

THE LETTER OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS

For the Introduction to Colossians see page 1057

Greeting

I Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
to the saints and faithful brothers¹ in Christ at Colossae:

from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

²¹ And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,²² he has

reconciled in his body of flesh by his blood,

in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,

not continuing in the faith steadfastly

but shifting from the hope of the gospel

which has been preached in all creation under heaven, and

of which I am ashamed.

The Bible is a gateway to an encounter with God. It's God's word, from God to us.

We believe that God is revealed through scripture, so we want to make sure everyone is able to encounter God in this way.

This study is designed to help us interact with scripture regularly and thoughtfully. We will go through Colossians prayerfully to see what God's word has for us in this time.

These materials are designed to let scripture speak for itself. You'll be directed to go back to the Bible to answer questions and engage with God's word directly.

Perhaps you haven't read the Bible much for yourself, and this is a new discipline for you. Or perhaps you have, but you haven't been engaging with it regularly.

Wherever you are, this guide is a great place to start as we strive together to make regular Bible study a part of our lives. D.L. Moody said, "The Bible was not given to increase our knowledge, but to change our lives." Jump into this study today and watch how God transforms you.

I hope you'll hold on to this guide and use these tools for future studies. But most of all I hope you'll be empowered to continue digging into scripture to encounter God and be transformed.

Janet Galante
Groups Minister

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How To Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help us encounter scripture regularly and to apply what it's saying.

Inside you'll find the following resources:

Ways to Engage with Scripture: This is a list of methods for interacting with the Bible. We encourage you to consider different ways to interact with the Bible over the next few weeks. People learn in different ways, so we want to be creative with how we engage with the Bible.

Sermon Notes: Take notes at church each week to inform your reading. The more you hear a passage, the more likely you are to be changed by it. Write down what you hear so you can continue to learn from it.

Daily Scripture Reading: We have broken down Colossians into 5 readings a week. Some of the readings are purposefully repetitive. Repetition increases retention. Each scripture reading includes a question or challenge to help you interact with God's word.

Group Study: This study is designed to be accomplished by a facilitator in a small group discussion. The material isn't meant to be presented in a lecture, but rather by digging through scripture together. This will allow people to personally put into practice several ways of directly interacting with scripture.

Discuss the material in groups of 4-6 (up to 10 maximum) so each person has the opportunity to interact with the Bible. The goal is for everyone to personally engage with scripture so they can learn from it and be changed by it.

If your group is larger than 10, we recommend breaking into smaller groups for discussion. Resist using the material to lecture or keeping the group large – this will only prevent people from directly engaging with the material and encountering the Bible personally.

Leave enough space between asking a question and moving on so people have the chance to go to the Bible to discover the answer.

There are 4 lessons included. If your group is pressed for time, consider picking questions ahead of time to make sure you hit important points from each section of scripture. Or take 2 weeks to go through each lesson so you have enough time to go through the material.

Bible Study Approaches: There are a lot of ways to study the Bible. This guide will lead you through a way to study it on your own through devotional readings, and it will also lead you through a group study. In those contexts, we'll explore lots of different ways to approach scripture. At the end of this study, you'll find an appendix with a collection of many approaches to Bible study that can all be helpful. Be sure to check it out to see what other approaches you might like to try.

Recommended Resources: Want to explore more? You'll find a list of commentaries and other Bible studies so you can learn even more about Colossians.

Ways To Engage With Scripture

Over the next few weeks, challenge yourself to try out different methods for reading scripture.

Listen to an audio version of scripture, such as the Streetlights Bible.

Pray the scriptures.

Read a passage in multiple translations of the Bible.

Highlight parts you want to remember or parts that stand out to you.

Draw the passage (*images, story, characters*).

Outline the passage.

Hand write the passage.

Memorize a passage.

Act it out.

Reflective Reading (*see p. 51*)

Listen to music inspired by the passage. (*For example, Colossians: Walk in Christ by Our Pilgrim Songs, available on Spotify. Or do a Google search for more ideas*).

Read a commentary (*recommendations on p.54*)

Download the YouVersion Bible app and go through a Bible reading plan based on the book of Colossians.

Study the passage with a small group.

Write a paraphrase or summary of the passage.

Print it out and mark it up.

Use a study Bible.

Sing the word. (*Many of the Psalms were improvised with melodies as they sang them out loud.*)

Display scripture passages. Write it down on sticky notes and put it on your mirror. Put it by your nightstand, on your refrigerator, or somewhere you'll see it.

Introduction to Colossians

10/13 SERMON NOTES

Use this week to learn more about the book of Colossians and to prepare for this study. Here are a few ideas:

Go back and listen to this week's sermon.

Take notes to inform your reading of Colossians throughout this study. You can access the sermon at www.fcc-jc.org/message.

Get a Bible.

If you don't have one, you can get one at FCC during Sunday morning services, or pick one up at the front desk during the week.

Check out the recommended videos on RightNow Media.

Set up an account by texting FCCJC to 49775 or visiting www.fcc-jc.org/curriculum.

Watch The Bible Project's video on Colossians.

Go to bibleproject.com/explore/video/colossians for a 10 minute overview.

Consider ordering a commentary.

Find a list of commentaries on p. 54.

Set a reminder to read scripture every day.

Start removing barriers in your schedule so you can be consistent.

Make a plan to join a small group to study scripture together.

Gather a few friends together for the next 4 weeks, or join one of the groups at FCC.

Read the book of Colossians in one sitting.

Who Is Jesus?

An inspiring way to learn from Colossians is to keep a running list of all the things you learn about Jesus. Use these pages in every sermon, Bible study and devotion you do. If you learn something about Jesus, write it down on these pages. Then on the right column, write down what this means for you. What impact does this have on your life? On what you do? On what you believe?

10/25 Colossians 1:1-23

Who is Jesus?

What this means for me:

11/1 Colossians 1:24-2:15

Who is Jesus?

What this means for me:

Who Is Jesus?

11/8 Colossians 2:16-3:14

Who is Jesus?

What this means for me:

11/15 Colossians 3:15-4:18

Who is Jesus?

What this means for me:

How would you summarize what you've learned about Jesus in this study?

How is God calling you to respond to what you've learned in this study of Colossians?

Colossians 1:1-23

10/20 SERMON NOTES

DAILY DEVOTIONS

10/21: Read Colossians 1:1-23.

Read the passage aloud. Pray that God will be present and guide you this week as you encounter scripture.

10/22: Read Colossians 1:1-8.

Write down:

Author:

What we know about the author:

Recipients:

What we know about the recipients:

10/23: Read Colossians 1:9-14.

Paul offers a powerful prayer for this community even though he hasn't met them. Read these verses aloud and pray them on behalf of someone – your friend, another Christian you might not know personally, or even yourself.

10/24: Read Colossians 1:15-23.

Complete the Reflective Reading exercise on p. 51.

10/25: Read Colossians 1:1-23.

Fill out the chart on page 10.

In the left column, write down any descriptions of Jesus from this passage. In the right column, write down what this means for you. What does the passage tell you? How do these truths about Jesus affect your life?

Colossians 1:1-23 GROUP STUDY

OPEN

Do you write letters? If so, to whom?

What's the best thing you've received in the mail?

PRAY

Now let's approach scripture prayerfully together. Pray that God's Spirit would be at work as we read Colossians today.

READ

Read Colossians 1:1-23 aloud.

DISCOVER

Find the SAGA of Colossians:

Setting:

Author:

Genre:

Audience:

How does Paul describe God in this passage?

How does Paul describe Jesus?

How does Paul describe people?

Take a few minutes to give everyone time to write down the answers to these questions. Then share your answers with one another.

Why does Paul give thanks for the Colossians (v. 3-4)?

Was the gospel effective in the lives of the believers in Colossae? How?

What is the goal of this knowledge, wisdom and understanding (v. 10)?

List the 6 things that will be present in the lives of the Colossians as they grow in spiritual maturity (v. 9-14).

Rather than seeing a life lived worthily as an unreachable standard, consider the potential God has given us for full living. By his grace and help, we can do so. What is the source of strengthening for living worthily (v.11-14)?

How can Colossians 1:1-14 be used as a guideline for praying on behalf of yourself, your friends, and other Christians you might not know personally?

Colossians 1:1-23 GROUP STUDY

Col. 1:15-20

Verses 15–20 are actually a hymn. Some Bible translations might even format this part of the text differently, like a poem or the lyrics to a song. It's as if Paul pauses for a brief moment to exalt Christ by worshipping him.

Optional:

Make a title for each stanza (15-16 and 17-20).

How did Jesus display the character and nature of God while he was on earth?

Take note of repeated words like “all” and “first.” How does Paul describe the king of the new creation? Who is he, what has he done, and what will he do?

Paul wrote this song while under house arrest, a prisoner of the Roman authorities. How is it significant that Paul could declare these words while in this situation?

Paul shows how the new lives of the Colossians differ radically from their old ones. Based on verses 21-23, what changes have occurred?

- In their relationship with God

Old

New

- In their behavior

Old

New

How were these changes made possible?
(1:19-20, 22)

Col. 1:21-23

Optional:

Read John 1:1-

18. Who is Jesus?

Compare this to what you learned in Colossians 1.

The Jews called God "the firstborn of all creation" to signify his having created all things. Paul, being Jewish, is simply using a Jewish phrase to make his point that Jesus is God. In ancient cultures, the idea of "firstborn" really implied rank and responsibility more than chronological birth order.

> What did you learn about Christ's role in creation? According to verse 16, what has Christ created? How does this impact your day-to-day living?

Colossians 1:1-23 GROUP STUDY

APPLY

What is Paul's focus with respect to Christ in chapter 1?

How can a wrong understanding of Christ's nature or ignorance of his work affect you?

Is the gospel having the same effect in your life that it had in the lives of the Colossians?

What are the most prominent desires, people, or things in your life that compete with Christ's lordship?

What merits or strengths do these things have? What can they offer?

How does their power and promise compare to the credentials of Jesus?

What are some practical changes you can make in your thinking, schedule, or other area in your life to better reflect the supremacy of Christ over your life?

REFLECT

Our goal in all Bible studies is to know Jesus Christ and to become like him in our attitudes, our thoughts, our speech, our actions, and our values. These are good questions to reflect on after any Bible study.

? What attitude do I need to change as a result of this study?

? What do I need to start doing or stop doing?

? What things do I need to believe or stop believing?

? What relationships do I need to work on?

? What ministry should I have with others?

Consider these questions silently, and use the space below to summarize your response to this week's study:

Read these words from Colossians 1:9-14 as your closing prayer:

We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,¹⁰ so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience,¹² and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.¹³ For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves,¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

CLOSE

Colossians 1:24-2:15

10/27 SERMON NOTES

10/28: Read Colossians 1:24-2:15.

Read the passage aloud. Pray that God will be present and guide you this week as you encounter scripture.

10/29: Read Colossians 1:24-2:5

List every reference to the word “mystery.” What is the mystery?

10/30: Read Colossians 2:6-8.

What does it mean to be rooted and built up in Jesus? What other things are we tempted to put our roots in instead of Jesus? Pray that God will give you the strength to stay rooted in Jesus.

10/31: Read Colossians 2:9-15.

This passage describes the effect Jesus has on the world. What did Jesus do to us? What did Jesus do to the powers and authorities of the world?

11/1: Read Colossians 1:24-2:15.

Fill out the chart on page 11.

In the left column, write down any descriptions of Jesus from this passage. In the right column, write down what this means for you. What does the passage tell you? How do these truths about Jesus affect your life?

Colossians 1:24-2:15 GROUP STUDY

OPEN

What's your favorite plant, tree, or flower?

PRAY

Now let's approach scripture prayerfully together. Pray that God's Spirit would be at work as we read Colossians today.

READ

Read Colossians 1:24-2:15 aloud.

DISCOVER

Col. 1:24-2:5

Verse 24 shows how intimately Christ and the church are connected. How are they connected?

List every reference to the word "mystery."

Optional:

Read Ephesians 1:9-10 and 3:3-10 for more about the mystery.

Paul's mission is to proclaim the mystery that has been hidden (1:25-27). What is the mystery?

To whom has it been revealed?

What's Paul's goal in sharing this mystery?

How can you be a part of revealing the mystery? Who can you reveal the mystery to?

In what 2 areas did Paul commend the Colossians? (v. 5)

What counsel did Paul give to the believers in these verses? (Colossians 2:6-8)

Col. 2:6-15

Look at verse 8. What are the characteristics of the philosophy they are being warned about?

Why is the wisdom that comes from God superior to everything else? (v. 10)

What do we learn about the identity and mission of Christ in verses 9-15?

- Identity

- Mission

Colossians 1:24-2:15 GROUP STUDY

Col. 2:6-15

What has Christ done for us?

What are the practical consequences of forgetting these truths? (v. 8)

Observe how the words “in Christ,” and “in him,” and “by him,” and “by Christ,” are used repeatedly throughout 2:9-12. What do you think is meant by each of these phrases? List them below.

What does it mean to be “buried” with Christ and “raised” up with him?

In Galatia, Jewish zealots told the new converts that in becoming Christians they had only gotten half of what they needed. What they now ought to do, to complete the experience, was to be circumcised to keep the law of Moses.

Paul is warning the Colossians not to get drawn into this. He explains if you already have Jesus as your Lord, you don't need to be completed by another system. The Colossians don't need to get circumcised to have access to Christ's saving work.

How would you explain the difference between the Jewish rite of circumcision and the spiritual circumcision Paul mentions in this passage? (11-12)

Col. 2:6-15

Optional:

In verse 7, Paul might have in mind Psalm 1, which includes an extended metaphor about a righteous person being like a tree planted by rivers and bringing forth fruit. Picture a tree growing. What do you think it means to be the following?

- *Rooted in him*
- *Built up in him*
- *Firm in your faith as you were taught*
- *Overflowing with faithfulness*

Are you rooted in him? Built up in him? Firm in your faith? What steps can you take to become more grounded?

Colossians 1:24-2:15 GROUP STUDY

APPLY

What would you say so far is the message of Colossians in your own words?

What ideas compete with Jesus in attempting to guide the way you live? How do they measure up to the tests suggested by 2:8?

According to what you have studied this week, what is your protection against the danger of a “persuasive argument”?

Whether you are in a formal teaching or leadership position or not, what can you do to help Christians around you become more mature in Christ?

REFLECT

Our goal in all Bible studies is to know Jesus Christ and to become like him in our attitudes, our thoughts, our speech, our actions, and our values. These are good questions to reflect on after any Bible study.

- ? *What attitude do I need to change as a result of this study?*
- ? *What do I need to start doing or stop doing?*
- ? *What things do I need to believe or stop believing?*
- ? *What relationships do I need to work on?*
- ? *What ministry should I have with others?*

Consider these questions silently, and use the space below to summarize your response to this week's study:

One of the ways we can protect ourselves from combining other teachings with Christianity is by reminding ourselves of what the Bible teaches. As a group, pick a verse from Colossians to memorize. Hand write it below:

Try to recite it to one another next week.
Close in prayer together.

CLOSE

Colossians 2:16-3:14

11/3 SERMON NOTES

11/4: Read Colossians 2:16-3:14.

Read the passage aloud. Pray that God will be present and guide you this week as you encounter scripture.

11/5: Read Colossians 2:16-23.

Write below what Paul instructs the recipients of this letter.

11/6: Read Colossians 3:1-11.

Every time you get dressed or change clothes this week, reflect on what it means to take off the old self and put on the new self. Pray that God would continue to remind you that you have been made new in Christ.

11/7: Read Colossians 3:11-14.

This chapter included a lot of direction on how we ought to live. It's important that we consider these instructions and bring our lives before God. Today we will try a prayer practice called the Examen. Go to p. 52 and prayerfully bring your day before God.

11/8: Read Colossians 2:16-3:14.

Fill out the chart on p. 12.

In the left column, write down any descriptions of Jesus from this passage. In the right column, write down what this means for you. What does the passage tell you? How do these truths about Jesus affect your life?

Colossians 2:16-3:14 GROUP STUDY

OPEN

Describe a time when you showed up somewhere — an event, a trip, or a celebration — wearing the wrong clothing.

Did your group pick a memory verse last week? Take a few minutes to try to recite it to one another.

PRAY

Now let's approach scripture prayerfully together. Pray that God's Spirit would be at work as we read Colossians today.

READ

Read Colossians 2:16-3:14 aloud.

DISCOVER

Col. 2:16-23

"Therefore" (2:16) links this portion of the passage with what has gone before. All of our understanding of 2:16-23 - a list of "do not's" - ought to be founded on the previous list of what Christ has done, is doing, and will continue to do on behalf of his people.

Take a moment and refer to the first question on page 26. What has Christ done for us?

What was wrong with the various practices Paul criticized in Colossians? (v. 17, 22, 23)

The Jewish ceremonial laws were intended to symbolically depict the coming of Christ. Why don't Christians have to follow them? (v. 2:16-17)

Col. 2:16-23

There was a group of people who tried to disqualify the Christians in Colossae by pushing their ideas of asceticism, or severe self-discipline, and the worship of angels. How does Paul describe these people? (v. 18-19)

What do we learn about the elemental spirits of the world and self-made religion? (v. 20-23)

What reason does Paul give the Gentiles to justify themselves to those judging them? (v. 17, 22)

Col. 3:1-15

To what does “Therefore” (or in some versions “since then”) in verse 1 refer? Look at the previous verses to find out.

In verses 1-2, what two things does Paul tell his readers they must do? What are they not to do?

Colossians 2:16-3:14 GROUP STUDY

Col. 3:1-15

List how the believer's wardrobe is to change: (v. 1-2, 5-9, 10, 12, 13, 14)

- Take Off (Old Self)

- Put On (New Self)

What tense does Paul use in 3:7? Why do you think he does so?

In what is the believer renewed and according to whom? (v. 10)

What groupings of people does Paul include as those who are made equal through Christ? (v. 11)

The Colossian church might well have included Greeks, Jews, and barbarians, both slaves and free persons. In such a church, why might the exhortations to be rid of anger, slander, etc. have been especially appropriate? (v. 8)

What sorts of diversity in your church, workplace, family, make these exhortations necessary for you?

Why does Paul include the word “therefore” (3:12)? That is, on the basis of what truth does he tell his readers to put on beautiful characteristics? Look at the previous verse to find out.

What 3 words does Paul use to describe believers? (v. 12)

How does Paul say we are to forgive? (v.13)

Against whom do you have a complaint? Release your complaint to God, asking him to bless those who have injured you.

Col. 3:1-15

Optional:

Paul lists 5 virtues in 3:12. In each of the following cross-references, discover models for the clothing God wants us to wear.

- *Matthew 9:35-38 - compassion*
- *Luke 6:35 - kindness, goodness*
- *Phil. 2:6-11 - humility*
- *1 Peter 2:23 - gentleness, meekness*
- *Isaiah 48:9 - patience*

Colossians 2:16-3:14 GROUP STUDY

APPLY

What captures your imagination? When your mind wanders, where does it go? With what truth do you need to fill your mind? List some ways you can fill your mind with the truth.

Consider how you are doing at putting to death the practices listed in verses 5-10. Are there any changes you need to make?

What does it look like to put to death the old self and its habits? How have you done this in your own life?

REFLECT

Our goal in all Bible studies is to know Jesus Christ and to become like him in our attitudes, our thoughts, our speech, our actions, and our values. These are good questions to reflect on after any Bible study.

? What attitude do I need to change as a result of this study?

? What do I need to start doing or stop doing?

? What things do I need to believe or stop believing?

? What relationships do I need to work on?

? What ministry should I have with others?

Consider these questions silently, and use the space below to summarize your response to this week's study:

Close in prayer with these words from Colossians 3:12-14.

- ¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy
- and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with
- compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and
- patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one
- another if any of you has a grievance against
- someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And
- over all these virtues put on love, which binds
- them all together in perfect unity.

CLOSE

Colossians 3:15-4:18

11/10 SERMON NOTES

11/11: Read Colossians 3:15-4:18.

Read the passage aloud. Pray that God will be present and guide you this week as you encounter scripture.

11/12: Read Colossians 3:15-4:1.

List the commands given to people in these verses. Do you notice any themes?

11/13: Read Colossians 4:2-6.

What opportunities do you have to proclaim the gospel? Pray that God would empower you to make the most of every opportunity, fill your conversations with grace, and know how to answer everyone.

11/14: Read Colossians 4:7-18.

Paul greets many of his brothers and sisters in Christ. How does he describe some of them at the end of verse 11? Is there anyone in your life you could describe that way? Write them a note or send a text to thank them for the ways they've supported you or partnered with you in ministry.

11/15: Read Colossians 3:15-4:18

Fill out the chart on page 13.

In the left column, write down any descriptions of Jesus from this passage. In the right column, write down what this means for you. What does the passage tell you? How do these truths about Jesus affect your life?

Colossians 3:15-4:18 GROUP STUDY

OPEN

Share a few titles you've had in your life. These could include jobs, relationships, or leadership positions. Which ones have impacted you the most?

PRAY

Now let's approach scripture prayerfully together. Pray that God's Spirit would be at work as we read Colossians today.

READ

Read Colossians 3:15-4:18 aloud.

DISCOVER

Col. 3:15-4:1

What should be the basis of our teaching and worship, and what should our general attitude be? (3:16)

What does Paul say the actions of the Colossians should be motivated by?

Col. 3:18-4:1

Notice that in each pairing, Paul addresses both members, but each time he comes back to the householder—the member with the most societal power (husband, father, master).

Legally, a Roman husband had more extensive power over his wife than a Jewish husband did. His power was all pervasive, and wives were in the same legal position as their children. In his letters, Paul focuses not on the legal rights endowed by Rome but on the law of love inherited from Christ.

Paul's words would have been perceived as radical at the time they were received. He gives some shocking instructions to the powerful: they are to treat the vulnerable members of their families kindly, and in marriage the powerful one is even called to lay down his life! Through these instructions, Paul demonstrates what it looks like to follow Christ when we are in different positions.

Col. 3:18-4:1

What are husbands, fathers, and masters instructed to do? What can this teach us about how to act when we are in positions of power?

What are wives, children, and slaves instructed to do? What can this teach us about how to act when we are in more vulnerable positions?

How do you see Christ's law of love at work in these instructions?

What are the positive possibilities of families operating according to this passage?

Optional:

These words in Colossians are parallel to a section of Ephesians. For further study, explore Ephesians 5:21-6:9. List the commands given below. How do these commands flow from Ephesians 5:21? How do they complicate the Roman power dynamic with the Christian teaching of love?

Colossians 3:15-4:18 GROUP STUDY

Col. 4:2-18

What instructions did Paul give the church regarding prayer? For what specific things did he ask prayer? (v. 2-4)

Paul previously mentioned the mystery of Christ. Do you remember what the mystery was that he is making known? (1:26-27, 3:2-3, 4:3)

Even though Paul is imprisoned for spreading the gospel, what is his top priority? (4:3-4)

In the following examples of how Christians are to act wisely towards outsiders - unbelievers - what do you think Paul means?

- Make the most of every opportunity - 4:5
- Conversations full of grace, seasoned with salt - 4:6
- Know how to answer everyone - 4:6

Optional:

By looking at these mini biographies we can make some observations: Paul ministered in the context of community; he did not try to do it all by himself. He delegated many tasks, and he mentored many in the faith. Write below what we learn about these people.

Tychicus

Epaphras

Aristarchus

Luke

Mark

Nympha

Jesus who is called Justus

What do you discover about the relationship between the churches in Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis (4:13-16)?

Col. 4:2-18

What opportunities do you have to be with unbelievers? What do you think is your reputation among them?

How might the relationship between the churches in Asia be an example to your community of faith?

Colossians 3:15-4:18 GROUP STUDY

APPLY

Tychicus wrote the letter as Paul's scribe and delivered the message in person to the Colossians. He demonstrates how all believers have the opportunity to learn the gospel message and deliver it to others.

As you finish this study, you're called to be the messenger now. Paul instructs us to make the most of every opportunity as we proclaim the mystery of Christ.

What have you learned about the gospel message through this study? Look back at your notes from other weeks and make a list below.

What have you learned about Jesus throughout this study? Look at your chart on page 13.

Who do you need to proclaim the message of Christ to?

How will you proclaim the message?

What's something you've learned in this study that you don't want to forget?

Have three people read these verses from Colossians 1 aloud to close.

Reader 1:

¹⁵ *The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.* ¹⁶ *For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.* ¹⁷ *He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.* ¹⁸ *And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.* ¹⁹ *For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him,* ²⁰ *and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

Reader 2:

²¹ *Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.* ²² *But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—* ²³ *if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.*

Reader 3:

²⁸ *He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.* ²⁹ *To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.*

Bible Study Approaches

There are a variety of ways we can study scripture. This section includes a few tools you can use. This list isn't meant to overwhelm you, but to equip you.

Some of these have already been incorporated into the study materials. As you continue reading the Bible, try out more tools and see what God teaches you.

You might find that some of these tools will become your lifelong friend, guiding you as you study the Bible and hear from God. Other tools might not work for you at all. Remember – the goal isn't to use a tool successfully, but to encounter and hear from God. Use whichever tools make the most sense for you as you strive to meet God in the scriptures.

2 SIMPLE QUESTIONS:

This method gives you 2 questions you can ask of every single passage. If you're short on time or need a simple way to get started, start here.

For every passage ask these 2 questions:

- What does this teach me about God?
- What does this teach me about how I should live?

INDUCTIVE METHOD:

This method can seem complex, but at its core, the inductive Bible study method is meant to prompt you to discover what the Bible says and how to apply it to your life.

This method has three main steps: Observation, Interpretation and Application.

With the Inductive Method, we begin with simply observing the text first with no certain topics or preconceived interpretations in mind. This is important. We are not seeking to support a viewpoint or enhance an idea, but rather beginning with the text at hand.

Take a minute and to pray and then read the text.

- **Observe.** What does the text say? Observations may seem obvious at first, but they open the door to the meaning of any part of the Bible.
 - » Gather the facts of what is happening or being said.
 - » Take notes on themes and repeated words.
 - » Ask yourself questions about the passage: Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?
 - » If it's a story, what's happening?
 - » What do you notice about the passage?
- **Interpret.** What does it mean?
 - » Consider the context. What was the intention of the passage?
 - » What does this passage tell us about God?
 - » What is the main point of the passage?
 - » Consult other resources such as commentaries and Bible studies to understand the topics or the meaning.
- **Apply.** How do you apply what you just learned to everyday life?
 - » What does this mean for your life, your priorities, and your decisions?
 - » What is your takeaway from this scripture reading?

Bible Study Approaches

NEWSPAPER METHOD

Approach the passage the way you would approach writing a newspaper article. Take note of the answers to these key questions.

- **WHO**

Who are the people in the text? What is said about the person or people? What does the person say?

- **WHAT**

What is discussed throughout the chapter? What is happening in the text? What type of instructions does the author note? What are the events?

- **WHEN**

When does or when will the event take place? Past, present, or future? When did they occur in relation to other events in scripture? When was the writer writing?

- **WHERE**

Where did the event take place? Where is the narrative taking place? Where are the people in the story? Where are they coming from? Where are they going? Where is the writer? Where were the original readers of this text? If there is a journey taking place, trace it on a map.

- **WHY**

Why is this passage included? Why is it placed here? Why does this follow that? Why does this person say that? There are an infinite number of “why” questions.

SOAP METHOD

Use this memorable acronym to guide you through scripture. This can be used with any passage as you strive to approach scripture with reverence and to use it in your life.

- **S - Scripture**

Physically write out the Bible verse.

- **O - Observation**

What do you see in the verses you're reading? Who is the audience? Is there a repetition of words? What words stand out to you? Is there a theme?

- **A - Application**

What is God saying to you today? How can you apply what you read to your life? Are there any changes you need to make?

- **P - Prayer**

If God has revealed something to you during this time, pray about it. Confess if God has revealed a sin in your life. Take time to pray words of gratitude for God's goodness in your life.

STEP METHOD

This method is application focused. Remember – the goal of Bible study isn't to find information, but transformation. This acronym will push you to discover how you can apply your learning to your life.

- **S - Sinful** thoughts or behavior to confess?
- **T - Truth** to understand, believe or claim?
- **E - Example** to follow?
- **P - Practical** action to take?

Bible Study Approaches

SPECK

This acronym is another way we can experience the impact of God's word on our lives. Use the questions below with any passage to recognize what God is teaching you.

- Is there a **sin** for me to avoid?
- Is there a **promise** for me to trust?
- Is there an **example** for me to follow?
- Is there a **command** for me to obey?
- How can this passage increase my **knowledge** of the Lord?

SAGA METHOD

This is a helpful tool to use when you're starting a new book of the Bible. Use the text or the details of a study Bible to identify these aspects of the passage.

- **Setting:**
- **Author:**
- **Genre:**
- **Audience:**

REFLECTIVE READING METHOD

Reflective Reading is a discipline which helps us blend Scripture and prayer together so we can go deeper in our relationship with God.

At each step, read the passage out loud and the prompt below. Then, leave a minute of silence in between each step to reflect on the prompt. This can be done individually or in groups.

Colossians 1:15-23 is used as an example below. You'll go through this scripture during the daily devotions. You can use this method of scripture reading for any passage you choose.

- **Read:** Read Colossians 1:15-23 twice.
Start by asking the Holy Spirit to be present with you during this time of prayer. Take a minute of silence to note verses or phrases that stand out to you.
- **Reflect:** Read Colossians 1:15-23.
Explore the passage and ask questions. What did the author mean? How does it make me feel? Imagine being present in this passage. What happens in the passage? What does this say about your life today?
- **Respond:** Read Colossians 1:15-23.
Pray and respond to God. Dialogue with God. Ask for guidance, pray your questions, and thank God. Speak your personal response to God. Tell God what comforts you and challenges you about this passage. Ask for his help living out truths you've discovered today.
- **Rest:** Read Colossians 1:15-23.
Rest in God's word. Rest in God's presence. Contemplate what God is teaching you during this time. Stop. Be still. Stop talking, stop asking, and slow your brain down. This is the time to listen to God, for letting the Spirit talk back to you. Go beyond the words you've read, and allow God to root you in truth and wrap you in love.

Bible Study Approaches

EXAMEN PRAYER

This tool actually isn't a way to study the Bible. However, it is a great prayer exercise to do in partnership with scripture. Scripture often points out ways we ought to live. This prayer guides us to reflect on how we are living and how God is instructing us to live. This can be done alone or with others.

Read these prompts and leave silence in between for prayerful reflection.

Become aware of God's presence. We begin with a pause. Take a deep breath or two. Become aware that you are in the presence of the holy. Ask God to bring clarity and understanding as you reflect on your day. Ask the Spirit to be present with you.

Silence for 2-3 minutes

Look back with gratitude. We will now reflect back on our day with thanksgiving. Review the past 24 hours and notice what you are thankful for. What did today bring that you are grateful for?

Gratitude is the foundation of our relationship with God. Walk through your day in the presence of God and note its joys and delights. Focus on the day's gifts. Look at the work you did and the people you interacted with. What did you receive from these people? What did you give them? Pay attention to the small things – the food you ate, the sights you saw, and other seemingly small pleasures. God is in the details. Spend the next minute or so reflecting on these things.

Silence for 2-3 minutes

Take an honest look at your day. Note everything that happened over the course of the past 24 hours – your interactions with others and your emotions. We often rush through each day, not pausing to reflect. Honestly look back on your day.

We can detect the presence of the Spirit of God in the movements of our emotions. Reflect on the feelings you experienced during the day. Boredom? Elation? Resentment? Compassion? Anger? Confidence? What is God saying through these feelings?

God will most likely show you some ways that you fell short. Make note of these sins and faults. But look deeply for other implications. Does a feeling of frustration perhaps mean that God wants you to consider a new direction in some area of your work? Are you concerned about a friend? Perhaps you should reach out in some way. Bring your day before God.

Silence for 2-3 minutes

Choose one part of the day and pray about it. Ask the Holy Spirit to direct you to something during the day that God thinks is particularly important. It may involve a feeling – positive or negative. It may be a significant encounter with another person or a vivid moment of pleasure or peace. Look at it. Pray about it. Allow the prayer to arise spontaneously from your heart.

You may find something God is directing you to work on – an emotion, a relationship, an unpleasant situation. Pray for it and ask God’s guidance to resolve it.

Silence for 2-3 minutes

Look toward tomorrow. Ask God to give you light for tomorrow’s challenges. Pay attention to the feelings that surface as you survey what’s coming up. Are you doubtful? Cheerful? Apprehensive? Full of delighted anticipation? Allow these feelings to turn into prayer. Seek God’s guidance. Ask him for help and understanding. Pray for hope.

Recommended Resources

Here is a list of resources you might find useful as you study Colossians. If you need more resources to choose from, email Janet Galante at jgalante@fcc-jc.org.

COMMENTARIES AND BIBLE STUDIES

- *Colossians & Philemon* - N.T. Wright For Everyone
- *Colossians & Philemon* - LifeChange Series
- *Colossians & Philemon* - Tyndale New Testament Commentaries
- *Colossians Remixed* by Brian J. Walsh and Sylvia C. Keesmaat
- *That I May Know Him* - Kay Arthur
- *Cappuccino with Colossians* - Sandra Glahn

VIDEO BIBLE STUDIES ON RIGHTNOW MEDIA:

- “Above All” – Jason Turner – 12 sessions
- “The Book of Colossians” – Louie Giglio – 8 sessions
- “Colossians” – Michael DeFazio – 13 sessions

BIBLES:

- **Serendipity Bible** – This Bible includes discussion questions and material you can use in a small group setting as you study the Bible together.
- **Study Bible** – These Bibles include contextual information and historical background to inform your reading.
- **Journaling Bible** – There are a variety of journaling Bibles to choose from. Most have larger margins or extra space for you to take notes and mark up your Bible as you interact with the word of God.

BIBLE STUDY WEBSITES:

- Biblegateway.com
- Bible.org
- Biblehub.com
- Biblestudytools.com
- Bibleproject.com
- Logos.com
- Navigators.org

from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

★ Christ holds
of creation
pieces. Give
itself
grace
↳ 1/

And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, so as to present you holy and blameless

before him ²² if indeed you have obeyed the faith, and if indeed

you have continued in the love of the gospel that you received, until the end of the world.

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