by him.

- Do you surround yourself with people who inspire you?
- In what ways do you think you may be an inspiration to others?

- In what specific ways might you consider yourself a '*minister of the gospel*' in the sphere God has placed you?

**Rejoice in Sufferings:** Read **v.24** again. If we're not careful, it can be another misunderstood verse. We know it's NOT saying that Paul is somehow finishing what Jesus left unfinished. That wouldn't agree with the rest of Scripture. On the cross, Jesus said, "***It is finished!***"

- Paul was suffering with what personal attitude?
- He was suffering for whose sake?
- To whose afflictions was he likening his sufferings?

Read **John 15:18-21**.

- How do you think Paul's life was a fulfillment of what Jesus said in this passage?

Is there a place in your life to suffer, in identification with Christ's afflictions, for the sake of His body the church? We're not called to be Apostles like Paul, but we are called to be *servants of Jesus*.

Meditate on this — ask the Lord to show you His plan for being *like Him* in His sufferings.

For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake.

Philippians 1:29

## Day 2:

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🔗 READ and WRITE Colossians 1:27-29 in your journal.

- With a purple pencil, underline 'mystery' and 'in Christ'. Circle 'Him' at the beginning of v.28.
- With a pink pencil, circle 'Christ in you, the hope of glory'.

**Gotta Love a Mystery:** The phrases underlined in purple all represent concepts that were unknown in former times — they were hidden — they were a mystery.

Consider God's covenant with Abraham — the above phrases had no presence in that first covenant — but they have everything to do with the NEW covenant, which can be summarized by the last seven words in v.27. Write it out here:

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Jesus lives **IN ME!**

This is what gives me stability for today and hope for tomorrow!

**It's All About Him:** We circled the first word in v.28 — **HIM**. It would be inappropriate to replace "Him we proclaim" with anything else like "this we proclaim" because our faith rests on a PERSON, not an idea!

**Everyone Mature in Christ:** Paul's desire was to develop *mature* followers of Christ. He wasn't interested in merely hearing *professions* of faith, but in forming *grown-ups* in the faith.

List three things that come to mind that enable a believer to grow from a child-in-Christ to a grown-up-in-Christ.

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Were the words *warning* or *teaching* included in your bullet points? They were included in Paul's sentence (**v.28**).

- What benefit do you think *warning* and *teaching* produce in an effort to make mature followers of Christ?

**His Energy:** Take note of the effort-related words in **v.29**:

♦toil ♦struggling ♦energy ♦powerfully ♦works

As we consider the *effort* required to make something *stable* in the natural world around us, we shouldn't be surprised to also find *effort* required for spiritual stability. In Paul's life, ministry meant persecution, pain, and prison. In our lives, these words remind us that:

- ...there is **toil** and **struggle** in the life of a Christian.
- ...because we have Christ in us, we can rely on the *energy* offered by the Holy Spirit rather than merely our own *energy*.
- ...He will **work powerfully** in us.

Paul was toiling to proclaim Christ and make mature believers.

- What is YOUR calling—what area has God called you to toil in right now?

*Ask God to meet the needs of your mission  
with HIS power and energy through the  
work of the Holy Spirit in your life.*

## Day 3:

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✞ READ and WRITE Colossians 2:1-5 in your journal.

- ❑ With a pink pencil, underline the phrases: ‘*hearts may be encouraged*’, ‘*knit together in love*’, ‘*full assurance of understanding*’, and ‘*firmness of your faith*’.
- ❑ With a green pencil, circle ‘*wisdom*’ and ‘*knowledge*’.

**It Takes Work:** Remember those effort-related words from the end of chapter one? Paul said, [because of the gospel of Christ] “*I toil, struggling with all his energy.*” Chapter two picks up the same theme and goes on to share the purpose of this effort.

- What did Paul want his readers to know in v.1?

Remember, he had never met these people, so apart from writing this letter, how do you think he may have been *toiling*?

Has the Lord nudged your heart to labor in prayer for someone? Do you find that you need endurance to toil in this way?

These words encourage me that it’s okay when prayer feels like work! Prayer sometimes requires toil and endurance — but I need to remember that I’m laboring with the *strength* that God supplies.

**Full Assurance and Firm Faith:** I appreciate that Paul made his mission clear. His goals were the phrases that you underlined in pink.

We often think that *sin* is our greatest enemy, but *doubt* leading to unbelief can be tragic. Don’t get me wrong, sin causes a rift between us and God, and it needs to be dealt with. But the slow creep of doubt, with it’s potential to give birth to unbelief, is something all Christians need to be strengthened to resist.

Who are the people in your world that you want to see fortified against unbelief and strengthened in understanding and knowledge?



Paul had been laboring in prayer AND now in communication so that the believers would be strong in their understanding of Jesus Christ, whom he called God's \_\_\_\_\_ . (v.2)

Jesus isn't really a *mystery* to US, but Paul wanted them to know that it's IN CHRIST where a believer finds things that are hidden from the world, namely (v.3) **ALL the treasures of:**

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Read these Scriptures and comment regarding further insights on wisdom and knowledge:

Proverbs 1:7 —

Ephesians 4:17-18 —

2 Peter 1:3-4 —

I pray that we will all be...***steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord***... so that our spiritual condition might be described with the words that Paul used in v.5...

***In good order and firmness of your faith in Christ!***

***Day 4:*** \_\_\_\_\_

✎ READ and WRITE Colossians 2:6-7 in your journal.

- With a purple pencil, underline the phrase 'in Him' (2x).
- With a pink pencil, circle the phrases '*walk in him*', '*rooted and built up in him*', '*established in the faith*' and '*abounding in thanksgiving*'.

The Colossians were Christians — they had ***received Christ the Lord***. Being *in Christ* had created an initial change in their lives and an opportunity for more change, more growth.

You circled four phrases in pink — the middle two phrases seem to describe that initial change — while the first and last seem to be directives for growth.

- From **v.7**, list those two phrases that describe how our spiritual lives get off to a good start once we are *in Christ*:
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
- From **v.6-7** list the two phrases that give a directive on how we should continue the good start that Christ has given us:
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_

You've probably noticed vegetables that grow at different rates due to soil, sun, or water (or at least you can imagine this to be true). Perhaps our spiritual lives aren't so different, having been rooted in the same way, we then determine the rate at which we *walk in Him*.

- What does it mean in practical terms to **walk in Christ**?

**Abounding in Thanksgiving:** Those are the final words of our passage. Do you find that as intriguing as I do? We grow in stability by **walking** out our faith in Jesus through **thankfulness**!

Before you close your Bible for today...

- Thank God for His past work in your life.
- Thank God for His present work in your life.
- Thank God for the people, circumstances, and even difficulties he has allowed in your life that are causing you to be *built up*.

Prepare to share an area of thankfulness with your discussion group.

## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Read **Matthew 5:10-12**. Jesus and the New Testament writers held a unique view of **suffering** that can be difficult for us to grasp. How can you embrace the *blessing* or *rejoicing* part of suffering for the cause of Christ?
2. Paul described part of his ministry in **v.28** as *warning and teaching*. Read **Colossians 3:16** where you'll find that it's *our* ministry as well. Discuss how this is carried out in the regular, everyday life of a Christian (as opposed to the formality of pulpit teaching).
3. We are often prone to laziness. We like to convince ourselves that if God is *in something* it should come together quite nicely. How do the Apostle's words about toiling and laboring confront that notion? What has been your personal experience?
4. If a friend tells you that she's uncertain about God's Word or doubts God's intentions, how would you go about *encouraging her heart toward full assurance of understanding (v.2)*?
5. It's common today for people to claim a *knowledge of God* apart from the revelation of Jesus Christ. How has the first section of Colossians convinced you otherwise?

## Notes from Teaching — Week Four

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## Week Five — Colossians 2:8-23

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### Day 1:

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✞ READ and WRITE Colossians 2:8-11 in your journal.

- With a purple pencil, underline the phrases 'in Him' (3x).
- With a green pencil, circle the word 'filled'.

**See to it:** This Biblical phrase always grabs my attention. It's a gentle but firm warning to *pay particular heed*.

- In v.8, what potential harm could happen to us as we are walking out our faith?

From v.8, list enemies we are warned about that could capture our minds (use another translation or two for more insight or clarity).

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

What are some ways that we can be *taken captive* in our thinking? List some specific real-life battlegrounds (i.e., classroom, family influence, etc.)

Are you living near any of the battlegrounds that you listed? We can't always *move or change our position* in order to put distance between us and the battle. But we *can* be alert, armed, and ready.

- Is there a specific area that the Holy Spirit has revealed to you where you must improve your guard?

**In Him:** You may have noticed the phrase *In Him* appeared five times between verses 6 and 11. Paul will go on to use *with Him* three times in verses 12 and 13. This is a key thought in the battle for our minds — to remember *who we are* and *how we are connected to Him!*

As we *walk in Him*, we will encounter the tricks of the enemy, but we are protected *in him* because He lives *in us*.

**v.10** We have been \_\_\_\_\_ **in Him** (Jesus)

**v.9** **In Him** (Jesus) the whole fullness of the \_\_\_\_\_ dwells

This tells us that ...

- all of God (the whole fullness) is *in Jesus*,
- we are *in Jesus* and He (through his Holy Spirit) is *in us!*

That means we have access to all the power of God as we face enemies that want to capture our thinking.

**Circumcision:** The Apostle sometimes used graphic metaphors to get his point across — for example, pointing out the spiritual metaphor associated with physical circumcision.

What was the point of circumcision?

- ⇒ It was introduced as an outward sign of the covenant that God made with Abraham and all of his descendants after him — a sort of ethnic badge.
- ⇒ But it was always intended to symbolize an inward change of the heart as a person makes a choice to surrender their life to God.

Read **Romans 2:28-29** and **Philippians 3:3**.

- How do these passages support the idea that our hearts are fundamentally changed when we come to Christ?

Now, let's add the reality of spiritual circumcision to our growing list of '*in Him*' metaphors that help stabilize our faith:

- ◆ We **received** Christ and now have an opportunity to **walk *in Him***.
- ◆ We have been **rooted *in Him*** so that we can be **built up** and grow.
- ◆ Even though He is the ruler and authority of all things, we have been **filled *in Him***.
- ◆ ***In Him*** we have allowed our heart to be forever, spiritually, surgically **changed** to reflect our relationship with God our maker.

## Day 2:

✞ READ and WRITE Colossians 2:12-15 in your journal.

- ☐ With a purple pencil, underline all the phrases '*with Him*' (3x).
- ☐ With a blue pencil draw a down-arrow over '*buried*' and '*dead*' and an up-arrow over '*raised*' and '*alive*'. Also underline the action phrases '*forgiven our trespasses*', '*canceling the record of debt*', '*disarmed the rulers and authorities*'.

You've probably noticed that the words and phrases you marked in *blue* describe an action or a change that happens because of **Christ**. For example: *delivered, transferred, filled*, and now *buried* and *raised*. These all describe the **powerful working of God (v.12)** on our behalf.

**Baptism:** Here is another metaphor of death and life in **v.12** which is also a symbolic act for those who put their faith in Jesus Christ.

- What are the two actions that are symbolized by baptism?

\_\_\_\_\_ with Him                      \_\_\_\_\_ with Him



- What are the two realities that describe our spiritual life before and after Christ?

\_\_\_\_\_ in your trespasses; \_\_\_\_\_ *together with Him*

Dead people can't make themselves alive again. However, people try to make themselves acceptable to God without Christ all the time — like a dead corpse attempting self-improvement.

- Have you ever felt the need to clean *yourself* up first in order to be forgiven and in good-standing with God? How do these verses challenge that thinking?

Paul liberally used the phrase '*with Him*' to remind us that we are connected to His **power**.

- ◆ V.12 *buried with Him — raised with Him.*
- ◆ V.13 *made alive together with Him.*

It is important to realize that the **same power** that accomplished all that we underlined in blue, is the **same power** that will help us accomplish what is underlined in pink: *walk in Him*, and become *built up*.

- Read **2 Peter 1:3-4** and note any additional insights:

*Meditating on these realities will shape our thinking  
and protect us from being taken captive by deceitful philosophies!*

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## Day 3:

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 **READ** and **WRITE Colossians 2:16-19** in your journal.

- With a purple pencil, underline ‘*the Head*’, and ‘*the whole body*’.

**Therefore:** With our second *therefore*, we again ask *what is it there for?* Well, the Apostle has been carefully reminding us that we are not only *in Christ*, but he has triumphed over every enemy that would want to capture our thinking — therefore we can triumph too.

The purpose of this letter was to address a crisis that had formed against the church — ideas and philosophies that had seeped in and attempted to blend and blur the message of Christ. We can apply this same inspiration to modern lies circulating in our culture.

- In **v.16** what would you guess were some of the religious/cultural expectations and ideas directed at the believers?

- What comes to your mind as contemporary counterparts, based on your own life experiences?

- In **v.17** what was Paul’s argument as to why devotion to these things shouldn’t be the main focus in their life in Christ?

Our passage opened with '*let no one pass judgment on you*'. If we read ahead a few words into tomorrow's reading we find, '*let no one disqualify you*'. How do you think that disqualification could happen?

It's time to reflect on our own life now. If you have embraced any twisted ideas or philosophies of what you **must do** to make yourself acceptable to God, now is the time to really pour over these Scriptures to confront any false narratives and preach the gospel to yourself that *the reality is found in Christ* (v.17 NIV).

**More Fine Sounding Arguments:** Earlier in this chapter Paul warned against *plausible arguments* (*fine-sounding arguments* NIV). These are man-made religious ideas, activities, or attention to spiritual details that can consume a person and turn their focus away from Jesus and on to their accomplishments.

- List the religious threats to the Colossian church you see in **v.18**:

- Look up and define *asceticism*:

- In **v.18** what did Paul point out as a natural result to devoting oneself to religious requirements:
- Add anything that you have observed along these lines from your own experiences in life.

**Hold fast to the Head:** Paul gave an antidote to this messy business of following religious methods — *hold fast to the Head* — meaning Christ Jesus rather than holding onto legal requirements.

Read **1 Corinthians 12:12-13**.

- Keeping in mind the analogy of a head and a body, which represents Jesus (the head) and his church (the body), reword **v.19** to explain how Christians are intended to grow...
- As a member, a part of the whole body, what is your particular responsibility in this growth?

## Day 4:

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📖 READ and WRITE Colossians 2:20-23 in your journal.

**Do not ... do not ... do not:** This is a perfect description of legalistic religion — often defined more by what we don't do than what we do. Adhering to rules that promise the way to *really know God*, or the way to *really please God*, they actually please our ego instead.

Read **Matthew 15:1-20**.

- Write a brief statement summarizing what Jesus said about the relationship between food/mouth/words:

The Apostle Paul warned the believers in *that century*, about the false teachings coming at *them*. Now, we should consider *our* experience. To tell you the truth, I don't see much asceticism invading my world — maybe in some countries, but I don't think we Americans like to deny ourselves anything. So it's not a popular false-gospel here.

But the opposite — a message of health, wealth and happiness — is certainly a relevant foe of the pure gospel of Jesus Christ.

Let's investigate what God's Word says about the idea that God wants you wealthy, healthy, and happy. Consider these passages and note observations about how it applies to your life:

- **Matthew 6:19**
  
- **Matthew 6:24**
  
- **Luke 12:15**

- 1 Timothy 6:10
- Hebrews 13:5

As we wrap up the warnings from chapter two, let's remember the main point of this letter: *"That you may be **filled** with the knowledge of Jesus and **strengthened** in him, so as to **walk** in a way that pleases God and become fruitful in this life."* (my paraphrase)

- All self-made religious ideas have an appearance of what (v.23)?
- But they are not able to do what (v.23)?

If we desire to **walk in a manner worthy of the Lord (v.10)**, it must be accomplished by **His** power working through us. Putting our energy into these *dos* and *do not*s produces no ability to stop the flesh and actually feeds it and makes it stronger.

So we ask: *how do we walk in the power of God?* It comes down to a *new nature* — a *divine nature*!

*His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature. 2 Peter 1:3-4 (ESV)*

When we believe in Christ for salvation we become God's children and he shares with us his divine \_\_\_\_\_ (v.4)

- birds fly due to the *nature* of their species;
- lions are carnivorous — it's their *nature*;

The strength we need to please God actually comes from the nature He has imparted to us at our new birth.

*Meditate on the 2 Peter passage above today and ask God to help you grasp the reality of partaking of the divine nature.*

## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. It's been said, '*before we get someone saved, we have to get them lost.*' V.13 says '*you were dead in your trespasses.*' What does that mean and why is it such an important message for people to understand?
2. The term **Progressive Christianity** hadn't been thought of in the days of this letter, but it would have described what was happening. What types of *philosophy* and *human tradition* are wanting to merge into our churches today?
3. There is something about devotion to religious rules that tends to make people feel superior to others. What is the ultimate danger of excessive adherence to these types of rules?
4. We said that *asceticism* isn't as popular of a religious temptation today as *materialism* has become. Times change. The full title for this Bible study is "**Finding Stability in a Changing World**". How does the simplicity of *holding fast to the Head* promote stability in your life and in the life of the church through the ages?
5. Are there any '*do not's*' that you grew up with that have been a challenge to weed out of your relationship with the Lord? Explain.





## Notes from Teaching — Week Five

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## Week Six — Colossians 3:1-11

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### Day 1:

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✎ READ and WRITE Colossians 3:1-2 in your journal.

- With a purple pencil, underline the phrase *'with Christ'*.
- With a blue pencil draw an up-arrow over *'raised'* and *'above'*.

The first word of this chapter *'If'* could be better understood *'Since'*. We know Paul didn't write in chapter divisions, so a glance back at the final verses of chapter two remind us that regulations only provide an illusion of victory over sin while not restraining our sinful nature at all. We need a completely *new* empowered and stable nature to not only avoid the captivating philosophies of the world, but to avoid sin.

Read **Ephesians 1:18-22**.

- Based on this passage and **v.1** in our current text, why do you think it makes sense for a child of God to be focusing on and seeking out things *above*?

What does this look like? How does a Christian women *'set her mind on things above'*? List at least three practical and specific ways:

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- 
- 

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.  
Colossians 3:2

In order to set our minds on things above, we need to turn our minds away from things on earth. What does that mean? How does a Christian women *'set her mind away from things that are on earth'*? List at least three practical and specific ways:

- 
- 
- 

How can the '*setting of our minds*' enable us to curb the temptations we face from our flesh, the world around us, and the devil?

## Day 2:

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📖 READ and WRITE Colossians 3:3-4 in your journal.

- ☐ With a purple pencil, underline the phrases '*with Christ*' and '*with Him*'.

**Dead and Hidden:** As we *set our minds on things above*, we become less focused on things *below*. The reason is...

- (v.3) *you have* \_\_\_\_\_. How much consideration to her environment do you think a corpse pays? I know, that's morbid, but hopefully, it helps us understand the text!
- (v.3) *and your life is* \_\_\_\_\_ *with Christ in God*. People keep coin collections or family treasures *hidden* from plain sight where they're protected and safe, rather than exposed and vulnerable. Again, maybe this illustration helps us understand the text!

Read Ephesians 1:13-14.

- List other words used for the same protection. Explain their meaning:

Note: This hidden condition doesn't mean that people can't detect that you are a believer. Your testimony should not be hidden, and your *lamp* should not be under a *basket*. Rather, we should think of this similar to the root of a plant — that portion that is unseen and hidden underground. Even if the above-ground, exposed portion is affected somehow, the hidden portion of the plant is sustained and will recover and bring forth more growth.)

**Now appearing:** The promise we have, as children of God, is that we share in Jesus' inheritance. Fill in these missing words:

- (v.4) When Christ \_\_\_\_\_ appears, then you also will \_\_\_\_\_ with Him in glory.

Read **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**.

- In v.17 we are told the length of time we will be with the Lord. How long will it be?
- In v.18 we're instructed what to do with this information. What is it?
- Look for an opportunity to stabilize someone else's faith today by encouraging them in the way this passage describes and record your experience here:

Let's bring **Colossians 3:1-4** around full circle. Because our life is hidden in Christ, we are identified as belonging to him, and we will be seated with him in heaven and inherit with him. Now return to **v.1-2** and write out the directive we have been given:

### Day 3: -----

🔗 **READ** and **WRITE Colossians 3:5-7** in your journal.

- ☐ With a pink pencil, underline the phrase '*put to death*'.

**Slay the Earthly:** Don't you appreciate how the Apostle plainly and graphically tells how we should walk through this life. We're not told to ignore, or avoid, or reject the earthly, but to ***put it to death!***

**Verse 5** contains a list of what we call *sensual sins* because they arise from our senses.

- List the sins from **v.5** that we are to rid our lives of:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Now, write some things that are not listed in this passage, but come to your mind. Things that are of our earthly nature and are out of agreement with the life of a believer:

Because we have died with Christ, we have the spiritual power to slay the earthly, fleshly desires that want to control us. Paul called this "reckoning" ourselves dead to sin but alive in Christ.

Bible Exposition Commentary<sup>1</sup>

- v.6 tells us that it is because of these things that \_\_\_\_\_ is coming.
- v.7 tells us that *we too once* \_\_\_\_\_ *in them* (the earthly passions).

But the key to putting these sensual sins out of our life doesn't lie in knowledge, or self-control, or just trying a bit harder to avoid them. The key lies back in the beginning of this chapter. Fill in the missing words from these two verses:

(V.1) IF then you have been \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ...

(V.5) Put to death therefore what is \_\_\_\_\_ in you.

Read **Romans 7:5-6**.

You see, as Christians, our relationship to sin has completely changed. We were once slaves to sin, but now, we no longer have to obey the pull and persuasion of sin. We have been *raised with Christ*, raised above captivity to our sensual desires.

What are some helpful steps as we desire to walk in our new nature in Christ, and put to death the elements of our old nature?

**Step One:** Reckon yourself dead to sin. This is the essence of the verse at the bottom of this page. Realize it is a possibility to not obey the voice of sin in your life.

So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin  
and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Romans 6:11

**Step Two:** Take action against sin. This is the essence of passages like **Colossians 3:5**. The action of *'putting to death'* or *'putting away'* is what we call repentance — changing your mind, and walking in the other direction.

There *are* some practical things we can do to help us with step two, depending on what particular struggles you have...

- ❖ If it's a place, don't go there.    ❖ If it's an image, turn away.
- ❖ If it's a liquid, don't drink it.    ❖ If it's social media, don't click.
- ❖ If it's a person, part company.

That may sound overly simplistic, but it helps to remember that the *temptation* to sin is not the same thing as actually *engaging* in sin. Temptations will come and go throughout our life, but we no longer need to obey them — we *can* turn away!

- What is the Holy Spirit speaking to your heart? What needs to be slain?

*Now ask God for strength and wisdom  
to be successful with God's awesome power!*

## *Day 4:* \_\_\_\_\_

📖 **READ** and **WRITE Colossians 2:8-11** in your journal.

- With a pink pencil, underline the phrases *'put them all away'*, and *'put on'*.

**Take off the Old, Put on the New:** One more day of self-confrontation!

- From **v.8-9**, list the social sins to be removed from our lives:

These sins may be more difficult to detect than the sensual sins we faced yesterday, because we may classify these as *sins in good standing* — hardly even *sins* at all. We may rationalize that *everyone* does a little bit of deceiving, a little losing of the temper, a little repeating of information about someone.

When we don't really believe an attitude is all *that* terrible, it becomes easy to form a habit, and before we know it, we have a habit of anger, a habit of slander, or a habit of lying.

- List any social sins (which you might euphemistically call *bad habits*) that you have been struggling with but you know God has been speaking to you about 'putting off':

*Confess these to the Lord.*

*Ask for His strength to continue to identify what is not pleasing to Him and provide you the power to take appropriate action!*

Paul encourages believers in Christ to remove those habits like we might remove muddy work clothes. Then we are to dress ourselves with attitudes that are in agreement with our *new nature*!

- What are some of the habits that would be in keeping with our *new nature*?

There is one final concept today that should bring us hope. When we are born again, we are made *new* — that is called our justification before God. It only happens ONCE.

But **V.10** reminds us that we are also *being* \_\_\_\_\_ *in knowledge after the image of our creator*. This is our sanctification and it can happen EVERY DAY! One blessing of being In Christ is that He is renewing us day by day into His likeness.



## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Why do the attempts mentioned in the previous chapter (*do not handle, do not taste, do not touch*) bear no lasting success in helping us say no to the sins mentioned in this chapter?
2. Read **Mark 8:31-33**. How is Peter an example of someone who was *setting their mind on earthly things* in this passage?
3. Do you believe the sins listed in **v.5-8** to be equal in offense? Why or why not? Do you live and act as if they are all equal?
4. What would you say to a friend who confided in you, '*I HAVE tried to **put off the old self with its practices** before, but I still struggle with those things, what's wrong with me?*'
5. ***Setting our minds on things above*** isn't a hard concept to understand. That's where Jesus is and He is our treasure. But we live here and there is a gravitational pull toward the things on earth. Share one practical strategy to take pleasure in our future with Christ over our present pleasure on earth.
6. What was your most significant discovery from **Colossians 3:1-11**?

## Notes from Teaching — Week Six

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## Notes from Teaching — Week Six

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## Week Seven — Colossians 3:12-4:1

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### Day 1:

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✞ READ and WRITE Colossians 3:12-14 in your journal.

- ☐ With a pink pencil, underline the phrase 'put on' (2x).

**A New Wardrobe:** Continuing the analogy of taking off the old clothes and putting on the new, there are actually eight new wardrobe pieces mentioned in these three verses.

- First, list the adjectives in **v.12** that describe us, as God's children:

Read **John 15:16, 19**.

- Write a sentence that explains God's choice regarding you.

Because He chose us to be His *image bearers* in this world and because we are set apart and loved and given a new nature, we can walk in agreement with HIS character and put on the wardrobe that expresses HIS beauty. List eight virtues in today's passage:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| ❖ | ❖ |
| ❖ | ❖ |
| ❖ | ❖ |
| ❖ | ❖ |

Which new wardrobe piece do you find the most challenging right now in your life?

Using a concordance, find that challenging virtue portrayed in the character of Jesus. For example, if compassion is most difficult, find an example of Jesus showing compassion for the crowds. Now, spend time in prayer, asking God to enable you to follow Him in this area.

**Forgiveness:** In **v.13**, we are commanded to forgive offenses.

- What is the reason given?

**Love:** Above all, we are to put on love.

- What is the function of love in **v.14**?

Explain what this looks like in real-life situations, maybe through a personal example.

## Day 2:

 **READ** and **WRITE** Colossians 3:15-17 in your journal.

- With a pink pencil, underline the phrases '*let the peace of Christ*', '*let the word of Christ*', and '*do everything*'.

I often say, "*it's simple, just not easy.*" Taking off the things that are *not* in agreement with Jesus, and putting on things that *are* in agreement is very simple — it's just not always easy. It requires yielding to the Spirit of Jesus in order to *let things happen*. For example:

- **(v.15)** *Let the* \_\_\_\_\_ *rule in*  
\_\_\_\_\_.
- **(v.16)** *Let the* \_\_\_\_\_ *dwell in you*  
\_\_\_\_\_.

**Thankful Hearts:** There is also a repetition of the habit of **giving thanks** in these verses.

- With a pink pencil, underline '*thankful*', '*thankfulness*', and '*giving thanks*'.
- What do you think is significant about the practice of gratitude?

List the practices from **v.16** that should be an active part of our lives (either personally, or with other believers):

Share some practical real-life applications for those activities:

**Whatever you do:** I dislike the response '*whatever*' that young people sometimes use; but, I love the phrase, '*whatever you do*' (**v.17**), it makes these concepts personal and practical. *Whatever we do* depends on *who* we are and *what* God has put in our lane.

- What is God stirring up in your heart *to do*?

- What are your instructions in **v.17** with regard to *what you do*?

### *Day 3:* \_\_\_\_\_

📖 **READ** and **WRITE Colossians 3:18-21** in your journal.

- ☐ With a pink pencil, underline the words '*submit*', '*love*', and '*obey*'.

**One Happy Family:** These two days of our study will be relational and practical! For many, these words aren't new information, but God's Word is living and active, and even when we meet familiar passages, we can expect to be changed by our time spent in the Word!

Read **1 Peter 3:1**.

- From that passage, and from **v.18** in our current text, what is the command to wives?

Fill in the qualifying adjective before the word *husbands* in the Peter passage: "Wives, be subject to your \_\_\_\_\_ husbands."

- How does that one word shed more light on the directive?

Read **Ephesians 5:22-24**.

- Who does the husband symbolize?
  
- Who does the wife symbolize?

- With the Ephesians passage in mind, and the exhortation to wives in our current text — why do you think it is *'fitting in the Lord'* for a wife to hold this position or rank in the family?

Read **1 Peter 3:7**.

- From that passage and from our current text in **v.19**, what is commanded of the husband?

Since wives are exhorted to fall in rank in the family unit, and husbands are exhorted to love, show honor, and not being harsh, do you think it's possible that our natural bent in our relationships is toward the opposite?

Read **Genesis 3** about the *Fall of Man*, paying particular attention to the result or the curse of sin in **v.16-19**.

- Now, write your thoughts on why we may naturally relate to one another in the family in the way we do:

We must not think of submission as slavery or subjugation. The word comes from the military vocabulary and simply means "to arrange under rank." That one soldier is a private and another is a colonel does not mean that one man is necessarily better than the other. It only means that they have different ranks. Bible Exposition Commentary<sup>2</sup>



If you are married, is there a particular area of reverence to the Lord, through submission to your husband, that God is asking of you?

**Children and Parents:** Note God's created order for children and parents in **v.20-21**:

- Children have a responsibility to:
  
- Fathers (and mothers) have a responsibility to:
  - What is the reason?
  
- Again, what do you think might be our natural inclination as parents because of our sinful nature?

Can you testify as to how God has empowered you to overcome behaviors that were not encouraging to your children or your family; like yelling, losing your temper, frustration, or lofty expectations?

- Note any victories that God has given you in this area:

## Day 4:

✞ READ and WRITE Colossians 3:22-25, and 4:1 in your journal.

- ☐ With a pink pencil, underline the phrase 'work heartily'.

**Servants & Masters; Employees & Employers:** The cultural context of this passage existed in a society with many types of servants and masters. Western society is not the same, but I see no reason why these exhortations cannot be just as viable in the workplace.

If you are primarily an employee (or even a volunteer), make a list of three things that seem most significant in this conversation. If you are primarily a boss (master), make your list from your perspective.

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In the same way that husbands and wives were not to only offer respect **IF** the spouse was a Christian; so too, workers are exhorted to work hard, honor, and please, no matter the spiritual condition of their superior.

(v.23) *They are to work heartily* \_\_\_\_\_  
*and not* \_\_\_\_\_ .

Does it come naturally at your job to think you are *working for the Lord*? What practical advice would you give a friend who is struggling in their work environment with a boss or employee?

And let us not grow weary of doing good,  
for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.

Galatians 6:9

## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Of the traits listed in **v.12**, which two would you crave the most, or appreciate the most in a spouse or even a friend?
2. What does it mean to *bear with one another* (**v.13**)?
3. Share some Godly trait that the Holy Spirit encouraged you to *put on more of* during your study this week. How are you planning to accomplish that?
4. Explain why it's Biblically *fitting in the Lord* for a wife to submit to her husband's leadership and are there any boundary lines for that submission?
5. How should a wife respond to a husband's harshness or lack of love? How should a husband respond to a wife's lack of respect?
6. In what way can the mandate to *do everything in the name of the Lord* shape your work ethic, either for paid employment or as a volunteer?

# Notes from Teaching — Week Seven

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## Week Eight — Colossians 4:2-18

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### Day 1:

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✞ READ and WRITE Colossians 4:2-4 in your journal.

- ☐ With a pink pencil, underline the phrase ‘*continue steadfastly*’, ‘*watchful*’, ‘*thanksgiving*’.

**PRAY, PRAY, PRAY:** Adverbs are words that ADD to the verb. They may tell us *how* or *when* something was/is done.

- What words add to the subject of prayer in v.2?

Since you know that God is sovereign, you might wonder, “*Isn’t God going to do what He’s going to do anyway? Why so much focus on prayer?*” Well, God has chosen to govern the world in fellowship with His people. We are now the Body of Christ and we are partners with God, or as Peter said (**1 Peter 1:4**), *partakers of the divine nature*.

What do these passages add to the *how*, the *when*, and the *quantity* of prayer?

- Matthew 6:5-13

- Luke 10:2

- Ephesians 6:18-20

- 1 Thessalonians 5:17

**Where is our focus:** Of all the things that Paul could have requested prayer for, put into your own words his request in **v.4**:

Paul's was an eternity-centered prayer request. I so wish more of my requests had that focus.

- List one or two eternity-centered prayer requests that spring up from your current circumstances in life:

## *Day 2:*

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 **READ** and **WRITE** Colossians 4:5-6 in your journal.

- With a pink pencil, underline the phrases 'walk in wisdom', and 'let your speech be gracious'.

**What will they think?** In general, it's not a great idea to be concerned about what people think. However, in this context, Paul gave some good tips for sharing our faith with outsiders, who may be watching and thinking about our lives.

In the NIV, **v.4** says ***"Pray that I may proclaim it [the gospel] clearly, as I should."*** We know that proclaiming the Gospel was on his mind. With that in view, list some of the tips he exhorted US to be thinking about from today's verses:

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It's been said that *time* is the one truly non-renewable commodity. Once that minute or hour has passed, it is never able to be retrieved. Oh, how easy it is for us to delay or postpone sharing something of ourselves, and our new life in Christ with outsiders — but we seem to find a hundred excuses.

Perhaps, it's best to stop right here, and ask God to show you how to make the best use of your time today. Write your thoughts and then do exactly what He shows you:

**Well-seasoned words:** Do you have a friend, like I do, who always seems to know the perfect thing to say, especially when I don't? Our words are important, our *talk* needs to match our *walk*. What do these Scriptures add to this concept?

- Psalm 19:14
- Ephesians 4:15
- Ephesians 4:29
- 1 Peter 3:15



The Christian's walk and talk must be in harmony with each other. When character, conduct, and conversation are all working together, it makes for a powerful witness.

Bible Exposition Commentary<sup>3</sup>

### *Day 3:*

✞ **READ** and **WRITE Colossians 4:7-15** in your journal.

Today's verses contain a large amount of writing — it just happened that way due to the long closing greetings in this letter. If you need more time for writing in your journal, just shift a couple of verses to tomorrow's writing.

**Faithful Men:** Epaphras was the one who brought Paul news from the Colossians, but it seems he would not return to them very soon, so Paul sent Tychicus and Onesimus on the return mission instead. (Tychicus is also mentioned in **Acts 20:4** and **Ephesians 6:21-22**.)

- How did Paul describe Tychicus in this passage?

- How did he describe Onesimus?

**A True Prayer Warrior:** Since Epaphras spent time with Paul in confinement in Rome, Paul was able to observe his character and daily prayer habits. When Epaphras prayed — Paul knew it and he wanted the believers back home to know it too. He wanted them to know how genuine he was toward them.

From v.12-13...

- How did he pray?
  
- What did he pray?
  
- For whom did he pray?

When we're inspired by someone's prayer life, we should take the opportunity to become apprentices! It would be a great waste to merely *talk about prayer*, we must become people who actually *take time to pray!*

Today, once again, let's take up this challenge, put down our pens and actually pray for those whom God has put into our realm of influence.

- ❖ Pray specifically
- ❖ Pray passionately
- ❖ Pray Scripturally

Follow the example found in these men of God, and use the tools you have learned from this study.

To this end we always pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of His calling and may fulfill every resolve for good and every work of faith by His power, so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you.

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12

## Day 4:

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✞ READ and WRITE Colossians 4:16-18 in your journal.

**For the Many and For the One:** Paul definitely embraced the apostolic ministry God had entrusted to him. His final instructions in **v.16-17** were directed first toward an entire region of people and then his comments narrowed to just one individual.

**To the masses, he said:**

*“Hey, make sure this letter is circulated and read aloud and mulled over and taken to heart — that everyone would know the heart of the Lord on these matters”*

**To the individual, he said:**

*“Tell Archippus to make sure he carries out the ministry the Lord gave him to do”*

How would you feel if, out of an entire region of people, God called you out by name, saying,

*“\_\_\_\_\_ , be sure to fulfill the ministry that I’ve given you to do”?*

Prayerfully, list at least two general things that you know God has stirred up in your heart to fulfill. (These should be things that any Christian could list.)

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Now, list at least two specific things that you sense God is calling you to walk out in your life — specific things that He has given ONLY to you to accomplish.

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That is the sense that I would hope to leave us all with, in this study.

- We've asked God to **stabilize** us to continue steadfastly
- We have asked that we be **filled** with the knowledge of His will
- We have considered the **walk** that God intends for us

...and now the last thing left is just to — **do it!**

In the same way that Paul closed this letter with, '**Grace be with you**' my prayer for all of us is:

*"Lord, please enable our hearts and minds to be strengthened by your power to keep the ministry you have entrusted to us in focus, to be faithful doers of your word and your will and to bring glory to YOUR name here on earth — Amen"*

## Questions for Thought & Discussion

1. Paul mentioned thankfulness a total of six times in this letter. Explain why this is so important in the life of a believer.
2. What do you think *seasoned with salt* means in **v.6**?
3. In what ways has this study inspired your prayer life?
4. In what ways has the Holy Spirit brought clarity to some aspect of your Christian life through your study of Colossians?
5. Have you noticed any areas that the Holy Spirit has caused a change in you during your study of this book?
6. I chose the title **Finding Stability** for this study of Colossians. What title might you have chosen?





## REFERENCES

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- **1,2,3 John** — Light, Love and Logic, Lessons from the Apostle John

