

# The Book of Colossians

## Chapter 1

1. Faith, hope, and love are mentioned in verses 4 and 5. These are three foundations of the Christian faith. Who was their faith in? Who was their love for? What was their hope?
2. In verse 9-12, Paul prays for the Colossians. List the things that he prays for them. If you have ever had a difficult time praying for anyone, this is a great model for us to follow as we seek to pray for God to work in people's lives.
3. Consider verses 13-14. What things does this verse say Jesus did for us?
4. Read verses 15-17. Now read Genesis 1. What do these verses teach us about Jesus' role in the creation of the universe?
5. In verses 15-20, we read that in everything, Jesus should have the preeminence, that He should be first priority. Make a list of each time the word "all" is used in these verses and what it is describing each time. What does this tell us about Jesus' rightful place in His creation and in our lives?
6. In verses 20-23, we read that Jesus reconciled us to God even though we were once enemies in our mind toward Him. Outwardly, we may seem very different, but inwardly, we are very much the same: we are rebels, and want to do things our way, not God's. Before Jesus, this was the rule, but now He remakes us from the inside out. How has God changed you since you received His Son into your life?
7. When the bible speaks of a mystery, it speaks of a thing once hidden, but now revealed. The great mystery of the Scripture is the great salvation we have in Jesus. One of the amazing things about this salvation that distinguishes it from all other religion is that the creator of the universe, Jesus, comes to live in our hearts and to work inside of us. Take time to consider and think upon this. Thank God that He lives and works in us, not that we have to work it all out ourselves!
8. In verse 28, notice that the main theme of Paul's preaching is not a "what", but a "who": "Him we preach." As you seek to be used by God to reach others, do you keep Jesus central? Politics, economics, world religion, current events, or any number of other things threatens to take the focus off of Him. Ask God to help you to continually bring things back to Jesus with others.

## Chapter 2

1. Paul says in verse 1 that he has a great "conflict" for the Christians. This word means to contest or to struggle for, and carries the idea of striving in athletic competition. List the things that Paul struggling to see happen in these Christians lives in verse 2? How do you think he is struggling for them if he is not with them? Is there anyone that you strive for?
2. In verse 3 it tells us that all knowledge and wisdom is found where?
3. Read verses 4-7. Paul wants to see people established and solid so that they are not deceived and taken advantage of by false teachers. In verses 5-7 look at some of the ways that a person is established. List these out.
4. Look at verse 8. What are some of the ways that we can be tricked or deceived? In verse 9-10 what/who is the antidote to being deceived? Is there anything lacking in Him?
5. Verses 11-12 speak about how we died to the old life and that in Christ we are raised to a new life. Does your old life differ from your life now that you are a Christian? In verse 12, how do we access this new life?
6. Read verses 13-15. Re-state in your own words all of the things that Jesus accomplished at the cross.
7. In verses 16-23, Paul speaks of religious activity and rules (observing certain days, eating certain foods), and how all of those old testament observances were simply a shadow of Christ, but that He is the real thing. Shadows have no weight or mass, but

# The Book of Colossians

they are a clue about the nearness of something this is real and does have substance. In other words, religious dos and don'ts are not what Christianity is really all about; Jesus is what it's about!

- a. Paul warns about a certain kind of false teacher in verses 18-19. Note the false teaching and religious practices in verse 18, but especially note verse 19, which is what keeps a person on the right track.
- b. In verses 20-23, we see how there is a certain natural appeal to obeying religious rules, but note verse 23. What does following these rules do about the problem of our flesh (our self-serving nature)? Contrast this with how Jesus deals with the flesh in verses 11-14.

## Chapter 3

This chapter begins with an "if, then" statement: if you have been raised with Christ, then. The rest of the chapter fulfills the then, and tells us how we live should live in response to all that God has done for us. Much of what He has done is not visible, and is yet to be revealed.

1. In verses 1-4 list some things that these verses teach us about Jesus.
2. What does Paul tell us to do in verse 2? What earthly things do you personally need to get your eyes off of, and what heavenly things do you need to set your heart upon?
3. Verse 3 tells us that we died with Christ. But then in verse 5 we are told to put to death the parts of us that are embracing sin and living in opposition to God. We begin a relationship with God when we identify ourselves with Christ, but we also need to daily cooperate with His Spirit's work in our lives. Read Luke 9:2. Make a list of the things in verses 5-8 that we are to no longer take part in now that we are Christ's.
4. Read verses 9-11. The lifestyle that Paul is saying to put off is called the "old man". The new way that Paul calls us to live is called the new man. What things do verse 10 and 11 teach us about the new man?
5. In verses 12-17, we find some of what the new man's life should look like:
  - a. Make a list of all we're called to do in these verses.
  - b. Read verse 13. Why must we forgive others?
  - c. Note verse 14. What is the most important thing for us to put on?
6. Verses 18-25 deal with the ideas of submitting to the authorities that God has placed over us, and of righteously leading those God has put under our authority. Are there any of these instructions that are particularly relevant to your life?
7. Read verses 17 and 23. These verses are "catch-all" verses that apply to our whole lives. Take some time and ask God to help you to obey these verses.

## Chapter 4

1. In verse 1, how does God tell us that Christian managers, bosses, and employers ought to treat their employees and staff? Why should they treat them that way?
2. In verses 2-4 Paul exhorts the Colossians to a diligent, thankful prayer life, and asks them to pray for him as well. What does he ask them to pray for? Read Ephesians 6:18-20 for a similar prayer. According to these two passages, how should the word of God be communicated? Pray for all those at Calvary Chapel who teach the Word of God, that they would communicate it in these ways.
3. In verses 5-6, how does Paul tells us to conduct our relationships with unbelievers? What elements should direct our conversations with them?
4. Tychicus and Onesimus are mentioned as two people who Paul has entrusted with some ministry responsibility. What characteristics do they share, and why are these critical to being a servant of God?
  - a. For further study, Tychicus is mentioned in Acts 20, Ephesians 6, 2 Timothy 4, and Titus 3 as well as this chapter.

# The Book of Colossians

- b. Onesimus is the runaway slave whom Paul led to Christ in jail. His story is found in the book of Philemon. He was a criminal whose crime was punishable by death before God stepped in saved him and transformed his life. What does it say about God that He can use a life that was headed for destruction?
5. Paul mentions three Jewish friends who stayed with him in prison. No particular ministry is listed of them except this: they were a comfort to Paul. Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-4. Who might God want to use you to minister His comfort to?
6. In verses 12-13, Paul tells the Colossians about Epaphras, one who loves, prays for, and sends his greeting to the Colossian church. Epaphras stands as an example of the type of prayer life that Paul is exhorting them to back in verse 2. How do you feel when you find out that someone has been praying for you? The greatest thing that we can do for someone is to be praying for them, and sometimes it is the only thing we can do. Take time to pray for people in your life...no matter where they are!
7. There are a number of other people whose names are mentioned in the rest of the chapter. As you read about them consider that we are not all the same and can be at very different points in our walks with the Lord, with different callings, and different ministries. Do any of the following people's lives minister to you?
  - a. Luke - the same author of the gospel of Luke, and a longtime ministry partner of Paul's. He was a doctor!
  - b. Demas - a man who at one time served the Lord heartily, but later falls away.
  - c. Nymphas - a man who opened up his home for Christians to meet there.
  - d. Archippus - a man who had been appointed to ministry, and needed exhortation and encouragement to stay the course.