

COLOSSIANS

verse by verse



Fellowship Bible Church

COLOSSIANS ***verse by verse***

Bible Study Guide

From the leadership development ministry of

FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH MISSIONS

Acknowledgments

Many of the basic thoughts used in this study of the Epistle to the Colossians, comes from the "Life Application Bible Commentary" published by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. We have used their ideas liberally with their permission. We alone assume responsibility for the contents here, but we appreciate Tyndale giving us permission to use their materials.

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02/05/07
Revision 1

Colossians Chapter #1

Christ, the Image of the Invisible God

Introduction:



- Paul wrote Colossians as well as Philippians, Ephesians, and Philemon from a prison in Rome.
- At the time of the writing of the letter to the church at Colosse, Paul was a prisoner in Rome. He met a runaway slave named Onesimus who actually belonged to Philemon, a leader in the church at Colosse. Paul led Onesimus to Christ, and then wrote to his friend Philemon asking him to forgive Onesimus and to receive him back as a brother in Christ.
- About the same time, Epaphras arrived in Rome because he needed Paul's help. Some new doctrines were being taught in Colosse, and were invading the church and creating problems.
- The heresy that was being taught in Colosse was a Jewish-Hellenistic religious syncretism, which later became known as Gnosticism, which led to devaluing Christ.
- It's interesting to consider that any teaching, which detracts from the centrality of Christ, is basically a perversion.

A. Paul greets the Colossian church

Col. 1:1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,*

2 *To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

- Notice that Paul describes himself as an apostle (one who is sent) of Jesus Christ. Because Paul was not one of the original twelve disciples who were later called apostles after Jesus resurrection, some doubted his credentials. Yet Jesus had appeared to Paul and had commissioned him, and we see that in **Acts 26:12-18**. Paul did have the right to claim authority as an apostle.
- It would also be good to make note of the fact that Paul described himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ "by the will of God". He used that same terminology in **1 Tim. 1:1**.
- In **verse 2** we see to whom this letter was written; "**To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse**". The word saint does not refer to an individual that has attained some special holiness, but rather it's more of a common term designating believers (merely means separated ones)
- In the end of **verse 2** we see a phrase that Paul used in every one of his epistles from Romans to Philemon. After the initial greeting in each epistle, we read the

following; ***“Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”***

- Just imagine if you would for a moment that you had grace, unmerited favor/free gifts/blessing from God, as well as peace, total blessing from God and not just “peace with God” (***Rom. 5:1***), but “peace from God”, what more could anyone desire in life? This is what Paul desires for all believers, everywhere.
- However, There has always been a tendency in the body of Christ to teach salvation by grace through faith, and then to attempt to live a holy and righteous life through every imaginable form of legalism. However, Legalism forces Christians into a constant striving to avoid failure, while grace on the other hand eliminates the fear of failure.
- God is made known to us as “the God of all grace”, and the position in which we are placed is that of recipients of His grace... The word favor is the nearest Biblical synonym for the word grace. Grace is favor, and favor is grace, and it finds it’s greatest triumph and glory in the sphere of human helplessness. Grace ceases to be grace if God is compelled to withdraw it because of human failure or sin. In fact, grace cannot be exercised where there is the slightest degree of human merit to be recognized. God cannot propose to do less in grace for one who is sinful than He would have done had that one been less sinful. The sin question has been set aside forever, and equal favor/grace is extended to all that believe. Thus, grace can not be increased, nor diminished.
- ***Romans 5:17*** states, “Those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the one, Jesus Christ.” This understanding of God’s Grace is foundational to Christianity. Furthermore, grace alone can free us, not only from the penalty of sin, but also the power of sin. Romans 6:14 says; “For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace.”
- Possibly, the greatest need in the church of Jesus Christ today is a “grace awakening”. It is our desire, as you study the following lessons that you would “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jersus Christ”. ***2 Peter 3:18***

B. Paul thanks God for the Colossian’s faith and love

Col. 1:3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, 4. Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,

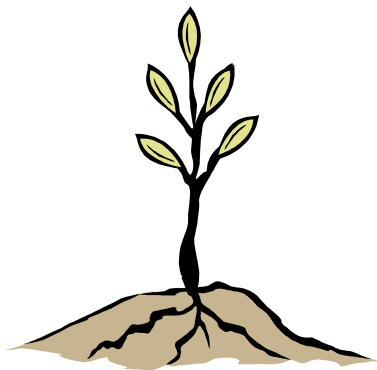
- Notice Paul uses the phrase “praying always for you” in ***verse 3***. Then in ***verse 4***, he reveals what had given him this burden to pray for a group of people that he had never met; he had heard of their faith in Christ, as well as their love for the saints. Quite often we hear of a pastor or missionary who has a good ministry in a certain place, or we hear of the size of their church, or how many they have led to Christ, but rarely if ever, do we hear of an individual Christian or church that is described by the tremendous faith of the people.

- It is interesting to give thought to the fact that if the Christian life is merely a walk of faith, then why aren't we emphasizing that faith; why don't we describe our churches or fellow believers by their faith? Paul certainly did; **1 Thes. 1:8; Eph. 1:15; Rom. 1:8**
- Wouldn't it be wonderful if our faith defined us and was spoken of in our communities, in our countries, and throughout the world.
- Back again to **Col. 1:4**. Not only does Paul make note of the people's faith in Colosse, but also their love, which they have for the saints. Keep in mind that true Biblical love (**1 Cor. 13:4-7**) is actually a fruit of faith. Our love for others, as well as our love for the Lord is not something that we are able to produce through any effort of ours. Instead it is a fruit of the Spirit (**Gal. 5:22a**) and will only manifest itself in our lives as we depend on the Spirit to hold the flesh with it's fruit (envy, strife, jealousy, anger, and divisions) in the place of death.

C. Thanks to God for the fruitfulness of the gospel

Col. 1:5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; 6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

- Thinking back again to **verse 4**, and the faith of the Colossian believers in Christ and their love for the saints, Paul knew that this faith and love were not human-generated emotions. Rather they were a by-product of their hope (confident expectation) which is stored up for all believers in heaven.
- Why have faith in Jesus Christ if there is no hope for a glorious future; why love others if it doesn't matter in the end; why not instead find a faith that permits us to do what ever we want? If we have no hope stored up for us in heaven, if being a Christian is of value to us only now in this life as it says in **1 Cor. 15:19**, "we are the most miserable of all creatures".
- As we mentioned before, Paul is writing from prison, and so he is writing from the perspective of a persecuted believer. He realized that he would have no reason to face persecution for his faith if that faith did not anticipate a great hope laid up for him in heaven.
- He goes on in **verse 5** to say that Christ gave this hope, which is stored up for all believers in heaven, when they heard and believed the Gospel.



- It's interesting that in **verse 6**, Paul speaks of the Gospel as something alive, and growing, and spreading, and bearing fruit. He was not exaggerating when he wrote the words "all over the world"; he did not mean that every location on earth had been evangelized, but that the Gospel was making headway across racial and national and geographical barriers. And it continues to bear fruit today in all of our lives.
- As I ponder this verse, I can't help but think back in my

own life to the fruit that has come forth from my understanding and believing the Gospel. Looking back over the years before salvation, before knowing, and understanding, and believing the Gospel, I see no fruit of the Spirit, no fruitful life, no fruitful ministry, nothing of eternal value was coming out of my life. However, it has been interesting to see what God has done through an understanding and faith in the death and resurrection of Christ.

- It might be good for all Christians to consider what the Lord has done in our lives since believing the Gospel. Many of us have been used of Him to bring family members to Christ, mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, aunts and cousins. Mutual submission, self-less love and servant-leadership now mark marriages that were once two self-centered people existing in the same house. The frustrations of trying to raise children without Christ, or trying to function in a world system that is built on Satanic principles such as greed, immorality and power are no longer there as we now have a hope that is laid up for us in heaven. That hope began the day we understood and believed the grace of God in truth.

D. The commendation and example of Epaphras' faithfulness

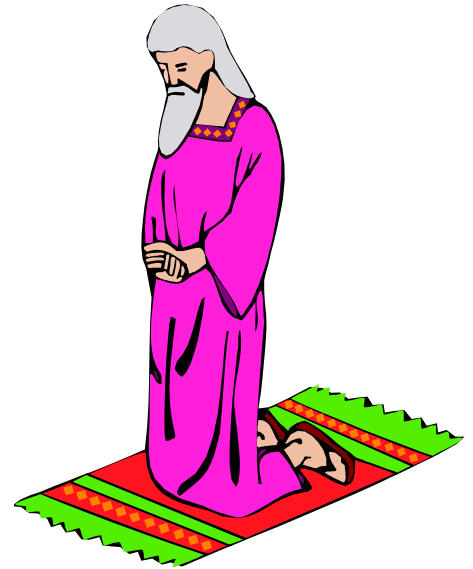
Col. 1:7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; 8 Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.

- Paul is reminding the Colossians that they first heard the Gospel from one of their own, Epaphras, who was a native of Colosse. (***Col. 4:12***)
- Apparently Epaphras had founded the church at Colosse while Paul was living in Ephesus. Many think that he had been converted in Ephesus and then returned to his hometown. Paul here refers to him as a dear fellow-servant and faithful minister of Jesus Christ.
- In Philemon 23, Paul describes Epaphras as a fellow-prisoner. It's unclear from this verse if Epaphras was actually in prison with Paul, or if Paul's words were a reference to his being taken captive by Jesus Christ.
- From **verse 8**, we can know that Epaphras had told Paul all about the church in Colosse. As we mentioned before there was some concern about the heresy that had come into Colosse and was invading the church, but Epaphras had also told Paul about the character of the church. Remember in **verse 4** he had made mention of their faith in Christ and love for one-another. It's interesting that here in **verse 8** greater detail is given regarding the love of the Colossians; "love in the Spirit". True Biblical love can only come from the Holy Spirit which is obvious from **Gal. 5:22** when Paul mentions the fruit of the Spirit, "love".
- Keep in mind that Biblical love is a by-product of our new life in Christ, and that love cannot be produced in the power of the flesh; it will never be produced through man's effort. As we by faith rest at the foot of the cross where the old man has been crucified, the Holy Spirit will begin to produce the life of Christ in us. In addition, the fruit of the Spirit, which are the characteristics of Christ including Christ-like love, will be manifested in our lives.

E. Paul intercedes for the believers

Col. 1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; **10** That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; **11** Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

- How should we pray for a group of people whom we have never seen? That was the situation Paul found himself in. All that he knew about the believers in Colosse he had learned from their faithful Pastor Epaphras. Paul knew of the false teaching that was threatening the church, so he centered his prayer on that problem. It's also interesting to note that his prayer focuses on spiritual blessings, and not on material or physical matters.
- He begins in **verse 9** by praying that the church at Colosse would be "filled with the knowledge of god's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding". Can you imagine what it would be like to be filled with the "knowledge of God's will"? Always, always, always knowing what the Lord wanted you to do. Every dollar that you spent, you knew it was His will. Every word that you spoke, you knew He wanted you to speak it. Every time you reached out in love, every time you rebuked a brother, you were positive that it was his will.
- But that's not all. Not only does Paul pray that they would be filled with the knowledge of His will, but they would be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. A good definition of wisdom is looking at life from God's point of view. So Paul's prayer is that not only would the believers in Colosse know what God's will was, but that they would be seeing it the same way God sees it.
- And then Paul take it one step further by praying that they would be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. They would always know His will, be seeing the situation the same way God sees it, and understand why the lord wants it that way.
- Paul goes on with his prayer in **verse 10** by giving five evidences of being filled with the knowledge of His will. The first being "that you might walk worthy of the Lord". Now we might say that no one can be worthy of the Lord, however; if the Holy Spirit is producing the life of Christ in us and it's "**no longer I but Christ**", then we are walking worthy of the Lord.
- In this **verse 10** not only do we read "that we might walk worthy of the Lord, but "that we might walk worthy of the Lord in all pleasing". Of course, we know from **Heb. 11:6** that the only way we can please God is to **believe** in Him.

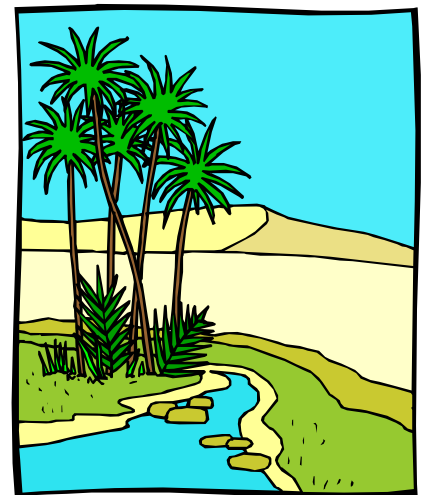


- Paul continues with “being fruitful in every good work”. Imagine if everything we did bore fruit. A fruitful life, a fruitful ministry, the fruit of the spirit is being manifested in our lives; all these things are evidences of being “filled with the knowledge of His will”.
- Paul now ends **verse 10** by praying that the Colossians would increase in the knowledge of God. It might be helpful to give serious thought to what is probably one of our greatest needs as Christians. There is one thing on which the foundation of the Christian faith rests. It is a most important factor in this life and walk of faith, and that is **knowledge...** In fact, we could even be more specific and say that man has a great/tremendous need of a **TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD. John 17:3** Notice that Jesus defines eternal life, not as a span of time, but rather a **knowledge of God...**
- **Eph. 1:17** This is Paul’s prayer for the Ephesian Church. Notice that he does not pray for anything new, but rather for God to reveal Himself to them. Then in **verse 18** Paul goes on praying that He would open the eyes of their understanding (heart) so that they would **KNOW**....
- We could say this: We are unable to trust someone if we don’t know them; but on the other hand, we can’t help but trust someone if we really do know them. No effort is required, it just comes natural. So therefore, we could say that **our trust will always be in proportion to our knowledge**, which means that **to the degree that we don’t know God, we will trust in other things. Romans 10:14** “how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?”
- It’s almost as if Paul is building to a crescendo in **Col. 1: 9–11. He begins in verse 9 with being filled with the knowledge of His will, then mentions walking worthy, all pleasing, fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;** now he prays that the Colossians would be “strengthened with all might according to His glorious power”.
- Our natural thinking would be that God will strengthen us for the purpose of doing great things for Him. That is not what we read here. Paul’s prayer is that God would strengthen not only the Colossian believers, but all believers so that we are able to “**patiently endure with joy**”. So that we can put up with all the horrible wrong that is going on in this fallen world. There are millions of babies being aborted each year, as well as child abuse, and terrorist’s attacks; all over this world we witness terrible atrocities, so Paul prays that believers will be able to patiently endure all of this with joy.
- Of course Joy is a fruit of the spirit; joy is something that only the Holy Spirit can produce in our lives. It’s not that God won’t ever strengthen us to go out and do great and wonderful things for him, He may do that, but meanwhile He wants to produce joy in our lives in the midst of some rather difficult circumstances, so that



others may see that manifestation of the life of Christ in us and will be drawn to the Lord.

- Back in **Psalm 84** we read in **verse 1** “how lovely are your tabernacles O Lord of hosts”. The word tabernacle refers to dwelling places; we could rephrase the verse to read, “how lovely are your dwelling places” (*those places where we abide with Christ*). What are those dwelling places where we are abiding with Christ - those places where we are trusting, and resting, and depending on Him. Could it be in the area of finances, or possibly our marriage, or raising our children, or our job. Are we trusting and resting in Him moment by moment, day by day, in these areas? How lovely are those dwelling places. However, those places where we are not trusting/dwelling/abiding in Him, are not lovely places; there is frustration, impatience, worry, fear, stress, anxiety, etc.
- He goes on in **verse 2** “My soul longs, ye even yearns for the courts of the Lord” for those places where I can dwell with Him. “My heart and flesh cries out for the living God”.
- In **verse 4** we read “blessed are they that dwell in thy house”; happy are those that abide in Christ. “They will still be praising thee”. And then that little word “selah” (*which means think on that awhile*).
- Moving on to **verse 5** we read “Blessed is the man who’s strength is in thee”, not partly in thee and partly in me. Continuing on “and in who’s heart are the highways to Zion”, in other words, this man has a heavenly focus; he has set his affection on things above (**col. 3:1-2**); his hope is in heaven (**Col. 1:5**); he is occupied with Christ.
- Blessed is the man who’s strength is in the Lord. He is occupied with/abiding in Christ and in **verse 6** we read he is “passing through the Valley of Baca” (a dry desert land – at best that is what this life/world is, a “Valley of Baca”).
- But notice the man who’s strength is in God and is abiding with Him will make this Valley of Baca a “well”. In other words, he is like an oasis for others; a place where one goes to get a cool drink of water; a place where people are drawn for the purpose of being spiritually refreshed. Have you ever met one of those godly old saints who always seems to encourage/refresh you.
- **Verse 6** goes on “the rain also fills the pools”. The one whose strength is in the Lord and is occupied with Him, never goes dry. In **verse 7** they “go from strength to strength” (*they just keep getting stronger and stronger as they go*), unlike many of us Christians who are like a falling star on a course heading for burn out.
- I believe this is what Paul is referring to back in **Col. 1:11**, “Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power”, so that we can patiently endure with joy; we



are an encouragement to others and just keep getting stronger and stronger as we go.

- Back in **James 1:2** is a very familiar Scripture; “my brethren consider it all joy when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance” (patiently enduring with joy), “and let endurance have her perfect work that you may be mature, complete, lacking nothing.” ...**Let endurance have its perfect work...**

F. Thanksgiving to God, for the Father’s part in our redemption

Col. 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

- Here Paul is giving thanks to God the Father; why? Because through Jesus Christ, He made it possible for all believers to share in the inheritance of the saints (**Rom. 8:17a – “Joint heirs with Jesus” – Everything that He is and everything that He has is ours**). In addition, we are enabled only because God, by His grace, has enabled us/has made us fit to be partakers.

G. The reconciling work of God the Father through God the Son

Col. 1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated (transferred) us into the kingdom of His Dear Son.

- In scripture, darkness is a metaphor for evil; it is the dominion of those who are without God. True believers, however, have been transferred from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom, from guilt to forgiveness, and from the power of Satan to the power of God. (**Act. 26:17-18; Eph. 5:8; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 Jn. 1:5-7**)
- We have been rescued from a rebel kingdom to serve the true King. That King, the Son God loves, is described in the following verses where the focus is all on Jesus Christ. Remember we mentioned that the problem in Colosse was a devaluing of Jesus Christ, and Paul now brings all attention to Christ.
- In **verse 13** we see that God has delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated/transferred us into the kingdom of His son. Now keep in mind that the Bible has one interpretation, and many applications; and I think we could look at this that He has delivered us from the power of darkness (taken us out of Adam) and He has placed us into His son Jesus Christ. That’s our position in Christ; we are no longer in Adam, we are now in Christ.
- However, we can also apply this to our daily lives; He has delivered us from the power of darkness, from that dominion/power that the world, flesh and devil have over us. Look at **Col. 2:15** with me. We read, “**And having spoiled (disarmed)**

principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

- So we could say He has delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us into Christ, where the Holy Spirit now begins to influence and control our lives.

Col. 1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

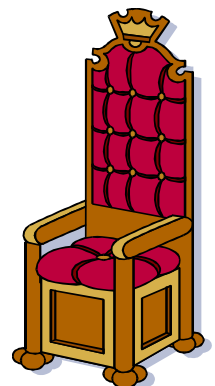
- Paul continues the focus on Christ. “Redemption” means to buy back, or to save from captivity by paying a ransom. That is the way that God chose to free sinful people. He bought us with the price of His own blood, and through that purchase forgave all.
- In **verses 12 through 14**, Paul lists five benefits that God gives to all believers through Christ:
 1. He made us qualified to share in His inheritance.
 2. He rescued us from Satan’s dominion of darkness.
 3. He brought us into the eternal kingdom of His Son.
 4. He redeemed us; bought our freedom from sin and judgement.
 5. He forgave us all our sins.

Colossians 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

- These verses are regarded as some of the most important in the New Testament establishing the Deity of Christ. Jesus is not only equal to God; He is God. (***Phil. 2:6; Jn. 10:30, 38; 12:45; 14:1-11***)
- As the image of the invisible God, Christ is the exact representation of God; He is not a copy, but the very embodiment of God’s nature; He not only reflects God, but as God, He reveals God. Some verses to consider are (***Jn. 1:18; 14:8-9; 2 Cor. 4:6; Heb. 1:1-3***).
- As the first born over all creation, He has all priority and authority of the first born prince in a king’s household. (***Heb. 1:2***)

Col. 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

- Lest anyone misunderstand that “firstborn” in the previous verse meant that Jesus was merely the first thing that God had created, Paul went on here to explain that all things were created in, through, and for Christ. That little word “for” reveals to us the goal of all creation; to glorify Christ. (***Jn. 1:3***)
- Because the false teachers believed that the physical world was evil, they thought that God Himself could not have created it. If Christ were God, they reasoned, He would be over the spiritual world only. But Paul explained that all the thrones, dominions, principalities, and



powers, whether in heaven or on earth, of both the visible and invisible world (physical government and spiritual forces) are under the authority of Christ Himself.

- Throughout **verses 16 through 19**, the focus remains on Jesus Christ.
- Over in **Rev. 4:11** we read **“thou art worthy O Lord to receive glory and honor and power: For Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created.”**

Colossians 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

- Christ is before all things, both in time and rank. He is not only the Creator of the world, He is also its Sustainer.
- Paul’s point here is that because Jesus is the creator of all things, therefore He is able to hold it all together; if He lets go, the whole universe flies apart.
- Because Christ is the Sustainer of all life, nothing in creation is independent of Him.

Col. 1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.

- While verses 15-17 unveiled the Son’s relationship to the “old creation” (the world), this verse describes His relationship to the “new creation” (the church).
- **“He is the head of the body, the church”**. The church exists because Christ is it’s beginning, it’s source, it’s head. He is the head; He is the boss; He is the brains of this body (the church). In addition, we are all a part of the body; hands and feet, eyes and ears, fingers and toes.
- The church is composed of many types of people from a variety of backgrounds with a multitude of gifts and abilities. Despite the differences, all believers have one unifying principle; faith in Christ. On this essential truth, all believers find agreement.
- Paul is saying because Jesus is the head, we all need to be looking to Him. Why? He tells us at the end of **verse 18**. **“He is the beginning, the first born from the dead, so that He might come to have first place in everything”**. The thought here is that not only is Christ the beginning, but He is also the first born from the dead; He was the first to die and come back to life. He was the first born in both time and rank; there will be many more who will live forever after physical death; all who trust in Christ will also defeat death and rise again to live eternally with Him. **1 Cor. 15:20; 1 Thes. 4:14**. Keep in mind that Jesus Christ will always have preeminence; in other words He will always be the first/hold first place.
- The resurrection assures us that Christ is not a legend, He is alive and ruling His kingdom; therefore we should give Him first place in all our thoughts, activities, etc.



Col. 1:19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell;

- The little word “for” explains why Christ will have first place in everything. God’s desire was to have all of His fullness/His completeness/His totality dwell/live permanently in Jesus. **(Col. 2:9)**
- Paul wanted to explain that Christ is God’s dwelling place; therefore, Jesus Christ is divine, sovereign, and preeminent. All of God, including His attributes, characteristics, nature, and being, indwells the Son. When we have Christ, we have all of God.
- Again, any teaching that devalues Christ is a perversion. He is totally, and fully God.

Col. 1:20 *And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*

- Paul explains that God’s fullness dwells in Christ, and in that fullness, He reconciled all things unto Himself. Remembering that the penalty for sin is death, therefore Christ’s death on the cross paid that penalty and provided reconciliation for all things.
- What did Paul mean by all things? Let’s first consider what this reconciliation means for humanity. There can be no peace between sinful man and a holy God. Because people are born into sin, they cannot become good enough to be acceptable to God. In Old Testament times, God accepted symbolic offerings; Jesus had not yet been sacrificed, so God accepted the death of an animal in the place of the death of a sinner. When Jesus came, He substituted His perfect life for our sinful lives, taking the penalty (*death*) that we deserved. We are guilty, but Jesus took the punishment; thus He redeemed us from the penalty of sin and reconciled us to God.
- Going back to our question, what does this reconciliation mean for all things? Besides humans, let’s give some thought to creation. Creation was corrupted when Adam sinned. Sin has caused all creation to fall from the perfect state in which God had created it, thus the world is subject to decay so that it cannot fulfill its intended purpose; one day, all creation will be reconciled and set free from the curse. **(Rom. 8:19-21)**

Col. 1:21 *And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled 22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:*



- Paul here gives the reason why we need reconciliation. All believers have at one time been alienated/separated/estranged from God and were His enemies; our thoughts and behavior have revealed not apathy, or ignorance, but rather hostility toward Him. However, now He has reconciled us (*brought us from the place of an enemy to the place of a friend*) in the body of His flesh through death. Why? So

that He could present us holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight.

Rom. 8:1; Eph. 1:4

Col. 1:23 *If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;*

- Keep in mind that **verse 23** is a continuing thought; He has reconciled us for the purpose of presenting us holy and without blame in His sight assuming that we continue in the faith and not moved away from the hope of the Gospel. Paul is not implying that a true believer could move away from the faith; but what He is saying, is that if we are truly born again, we'll be grounded and settled and never moved away from the hope of the death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- As Paul closes this introductory section, he makes one final stab at exposing the doctrine of the false teachers by declaring that the gospel has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. This did not mean that every person had heard the gospel, but rather that it was available to all people, regardless of nationality, language, age, race, gender, etc. Spirituality was not, as the false teachers claimed, available only to a select group of intellectually, elite people. The hope of the gospel is available to all people.
- Paul now makes mention of the ministry that the Lord has given Him in **Verses 24 – 25**.

H. Paul's ministry

Col. 1:24 *Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:*

- The little word “now” communicates more than just providing a transition. Paul could rejoice in prison; he had encouraged the Philippians by explaining that suffering was a privilege (**Phil. 1:29**), and that the early apostles had rejoiced when they were considered worthy to suffer for believing in Christ (**Act. 5:41**).
- Paul informed the churches to whom he wrote that his suffering was not a punishment, nor was it accidental (as though God had somehow lost track of him). Instead, Paul was honored to be suffering, and he rejoiced at how the Lord was using his suffering to develop courage and faith in the believers and churches by watching Paul's example.
- Possibly the false teachers were pointing to Paul's' imprisonment as proof that his leadership and his teaching were in question. Paul explains that, instead, his imprisonment proved the truth of his words, and he could rejoice in that imprisonment knowing that it was all a part of God's plan “filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions”. The thought here could be that Christ suffered and died so all men could be saved, and our role as ambassadors for Christ is to die to

Rejoice!

our selves, through our co-crucifixion with Christ, so that others can know Him. (2 **Cor. 4:10-12**)

- And all “for the sake of His body, which is the church”.

Col. 1:25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;

- Paul makes mention of the fact that God gave him a ministry. Paul was keenly aware of who had commissioned him, to whom he had been commissioned, and what he had been set apart to do. (**Act. 9:15; 1 Tim. 1:12; 1 Cor. 9:16-17**)
- As a well trusted servant, Paul was entrusted with a special task; he was commissioned to make the Word of God fully known.

I. The mystery of the indwelling Christ (God the Holy Spirit)

Col. 1:26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:

- Paul’s special message had to do with what he calls a mystery. Today, we think of a mystery as something eerie or frightening, but this was not the way the word was used in Paul’s day. The false teachers used this word to describe the inner secrets of their religions; kind of like a sacred secret. So in verse 26 Paul clearly states that the mystery, which had been hidden from ages/dispensations and generations, was now being made manifest to those who believe, that is, to the saints.

Col. 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:

- To these believers, New Testament saints, God chose to make His mystery known among the Gentiles. These words, would have been wonderful news to Paul’s Gentile audience.
- And now Paul tell us what this mystery is; **“Christ in you, the hope of glory”**. That’s the mystery, **“Christ in you”**.
- The moment we trust Christ as our savior, we step out of life in Adam, and enter into life in Christ. **1 Cor. 1:30a**. The term **“in Christ”** is the key to the whole New Testament. It, or its equivalent is used 130 times. These two words are probably the most important ever written to describe the relationship between Christians and Christ.
- To be “in Christ” determines our position, privileges, and possessions. To be “in Christ” is to be where He is, what He is, and to possess what He has.
 1. Where is He? He’s in the heavenlies. Where are we? We are in the heavenlies also. **Phil. 3:20** - It is God’s desire for us to begin to live in heaven, now **Col. 3:1,2**.
 2. To be in Christ is to be what He is **1 Jn. 4:17**.
 3. To be in Christ is to possess what He has. **Rom. 8:17 & 32**.

- We should be living like spiritual millionaires (love, joy, and peace) so that others will desire our spiritual wealth, but instead we live like spiritual paupers (anger, depression, frustration, etc.).
- We've looked at "in Christ", now let's turn our focus back to **Col. 1:27** and the mystery, "Christ in you the hope of glory". **Gal. 2:20**. Notice the progression here; first I have been crucified, and then Christ lives in me. The death of self must precede the Christ life. **Luke 9:23**.



- The real Christian life is to possess the life of Christ in such a way that we can say with Paul, "to me to live is Christ". **Phil. 1:21**. The real Christian life is to have Jesus Christ filling our mind, will and emotions in such a way that my thoughts are really His thoughts, my will is His will and my emotions are coming from Him. ***It is Jesus Christ filling my life until I have no life apart from Him.***
- "Christ in you" was the heart of Paul's message to the churches, and he made it very clear in all his teaching and preaching. Paul had one goal and that was to see Christ formed in every believer. **Gal. 4:19**.
- The Christian life (the Christ life) can be defined in these two simple phrases...
 - 1) in Christ, and
 - 2) Christ in you.
- What God has really done through all this is to bring Christ and the Christian into oneness in such a way that Christ is both in the heavenlies and on earth. Likewise, the Christian is both on earth and in the heavenlies. Christ in the heavenlies is the invisible part of the Christian, while the Christian on earth is the visible part of Christ.
- ***... No longer I, but Christ... (Gal. 2:20)***
Col. 1:28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:
 - Paul switched from "I" to "we" so that he could include his co-workers Epaphras and Tychicus who served the Colossian Church, while excluding the false teachers.
 - Paul and his co-workers were proclaiming Jesus, who was indwelling every believer, by warning and teaching. The **warning** is that without an understanding of the mystery, "Christ in you", there will be no spiritual maturity. The **teaching** is that spiritual maturity is available through faith in Christ.
 - Paul says it is this Christ that we preach, and the warning and teaching always has one goal in mind, "that we may present every man mature in Christ".

Colossians 1:29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

- "Therefore I also labor, striving"...but not in his own power, not through his effort...striving according to ***His*** working.
- It appears that ***Romans 10:2*** points toward this problem of striving, laboring to live the Christian life. I heard a man



describe this verse as “race track Christianity;” there is a lot of activity but no advance. We just keep going around, and around and get no where. Racetrack Christianity leads to one thing--burned out, beat down, faithless and fruitless Christians with no power in their lives to carry on.

- There is an often-used word in Christianity today, and that word is commitment. This word commitment carries with it the idea of serving the Lord through our own efforts, in our own power---commit your life to the Lord, we are told; re-commit your life; dedicate your life; re-dedicate your life. It's clear from Scripture, that this is not God's way to live the Christian life. **(Rom. 7:18; John 6:63)**
- This is not a new problem, but rather a problem that has plagued the church since the beginning. **(Galatians 3:1-3; Galatians 5:7)**
- What is the answer to racetrack Christianity? **We're designed to run on God's power, not the power that we can crank out....** Following are some scriptures that might be a help: **1 Cor 15:9, 10; Phil 2:13; and of course Col. 1:29..**
- There are many Christians today who are failing miserably in ministry due to the fact that they are running on their own power. Pastors, missionaries and Sunday School Teachers all over the world, are beat down, burned out, faithless and fruitless Christians. **John 15:4-6; Acts 5:38,39.** “IF IT IS A WORK OF MAN, IT WILL COME TO NOTHING. BUT IF IT IS A WORK OF GOD, IT CANNOT BE STOPPED”.
- *“Faith is dependence upon God. And this God-dependence only begins when self-dependence ends. And self-dependence only comes to its end, with some of us, when sorrow, suffering, affliction, and failed plans bring us to that place of self-helplessness and defeat. And only then do we find that we have learned the lesson of faith; to find our tiny craft of life rushing onward to a blessed victory of life and power and service undreamed of in the days of our fleshly strength and self-reliance.”* Author unknown



Colossians Chapter 2

Complete in Christ

A. Paul's warfare for believers to be grounded in the wisdom and knowledge of God

Col. 2:1 For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

- It's interesting to consider Paul's opening statement here in Chapter 2; ***I only wish you knew the great inner struggle that I have for you.*** Paul makes a similar statement in ***Gal. 4:19.***
- The great inner struggle came for Paul over the concern that prompted the writing of this letter; knowing that false teaching was threatening the Colossian believers from maturing in the faith.

Col. 2:2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

- Paul's desire was that all Christians would be encouraged in heart as well as united in love, so that they might have a full understanding of God's mystery which he mentioned before in ***Chapter 1:26-27 – "Christ in you"***. Notice the strong terminology that Paul uses here; attaining to a wealth/riches that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of the mystery – "Christ in you".
- We could say it this way; the encouragement/comfort believers receive when they unite together in love, gives them a rich and full understanding of God's mystery – "Christ in you".

Col. 2:3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.



- Paul declares that in Christ are hidden all the treasures/riches/valuables which come from wisdom and knowledge.
- Turning back to ***Proverbs 24:3-4*** we read; ***"By wisdom a house is built, by understanding it is established, and by knowledge shall the rooms be filled with all precious and pleasant riches."*** A good definition for wisdom could be looking at life from God's point of view; and as we begin to look at life from His point of view, ***our spiritual house is built.*** As we continue on through life growing in God's wisdom, we come to a crossroads where we have an opportunity to apply Biblical wisdom in a certain situation, or go the world's

way. So we decide that we'll go with God, and when we do, we see God's hand in it resulting in an understanding of how the Lord works in this life. At that point of understanding, ***our spiritual house is being established or strengthened.*** Let's take this one step further; "By knowledge", which is familiarity gained through experience – We've looked at life from God's point of view, we've applied it to our lives, and now we "***know***" – The outcome of this progression from wisdom to understanding to knowledge is that ***the rooms of our spiritual house are filled with all precious and pleasant riches.*** We're not speaking of physical riches such as health or wealth, but rather spiritual riches ***Eph. 1:3; Gal. 5:22-23; 2 Pet. 1:3; etc.***

- Again remember that the heresy being taught in Colosse was a devaluing of Christ; thus the emphasis by Paul of the treasures/the riches/ the value of a full knowledge of Christ.

Col. 2:4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile (deceive/trick) you with enticing words.

- The believers in Colosse already knew what they needed to know to be saved; but now it was a matter of growing to maturity in faith.
- Here Paul gives the first of three warnings regarding false teachers in this chapter; the other two in ***verses 8 and 18.*** (***2 Pet. 2:1-2***)

B. Paul's expresses faith in God answering his prayer

Col. 2:5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

- Remember that Paul is writing to warn the Colossians against false teaching, and although he could not be with them, his thoughts and prayers were with them because they were united through the Holy Spirit.
- After the strong warning in ***verse 4***, Paul encourages the Colossians by telling them that he is rejoicing to see the steadfastness of their faith resulting in orderly/disciplined lives which was evidence that they had not embraced the heresy.
- However, he wanted to insure that they would not give in and believe the lies of the false teachers, so he launched into a full-scale rebuttal of the false teaching.

C. Basic instruction in living the life of faith

Col. 2:6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

- This is a Scripture that the Lord has used in many Christian's lives to introduce them to a walk of faith. I had lived a legalistic Christian life for almost 20 years when the Lord opened my eyes to this verse. Freedom came when I finally realized that it's as easy to live the Christian life as it is to get saved. (***Gal. 5:1***)
- We could say that the single most important principle of spiritual growth is faith...Without faith, any desire of ours to



walk with the Lord and grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely hopeless. **Heb. 11:6; 10:38. Rom. 14:23** – We could probably say that the Christian life is nothing more than a walk of faith.

- The Christian life is not a walk of me producing/performing, but rather receiving by faith.
- An interesting thought to consider is this; it is only natural in this production-oriented society to balk at a walk of faith. We are taught from childhood to produce/do the right things, or life will not go well.
- We hear things like "the Lord helps those who help themselves". This is not a true statement... What we find is true from the Bible is that the Lord helps those who trust in Him....
- It is important that we know that this problem is not unique to the 20th century, but rather a problem that has plagued the church and Christians since the beginning. **Gal.3:1-3**
- The faith by which we were saved is the same faith by which we are to "stand" **1Cor.16:13**..and "walk", **2 Cor.5:7**..... and "live". **Gal.2:20b**
- The same way we were saved (by grace through faith), we are to walk (by grace through faith). Paul continues in **verse 7** describing that walk.

Col. 2:7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

- Paul used several metaphors in this verse; rooted, built up, and established.
- First rooted: As we grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord, our roots must go down deep into Jesus Christ. Whenever a seed is planted, the way up is down; the roots must grow down deep into the soil (deep into Jesus Christ) before the plant will be "**built up**" or grow up out of the ground to be seen.
- "Rooted" in Him, "built up" in Him, in order that the Colossians, as well as all believers, may be able to stand firmly (by faith) against any false teaching. (**Jn. 15:4-5**) True understanding of what Christ has done on our behalf, can lead to no other response than gratefulness.
- Ponder **Rom. 10:17; "So then, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God"**. As the Holy Spirit roots us down into Christ, and occupies us with Him, the natural by-product will be a strong faith in Him as well as gratitude/a deep appreciation/thankfulness.However.....**verse 8**

D. Warning! The enemies of our faith

Col. 2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

- And now we have the second warning regarding the false teachers that were spreading their heresy in Colosse. **Watch out! Be on the alert!**



1. Lest any man take you captive through philosophy (the highest form of intellect).
 2. Lest any man take you captive through vain deceit (nonsense).
 3. Lest any man take you captive through tradition (we've always done it that way).
 4. Lest any man take you captive through the rudiments of this world (anything we place ahead of Christ)
- Beware lest we are taken captive by anything and not taken captive by Jesus Christ. In reality, many Christians are taken captive by money, power, education/knowledge, houses, vehicles, computers, the opposite sex, and the list goes on, and on, and on; but rarely do we find Christians who are captivated by Christ. (**Eph. 4:1; Philemon 1:1**)
 - One source of man's weariness is the pursuit of things that can never satisfy; but who of us has not been caught up in that pursuit at some time in life? Our passions, possessions, and pride – these are dead things. When we try to get life out of dead things, the result is only weariness and dissatisfaction." Max Lucado
 - ***As the Lord continues to deepen our understanding of the Christ-life, I have recently given much thought to Paul's comment in Phil. 3:7 – "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." What a total change of attitude in this man's life. As Saul, before his conversion, he had much worldly gain. He had gathered many honors for his name. He had made progress in Judaism beyond many of his peers. He had achieved a legal righteousness in which no man could find a flaw; His zeal, his knowledge, and his morality were of the highest order. However, from the moment Christ was revealed to him on the road to Damascus, everything changed – Act. 9:3-4***
 - ***Notice his two remarks in verses 5-6 – "Who are you" & "What would you have me to do." All of a sudden, what had previously been gain, his righteousness, education, and morality, had now turned to rubbish. Phil. 3:8***
 - The revelation of the glory of Christ had so completely changed the entire thought-life, attitude, and being of Paul that those things, which he had once esteemed positive gain, were now considered as positive loss....
 - ***Why? Simply because he had found his all in Christ, he was taken captive by Christ. Jesus Christ had supplanted everything in Paul's heart. Christ now displaced all that once belonged to Paul.***
 - As we grow in our understanding of all that the writer to the Hebrews had in mind in **chapter 12 and verse 3** when he said; "looking unto Jesus", the more completely we are stripped and emptied of everything in which "We" could glory or consider gain. Whatever there may be that tends to exalt self, whether it be righteousness, morality, respectability, wealth, glory, or intelligence, it is an absolute hindrance to our enjoyment/occupation/ with Christ

E. The believer is complete in Christ

Col. 2:9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

- And this is why we should not be taken captive by anything other than Jesus Christ; because in Him dwells all the fullness of God – Nothing can be added to fullness; He is totally and completely God.
- It's interesting to note that from verse 9 through 13, we continually read the words "in Christ" or "in Him"; "with Christ" or "with Him" to show that Christ is the center of all that God is doing. In this verse, Paul is clearly stating that Christ was not just another deity along with God, nor was He less than God, nor one in a hierarchy of angels who would act as intermediaries between people and God, Jesus Christ was totally and completely God.
- The false teachers said that Christ could not have been both God and man, but Paul clearly reveals in this verse that He was indeed the God-Man.

Col. 2:10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

- And by the way Paul says, just in case you are not aware of it, "**you are complete in Him**". As nothing can be added to fullness (**verse 9**), neither can there be anything added to completeness. He is fully God, and we are complete in Him, and God wants us to know (fully understand) this truth...**WE ARE COMPLETE IN HIM...** Keep in mind that this is a positional truth, and as we, by faith, rest in our position of "completeness", the Holy Spirit works that "completeness" out in our condition.
- Now many times in scripture the Lord uses a natural or physical picture to teach us a spiritual truth. This is true the area of being complete in Him, He first teaches us that we are complete in Adam before we can understand what it is to be complete in Christ.
- The key for our understanding in all this is a little phrase used repeatedly in **Gen. 1** which is, "*after its kind*". **Gen. 1:11-12 and 21-25** - As it is with plants and animals, so it is with man – "*after His kind*". **Gen. 1:26, 27**
- However, after the fall, **Gen. 5:3**...Every believer must first learn that he is complete in Adam (after His kind). We came from him and we are like him.
- Inside of each of us is a self-centered sin nature, the flesh, an inward desire to do wrong. In the book of Romans the word sinner, which we all are, is brought to our attention in chapter five, and it is important to notice how it is introduced. Look again with me at **verse 19**. We see that a sinner is a sinner because he is born a sinner, not because he commits sins.
- From the first half of **verse 19** it is very clear that in the natural, we are complete in Adam, but now look more closely at the last part of that verse...
- Remember **Col. 2:9 and 10a**, "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily and ye are complete in Him". By Him are we made righteous.
- Jesus Christ is the Source of our Christian life - we were born into Him and God has made us complete in Him. **2 Cor. 5:17a**



- As we, by faith, rest in this truth, it becomes a reality in our daily lives (little by little), and we receive what is already ours. The important thing to know and believe is that all is ours, we are complete in Him now. **2 Pet. 1:3; Rom. 8:17; Eph. 1:3**
- We could say it this way: When a person is born again into the family of God, he is born complete in Christ.
- It may help to think of it this way. Is Christ complete? Yes. Nothing needs to be added to Christ because He is already the fullness (**Col. 2:9**) of God; and as we believers, by faith, rest in our position in Christ we also are filled with all the fullness of God. **Eph. 3:17-19**
- Since we are complete in Jesus, it will not do to try and add to that finished work.
- Our part is not production, but reception of our life in Christ.
- It is really to translate/transfer Christ's life unto man.... Which in reality is forming men of God".

F. Our co-crucifixion with Christ

Col. 2:11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. 12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

- The Word of God presents the illustrations of circumcision and baptism; circumcision to depict our being cut off and removed from Adam, in order to be baptized (spiritually born) into living union with Christ. Nor did our heavenly Father stop at circumcision and baptism, but went on to position us in the heavenlies in the ascended Lord Jesus.
- In the Old Testament, Jewish males were circumcised as a sign of the Jew's covenant with God. (**Gen. 17:9-14**) Circumcision symbolized the "cutting off" of the old life of sin. (**Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4; Ezek. 44:7**) However, with the death of Jesus, bodily circumcision was no longer necessary to be identified as God's people.
- However, the Jewish false teachers in Paul's time gloried in physical circumcision, the "cutting off" of useless physical flesh.
- Here Paul addresses spiritual circumcision; as believers we have received a spiritual circumcision, the cutting off of the wretched flesh which is not done by man, but rather happens at the cross where we are co-crucified with Christ. (**Rom. 6:6**)
- Through our co-crucifixion with Christ, we have been set free from the reign of the flesh, thereby making it possible for us to walk in the Spirit.
- The moment we trust Christ as Saviour, the Holy Spirit baptises/places us into Christ (**1 Cor. 1:30a**), therefore, whatever has happened to Christ, has happened to us. He was crucified and buried. When He went to the cross we also went to the cross. When He went to the grave, we also went to the grave and now our flesh which was co-crucified with Him is held in that place of death and made inoperable as we, by faith, rest in this truth.

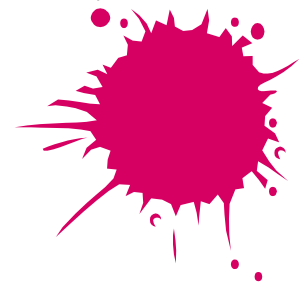
- And that's not all, He was raised and ascended. When Christ came out of that grave we also were raised; and when He ascended into heaven to sit at the right hand of His Father, that is our new position in Christ. ***Eph. 2:6***
- Since He was raised to new life, we also have been made a new creation with a new nature, which is His very life. (***Rom. 6:3-5***)

Col. 2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

- Since the Colossians were Gentiles they were uncircumcised; however this was not the cause of their spiritual death. Their uncircumcised sinful nature made them dead in their sins. (***Col. 2:11-12***)
- In ***Deut. 10:16***, Moses told the people of Israel to circumcise their hearts; in other words, go beyond physical surgery to the heart. They needed to submit to God in their hearts as well as in their bodies. (***Jer. 4:4; Rom. 2:29***) Paul taught that real circumcision is a matter of the heart.
- We were separated from God because of our sins and lived under the constant control of our flesh. But, through Christ, we have been made alive and have not only received the forgiveness of our sins (***Eph. 2:12-13***), but also we have been delivered from the power of sin. To defeat death, God made us alive; to deliver us from sin, He made us alive with Christ.
- As opposed to being dead alone in their sin, being alive together with Christ means that believers do not need to live any longer under sin's power.
- How did this happen? He forgave us all our trespasses. God's forgiveness opens the way for believers to experience new life in Christ.

Col. 2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

- At the cross Jesus paid for all of our sins, past, present and future, and therefore has also freed us from the condemnation of the law. For anything in our lives that the law could condemn, has been paid for at the cross by Christ.
- This verse could be translated as "erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands". Paul is explaining here the nature of Christ's forgiveness. In forgiving all our sins, Christ erased the record of our trespasses against the law that stood against us. Humanity could not pay the debt for these offenses, so God wiped out the record of our sin.
- Christ cancelled the written record against us by taking the ledger to the cross and nailing it there. Jesus took care of our indebtedness to God.



Col. 2:15 And having spoiled (disarmed) principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

- Not only did Christ's death on the cross pay for humanity's debt to God, but it was also Christ, at the cross, that overcame/disarmed principalities and powers. (**Col. 1:13; 1 Jn. 3:8**) In **1 Pet. 5:8**, we are told that Satan is a roaring lion; after the cross that's all he can do, just ROAR. He is totally under the sovereign control of God, and can only do what the Lord permits. (**Job. 1:6-12; 2:6**) The same goes for demons (**Matt. 8:28-32**); all were **disarmed** at the cross.
- It is interesting the confusion many have regarding Satan. I heard a missionary pastor say about him; "that guy has more medals for things he didn't do. He gets credit for most of the problems that occur in this life".
- But on the other hand, I remember someone sharing a true story of a young man who had gone to a tattoo parlor to receive his first tattoo. When the young man entered the door of the shop, he was confronted with a big decision; what would he choose to have tattooed on his arm. After looking at many options, he settled on a picture of the devil, with horns, in a red suit and carrying a pitchfork. Later that day, the young man went bowling and had rolled up his shirtsleeve to reveal his new tattoo. Suddenly from the next bowling lane he heard a woman's voice saying, "look at that cute little devil". That is exactly what Satan would like us to believe of him, that he is a cute little devil.
- Isn't it interesting that in reality Satan is a murderer, who hates God and desires to destroy every man woman and child that God loves, including you and me? So what does man do? He tattoos Satan's picture on his arm and calls him a cute little devil.
- Satan can appear as an angel of light. (**2 Cor.11:13-14**) He can make what is bad look good – Abortion. On the other hand, He can make what is good look bad - Spanking our children.
- Some comments by the Apostle Paul;
 - 1 Cor. 7:5** - Tempter
 - 2 Cor. 2:11** - Apparently he can gain an advantage;
 - Eph.4:25-27** - He can gain ground
 - Eph.6:11-12** – Schemer
 - 1 Thes. 2:18** – He can hinder
 - 2 Thes. 2:9** – He's actively working
 - 1 Tim.3:6-7** – Can ensnare
 - 1 Tim.5:15** - Some turn aside to him
 - 2 Tim.2:26** – He can hold men captive (of course this is done through ignorance or unbelief)
- ***If this was all that was written to the church about Satan, it would appear that we are in big trouble.***
- Well, praise the Lord. There is much more to be said.
- Let's try and draw a true, Biblical picture of Satan;
 1. **1Pet.5:8** – Roaring/angry lion – Wants to destroy
 2. **Jn.8:44** – Liar/Murderer – He destroys lives by deceiving folks,



not

by knifing them

3. **Rev. 12:7-10** – This scripture reveals how he operates – (Deceives the world/accuser)

- Examples;
 - A. Job – **Job. 1:6-12; 2:1-6** – Accuser – Notice that Satan is under the sovereign control of God.
 - B. Eve – **Gen. 3:1-6** – Deceiver/Liar/Murderer
 - C. Jesus – **Matt. 4:1-3** – Tempter – He can't force us/just tempt us – **1Thes. 3:5**
- Keep in mind that Satan is under the sovereign control of God; he would like to throw Christians into the fiery furnace to destroy them, but our loving Heavenly Father only permits the ropes that bind us to be consumed. (**Dan. 3:1-28**)
- Satan would like to grind us to powder, but the Lord only allows the chaff to be separated from the wheat. (**Luke 22:31-32**) "*Simon, Simon, Satan wants to sift you like wheat*".
- The greater majority of Christians who are blood bought, heaven bound, and set free, live in fear and bondage to the devil, living in retreat and defeat, unaware of the total victory of the cross - Crucified to the devil – **Gen. 3:15; Jn. 12:31**
- A powerful verse - **Jn. 8:32**
- A comment from C.A.Coates; "*The forgiven man is on an altogether new ground with the Father; he is on the ground of Grace, which is given to us through Jesus Christ who is "full of grace and truth."* The apprehension (taking hold) of this, puts the soul beyond the reach of the oppression and harassing of the devil.
- The cross is the solution to anything that our external enemy can do. He was defeated/crushed/disarmed at the cross. (**Col. 2:15**)
- Another interesting Scripture. **Eph. 6:10-14a**
- Notice the number of times that Paul uses the word stand. If we were to look at that word "stand" in the Greek, it has the idea that the ground is already taken and we are to merely hold our ground. But How? By faith - **1 Pet. 5:8-9a**
- **Eph. 4:27** - "Don't give place/ground to the devil".
- What gives place to the devil? **Unbelief - Stand (Hold your ground) firm in the faith.**
- **James 4:7** is significant. Notice the order here, submit (trust, depend on God), then resist the devil, by faith.
- According to the Word of God, our Heavenly Father is sovereign not Satan, not the demons. God the Father rules over all, no matter what Satan does.
- Many, many believers, not knowing or abiding in their position in Christ the Victorious One, attempt to fight against the devil and his demons. Before long, Satan looms larger and stronger in their minds, while Jesus seems to become smaller and weaker.
- Soon they imagine there are demons everywhere
- They become obsessed with warfare and before long, they begin to experience defeat and breakdown in the physical, mental, moral and spiritual realms.

- If Satan can bluff we Christians into becoming more occupied with him than the Lord Jesus, the inevitable result is a defeated Christian.
- However, it was Christ, at the cross, who overcame/disarmed principalities and powers; our part is to believe.

G. Conclusion- How knowing and believing who we are in Christ impacts our lives

Col. 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

- Because Christ had cancelled the written code (2:14), and had disarmed evil powers (2:15), believers have been set free from legalistic rules. Paul's point, don't give up freedom for legalism.
- Jesus Christ has provided everything that mankind will ever need.
 1. He is fully God and in Him we have been made complete.
 2. Through Him, we have received freedom from our flesh and a new nature.
 3. Through Him, we have been forgiven of all sin.
 4. Through Him, we have been set free from the law.
 5. Through Him, we have been delivered from Satan's power.
- In light of all that Christ has done for man, it only stands to reason that we have been set free from legalistic Old Testament dietary laws or observing celebrations, etc. (***Gal. 3:1-3; 5:1***)

Col. 2:17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

- Anything that is not Christ or found in Christ, is a shadow or unreal. At one time, these laws were needed as the ceremonial and civil regulations of Judaism set God's people apart from the world. Through Christ, however, God was preparing a new people for Himself, a worldwide family.
- Old Testament laws and holy days were a shadow of things to come; the reality of all is found in Jesus Christ. What the Old Testament promised, Christ fulfilled.

Col. 2:18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility (delighting in self-abasement) and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

- By turning the Colossian believers from the reality back to the shadow (false humility/self-denial, teaching that God can only be approached through angels, taking great pride in signs, wonders, and visions, as well as observing dietary laws and celebrations), false teachers led many down a road of destruction. (***2 Pet. 2:1-2***) This ultimately results in loss of reward (***1 Cor. 3:13-15***).

Col. 2:19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

- The fundamental problem with the false teachers was that they were not connected to/occupied with Christ. Had they been “holding the Head”/looking unto Jesus, they would not be teaching false doctrine.
- Keep in mind that we are all part of Christ’s body/the church, and as the members of our physical body must be connected to the head/brain at all times, so must the members of Christ’s body remain connected to “The Head”. Had the false teachers been connected to “The Head”, they would not have been false teachers.

Col. 2:20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?



- Because we have died with Christ, we are no longer under the power of the principles of this world system. (**Gal. 6:14**) Our death with Christ has freed us from our former slavery to this world system. Paul wondered why these Colossian believers would even think about submitting themselves to a defeated foe/conquered power.
- Let’s take a moment to define this term, “world”, which in all reality is rather difficult to define.
- It actually refers to the world system, which is dominated by satanic principles such as deceit, greed, ambition, selfishness and sinful pleasure.
- No wonder the Lord says, “Love not the world”. **1 Jn.2:15**
- Notice that John doesn’t say; “love not the world too much,” he simply says, don’t love it at all.
- **1 Jn.2:16** Basically, this is all that the world (world-system) has to offer.
- Every sin boils down to one of these.
 1. **Lust of the flesh** - alcohol, drugs, immorality, overeating, etc.
 2. **Lust of the eyes** - greed, materialism, Occupied with the opposite sex, etc
 3. **Pride of life** – Judgmental-ness, critical-ness, anger, inflated with self-importance, boasting, self-righteousness, etc. (*Touch not, taste not, handle not fit into this category*)
- It’s interesting to see what the serpent used to deceive Eve in **Gen.3:6**.
- It is also interesting to see that Satan used the same worldly tactics to tempt Jesus in **Matt.4:1-11**.
- Self-centered man, whether he be unsaved or a carnal Christian, will seek satisfaction through one of these 3 forms of worldly lust, but to all of them, the Christian has been crucified. **Gal. 6:14**
- It is very important that we understand our relationship to the world. **After the cross.**
 1. This world is not our home - **Heb.11:13** - Strangers & Pilgrims on earth

2. Our citizenship is in heaven - **Phil.3:20**

3. Jesus makes it very clear in Jn.17 that we are not of this world - **Jn.17:14**

Jn. 7:7. Why couldn't the world hate them here? Because at that time, **before the**

cross, they were still of the world. **They had not been crucified to it.**

- Remember **1 Jn.2:15**, "Love not the world, neither the things of the world."
- Now turn with me to **James 4:4** - Notice the terms used: adultery/enemy. James is saying that friendship with the world/world-system is **spiritual adultery**. Notice what Paul has to say in **2 Tim.4:10**.
- What is the solution to Spiritual adultery?
- The Cross **Gal. 6:14** - (I have no desire for the world, and it has no power over me) and our part is to believe. (**Col. 2:6**).
- And so Paul wondered in **Col. 2:20-22**, why these Colossian believers would even think about submitting themselves to a defeated foe/conquered power.

23 Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.



- To the Colossians, as well as to many Christians today, the legal demands of the false teachers appear to be good; Notice that Paul said obeying these rules gives an appearance of wisdom (*just an appearance*) in self-made religion. Following a long set of religious rules to gain acceptance by God is not God's way. It's a man-made religion, which began way back in the book of Genesis when Adam and Eve tried to make themselves acceptable to God by putting on fig leaves. It's as unacceptable to God today as it was back then.

- An interesting quote from Robert Farrar Capon; "For the Gospel of Grace is the end of religion, the final posting of the CLOSED sign on the sweatshop of the human race's constant struggle to think well of itself; for at best, that is what religion is: Man's well meant, but dim-witted attempt to gain approval for doing odd jobs that he thinks God will thank him for...Religion, therefore, is a loser...It has a failed past and a bankrupt future... There was no religion in Eden, and there will be none in the New Jerusalem; and in the meantime, Jesus has died and risen to persuade us to knock it off right now. He has made it real clear that as far as God is concerned, we're all home free already, and there is not a single religious thing that you or I have to do.....We are simply invited to believe it"... -Robert Farrar Capon
- Let's face this truthfully; legalism attracts many. Multitudes of Christians enjoy sacrificing and playing the martyr for the simple reason that it gives a feeling of

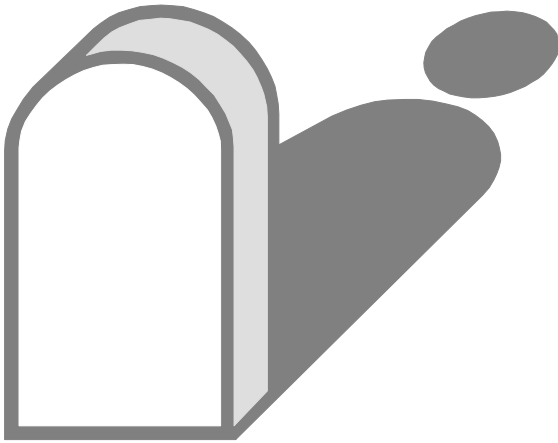
accomplishment, acceptance, satisfaction, and acceptance. However, as Paul points out, all of man's efforts to carry out Christian conduct/live the Christian life are of no value against fleshly indulgences. In other words, it will in no way be of any help in the battle against the flesh. Why? Because "the battle is not ours, but the Lords". **(2 Chron. 20:15b)**

Colossians Chapter #3

Risen with Christ

Introduction:

- We have seen death with Christ applied to the danger that faced these Colossian believer. Why were they subject to ordinances? They ought not to be, for in Christ they were dead to the rudiments of this world, and therefore have nothing to do with ordinances.
- Keep in mind that the Christian is positionally dead due to the virtue of the cross of Christ; this is all a matter of faith. Of course he is alive naturally, and will only see old thoughts and habits revived if not occupied with Christ.



- Now the Christian is looked at as a dead man; yes, dead to the world doing it's best, even the religious world. The best the natural man can pretend to is in not touching, tasting, handling. Such is it's only way of getting the victory, which is really no victory at all, but merely abstinence from certain things, or a system of fleshly restrictions.
- This is totally different from Christian principles. Christians look for the victory of grace. For the death of Christ has delivered us from the entire

ground of nature, in not touching, tasting, or handling. Christianity does not merely avoid evil within and around, but applies death to it all. Christ has died to it, and we Christians should know ourselves to be dead to all that is of the world whether it be moral or immoral, religious or gross, intellectual or foolish.

- In Chapter 3 we advance a step farther, Paul here reasons from our being risen with Christ. It is not merely that we shall die and rise, but that we are dead and risen.
- The Christian faith brought a whole new concept into pagan societies: What we believe, has a definite connection with how we behave. Faith in Christ brings with it oneness with Christ (In Christ, and Christ in you). He cannot live in us by His Spirit and have no influence on our lives.

A. Our position as a believer

Col 3:1 *If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. 2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

- Paul's assumption here is that his readers understood their co-crucifixion (**Rom. 6:6**) as well as their co-resurrection (**Eph. 2:6**) with Christ which he had mentioned back in **Col 2:11-12**.

- Now here in **Chapter 3**, Paul shares how faith in our identification with Christ should be affecting our daily lives; we are no longer occupied with the things of this world, but rather our occupation is with Christ. **Is. 26:3; Ps. 121:1-2; Ps. 123:1-2**
- This occupation with Christ is a progressive growth process that actually begins the moment we trust Christ as our Savior. It might be good for us to look at four phases of the Christian life.

- **Phase #1 is an occupation with our own fleshly desires....Jam. 4:1-3**
- *Quote from Dr. W.J. Prost; "The essence (predominant quality) of true Christianity is not to have either high or low thoughts of self, but rather not to be thinking of self at all". And then He quotes Phil. 1:21 - "For me to live is Christ".*
- Let's give some thought to this. Man is an **object** of God's blessing/His free gifts/His grace. And God is the source of man's blessing. **(John 3:27; Jam. 1:17)**
- But if the blessing/gifts/grace becomes man's **object**, then God, the source of it, is overlooked. **Job. 1:8-11** - Notice what's happening here. Satan is insisting that God's blessings were Job's **object**, & not God Himself.
- *This tendency in man goes all the way back to the fall. It was by proposing to Eve that she would receive a benefit/a blessing/some personal gain, that Satan trapped her. Gen. 3:4-6. Notice, personal gain was the primary object in her mind, and in order to obtain it, God was overlooked.*
- Now, if this snare/this trap was successful in a perfect environment like the Garden of Eden, how much more likely is it to be successful in our present fallen world?
- When God's blessings become all important, He Himself is **out of the picture**. And



this was the warning that the Children of Israel received when they came into the Promised Land. **Deut. 8:12-14**

- And so it happened, the blessings given actually turned their hearts to themselves and the consequence was, that God was not only forgotten, but rejected, which eventually led to idolatry/idol worship.
- Think back to those early years of our Christian lives where most of us will see a lot of childish self-centeredness, which God patiently tolerated. *(I remember praying for health, wealth, good days, etc.*
- *My focus was Me*) I was occupied with **my** pleasure, **my** joy and **my** relief.
- I looked for **freedom** from the guilt of **my** sin, and desired from Him the **peace, joy,** and **benefits** of **my** life in Christ.
- However, if we are going to grow spiritually, the way up is down.
- Therefore, in God's own time, the Lord will use that self-centeredness for the purpose of revealing to us a sinful malignancy/a rotten cancer that dwells within

each one of us. And at some point, we will begin a downward spiral into the terrible defeat of Romans Seven.

- ***This is Phase #2 - Occupation with the wretchedness of our flesh. Rom. 7:15-24***
- As Christians, we are going to be influenced and ultimately controlled by one of two powers; The self life, or the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. The first will make life hell and the second heaven. ***Jer. 17:5-8***
- The flesh/self is the fleshly, self-centered carnal nature that we inherited from Adam, and we all have one. It's ugly, it's horrible - we got it at birth. It will be with us until death and will never change. Vines definition of the flesh, or self, is "human nature deprived of the Spirit of God and dominated by sin".
- And to make matters worse, God sees nothing good in the flesh. ***Rom. 7:18a***. Even the very best which the flesh can produce, God rejects.
- It's interesting that unlike Paul, few Christians are willing to admit that the flesh/self is controlling their lives; there is a blindness to the subtle, clever, deceitful workings of the flesh.
- If the more horrible sins are absent from our lives, then we tend to rest in a complacent sense of goodness (self-righteousness). We fail to realize how obnoxious to God are the more "culturally" acceptable sins such as (embellishing stories, sarcasm, impatience, worry, etc.). Few people come to ***Rom. 7:24***
- Martin Luther once said, "I am more afraid of my own heart than of the Pope and all his cardinals. I have within me the great Pope self." *And we have within us a wretched tyrant that gives commands and we obey.*

Phase #3

- However, **in Time**, and I might add again, in **God's time**, the Spirit of Truth/the Holy Spirit will begin to reveal our need for relief from this wretched self-life and will begin to open our eyes to a deeper truth regarding our co-crucifixion with Christ. ***Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20***
- ***This begins Phase #3 - Occupation with the Cross***
- *Death is required to become a phase # 4/Spiritual man.*
- *The cross must come first. Luke 9:23; Lev. 8:22-30; Col. 3:9-10; Eph. 4:22-24*
- Many Christians pray for God to make them stronger to overcome sin/the flesh, but this is not God's way. God's way of delivering us from this wretched evil is not to make us stronger and stronger, but by making us weaker and weaker. ***(2 Cor. 12:9,10; Is. 40:29)*** God sets us free from the dominion of sin not by strengthening our old man, but by crucifying him.
- Remember the day when we saw clearly that Christ died for us; we all should be equally clear as to the time when we saw that we died with Christ, and then reckon it so.
- Notice the repeated statements in **Chap. 6** of our actual identification with the death of Christ. ***Verses 2,3,4,5,6,7,8,11,13***

- Miles Stanford quote; "Fruit springs out of death. Self-centeredness is always barren and solitary. The way of victory is the way of the cross. The Christian names that are honored in history are names that stand over graves where the old man was buried long before the body died."
- It is obvious from Paul's Epistles that his whole life hung on the fact that he was crucified with Christ.

Phase # 4

- As we begin to exercise faith in our co-crucifixion with Christ, reckoning ourselves dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God (**Rom. 6:11**), the result is a growing freedom from the power and reign of sin (**Rom. 6:18, 14, 7, 6**)
- **However**, in the midst of all this growth in "deeper truth," most of us are still more aware/more occupied with the benefactee than the **Benefactor**. We are more occupied with the results of spiritual growth than with the one who grows us.
- As the Holy Spirit begins to open our eyes to this truth, we are about to enter into **Phase #4 - Occupation with the risen Lord Jesus Christ. (Col. 3:1-3)**

Col 3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God.

Col 3:2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.



- This word "affections" could be translated "mind"; "set your mind on things above". Have you ever tried to set your mind/affections on something only to find your thoughts/affections drifting to other things. So you try harder to think on those things, but once again your mind wanders.
- Paul's remedy for this dilemma is to reckon on our co-crucifixion/co-resurrection with Christ, which will render the flesh powerless and therefore unable to influence man's soul (mind, will, emotions). In it's place the Spirit now becomes the influential one, the motivator, the power source in one's life enabling us to occupy our minds with "things above". .
- Remember **Gal. 5:17** which describes the battle between the flesh and spirit, "the flesh lusts/wars against the Spirit, and the spirit lusts/wars against the flesh". What are they fighting over? The control of man's soul (mind, will, emotions).

Col 3:3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

- The Greek aorist tense in the phrase "for you are dead" connotes that we died when Christ died, which our baptism confesses or proclaims. In Christ's death, all believers died (**Gal. 2:20a**).
- Paul further explains why Christians are able to set their affections/minds on things above; because of their position of co-crucified with Christ, they are dead to this

world as well as to the things in it (**Gal. 6:14**), and their lives are positionally “hid with Christ in God”. For now it is hidden; Christ has not yet allowed His glory to be seen by the world. Therefore a Christian should be content to be, for a little while, an object of rejection and scorn.

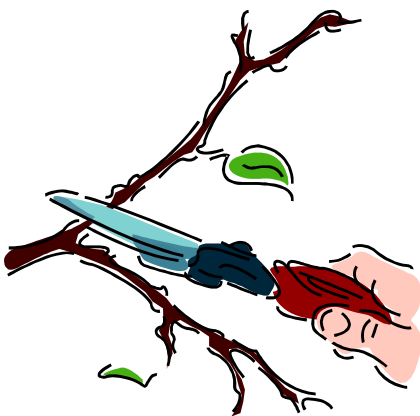
- Notice the double protection, “with Christ in God”. Satan can’t tempt Christ, and he can’t tempt us as we rest in our position in Christ.

B. Our resulting condition based on knowing and believing that Christ is our life

Col 3:4 *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

- Let’s consider Paul’s statement “Christ who is our life”. Christ Himself gives to all believers Divine life. He is the source, power, and goal of all Christian growth.
- In **Jn. 15:1**, the Lord explains our position in Christ by using the analogy of a tree. We read **“I am the true vine”**, or we could say He is the source of life. He continues on in the second verse referring to we Christians as branches attached to the “true vine” to the source of life. The idea here is that if the branch is severed from the vine, it dies. Thus Paul’s statement **“Christ Who is our life” (Jn. 11:25)**.
- **An interesting quote by J.B. Stoney; “I have the life of the One in whom I died. (Christ, who is my life – Col. 3:4) I am not a bit dead myself. ‘Holiness by faith’ people say I am dead; but that is not true. Others talk about dead to nature. Another novel notion that has come out is, that I must apply the death of Christ to get power over sin. All are wrong. The truth is, I have died with Him, and now I am in His life.” J.B. Stoney**
- Here is a further truth; “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory”. Christ is not always, as now, to be hidden, He is about to be manifested; and when He is, we too who are in Him, shall be manifested with Him in glory.
- Because we are positioned in Christ, where He goes, we go. Therefore, when he appears in glory, we shall also appear. (**1 Cor. 15:42-43**)

Col 3:5 *Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate (unrestrained) affection, evil concupiscence (desires), and covetousness, which is idolatry:*



- Because you are dead, and because you have this new life, even Christ, mortify your members which are upon earth. If the Colossian believers were to live out the Christ life, then certain manifestations of the earth-life must be held in the place of death.
- Although these believers had positionally died with Christ, and had been raised with Him, they were still susceptible to temptation and the evil desires of the flesh. Just like diseased limbs of a tree, these practices need to be cut off; which takes a conscious by faith, daily

appropriation of our co-crucifixion with Christ, which is the remedy for the earth-life.

- In **1 Pet. 4:1**, we are told to have the same mind-set as Christ who suffered in the flesh, and the reason for this is that “he who has suffered in the flesh/denied the flesh, has ceased from sin’. In other words stop giving the flesh what it wants. (**Lk. 9:23**)
- Since we have received a new position in which we are seated with Christ in the heavens, Paul is imploring us to by faith, appropriate our co-crucifixion and new position in Christ, thereby taking away sin’s power.

Col 3:6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

- The wrath of God refers to God’s judgement on these kinds of behaviours.
- Paul further explains that these are the very things for which God will judge the unsaved.

Col 3:7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

- Therefore, those things that we walked in before we were saved and given a new position are not appropriate behaviour for those who are seated with Christ in the heavenlies.

C. Practicing by faith who we are in Christ

Col 3:8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds. 10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

- It’s wonderful to see how the truth of being dead with Christ is brought in as deliverance from all fleshly strongholds. It is the judgment of the first Adam as a whole; nothing is spared. The “ye” in verse 9 is very strong; “Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him”.
- Our Father intends us to know and understand that He has already provided, in Christ our life, everything required for our Christian life both in time and eternity. He is patiently teaching us to have no faith in the old man (self), and to exercise all of our faith in the new Man (Christ). We are told to do in faith what our Father has already done in fact. At the cross, He freed us from the reign of sin and self; in the resurrection, He united us to the risen Lord Jesus. By faith in the work of the cross (our co-crucifixion), the old man is put off; by faith in our heavenly position in Christ, the



new man is put on. Hence we are free to dwell within the very source of every spiritual blessing with which our Father has blessed us.

- By considering/believing the old man to have been crucified at Calvary, he is "put off" daily (Rom. 6:11a). By considering/believing ourselves as newly created in the risen Lord Jesus, we "put on" the new man (Rom. 6:11b). As we escape self's reign of death, we enter into Christ's reign of life.

1. Put Off the Old

a. *Fact*

"Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him" (Rom. 6:6, NASB).

"seeing that ye have put off the old man" (Col. 3:9). Positionally, we were separated from the old Adamic nature in our identification with Christ on the cross.

b. *Faith*

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation (manner of life) the old man" (Eph. 4:22). By faith in our new, sanctified position, we turn from, we consider as crucified, the principle of sin and self within. We count ourselves to be new creations in Christ, having died to sin and self. That is our part in putting off the old man which God positionally put off from us at the cross.

2. Put On The New

a. *Fact*

"For as many of you as have been baptized [spiritually] into Christ, have positionally put on Christ" (Gal.3:27). "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:10). At our new birth we were recreated in Christ, and our Christian life is now hid with Christ in God (Col. 3:3,4).

b. *Faith*

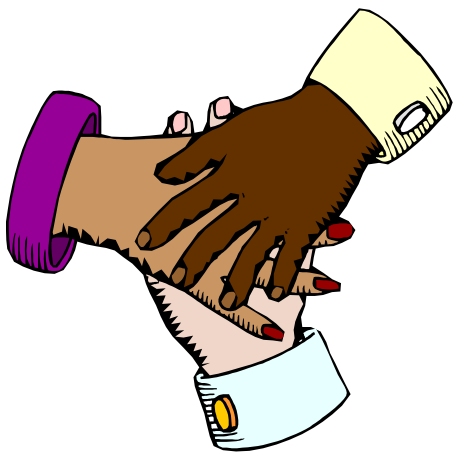
"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13:14). "... put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24). By faith in the positional fact that our Father has placed us in His Son, we abide in Him, we acknowledge our place in Him. By faith, we stand in the position He has already given us. "Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth" (Eph. 6:14).

- In ***Eph. 4:22-24*** we see a similar scripture; at first glance, it appears that the progression of thought in Ephesians is different than ***Col. 3:8-10***, however after taking a closer look it is identical.
- The basic progression is as follows; "put off the old man" (***Rom. 6:6***); followed by the renewing of the mind (as the influence of the "old man/flesh" over our minds is diminished, the Spirit then begins to influence/renew the mind); what follows is the Spirit's work of putting on the "new man" (molding us into the image of Christ); the outcome is Godly Christian conduct (stop stealing, stop the anger, stop all the bitterness, stop lying, stop grieving the Holy Spirit, etc).

D. No cultural or racial differences in Christ's body, the church

Col. 3:11 *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*

- There are no cultural differences “in Christ”. There should be no barriers of nationalities, race, education level, social standing, wealth, gender, religion, or power in the Church of Jesus Christ. (**Gal. 3:26-28**)
- Paul points out four groupings that were of particular importance in the Greek culture. 1. Racial/National 2. Religious 3. Cultural 4. Social/economic. Jesus Christ broke down all barriers; He accepts all who come to Him, and it is wrong to build the church on human distinctions (race/color/social standing), and not on Jesus Christ.
- It's imperative for us as Christians to value nothing but Christ. As Christ is all, and in all, therefore we must prize in one another only what is of Him; Christ is the only thing worth my thoughts, affections, labor, and life.
- If I love and prize Christ, such will be my feeling toward Christians.



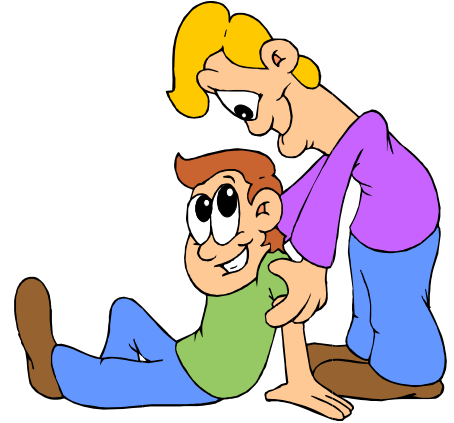
E. Practicing by faith who we are in Christ continued...

Col 3:12 *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. 14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness (harmony/unity).*

- It's interesting that Paul begins this section by reminding us of the grace of God; “**put on therefore, as the elect of God**”. The word “elect” means chosen, chosen of God.
- Divine selection is not limited only to God choosing who will receive eternal life because we see it everywhere in the universe. There is variety in everything God created. There are classifications among the angels. One star is bigger and brighter than another star. Men are not born of the same race with the same advantages, nor with the same abilities. Let's add this also--man's will has no part in any of this. Men do not choose their race or their life conditions, such as where they are born, rich or poor, healthy or sick, position of honor or dishonor.
- Any system of religious thought, which suggests that God is limited by the thoughts, prayers, or actions of man is just plain foolishness. The order of truth is seen in the first phrase of the Bible--“In the beginning God.” It is God who planned, He executed and it is He who will do His good pleasure.
- The true system of Biblical thought begins with God and man is conformed to the plan and purpose of his Creator, not the other way around. Something else for us to consider is that God is never obligated in the exercise of His grace. He chooses

whomever He pleases. (**Romans 9:20,21**) He sees absolutely no good in man which might form a basis for His blessings. **Romans 3:10-18**

- Paul continues in these verses explaining that when believers are resting, by faith, in the fact that the “old man” has been put off, and the “new man” put on, the heart attitude will manifest the characteristics of Christ.
- Paul here seems to be emphasizing the positive moral qualities of Christ, (*the tone, spirit, and inward feelings of Jesus*), which will become the attitude of our hearts. The attitude of tender mercy/compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, long suffering/patience, forbearing one another/tolerance, forgiveness, and love, all of which are a fruit of faith.
- “Putting on Christ” by faith, affects every attitude of the heart, which Paul explains are perfectly bound together in love. Love pulls together the other attitudes of the heart in unity; it is the basis of every right attitude and motive. **Rom. 13:14**



Col. 3:15 *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

- There are three kinds of peace mentioned in the Bible; peace with God (**Rom. 5:1**), peace from God (**Rom. 1:7b**), and here we see the peace of God.
- **Peace with God** - In **Rom. 5:6, 8, & 10**, we are told that natural man is ungodly, a sinner, and an enemy of God. However, in **Rom:5:1**, Paul states that through faith, we have made “peace with God.
- **Peace from God** - In each of Paul’s 13 epistles, after the initial greeting he makes the following statement; “Grace to you and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ”.
- **Peace of God** - However, here in **Col. 3:15** as well as **Phil. 4:7**, Paul mentions another peace, the “peace of God. It’s wonderful to meditate on the fact that we are no longer enemies of God, and that by grace through faith, we have made peace with God. And it’s even more encouraging to consider that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can actually receive peace from God. However, to ponder the awesome fact that the sovereign God of this universe desires to give all Christians His peace, the peace of God, is an overwhelming thought.
- Keep in mind when Paul begins this verse with “let the peace of God rule”, he is not suggesting that this be done through man’s effort or choice, but rather through faith in the finished work of the cross which he taught in **verses 9 & 10**.
- *Because the “old man” is put off, and the “new man” is put on, we now have the Lord Jesus Christ as the object of our affection and the result is the peace of God ruling”. (**Is. 26:3**)*

- The word translated “rule” is an athletic term and can actually mean “umpire”. Paul wanted the Believers to let God’s peace umpire/referee in their hearts/souls (mind, will, emotions). Having the peace of God or not having the peace of God, should be the ruling/determining factor that indicates whether we are operating in the flesh, or spirit.



- “To which” refers back to “the peace of God” which enables us to be unified as well as thankful.

G. The fruit of letting the Word of Christ dominate our hearts and minds

Col 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

- Again the word “let” assumes we are appropriating the truth of **verses 9 & 10**; therefore Paul boldly encourages all believers to, by faith, “let the word of God dwell in you richly”. Keep in mind **Jn. 1:1 & 14**; “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us*”.
- Is it possible that here in **Col. 3:16**, the Word is referring to the indwelling Jesus Christ? Consider that the written Word and the living Word are one in the same and will dwell in us richly as we rest in our identification with Christ.



- Which enables us to teach and admonish/warn one-another in wisdom and in a gracious, light-hearted manner.
- It might be good at this point to consider **Eph. 5:18-19**; we have taught previously that the literal translation of the phrase “filled with the Spirit” is actually “keep on getting filled by the Holy Spirit”. The Spirit is the agent that does the filling, and He is actually filling us with the Lord Jesus Christ/the “Word that was made flesh”.

• Notice the similarity in the fruit of our being filled by the spirit in **Eph. 5:19** as well as letting the Word of Christ dwell in us richly in **Col. 3:16**. (“...Speaking to yourselves (or to others) in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to the Lord”.)

H. How God’s indwelling Word positively impacts our activities and relationships

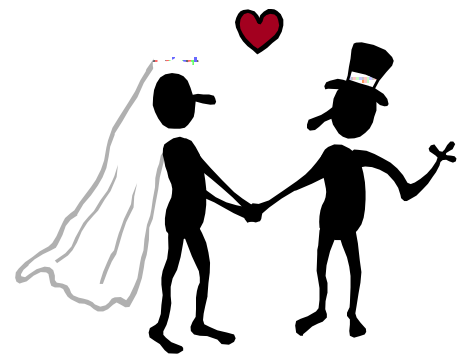
Col 3:17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

- In modern society, we pay little attention to names, but in the ancient world, a man’s name was of utmost importance.

- When Paul writes “whatever you say or do, do all in the “name of the Lord”, the phrase “In the name of the Lord” links it to the person of Christ.
- Keep in mind that if we say or do something in someone’s name, then we have their approval.
- It’s interesting to note that in **John 14:13** the sole condition for prayer to be answered is praying “in My Name”, and we can only pray in His name, if we know what His will is. Likewise we can only “do in word or deed in His name” if we know His will; and as we discovered in our earlier studies, we can only know His will at the cross where our will/desires are crucified.
- The words, “in My Name” signifies Christ Himself giving His approval, and that will only take place at the foot of the cross where the “old man” is crucified enabling us to walk in the Spirit.

Col 3:18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

- *Basically, a wife’s submission involves an attitude of lovingly giving up her rights.* The reaction that the idea of submission generates among women is normally very negative. Often times, it is viewed as inferiority, or loss of identity.
- It actually generates fear in the hearts of many women. The main reason for this goes right back to Gen. 3 – Women naturally want to rule/control their lives and to place themselves under the control of another, particularly a man who is not showing leadership qualities is frightening....
- However--the Biblical view of submission is very different from this...
- Referring again back to **Col. 3:18/Eph. 5:22**, notice that the submissive attitude of the wife toward her husband is qualified by the phrase, “*as to the Lord.*”
- Turning now to a very interesting scripture: (**I Peter 2:21-23**) **Jesus** actually set the example for submission by enduring injustice and trusting Himself to God’s care. Look what God is saying here, **A wife can submit to her less than perfect husband, while entrusting herself to God’s care.**
- **I Peter 3:1,2** (A wife’s submission can influence a husband.
- **I Peter 3:3-6** - Notice the word **fear** - (A wife who truly knows and trusts her God, will not be afraid to submit)... **1 Jn. 4:18; 2 Cor. 5:14a**



Col 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

- In **Eph. 5:23** Paul explains that a husband is the head of his wife as Christ is the head of the Church, and he is the savior of the body. What kind of Savior did we have? A self-less, sacrificing, suffering servant-Savior. He goes on in **verse 25** to say that husbands are to also love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. Therefore we can see from these verses, that Jesus Christ is the role model for all husbands. **Mark 10:42-45**

- Christian men/Christian husbands, our leadership role, whether it be in the church or home, is made very clear in this Scripture...**Primarily it is death to self, which will manifest itself in servant-leadership and selfless-love...**
- The price of servant-leadership is high and hard; he lays down his life for the sheep. True spiritual servant-leadership involves this principle: “Death working in me works life in you” (**2 Cor. 4:12; 12:14-15**)
- It might be good if we took a moment to address the problem of bitterness, and in particular, bitterness toward our wives. **Heb. 12:15** makes it very clear that bitterness comes from our failure to appropriate God’s Grace. (*Paraphrase*) *If we fail to appropriate/take possession of the grace of God, bitterness sets in, it troubles us, and affects everyone around.*
- For example, often husbands become frustrated with what appears to them as unreasonableness in their wives. Then in their fleshly frustration, they fail to appropriate God’s grace to cope with the situation, and the outcome is bitterness, which troubles them, and affects the entire family.



Col 3:20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

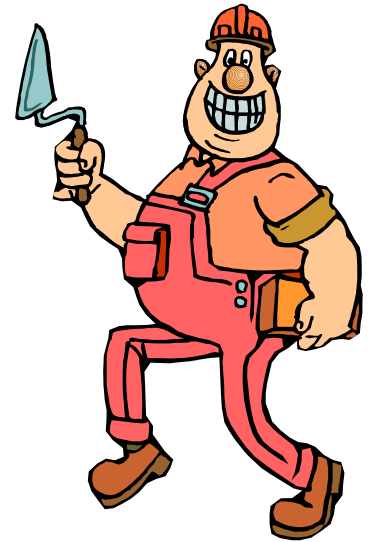
- The word for “obey” is different than the word “submit” used for wives. The wife occupies a place of equality with her husband and submission is merely a question of headship. However, the child is to obey as a servant is to obey. This is the same word as used in **verse 22**.
- Disobedience to parents is one of the last forms of lawlessness to occur on earth. (**2 Tim. 3:1-2**) Other Scriptures to ponder; **Eph. 6:2-3**
- Many times parents pressure their children to obey, and often they do obey under pressure, but their attitude is one of disrespect. The Lord makes it very clear in these verses that children are not only to obey, but they are to do it with the right attitude.
- Remember, by nature a child is selfish and does not want to obey and honor his parents. Somehow parents think that their children should be able to obey just because they say so. However, both children and parents need to understand what the Bible teaches; that the disobedience and disrespect is caused by the child’s flesh, and Jesus has made a way for them to overcome this as they walk by faith in the truth of **Rom. 6:6**.
- It’s interesting to read that obedience, which we saw in **Rom. 1:5** is actually a **fruit of faith**, and therefore is pleasing to the Lord. **Heb. 11:6**

Col 3:21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

- **Fathers have several responsibilities toward their children. One is mentioned here; he is not to provoke his child to anger; in other words, do not use parental authority to provoke and tear down a child, but rather to encourage and build up. (Eph. 6:4) There is nothing that more discourages a child than a parent's continual faultfinding.**
- **The mother is not so exhorted here, for as a rule her general fault is to spoil them.**

Col 3:22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

- It is estimated that several million slaves played a significant role in Roman society during the time of Paul's writings. Slavery was sanctioned by law and was part of the society's social makeup. Because many slaves and slave-owners had become Christians, the early church had to deal with the master-slave relations.
- Paul's statement neither condemns nor condones slavery, he was merely addressing the issue of Christians, whether slaves or employees, should no longer work for human approval. **(Gal. 1:10; Eph. 6:6; Pr. 29:25)**
- In those days, many Christian slaves served heathen masters; no matter, the great thing is to remember the Lord Jesus and His will. We belong to Him, for the purpose of doing His will.
- It's interesting to ponder that believing slaves were not set free from serving their masters, but they were set free from slavery to sin.



Col 3:23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

- Slaves had a variety of tasks; errands, teaching, cleaning, cooking, etc. Paul gave their jobs new dignity through focusing them on Christ as their master.
- Echoing his words in **3:6**, Paul once again explained that God will deal with all wrongdoing. It's interesting that the condition of the Ephesian Church was such that Paul could encourage them through the love of Christ. However, the Colossians not being in such a spiritually mature condition, are exhorted on a lower ground. Paul's appeal was more through the conscience.

Colossians Chapter # 4

Life and Fellowship in Christ

A. The indwelling Word's impact on relationships continued...

- It's rather evident that the first verse of chapter 4 belongs to the end of chapter 3. Three pairs of appeals; wives and husbands, children and fathers, and now servants and masters.

Col 4:1 Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

- There is the difference to be noted that husbands and wives existed from the very first; not so, the relation of master and servant. The relation of masters and slaves was a result of the entrance of sin into the world. We don't hear of bondmen before the flood, though Noah predicts it of Canaan soon after.
- If this is so, there is a rather interesting progression here in these relationships; husbands and wives in paradise, children born after the fall but before the flood, servants not heard of until after the flood.
- The point to ponder here is, that it is well to see that the master-servant relationship followed not only the fall, but even the great judgment of God executed on the earth. Therefore we could conclude that men, having fellow men as property or slaves, is far from being according to God. And yet we read here in verse 1 "*Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal*".
- Whether a servant was a believer or not, Christian masters were to treat all their slaves fairly, keeping in mind that Paul did not say that they should free all slaves.
- And then Paul's reminder that we all are accountable to our Heavenly Master.

B. Final instructions on worship and prayer

Col 4:2 Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;

- Turn with me to **1 Thes. 5:17** (*Pray without ceasing*); **Eph. 6:18** (*Praying always*); **Rom. 12:12** (*Devoted to prayer*); **Act. 6:4** (*Give ourselves continually to prayer*); **Luke 18:1** (*Men ought always to pray*); **Ps. 55:16-17**
- Pray continually/Pray at all times/Pray morning, noon and night. What does God expect from us? Does He want us to be monks on a mountaintop that never eat or sleep?
- Let's give some serious thought to all this; because there is a slight possibility that we don't even know what true Biblical prayer is.
- It might be helpful to stop a moment and define prayer. **What is it?**
- We could spend many hours looking up definitions of prayer, and to be quite honest, we'll probably find that most are rather shallow.

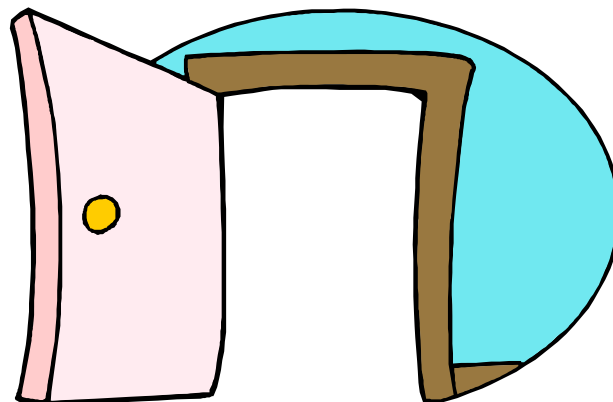


- Of all the definitions, John Darby seems to help us see the true meaning of prayer. (Paraphrased) – “Prayer is the great means by which we are practically kept in awareness of the Father’s presence. It is the proper expression of our weakness to the father and of our confidence in His love and care day by day and evermore. Prayer is confessing our constant need of dependence upon Him.”
- **True Biblical Prayer is acknowledging and depending on God.**
- It would appear that true Biblical prayer is not an action, but rather a life which maintains a dependence on Him at all times. Thus **Col. 4:2** makes sense.
- Paul exhorts the believers in Colosse to “keep alert in prayer with thanksgiving”. Paul may have been referring to being sensitive to the Holy Spirit as we pray; (**Rom. 8:26**) Praying in the Spirit; **Jude 20**
- Praying in the spirit will produce gratitude, thankfulness for all things. **Phil. 4:6-7**

C. Paul requests the believers at Colossae to pray for his ministry

Col 4:3 *Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:*

- Even though Paul was in chains for preaching the Gospel, he is requesting prayer for himself and Timothy that God would give them opportunities to share the message even in prison.
- We see no indication that Paul was discouraged, even at this late day.



Col 4:4 *That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.*

- Paul asked for not only an open door to share the “message of grace”, but also that he would speak it clear.

D. Final instructions on managing earthly relationships in the light of who we are in Christ

Col 4:5 *Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.*

6 *Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*

- He further requests that he would make the most of every opportunity, and respond to each person as he ought.
- If we walk in the flesh, we are not living a life that would draw others to Christ, and our speech will be full of impatience, anger, and self-centeredness which will inevitably drive people further from the truth and Christ. But, if we walk in the Spirit, the Spirit will manifest the life of Christ in such a way that many will be drawn to Christ through our Christ-like speech and behaviour.

- In the Spirit, our speech will be gracious giving us a rich glow of Divine favor, as well as seasoned with salt (*a preservative, guarding God's holiness*); therefore, it is appropriate for every situation.
- We do not read, “always with salt, and seasoned with grace”, but rather “always with grace and seasoned with salt”. Grace should always be the groundwork of all that we say. It's this combination of God's love with an uncompromising guarding/maintaining/preserving of God's holy and righteous will, that teaches the Christian not merely what, but how to answer each one as he ought.

E. Paul's final greetings



- Wherever Paul went, he stood out as a great leader; he never lacked followers. In the shipwreck on the way to Rome (**Act. 27**), when it seemed inevitable that all would be lost, it was Paul that stood out as the leader. Paul the prisoner, gave orders to the centurion soldiers and sailors in **verses 30-35**. Such was his personality and authority that the whole crew obeyed his orders without question.
- When he stood on trial for his life before King Agrippa, it was the prisoner who sentenced the judge (**Act. 26:27-29**).
- It's interesting to note that Paul poured his life into a small number of men with leadership potential; he did not try to exert control over them, but ultimately relied on the holy spirit to bring them to maturity. It's amazing to see the affection his followers had for him (**Act. 20:36-38**)
- Here in Colossians Paul closes his letter as he often did by sending personal greetings to individuals in the church. The names of various key-leaders who helped and encouraged Paul give us an outline of his relationships and widespread ministry.

Col 4:7 All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord: 8 Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;

- Tychicus had accompanied Paul to Jerusalem with the collection for the church (**Acts 20:4**). Paul sent him to Ephesus a couple of times (**Eph. 6:21-22; 2 Tim. 4:12**, as well as to Colosse with this letter. Paul refers to him as a fellow-servant.

Col. 4:9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.

- Onesimus was a runaway slave who was a native of Colosse and had been saved through Paul's prison ministry. His master was Philemon, an elder in the Church at Colosse. Paul refers to Onesimus as a dearly loved brother both here and in Philemon 16. It's interesting to note that the letter to the Colossians and the letter to Philemon were written at the same time.

Col. 4:10 Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)

- Aristarchus was from Thessalonica and had accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey. He had been arrested along with Gaius, during the riot at Ephesus (**Act. 19:29**). In **Philemon 23**, Paul calls Aristarchus a fellow-prisoner.
- Mark (also called John Mark) had started out with Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (**Act. 12:25**), but had left in the middle of the trip for unknown reasons (**Act. 13:13**). It appears that Paul wanted the Colossians to know that he had confidence in Mark at this time.

Col. 4:11 And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

- The phrase “who are of the circumcision” could mean that only Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus were Jewish. Whatever the meaning of that phrase, they had been a comfort to Paul in his life and ministry.

Col. 4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea and them in Hierapolis.

- Epaphras, like Onesimus was “one of you”; meaning he was a Colossian and may have been converted under Paul’s teaching in Ephesus. He had founded the church in Colosse and was one of the believers who the Lord had used to keep the church together despite growing troubles. Paul calls him a “servant of Jesus Christ”.

Col. 4:13 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

- Luke had spent much time with Paul, accompanying him on most of the third missionary journey. He also had remained by his side during this imprisonment, as well as Paul’s final imprisonment (**2 Tim. 4:11**). It’s assumed that Luke was a Gentile.
- Apparently, Demas was faithful during this time (**Philemon 24**), but later had deserted Paul, “having loved this world”. (**2 Tim. 4:10**)

Col. 4:15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

- Paul now turns from sending other’s greetings to sending his own.

Col. 4:16 And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from

Laodicea. 17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

- Paul's letter to Philemon was also addressed to Archippus (***Philemon 2***), where Paul called him a "fellow-soldier".

Col. 4:18 The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.

- Just as Paul had begun his letter with grace, so he ends it.

