



“Christ in You”

WEEK ONE: Introduction

DAY ONE

1. What would you like to see happen in your heart and life as a result of this study?

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2. Write a prayer to the Lord, asking him to do those things you have asked.

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DAY TWO

3. Who wrote the letter to the church in Colosse, and who was with him at the time of writing? *Colossians 1:1*

Paul wrote the letter, and Timothy was with him when the letter was written. The fact that Timothy was with Paul does not mean that Timothy was Paul’s co-author. Based on the content of Colossians, it is clear that Paul alone is the author of the letter (see, for instance, all the uses of the person pronoun “I” in Colossians 1:24-29). The fact that Paul had a co-worker with him when he worked is a great pattern for all of us to imitate. All of us need someone we can trust who will do what needs to be done and helps make up for our weaknesses.

4. In which New Testament letters do you find this same pairing of names in the introduction?

2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, Philemon. (You also find these names in 1 and 2 Timothy as well, however, in both of those letters, Timothy was receiving the letter. Obviously, Timothy was not with Paul when he wrote these two letters.)

5. Who was the letter addressed to? *Colossians 1:2*

The NIV reads “To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse” (Colossians 1:2). The ESV (English Standard Version) reads “To the saints and faithful brothers ...”. Both readings are possible. In either case, Paul writes these things not because the church was *behaving in a* holy and faithful manner (you will soon see that they were not behaving in a particularly holy and faithful manner) but because *they were these things* because of the work of Christ. A believer is a saint because of the work of Christ. Whether he acts like a saint is a different matter.

6. What was this church known for? *Colossians 1:3-4*

1. Their faith in Christ Jesus
2. The love they had for all the saints.

7. Paul commends the church for “the love you have for all the saints” (verse 4). This means their love for the church extended beyond their own individual church. What actions might have led to them developing a reputation like this?

Perhaps they welcomed visiting Christians with great hospitality (they were on a trade route and would have likely had travelers passing through town on a regular basis). They certainly prayed for other churches (first century Christians were noted for their robust prayer lives). They may have sent money to help other churches and believers. Perhaps they sent out their own missionaries (see *Colossians 4:13*)—Epaphras “worked hard” for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

8. What were the readers to do with the letter after they read it? *Colossians 4:16*

They were to “see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans”. In addition, they were to read the letter that the Laodicean church had (that letter may have been Ephesians).

9. Where was Colosse located? (Use the maps located in the back of your Bible. The maps you will want to refer to are the ones depicting the travels of Paul. You may also refer to the illustration on the back cover of this book.)

Colosse was located about 125 miles southeast of Ephesus in the Roman province of Asia (the region was known as Phrygia). It was, according to some, the least significant place to which Paul ever wrote a letter. It hadn’t always been of little significance. At one time, the trade route running between Ephesus and the east was of great importance. As the harbor in Ephesus became less suitable to traffic from large ships, traffic on the trade route was diminished. Colosse had become something like a steel-mill town after the mill has been closed.

10. What towns were located near Colosse? *Colossians 2:1; 4:13; 4:16*

Laodicea and Hierapolis—both of these towns were more important than Colosse. Laodicea is referred to (not at all favorably) in *Revelation 3:14-22*.

11. The apostle Paul was not the person who first brought the gospel to Colosse. A man named Epaphras did. Where was he from, and what was Paul’s opinion of him? *Colossians 1:7-8; 4:12-13*

He evidently was from Colosse as Paul calls him “one of you” (*Colossians 4:12*). Paul calls him a “dear fellow servant” and a “faithful minister of Christ” (*Colossians 1:7*).

12. Do you, like Epaphras, share Christ with those who do not know him? What would godly disciples say about you?

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13. Epaphras was with Paul (probably in Rome) when the letter was written. According to Paul, how did this man spend his time? *Colossians 4:12-13*

“He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured” (Colossians 4:12). Paul asserts that Epaphras was “working hard” for the saints in Colosse.

14. Would others say that you spend your time in this way?

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15. Epaphras is also mentioned in the book of Philemon. How does Paul describe him in that book? *Philemon 23*

He calls him his “fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus”.

16. Why do you think Paul describes him in this way?

Somehow, Epaphras had been arrested and imprisoned in Rome (if that is where Paul was a prisoner). The New Testament provides no information about how and why Epaphras was arrested.

17. Epaphras probably became a Christian while Paul was in Ephesus—the leading town in the same province Colosse was located in. Describe Paul’s work in Ephesus. *Acts 19 and 20*

Paul stayed in Ephesus for a longer period of time than he stayed with any other church. Paul’s ministry in Ephesus began when he prayed with 12 men and “the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied” (Acts 19:6). He then “entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months (Acts 19:8). After some refused to listen “He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus” (Acts 19:9). Paul did this for two years. This ministry was so effective that “all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord” (Acts 19:10). At the same time, God demonstrated his grace by enabling Paul to work “extraordinary miracles” (Acts 19:11). These events and others caused “the name of the Lord Jesus [to be] held in high honor” (Acts 19:17). Those in the church repented of their secret sins (Acts 19:18), and “the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power” (Acts 19:20). Such a great change took place in Ephesus that the local guild of idol craftsmen became concerned that they would soon lose all their business because Paul had “convinced and lead astray large numbers of people ... in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia” (Acts 19:26).

DAY THREE

18. Why do you think Paul sent Tychicus to carry this letter to Colosse? *Colossians 4:7-8, 18*

Paul could not go himself as he was imprisoned. He could not send Epaphras because he was imprisoned. He could send Tychicus. He was a faithful minister. Paul placed great trust in him and knew that he would encourage the church.

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19. What else did Tychicus do for Paul? 2 Timothy 4:12; Ephesians 6:21-22; Titus 3:12; Acts 20:1-5

Paul often sent Tychicus on missions that he could not go on himself. Like a utility infielder in baseball, Tychicus was plugged in when and where he was most needed. Tychicus is one of those unsung heroes whom we will meet in heaven.

20. Who accompanied Tychicus to Colosse? Colossians 4:9

Onesimus.

21. How does Paul describe this man in this verse?

He describes Onesimus as “our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you”. While this was all true, it was purposely incomplete! Paul left out the minor point that Onesimus was a runaway slave and (probably) a thief.

22. What more can we learn about this man in the letter to Philemon? Philemon 8-21

Paul calls him his child. He says that he is “very dear” to him (Philemon 16). He says that he was formerly useless to Philemon. Now he is useful to Paul and Philemon. Paul describes Onesimus as his “very heart” (Philemon 12). He says that he should be received “no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother” (Philemon 16).

DAY FOUR

23. Paul does not say why he wrote this letter, although hints can be found throughout the book. It appears false teachers were confusing the saints. Based on the following verses, what were the false teachers teaching the saints in Colosse? Colossians 2:4, 8, 16-23

The false teachers had been allowed to teach (this was the first mistake made by the church) and they had confused the saints. The saints were being deluded by “plausible arguments”. They were being taken captive by philosophy and empty deceit according to the elemental spirits of the world. Judgement was being passed on them in regard to food and drink and holy days and worship of angels and visions. The false teachers had “sensuous minds”—that is, they were led by feelings. The church was led down similar paths. The church was submitting to regulations according to human precepts and teachings. They were grabbing onto things that promoted self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body.

24. What is the Christian to do in regard to false teaching and false teachers? Titus 1:10-16; Hebrews 13:9

Paul never advocates placating false teachers. They are a danger to the flock and must be dealt with in an aggressive manner. They must be silenced. They should be rebuked sharply, not only to silence them and protect the saints, but also that they (the false teachers) may be sound in the faith. The Christians, for their part, must not be led away by strange teachings. (See also 2 Timothy 2:14-18, 23.) False teaching was not just a problem in the first century. It is a great

problem today. The remedy is still the same. False teachers must be silenced. If they are not silenced, they will ruin whole households.

25. Paul uses strong words in addressing the Christians in Colosse. What gave him the right to speak to the church in such a way?

He was an apostle. Christ had sent him to establish and to care for churches. Paul had suffered for this church. He had loved it and spent much time praying for it. Paul had led their leader (Epaphras) to Christ, thus he was a “father” to the Christians in this area.

DAY FIVE

26. Read Colossians 1-4, preferably in one sitting. Don't take any notes as you read, just take the time necessary to slowly read the chapters. When you are finished, write any thought these chapters leave you with in the space below.

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DAY SIX

Read the study notes.

27. Read the study notes and then complete the following sentence. This week the Holy Spirit has taught me ...

?????



“Christ in You”

WEEK TWO: Colossians 1:1-14

DAY ONE

Colossians 1:1-14

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

2 To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse:
Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **4** because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— **5** the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel **6** that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. **7** You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, **8** and who also told us of your love in the Spirit. **9** For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. **10** And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may 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, and joyfully **12** giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints 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.

DAY TWO

Read Colossians 1:1-2

1. In verse one Paul calls himself “an apostle of Christ Jesus”. Using a dictionary or Bible dictionary, look up the word apostle and write the definition below.

An apostle is someone who is sent on a mission. In the New Testament, apostles held unique authority given to them by Jesus (see Mark 3:13-19). They were called apostles “of” Christ Jesus. That is, they were sent by him and for him.

It is interesting to consider how many times Paul made this comment in his introductions. What does this say about Paul's understanding of his role as an apostle?

Our prayers must be characterized by thanksgiving. Thanksgiving shows that we see that God's hand is at work and that are grateful for that work. The more we thank God the more our eyes are opened to all that he is doing. Try it and see!

Here are two reasons to thank God: (1) the faith of the saints, (2) the love of the saints.

What a powerful statement! Don't be overly dismayed by governments/policies/people that would strive to keep the gospel out of a particular place. It cannot be done. The gospel is bearing fruit everywhere.

This is a great prayer to pray for any believer.

Notice, living a life worthy of the Lord requires being filled with the knowledge of God's will.

You did not qualify yourself. Your actions or nature had nothing to do with you being qualified. God qualified you!

2. What is an apostle's job In other words, what is the apostle supposed to do? *Ephesians 4:11-13*

An apostle's job is "to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ". Titus 1:1 provides a great explanation of an apostle's job. The apostle exists "for the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness".

3. How did Paul become an apostle? *Colossians 1:1; Ephesians 4:7-11; Acts 13:1-4*

He was made an apostle "by the will of God", by the gifting of Christ, and by the calling and sending of the Holy Spirit.

4. Reread the three passages in the question above. Which members of the Trinity do you find involved in the process of Paul becoming an apostle? What, precisely, did each member that is listed do?

All three members of the Trinity are involved in apostle-making! The Father wills it, Jesus gifts it, and the Holy Spirit calls and sends the apostle. Notice, you do not make yourself an apostle. You must be called and equipped by God.

5. In which of Paul's 13 letters do you find him introducing himself in this way? In which letters does he not introduce himself in this way?

He introduces himself as an apostle in Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, and Titus. He does not introduce himself as an apostle in Philippians, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, and Philemon.

6. Why do you think Paul included this fact in so many of his letters? Why might he have included this fact in this letter?

His inclusion of this fact would have given his letters additional "weight." He wasn't just writing as one Christian may write to another Christian. He was writing as one who had been called and gifted to be an apostle by the command of God. This should cause any Christian to pay close attention to the contents of his letters. The letter to the Colossians needed this "weight" because it was corrective in nature and was written "against" false teachers and false teaching. Paul did not hesitate to use his position to strengthen his position.

7. Paul was writing this letter to the "holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse" (verse 2). As we saw in the introduction, the Colossian Christians had not been behaving in a holy or a faithful manner. In fact, they were listening to false teachers and making decidedly unholy choices. Why, then, would Paul call them holy and faithful? See *Hebrews 10:10; Ephesians 5:25-27; Colossians 1:21-22; 1 Peter 2:9*

They had been made holy (sanctified) through the offering of the body of Christ. They were cleansed by "the washing of water with the word". They were holy! This does not mean that all their actions were holy. In the same way that your child may fall in mud, but this does not make

him or her a pig, a Christian may behave in an unholy manner, but this does not make the Christian unholy in nature.

8. Paul blessed the Colossian church with grace and peace. Where does this grace and peace come from? What is its nature? *John 14:27; 1 Corinthians 1:3; Philipians 1:2; Colossians 3:15*

It is Jesus' peace. Both grace and peace are from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

9. Do you believe this blessing was primarily ornamental, serving as a kindly greeting, or was it functional, serving as a call for God to literally bless the church with much needed grace and peace? *See also Luke 10:5-6 and Numbers 6:22-27*

This blessing was functional. Paul was asking the Lord to bless them.

10. Is this something we can practice today?

Yes! This is exactly what the pastor does when he gives the benediction. But it is not just for pastors. As priests of God (see 1 Peter 2:9), it is something we should all practice on a regular basis.

DAY THREE

Read Colossians 1:3-6

11. Paul's prayers for the Colossians begin with thanksgiving. What two things did Paul thank God for in regard to the church in Colosse?

Their faith in Christ Jesus (this is expressed vertically) and the love they have for all the saints (this is expressed horizontally).

12. What do the following verses teach us about thanksgiving?

Thanksgiving should always precede intercession. It leads to more faith in our prayer times, because when we thank God we are remembering God's faithfulness in the past.

Psalm 50:23

Thanksgiving glorifies God!

Philippians 4:6-7

Thanksgiving is to be a part of making our requests known to God. The peace of God is tied to thankful prayers.

Colossians 3:17

We are to give thanks to God the Father through Jesus. All is to be done in his name.

Colossians 4:2

We are to continue steadfastly in prayer being watchful in it with thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is awareness of God's good working and intervention in our lives. See also Psalm 118:15

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13. Is thanksgiving a part of your life? Would those who know you best describe you as a thankful person? Would God describe you in that way?

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14. According to Colossians 1:4, the Colossian church was known for its faith and love. Where did their faith and love come from?

It sprang from heaven to them! See also 1 Timothy 1:14.

15. Paul makes a startling statement about the gospel's influence in verse six. What is it?

The gospel is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world.

16. What does this tell you about the universality of the gospel message?

It is the most universal of messages. Jesus is the hope of the ends of the earth. See also Psalm 98:2.

17. What were Jesus' expectations regarding the proclamation of the gospel? *Matthew 28:18-20; Matthew 24:14; Acts 1:8*

Jesus said that the gospel would be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all the nations before the end. He commanded his followers to make disciples of all the nations. His apostles were to be witnesses to the end of the earth. His expectations were that all these things would happen. The gospel's advance throughout the entire world is not in doubt!

18. Just how successful will this proclamation be? *Revelation 9:7-14*

The proclamation of the gospel will be incredibly successful! One day, a multitude that is so large that it is impossible to count will stand before the throne. This multitude will be made up of people from every nation, every tribe, every people group, and every language.

DAY FOUR

Read Colossians 1:7-8

19. In verse seven, Paul refers to Epaphras as a "dear fellow servant". The literal Greek word translated "servant" here means "slave." Paul uses the same words to describe Tychicus in Colossians 4:7. What would the life of Jesus' slave look like?

Jesus' slave would be controlled by Jesus rather than attempting to control his own life. Jesus would be the dominant force in this person's life, for all this person did would be subject to him. Jesus would control this person's finances, time, talents, family, health, strengths, friends, weaknesses, diet, hobbies, career, etc., etc., etc. A slave doesn't have any rights. Jesus' slave would revel in that fact, acknowledging that life cannot get any better than serving as Jesus' slave.

20. What specific things might change in your life if you saw yourself as a slave of Jesus rather than merely his follower?

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DAY FIVE

Read Colossians 1:9-14

21. The Colossian Christians were confused about many things. That is why Paul was writing this letter. In these verses, Paul shares with the church how he and his companions were praying for them. What, specifically, were they praying for? *Colossians 1:9*

They were asking that the Colossians might be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

22. Why did Paul and his companions pray in this way? What did they expect to happen as a result of these prayers? *Colossians 1:10-12*

They prayed this way so that: (1) They might walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, (2) they might bear fruit in every good work, (3) they might increase in the knowledge of God.

23. According to verses 13 and 14, the Christian has been rescued “from the dominion of darkness” and has been brought “into the kingdom of the Son he loves”. From your experience, what are the characteristics of these two very different kingdoms?

The kingdom of darkness is characterized by shame, guilt, fear, bondage, distrust, joylessness, tension, wickedness, worry, anger, hatred, rage, jealousy, hopelessness, addictions, etc., etc., etc. The kingdom of the Son is characterized by growth, freedom, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, (and all of the traits outlined in Galatians 5:22-23).

DAY SIX

Read the study notes.

24. This week the Holy Spirit has taught me ...

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HANDS to the PLOW MINISTRIES

This does not mean that Jesus was born first. As God, he is eternal—he has always existed. It means he is the heir of all creation. It is all his.

Notice the number of times the words all and every are used in this passage about Jesus.

This is an amazing statement. Jesus made everything (how does this fit with your understanding of the events in Genesis 1 and 2?), and he made it for himself! He created his own inheritance! He is why we exist, therefore, we will not be satisfied living for anything else.

This really is the heart of the gospel. We must grasp this truth. We are able to boldly enter God's presence because Jesus' death has made us "without blemish and free from accusation".

We are repeatedly told that we must continue in the faith to the end. The New Testament does not picture our faith as a one time act that can be, once acquired, be ignored (i.e., I purchased a ticket for heaven and now I can get on with other things until my death). Rather, we must continue in our faith to the very end. That is the nature of true faith.

This is an important fact to know. All people have heard the gospel.

“Christ in You”

WEEK THREE: Colossians 1:15-23

DAY ONE

Colossians 1:15-23

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16** For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by 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.

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, not moved 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.

DAY TWO

Read Colossians 1:15-20

1. Using today's verses, describe Jesus as completely as possible. Who is he? (There are at least nine truths about Jesus listed here).

1. He is the image of the invisible God.
2. He is the firstborn over all creation.
3. By him all things were created.
4. All things were created for him.
5. He is before all things.
6. In him all things hold together.
7. He is the head of the body—the church.
8. He is the beginning.
9. He is the firstborn from among the dead.

(additional)

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10. In everything he has supremacy.
11. All God's fullness dwells in him.
12. Through Jesus all things are reconciled to God.
13. Peace is made through Jesus' blood which was shed on the cross.

2. How do these truths add to or change your understanding of who Jesus is?

The thought of Jesus being before all things and creating everything for himself is wonderful. I love that he made his own inheritance! I love that I am his inheritance. It greatly clarifies my purpose in life—I exist for Jesus! The Father was careful that in everything (even death) the Son might have supremacy. The statement that God “was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him” demonstrates the Father’s love for the Son. The exaltation of the Son bring the Father great joy! He has done everything to see that the Son is exalted.

3. Why do you think Paul focuses all his attention on Jesus in this passage? What might this say about the attention the Colossian church was giving toward him?

Jesus is the answer—always. The Colossians were turning to empty actions. They needed to be reminded of who Christ is.

4. What does a lack of attention toward Jesus result in? *Hebrews 2:1-3; Hebrews 12:3*

Drifting away. Not considering Jesus leads to weariness and faint heartedness.

5. What is the antidote to this problem? *Hebrews 12:2-3*

“Fix our eyes on Jesus ... Consider him.” We must deliberately think about Christ and his greatness. If we do not, we “grow weary and lose heart”. This is exactly what had happened to the Christians in Colosse. Rather than trusting in Christ and in his greatness, they were turning to weak rituals and formulas to sustain their joy and strength and holiness.

DAY THREE

Read John 1:1-18

6. How do these verses describe Jesus? By what names or titles is he called?

He is called “the Word” (see also Revelation 19:11-13). He was in the beginning. He was with God and he was God. All things were made through him. In him was life. The life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness. The darkness has not overcome it. He is the true light and he was coming into the world. The world did not know him. He came to his own people but they did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. He has glory ... glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. He ranks before earthly men (even the greatest of earthly men) because he came before them. From his fullness, we have all received grace upon grace. Grace and truth came through him. He is the only God. He is at the Father’s side, and he makes the Father known. Titles used of Jesus: the Word, God, the true light that gives light to every man, God the One and Only.

7. How do these truths add to or change your understanding of who Jesus is?

I like reading that Jesus came to his own (his own possessions!). Remember, he made everything for himself. He was coming to that which was already his. He became flesh and dwelt among us —what a mystery. The only God coming to man, living with man, to make the Father knowable and enjoyable.

8. What similarities do you find between the truths highlighted in this passage and those found in Colossians 1:15-20? Any differences?

John does not refer to the church, as does Colossians. John also does not refer to Christ's death or resurrection from the dead. John does not explain the "operation" of our salvation. Just is fact and results. Colossians does not refer to Jesus as "the Word".

DAY FOUR

Read Hebrews 1

9. How do these verses describe Jesus? By what names or titles is he called? How does God the Father describe Jesus in this passage?

In these last days God has spoken to us by his Son. God appointed him heir of all things and made the world through him. He is the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of his nature. He upholds the universe by the word of his power. He made purification of sins and sat at the right hand of the Majesty on high. He became superior to the angels. He has an eternal throne. Jesus made/laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens. He will roll them up at the end. Titles used of Jesus: Son, the firstborn, God, Lord.

10. How do these truths add to or change your understanding of who Jesus is?

Jesus is everything! He is currently ruling and uprightness is the scepter of his kingdom. He is glad (because he has been anointed with the oil of gladness)!

11. What similarities do you find between the truths highlighted in this passage and those found in Colossians 1:15-20? Any differences?

The church is not seen in Hebrews. Jesus is not called "God" in Colossians, although this is clearly seen, for all the fullness of God dwells in him and he is the image of the invisible God. Colossians does not refer to the firstborn being brought into the world.

DAY FIVE

Read Colossians 1:21-23

12. What was your condition prior to your acceptance of the salvation that is found only in Jesus? Colossians 1:21; Romans 5:10; Ephesians 2:1-3

Col. 1:21 - alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds; Rom. 5:10 - God's enemies; Eph. 2:1-3 - dead in trespasses and sins, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, living in the passions of our flesh, by nature a child of wrath.

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13. What is your condition now (if you are a Christian)? *Colossians 1:22; Hebrews 10:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Isaiah 1:18*

Col. 1:22 - reconciled, holy, blameless and above reproach before him; Heb. 10:10 - sanctified; 2 Cor. 5:17 - a new creation, the old has gone and the new has come; Is. 1:18 - my sins, though they were like scarlet, have become white as snow.

14. Do you believe this about yourself?

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15. Why do you think Paul emphasizes the need to “continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel” (verse 23)? What might this say about the condition of the church in Colosse? What might this say to those today who are trusting in an experience they had with Christ from long ago, but who have not “continued” with him?

Because we have no hope outside of Christ. They (the church in Colosse) were shifting from the hope of the gospel. Many do this today. This is a warning to continue in him.

16. In verse 23, Paul says that the gospel “has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven”. Prove this by the following verses.

Titus 2:11 - God’s grace has appeared, bringing salvation for all people.

Romans 1:18-20 - God has made himself known to man ... and he has done this plainly. His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived in the things that have been made.

Psalms 19:1-4 - The heavens declare the glory of God, the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day is poured out. All languages and tongues have heard of God’s glory through the preaching of the heavens.

17. Based on the verses you have just read, how would you respond to someone who said, “God is not fair in demanding all people everywhere to place their faith in Christ. After all, some people have never heard the gospel.”?

All have seen God’s eternal power and divine nature for God has made it clear to all men. No one is without excuse.

DAY SIX

Read the study notes.

18. This week the Holy Spirit has taught me ...

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May God grant us grace so that we could say the same thing. Suffering is normal in the kingdom of God. We must not become whiners and complainers. Rather, we must rejoice—we are participants in Christ's afflictions.

This does not mean that Christ's suffering on the cross was somehow not complete. In terms of atonement, Christ's suffering was complete. However, Christ is still suffering for the church's longterm growth, health, and strength.

The word of God in fullness includes the truth that Christ is in you.

We need to grasp this truth. This brings such victory. We need to rely on Christ in us. We cannot place our faith in ourselves. We are not strong enough.

If people are to grow into maturity, they must learn the truth that Christ is in them.

How did Paul outwork all the other apostles? He did it using Christ's energy. How did he keep going day after day and year after year? It was Christ in him. From where did he draw his joy? It was Christ in him.



HANDS to the PLOW MINISTRIES

“Christ in You”

WEEK FOUR: Colossians 1:24-29

DAY ONE

Colossians 1:24-29

24 Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. **25** I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— **26** the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. **27** To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. **28** We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. **29** To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

DAY TWO

Read Colossians 1:24-25

1. Paul had already suffered a great deal for the church in Colosse. What was his response to those things he had suffered? *Colossians 1:24*

He rejoiced in them. In his flesh he was filling up what was lacking in Christ's afflictions.

2. Why do you think he would do this? *Matthew 5:10-12*

He rejoiced, knowing that he was suffering “for the sake of [Christ's] body, which is the church”. This is highly significant and tells us a great deal about Paul. He put the church's needs above his own comfort. He rejoiced because the kingdom of heaven belongs to those who are persecuted (although persecution is not the only thing Paul suffered). He rejoiced because those who are persecuted are blessed. He rejoiced because those who are persecuted have a great reward in heaven.

3. Has this been your response to the things you've suffered for Christ and his church?

?????

4. What was Paul's response to anticipated future sufferings?

To fill up in his flesh what was still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions.

5. Why would Paul call the things he personally was suffering “Christ’s afflictions”?
Colossians 1:24; see also Jesus’ words in Acts 9:1-4

Christ’s suffering on the cross was complete. He paid the price for our salvation. However, we must know that his afflictions have not been completed. He is pained when Christian’s suffer. The things we suffer now truly are Christ’s afflictions. We are members of his body. When we suffer, he suffers. This is why Jesus said to Paul (then called Saul), “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” As Paul persecuted the Christians he was persecuting Christ.

6. In verse 25, Paul calls himself a servant of the church. According to the following verses, what else does Paul say that he is a servant of? *Romans 1:1; Ephesians 3:7*

A servant of Christ Jesus and a servant of the gospel.

7. Do you consider yourself a servant of these three things? Would others consider you a servant of these three things?

?????

8. Can a person serve on of these three things and not the others?

No. You cannot serve Jesus without serving his body. You cannot serve the body without serving the gospel. You cannot serve the gospel without serving Jesus.

9. What can we learn from Jesus in regard to living as a servant? *Matthew 20:25-28; John 13:1-17; Philippians 2:5-11*

Whoever would be great in the church must be a servant. Our goal is not to be served, but to serve. Jesus did this. Although he is God, he made himself nothing. On the night before he died, he washed the disciples’ feet, giving us an example to imitate. He looked to our interests, as we are to look to the interests of others.

DAY THREE

Read Colossians 1:25-27

10. As a servant of the church, Paul was given a specific commission by God. What is this commission? *Colossians 1:25-27*

To present the word of God in all its fullness. This included making known “the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations”.

11. What is the “mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints”?

It is “Christ in you, the hope of glory”. The same Christ we discussed in last week’s lesson—the one who made everything and made it for himself—is living in me!

12. Why do you think this mystery had been kept hidden for ages and generations?

This mystery—that God’s anointed Messiah would reside in mankind—could not have been revealed before Christ came because no one would have understood it. “The Messiah in me? How can that be?”

13. What does the phrase “Christ in you” mean to you? *Colossians 1:27*

See the second paragraph on page 43. This is a tremendous truth and must be understood. I am not alone. Christ has come to reside in me. His strength is in me. His love is in me. His power is in me. I draw from his resources. This was Paul’s theology. He understood that his strength was Christ’s strength (see Philippians 4:13).

14. What do you think this phrase meant to Paul? Was this phrase symbolic to him, or did its meaning go beyond this? *Galatians 2:20*

The phrase was not symbolic. He saw himself as crucified with Christ. He no longer lived, but Christ lived in him. This was not something he could see. He believed it by faith, and acted as if it were true.

DAY FOUR

Read Colossians 1:27

15. Describe the importance Jesus placed on his being “in” the believer. *John 6:53-59; John 15:1-8; John 17:20-26*

He talked a great deal about this truth. We are to “eat” his flesh and drink his blood. We are to feed (present tense) on him. This is graphic language, and it is not surprising that the people were disturbed when they heard Jesus say this. The disciples must have wondered what Jesus meant when he said that he would live in them. “How can he live in us?” See John 14. On the other hand, knowing Jesus as they knew him, they must have thought about the powerful implications if he did come to live within them.

16. Was this phrase symbolic to him, or did its meaning go beyond this?

The meaning was not symbolic. Jesus spoke as if he really meant what he said. He clearly said that he would live in the disciples.

17. What are the differences you would expect to see in the life of one in whom Christ lives?

That person would be like Jesus ... he would be joyful, productive, merciful, clear, connected to the Father, loving, in control, purposed.

DAY FIVE

Read Colossians 1:28-29

18. According to Colossians 1:28, Paul's goal was that "we may present everyone perfect in Christ". What, specifically, did he do so that this might be accomplished?

He proclaimed "him", warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom. Here we see that Christ must be preached. Not just the fact that Christ died and rose again 2,000 years ago (which seems to be the truth about Christ we most often preach), but also the fact that Christ desires to live within us.

19. "Perfect in Christ" means mature. Based on Colossians 1:24-29, what might be the difference between a mature believer and an immature believer?

An immature believer would not trust in Christ in him. He would still rely on himself. A mature believer would trust in Christ. As Paul said in Colossians 1:29, "I labor, struggling with all his energy".

20. Where did Paul find the energy he needed to effectively labor for the church?

Colossians 1:29; Philippians 4:13

It was Christ's energy! This energy powerfully worked in Paul. Christ strengthened him. That was why he could do all things. See also John 4:31-38.

21. If this was the case with Paul, why is this not the case with every Christian?

Because we don't know this truth. We are taught that we must struggle through life as best as we can and one day, we will meet Jesus in heaven. We rely on our own strength, rather than trusting in Christ's strength now.

22. What do you think activates this energy in the Christian's life?

Faith in Christ in me. I must believe this to be true. Obviously, in order for me to believe it to be true, I must know these truths.

DAY SIX

Read the study notes.

23. This week the Holy Spirit has taught me ...

?????



“Christ in You”

WEEK FIVE: Colossians 2:1-10

DAY ONE

Colossians 2:1-10

1 I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. **2** My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, **3** in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. **4** I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. **5** For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, **7** rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, **10** and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

DAY TWO

Read Colossians 2:1-3

1. Why do you think Paul wanted the Colossians to know how much he was struggling for them (this is now the second time he has brought this fact to their attention)? Colossians 2:1

This would have told them that someone was fighting for them and that they were in such desperate straits that they needed someone to fight for them. This should have increased their respect for Paul. You respect those who suffer for you. This would have maybe waken them from their foolish acceptance of the false teachers.

2. What was Paul hoping his struggles for the church in Colosse and Laodicea would accomplish? Colossians 2:2-3

Look at the progression in Paul’s thought here. He was hoping “that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order

Paul wasn’t bragging. He was putting a “weight” on the Colossian Christians. He wanted them to know that he was fighting for them. He was fighting for the things outlined in verses two through five.

These are important words. They explain why Paul wanted them to be encouraged in heart and united in love.

Our entire faith is about Christ.

Paul isn’t just talking about firmness in faith regarding the fact that Jesus died for you. He is also talking about firmness of faith in the fact that he is presently living for you and in you! We must trust him in us now.

Our faith must be in Christ NOW! He is our strength, life, power, wisdom, etc., etc., etc.

We are to watch ourselves, for many will try to steer us from simple dependence on Christ.

that they may know the mystery of God, namely Christ". His goal, ultimately, was that they might know Christ. This is why he suffered for them. This is why we should suffer for others.

3. Read verse two carefully. Why does Paul want the saints to be encouraged in heart and united in love?

Because he wanted them "have the full riches of complete understanding" (i.e., that they might know Christ).

4. What does this say about the importance of believers gathering together? *See also Hebrews 10:24-25*

Fellowship is critical. Being united in love encourages us and leads to the full riches of complete understanding.

5. In verse three, Paul declares that he wants the believers to "know the mystery of God, namely, Christ". What might be the difference between knowing Christ, as Paul advocates here, and merely knowing about Christ? *See also Acts 19:13-16 and James 2:18-22*

Knowing Christ is personal and includes faith in him. Knowing about Christ is, while important, incomplete. If this is all you have, you have nothing. He is not to be known as we might know geometry or astronomy. He is to be known like I know my wife, intimately and personally. As Hosea 6:3 says, "Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD" (ESV). This must be our goal. See also Philippians 3:10.

6. What are some evidences that a person truly knows Christ? *John 15:1-17; Romans 8:16; Galatians 5:22-24; 1 John 3:24; 1 John 4:13*

A person who knows Christ abides in Christ and Christ's words abide in him. Christ's Spirit testifies with that person's spirit that he is born again. The fruit of the Spirit resides in that person's life. We know we're abiding if we're obeying. We know he's abiding by the Spirit!

7. According to verse three, what two things are hidden in Christ?

All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

8. How do you think these things which are hidden in Christ can be accessed by the believer? *See also James 1:5-8*

By knowing Christ. By asking him to give us his wisdom and believing that he will answer. By trusting in him to meet our needs.

DAY THREE

Read Colossians 2:4

9. Paul told the Colossians these things “so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments” (Colossians 2:4). In verse eight, Paul provides a good explanation of what these “fine-sounding arguments” actually are. What are they?

They are “hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world”. These things do not depend upon Christ.

10. Paul did not rely on the fine-sounding arguments of the world, although he fully recognized man’s affinity for them. What, instead, did he rely on? 1 Corinthians 1:18-2:5

He depended on the message of the cross and on Christ and Christ crucified.

11. In Galatians 5:11, Paul, in discussing the gospel he preaches, refers to “the offense of the cross”. What do you think he means by this?

Because it is opposed to the law. It is based on grace alone. The offense of the cross is its “cursed” nature—Jesus hanging like a common criminal on a tree. The offense of the cross is the way in which it stands opposed to all human works.

12. What did this decision to preach in the way he did personally cost Paul? 2 Corinthians 11:23-29; Galatians 5:11

He lost everything for the sake of the gospel. He suffered countless persecutions. In fact, many of the things listed in 1 Corinthians 11 do not even appear in the book of Acts!

13. What has the preaching of the gospel cost you?

?????

DAY FOUR

Read Colossians 2:5-7

14. What do you think Paul meant by saying that he was present with the Colossians in spirit? Colossians 2:5

He was “with them” in heart. In the same way that I might say to someone celebrating a birthday that I can’t attend, “I’ll be with you in spirit.”

15. Why do you think Paul mentions this fact?

So they would not feel alone or abandoned. They would also feel the weight of his presence even though he wasn’t there. They were to do things as if he were there, because he was, in a sense, really there.

16. According to verse five, Paul delighted in seeing two things in the church. What were they?

1. Their good order. 2. The firmness of their faith in Christ.

17. What are some signs that a church is orderly? Colossians 2:5; 1 Peter 4:10-11; 1 Corinthians 14:26-40; Hebrews 10:23-25; Hebrews 13:17 and others

Firmness of faith in Christ (Colossians). Use of gifts to serve one another, carefully stewarding God's grace. Doing everything so that God might be glorified (1 Peter). Worship that is done decently and in order (1 Corinthians). Holding fast to the confession of our faith. Stirring each other to love and good deeds. Meeting together and encouraging one another. Obeying leaders and submitting to their authority (Hebrews).

18. Disorder in the church is a sign of something. What is it? James 3:16

Jealousy and selfish ambition.

19. What indications do we have that the church in Colosse was disorderly at this time?

They were not holding firm to their faith in Christ. They were not doing everything so that God would be glorified. Instead, they were putting up with false teachers, and glorifying their deceptive teachings rather than glorifying Christ.

20. Paul mentions that he delights in seeing "how firm your faith in Christ is". Don't all Christians have firm faith in Christ?

I don't believe all Christians have firm faith in Christ. They may trust him for salvation, but they don't trust him to live through them. Many have very weak faith in regard to the power of Christ in them. They do not see him as currently ruling and reigning.

21. Using Colossians 2:6-7 as the basis of your answer, describe what this firm faith in Christ looks like. See also Galatians 2:20

Walking in him, rooted and built up in him, established in the faith, abounding in thanksgiving. It is the acknowledgment that I no longer live but Christ lives in me.

22. If you are a Christian, would your kind of faith be described as "firm"?

?????

23. Where does a Christian get this kind of faith?

Asking God to give us this kind of faith. Study of God's word. Encouragement from our fellow Christians. A life of prayer. Reading and imitating those who have gone before me. See Hebrews 13:7-8.

DAY FIVE

Read Colossians 2:8-10

24. According to verse eight, what can take the believer captive?

Hollow and empty philosophy, deceit, human tradition, basic principles of this world.

25. Has this ever happened to you? If so, how and when?

?????

26. The believer is not to depend on “human tradition and the basic principles of this world”. What, instead, is the believer to depend on?

Christ.

27. How, practically speaking, does this happen? *John 6:29*

We place and keep placing our faith in Christ. As John 6:54 says, we feed on him.

28. Do you believe this is a once-for-all-time choice, or a daily decision? Please explain your answer.

Both. I must decide one and for all to put my faith in him, but I must do this in heart and mind continually.

29. Is that where your dependence has been over the last few days ... months ... years?

?????

30. Verses eight and nine are connected by the word “For”. Why would Paul connect the truth that “in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” with the truth we have been examining in verse eight?

Because when we depend on Christ, we have the fullness of deity available to us.

31. Who else share in Christ’s fullness? *Colossians 2:10*

We do! We have been given fullness in Christ!

32. What should be the practical implications of this truth?

We should be walking in grace and victory. We should be reflectors of God’s glory. Others should see Christ in us. The characteristics of God should mark our lives.

DAY SIX

Read the study notes.

33. This week the Holy Spirit has taught me ...

?????



“Christ in You”
WEEK SIX: Colossians 2:10-23

DAY ONE

Colossians 2:10-23

10 and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. **11** In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, **12** having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, **14** having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. **15** And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. **17** These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. **18** Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. **19** He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

20 Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules? **21** "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? **22** These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. **23** Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

Just as circumcision cuts off a physical part of the flesh, the spiritual circumcision to which Paul refers cuts off a spiritual (or, rather, unspiritual) part of your life—your sinful nature. It does not eliminate it. Rather, it severs its vital connection to you so that you can, for the first time in your life, walk free from sin.

We must never forget that the cross was the moment of triumph. Satan is not alive and well. He is mortally wounded and has been disarmed.

In other words, because of the the events that took place on the cross and your inclusion in those events (described in verses 11–15), you should not listen to the false teachers. They are talking about things they know nothing about.

Just because somebody has a compelling story about their religious experience does not mean it is true. Christ is the answer.

We do not live as the rest of the world lives. They struggle and fight against sin, trying to keep it under control. We rest in the victory of Christ, knowing that his death and our inclusion in his death has brought us freedom from sin. This does not mean, of course, that we never do sin. It means that sin's grip on us has been broken.

Rules and regulations cannot restrain lustful passions. The only way sin can be dealt with is by the cross of Christ and your death with Christ. If you are a Christian, do not think that rules will make you holier. Christ's finished work and your belief in that work is the secret.

DAY TWO

Read Colossians 2:10-11

1. Who are these “powers and authorities” that Paul describes in verse ten? See also Colossians 2:15 and Ephesians 6:11-12

Demonic rulers and authorities. They include the devil and a wide array of his evil army referred to as rulers, authorities, cosmic powers over this present darkness, spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

2. Describe Jesus’ relationship with these powers and authorities. Colossians 2:10; Colossians 2:15; Colossians 1:16

He is the head of all rule and authority. He disarmed the rulers and authorities, putting them to open shame, triumphing over them by the cross.

3. Why is this truth significant for the Christian to know and understand? Ephesians 6:12

Because we don’t wrestle against flesh and blood. People are not our enemies. We wrestle against these evil rulers and authorities. They are our enemies.

4. What did Jesus say to his followers in regard to these powers and authorities (Jesus called them “snakes and scorpions” here)? Luke 10:19

He gave them authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy. He said that nothing would harm them. He obviously was not referring to physical harm, for most of the apostles were killed on account of their faith. We must believe that, even in death, the disciples were protected from harm by the snakes and scorpions.

5. Do you think this truth applies to Christians today?

Absolutely. We are to continue the works of Jesus and bring the gospel to all peoples. Satan and his helpers have not disappeared from the face of the earth. Surely we need the same authority as was given to the earliest followers of Christ if we are to bring the gospel to all peoples and to stand in the face of their attacks.

6. When doesn’t the Christian have the ability to walk in this authority? 1 Peter 5:8-9; James 4:7

When he is not sober-minded and vigilant. When he is not firm in his faith. When he doesn’t resist Satan. When he is not submitted to God.

7. The false teachers were probably teaching the Christians in Colosse that they needed to be physically circumcised (among other things) in order to be saved. In verse 11, Paul tells these Christians that they have already been circumcised. Describe this circumcision Paul refers to here. See also Romans 2:28-29

He calls it a circumcision made without hands by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ. This is circumcision of the heart by the Spirit.

8. What does this circumcision remove from the believer? *Colossians 2:11*

The body of the flesh (the sinful nature).

9. What practical impact should this have on the believer's life?

The flesh (that is my sinful nature) had a life-sapping connection to me from the day I was born. I was literally compelled to sin. The Spirit circumcised my heart, cutting the sinful nature's connection to me. This does not mean that I no longer sin. It does mean that I no longer have to sin. The practical impact this should have on me is that I should live free from sin and walk in holiness.

DAY THREE

Read Colossians 2:12-15

10. Verses 12 and 13 are connected to verse 11. They describe when the Christian's inner circumcision took place. Please summarize these verses here.

I was buried with him in baptism and raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God.

11. Are these truths presented as something that will happen to the believer or that has already happened to the believer? Why is this truth significant?

They are presented as events that have happened for the believer. The believer has already been circumcised inwardly. This means that the leech-like connection between sin and the believer has been severed, freeing the believer to walk after Christ in true holiness.

12. Romans 6:1-14 describes this baptism into Christ in greater detail. Summarize Paul's words in this passage.

This is a difficult concept to understand and demands hard thinking. This passage indicates that I was baptized (dunked) into Christ, meaning that I experienced what he experienced. Because I was with him in his death, I was also with him in his resurrection. In the same way that Christ walks in newness of life, I am able to walk in newness of life because I was raised with him.

13. How is the non-Christian described in the first half of verse 13?

Dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of the flesh.

14. How did Jesus describe the non-Christian in John 3:18?

He described the non-Christian as condemned already because he had not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

15. How is the Christian described in verses 12 and 13?

Alive together with him! Forgiven!

16. Verses 13-15 describe several specific actions God performed on behalf of the believer. What are they?

He made us alive together with him. He forgave us all our trespasses; he canceled the record of debt that stood against us; he disarmed the rulers and authorities, putting them to open shame.

17. Why would it be important for the Christians in Colosse to know these truths?

Because they didn't feel forgiven; they were doing many works (at the recommendation of the false teachers) so that they might become holy.

18. Why is it important for you to know these truths?

Because this is who I am. I am alive and I am forgiven. If I believe these things to be true I will act in accordance with the truth.

19. Verse 15 mentions that Jesus "disarmed the powers and authorities". Who benefits from this disarming and who does Satan still have authority over? *Ephesians 2:1-2*

We benefit from this. Satan's authority is over the sons of disobedience.

20. Based on this verse, how would you describe the overall "fighting condition" of Satan and his demons, and his strength in comparison to the strength of the church "rooted and built up" in Christ?

The church should be and will be victorious, for her enemy has been disarmed!

DAY FOUR

Read Colossians 2:16-19

21. In verses 16 and 17, Paul provides a great explanation of what the religious festivals, New Moon celebrations and Sabbath days described in the law were all about. What does he call them here?

They are a shadow of things to come.

22. For the Christian, these things are reflections of our reality, but not the reality itself. What is the Christian's reality? *Colossians 2:17*

Christ. He is our substance and our reality.

23. Paul issues a strong warning in verse 18, what is it?

Don't let anyone disqualify you (see also Colossians 1:12).

24. How does Paul describe the false teachers in verses 18 and 19?

Puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, not holding fast to the Head.

25. The false teachers had lost their "connection with the Head". Who is the Head?

Jesus.

26. How does the Christian maintain his connection with the Head? *Colossians 2:6-7; John 15:1-17*

Jesus as I received Christ Jesus as Lord, I am to continue to walk in him. I must abide in him, obeying his commands.

27. What might be some warning signs that you have lost your connection to the Head?

Attempted keeping of the law (in my own strength). Pride, slothfulness, lack of love, lack of joy
...

DAY FIVE

Read Colossians 2:20-23

28. According to verse 20, what did the Christian die to?

The basic principles of this world.

29. When did this death occur?

It happened "with Christ". When he died, I died.

30. What is the Christian not to do because to this death?

Do not submit to the world's regulations.

31. The false teachings the Colossian Christians were hearing had an appearance of something. What was it? *Colossians 2:23*

Wisdom.

32. What was their true value? *Colossians 2:23*

They have no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

33. If the false teachings can't restrain sensual indulgence, what can? (Think carefully over the truths we have learned this week.)

Only Jesus—we must know that we died with him and are now alive with him. See also Titus 2:11-14.

DAY SIX

Read the study notes.

34. This week the Holy Spirit has taught me ...

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This is a critical fact that must be learned by all Christians. See Colossians 2:11-13 and Ephesians 2:4-7.

How can we set our hearts and minds on things above if we do not know that we have been raised with Christ? Once again, we see that our theology impacts our behavior.

Romans 6 provides a good explanation of this truth.

I am to put to death the things Paul mentions in verses 5-9 **because of** the truths presented in verses 1-4. If a Christian was to ask, "Why shouldn't I sin?" Most would answer, "Because it is wrong." This is certainly true, however, another reason is that we shouldn't sin because we have died with Christ and have been raised with him (again, see Romans 6). How can we sin when we died to sin and are alive with Christ?

God's wrath is not a popular subject today, but this doesn't negate its reality. It is very real and very terrible. See Romans 1-3.

This verse explains how I "Let the word of Christ dwell in [me] richly". If none of these things happen, it is probably safe to say that the word of Christ is not dwelling in you richly.

Our entire lives are to be centered on Christ. He is to be our life.

"Christ in You"

WEEK SEVEN: Colossians 3:1-17

DAY ONE

Colossians 3:1-17

1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. **3** For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. **6** Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. **7** You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. **8** But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. **9** Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices **10** and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. **11** Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

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 whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **14** And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. **17** And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

DAY TWO

Read Colossians 3:1-4

1. Verse one begins with the phrase, "Since, then you have been raised with Christ". Obviously, this thought is quite significant. When were you raised with Christ? Colossians 2:12-13; Romans 6:1-14

My life is tied to his life. When he died I died. When he rose I rose. See also Colossians 1:13.

2. The Christian is to take two actions based on this truth. What are they?

1. Set your hearts on things above.
2. Set your minds on things above.

3. Do you think these are one-time actions Paul is recommending.

No, these are not one-time actions. While these things are possible because of Christ's one-time action (his death, burial, resurrection, and ascension), setting my heart and mind on things above is a decision that I must make often on a moment-by-moment basis.

4. How can you do these two things?

First, I must know that I have been raised with Christ. Once I know that I have been raised with Christ, only then can I set my heart and mind on things above. Since this is true, I must know theology. I must understand what happened when Christ died and rose and ascended into heaven. I must meditate on these things.

5. Do you think it is possible to do these things if you don't know that you have been raised with Christ?

No. The truth sets us free. If we do not know that we have been raised with Christ, we will not be able to set our hearts and minds on things above.

6. According to verse one, Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father right now. Where is the Christian right now? *Colossians 3:3; Ephesians 2:6*

With him. My life is hidden with Christ in God. I have been raised up with him and seated in the heavenly places.

7. What impact should this truth have on your life here on earth?

If I understand this truth, I will no longer be carried away by earthly things; instead, my attention will be on heavenly things.

8. In verse four, Paul says that Christ "is your life". Is this true of all Christians?

Yes, however, some don't know this to be true. They are relying on themselves when they could rely on Christ.

9. What things in your life would change if you saw this as reality?

Praise God, I do see this as reality. However, I want to see it more and more. "Lord, show me these truths in increasing measure!"

10. When Christ appears, the Christian “also will appear with him in glory” (verse 4). We already know that the Christian has been raised with Christ spiritually. What do the following verses teach us about our “physical” resurrection? *Romans 8:17-25; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:10*

According to Romans 8, the “sons of God” will be revealed some day soon. We are eagerly waiting for our “adoption” as sons. According to 1 Corinthians 15, we will all be changed. Our perishable body will put on the imperishable. According to 1 Thessalonians 4, Jesus will descend and the dead in Christ will rise first. Then those who are alive will be caught up together with them. According to 2 Thessalonians 1, there is a day coming when Jesus will be glorified in his saints and marveled at among those who have believed.

DAY THREE

Read Colossians 3:5-11

11. The word “therefore” in verse five connects this verse with the truths presented in verse one through four. What action is the Christian to take based on the truths revealed in the first four verses?

Put to death whatever is earthly in me. See also verse 8. The phrase “rid yourselves of all such things” seems to be referring to the same action. See the study notes on page 77 regarding this action.

12. Who helps the Christian do this? *Romans 8:13-14*

The Holy Spirit. By the Spirit we put to death the misdeeds of the body.

13. Have you done this in your own life? Are you doing this in your own life?

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14. How do you reconcile the need to take this action with the truth that our old flesh or sinful nature has already been put off of us? *See Colossians 2:11*

It has been dealt with. However, those things that I have allowed to remain must be put to death. See Romans 6:6-7 and the textual note in the NIV regarding verse six.

15. Based on Paul’s words here, is there any reason sin should continue to have a hold on the Christian? In other words, whose fault is it if sin reigns in the life of the Christian?

Sin should not reign in the life of the Christian. It is the Christian’s fault if it does reign.

16. What does Paul state about Christ in 3:11? Is this how you think of him? Does your life reflect this?

Christ is all and is in all. More and more I think of him in this way. More and more my life is reflecting this reality.

DAY FOUR

Read Colossians 3:12-14

17. How is the Christian described in verse 12?

“God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved.”

18. What is the Christian told to do in verses 12 through 14?

To “clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity”.

19. Do you think it is possible to do this if you haven’t obeyed God’s commands as outlined in verses five through nine?

Absolutely not. How can darkness and light mix?

20. Who do you think helps the Christian do this?

The Holy Spirit (see question 12) and the body of Christ. See also Philippians 2:13—God is putting the desire in us and the ability to do what is right.

21. The Christian isn’t just to concern himself with his own life. How are we to treat fellow Christians? *Colossians 3:13*

We are to “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances [we] may have against one another”. We are to forgive in the same way that the Lord forgave us.

**22. Would those who know you best say that you make a practice of doing these things?
?????**

23. The Christian is to take off those things that belong to the earthly nature. The Christian is to put on those things that belong to the heavenly nature. Which of these two natures should be the easier for the Christian to wear? Why?

The heavenly one, for we are in Christ, and the heavenly nature is now our true nature. See 1 Corinthians 15:48 and 2 Corinthians 5:17. There is no one as miserable as a Christian living in an earthly fashion.

DAY FIVE

Read Colossians 3:15-17

24. In verse 15, we read that we are to let the peace of Christ do something. What are we to let the peace of Christ do?

Rule in our hearts.

25. How can you do this?

I let Christ's peace function as the umpire in my life. His peace in me and the peace between fellow believers and myself is to be a deciding factor in how I live my life. This does not mean, of course, that we are to tolerate things like false teaching for the sake of peace. After all, Paul was, in this letter, forcefully combating the false teachers. There is no peace when there are wolves among the sheep. Paul's battle against the false teachers was a fight for peace.

26. In verse 16, we read that we are to let the word of Christ do something. What are we to let the word of Christ do?

It is to "dwell in [me] richly".

27. How are we instructed to do this?

We do this as we "teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as [we] sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in [our] hearts to God".

28. Do you do this?

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29. How would life change for you if you consistently practiced verse 17?

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DAY SIX

Read the study notes.

30. This week the Holy Spirit has taught me ...

?????



“Christ in You”
WEEK EIGHT: Colossians 3:18-4:18

DAY ONE

Colossians 3:18-4:18

See the expanded version of these commands in Ephesians 5:22-6:9. We must realize that it is sinful to disobey these commands, no matter how unpopular or politically incorrect they might be.

This is certainly something all of us should apply

No matter where you work or what you do, you are serving Christ. This certainly should change your job and your attitude regarding those in authority over you.

18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

21 Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. **23** Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men. **24** since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

25 Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.

Colossians 4

1 Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. **3** And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. **4** Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. **5** Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. **6** Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

7 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. **8** I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. **9** He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

10 My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) **11**

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This is how you devote yourself to prayer. You keep watch (for things that need prayer) and you thank God (for things he has done and is doing).

Do you consider your conversations to be opportunities? Or are they just conversations? What would change if you considered every conversation to be an opportunity?

This man is a real hero. I'm excited to meet him some day.

Paul left out a minor detail about Onesimus here (he was more than just a faithful and dear brother—he was also a runaway slave). He left this piece of information out of this letter on purpose.

This is a good way to pray for any church. Could this be said of you? Could it be said of me?

Demas did not stay true to the faith. What happened? Could it happen to me?

Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. **12** Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. **13** I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. **14** Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. **15** Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

16 After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.

17 Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord."

18 I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

DAY TWO

Read Colossians 3:18-21

1. These verses provide instructions for families. Paul starts with the wife. What is she commanded to do, and why is she commanded to do it? Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:22-24
She is to submit to her husband because this is "fitting in the Lord".

2. What additional command does Paul give to wives in Ephesians 5:33?

She is to respect her husband.

3. What did Peter say to wives in 1 Peter 3:1-6?

They are to be subject to their own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won by their respectful and pure conduct. The adorning of the wife is not to be external. It is to be internal—the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit. In addition, the wife is not to give in to fear.

4. What is the husband commanded to do? Colossians 3:19; Ephesians 5:25-33

The husband is to love his wife and not to be harsh with her. He is to love his wife in the same way that Christ loved the church. He is to love his wife as his own body. He is to hold fast to her.

5. What did Peter say to husbands in 1 Peter 3:7?

The husband is to live with his wife in an understanding way, showing honor to her as the weaker vessel. If he doesn't do this, his prayers will be hindered.

6. If you are married, would your spouse say that you are doing what Paul has commanded in these verses?

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7. What happens in a marriage when the wife and the husband do not obey these commands?

We must understand that those who do not obey these commands are sinning. A marriage is out of God's order when these commands are not kept and it leads to all sorts of problems, a few of which are outlined in the verses we have just considered. The wife will not feel loved. The husband will not feel respected. The wife's behavior will not draw her husband to the Lord. The husband's prayers will be hindered.

8. What happens in a family when the wife and the husband do not obey these commands?

The problems in the marriage trickle down to the whole family resulting in pain. Unfortunately, the parents model bad behavior which will likely be copied by the children when they get married. There is great pain in any relationship that is not ordered according to God's divine plan.

9. What is the child commanded to do and why? *Colossians 3:20; Ephesians 6:1-3*

Children are to obey their parents in everything. There are two reasons given why children should obey: (1.) It pleases the Lord, (2.) So that the child may live long in the land. This promise of long life may not be a promise for a long life here and now. Rather, it might be a promise of eternal life (not that obeying your parents is the same as faith in Jesus, but obedience to parents is a step in that direction). It is just possible that Paul is interpreting this commandment "Christianly".

10. What warning is given to fathers and why? *Colossians 3:21; Ephesians 6:4*

Do not embitter your children. Do not provoke them to anger lest they become discouraged. We must learn when we've said and done enough.

11. If you're a parent, have you seen this ever happen with your own children?

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DAY THREE

Read Colossians 3:22-4:1

12. In these verses, Paul addresses slaves and masters. Slaves made up a relatively high percentage of the population in the Roman Empire and in the early church, so these words would have been listened to by many with great interest. What are Paul's commands to slaves in this passage and in Ephesians 6:5-8 and in 1 Timothy 6:1-2?

Slaves are to obey in everything, not as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Slaves are to render their service as the Lord and not to man. Slaves must be aware that God will reward anyone for whatever good he does. Slaves are to regard their masters as worthy of honor.

13. What is the Lord's response to the slave who serves well?

He will reward them for whatever good they do.

14. What is the Lord's response to the slave who does not serve well?

The wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no favoritism.

15. How do these verses apply in cultures where there is no slavery?

They obviously apply, to some extent, to employee/employer relationships.

16. What are Paul's commands to slave owners? *Colossians 4:1; Ephesians 6:9*

The owners are to reward their servants and they are to stop threatening them.

17. How do these words apply in cultures where there are no slave masters?

They certainly apply to how bosses treat their employees.

18. Why do you think Paul addressed how slaves and masters ought to behave, rather than addressing the evils of slavery and encouraging its abolition?

Paul needed to address how slaves and slave masters treated one another. Whether slavery ever ended or not, relations between slaves and masters needed to be brought in line with the gospel. It is worth considering what would have happened to the church at this time if Paul had set his sights on abolishing slavery as an institution.

DAY FOUR

Read Colossians 4:2-6

19. How is the Christian to pray? *Colossians 4:2*

The Christian is to continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.

20. What do the following verses teach about prayer?

Luke 18:1-8

We are to always pray and not give up. God will give justice to his elect who cry out to him day and night. He will give justice to them quickly.

Ephesians 6:18-19

We are to pray at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. We are to keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints. We are also to pray for our leaders that they might speak boldly.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

We are to pray without ceasing, giving thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for us.

21. All Christians know that prayer is important. Why it it, then, that so many seem to rarely do it?

Surely, there are many reasons for a lack of prayer: busyness, the devil, selfishness, self-reliance, etc., etc., etc.. Whatever the reason might be, lack of prayer demonstrates an overinflated self-confidence and an impoverished view of the living Christ. If we truly see Christ as living, we will pray.

22. Do you think Christians in the first century found it as difficult as believers today often find it to devote themselves to prayer? Why or why not.

Yes and no. We certainly have more distractions than they did, and distractions war against prayer. But, based on Paul's epistles, it is evident they still needed to be reminded to pray constantly. It is a decision all of us must make.

23. After reminding the church to be devoted to prayer, Paul tells them to be watchful and thankful. What do you think they are to be watchful for, and what are they to be thankful for?

We are to watch out for what and how to pray. And we are to watch for what God is doing. We are to be thankful for what God has done and for what he is doing.

24. How, specifically, was the church to pray for Paul and his companions? *Colossians 4:3-4; Ephesians 6:19-20*

They were to pray that God would open a door for the Word, so that the mystery of Christ might be proclaimed, and that Paul would make this proclamation clearly. They were to pray that words would be given to Paul and that he would speak boldly.

25. How are Christians to relate with "outsiders"? *Colossians 4:5*

Wisely. They are to make the best use of the time.

26. Could your typical conversations be generally characterized as "full of grace" and "seasoned with salt"? *Colossians 4:6*

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27. What, specifically, do you think constitutes "grace" and "salt" in a conversation?

If my speech is full of grace, I will be constantly demonstrating to people that grace is available and telling them how that grace is available. They will hear it in my words. Salt adds flavor and it is preservative. If my words are full of salt, I will be speaking in such a way that people develop a hunger for more of God's truth. See also Ephesians 4:29 and Philippians 4:8.

28. If your conversations are not full of grace and seasoned with salt, what are they full of?

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DAY FIVE

Read Colossians 4:7-18

29. Paul refers to a number of different people in this last section. We have already discussed Tychicus (the letter carrier), Onesimus (the returning slave) and Epaphras (the man who first preached the gospel in Colosse). Of the remaining names, a few are unknown, but several are referred to in other Scriptures. Using the verses appearing after the name, write a brief biographical sketch for these men.

Aristarchus - Colossians 4:10; Acts 20:4; Philemon 24

He was Paul's fellow prisoner. He was with Paul when he left Greece to travel through Macedonia. He was a fellow worker with Paul.

Mark - Colossians 4:10; Acts 13:13 (Mark is referred to as John in this verse); Acts 15:36-41; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24

Mark was the cousin of Barnabas. He left Paul and Barnabas during Paul's first missionary journey. He was the reason for the break-up of the Paul/Barnabas missionary team. In Timothy, Paul said that Mark was very useful to him in his ministry. In Philemon, Paul called him his fellow worker. It is obvious that Paul's opinion of Mark changed as Mark matured.

Luke - Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24

He was a "beloved physician" (I wonder if he used leeches!). He was with Paul when others deserted him. Luke joined Paul's team in Troas (Acts 16:10). He evidently stayed in Philippi (Acts 16:40) when Paul moved on. He is not heard from again until Acts 20:5. Luke seems to have been one of Paul's most faithful companions.

Demas - Colossians 4:14; Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:9-10

Demas was one of Paul's workers, but he was "in love with this present world" and he deserted Paul and went to Thessalonica.

Archippus - Colossians 4:17; Philemon 2

He had a ministry in Colosse and was called to fulfill this ministry "that he received in the Lord". Paul calls him a "fellow soldier".

30. Why do you think Paul includes greetings and personal information in his letters?

Because they are letters! They demonstrate that the letters are actually from Paul. They keep a link between him and those he loves. Paul was not a professional "technician" of the gospel. His heart and his head were engaged in the gospel work. He loved people. We can learn a great deal about the early church and the way in which the apostles worked through these greetings and the personal information.

31. What do Paul's words about Epaphras in Colossians 4:12-13 teach us about the true nature of prayer?

It is a struggle—a wrestling match. Prayer is not easy. It is agonizing at times.

32. Paul did not write this letter; a secretary recorded his words. But he did write by hand a final greeting to the church (Colossians 4:18). What practical value would this handwritten section have had to the church? See also 2 Thessalonians 3:17

It proved it was from him. It was his seal. It showed how much he loved them.

33. Why does Paul tell the church to remember his chains? What does this really mean? Colossians 4:18 (See also Ephesians 6:19-20)

He is saying, "Pray for me! I'm in prison and I need your prayers. Don't forget about me or my circumstances. In spite of my strength in my words, I am suffering. Please pray that I don't give up. Please pray that God would have mercy on me. Please pray that I would be helped in the gospel task." Paul wanted to let them know that the gospel is not cheap. He was suffering greatly so that they—and others like them—might grow to maturity.

DAY SIX

Read the study notes.

34. This week the Holy Spirit has taught me ...

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