

Key Verse: *“Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, overflowing with gratitude.”* Colossians 2:6 (HCSB)

COLOSSIANS

Resources: Holman Christian Study Bible, The NIV Study Bible, New American Standard Bible, Learn the Bible in 24 Hours by Dr. Chuck Missler, The Complete Guide to the Bible by Stephen M. Miller, To Live is Christ: The Life and Ministry of Paul by Beth Moore, Book of Colossians Bible Study by Norma Becker, and Controlling Your Thoughts by Charles Stanley.

Author: Paul (Colossians 1:1 and 4:18)

Date of Writing: Paul wrote Colossians during his first Roman imprisonment in the early AD 60s, the same year as Ephesians and Philemon. Most evidence favors Rome as the place where Paul wrote all the “Prison Letters” (Ephesians, Colossians, Phillipians, and Philemon).

Background on Colossae: During Paul’s ministry in Ephesus, he sent Epaphras to spread the gospel in the Lycus Valley. Colossae was once a busy river city 120 miles east of Ephesus in the Lycus Valley in what is now Turkey. The city was famous for producing dyed purple wool called colossinus. Trade goods had once passed through Colossae until the Romans built a short-cut further north through Laodicea. Consequently, Colossae suffered. The town was also almost nearly demolished by an earthquake sometime between AD 60 and 64 (not long after Paul’s letter). Citizens rebuilt the town but later moved on. Today, all that’s left of Colossae is a mound that archaeologists have yet to start excavating.

Purpose/Overview: Paul’s purpose of his letter to the Christians in Colossae is to refute the Colossian heresy. At this time, a group of heretics (later known as the Gnostics) were active and mixing angel worship, ascetic practices (denying the body and treating it harshly in order to achieve holiness), ceremonialism/legalism (strict rules about permissible foods, religious festivals, and circumcision), and Greek mythology. The gnostics could not accept both the deity and the humanity of Christ, so through some of their teachings, they tried to reduce Him to the status of an angel. The book of Colossians is a response to gnosticism. Main themes include: Christ Preeminent, the study of Christ Himself, the fullness and sufficiency of Christ, and Christ as the Redeemer.

Prayer focus: Just as Paul did for the believers in Colossae, ask God to fill you with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, so that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him, bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God. Colossians 1: 9-10 (HCSB)

DAY ONE: Read Colossians – Chapter 1

1. Who started the church in Colossae and how is he described by Paul?

2. List the reasons for Paul’s thanksgiving for the Christians in Colossae?

3. What requests did Paul make for the Christians in Colossae?

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4. Using these requests, write a specific prayer for yourself identifying any of these requests that you feel you may be lacking.

5. The verses in Colossians 1:15-23 are believed by most scholars to be a poem, or possibly a hymn, that would have reminded the Colossians of truths they believed. (HCSB, Becker) List the things that these verses say about Jesus Christ.

Prayer focus: Review your answer to #4 and consider ending your study today with this prayer.

DAY TWO: Read/Review Colossians – Chapter 1

Prayer focus: Consider beginning your study today by asking God to open your eyes, heart, and mind to what He has to reveal to you today. Ask to know Him more personally than ever before.

Among other things, the Colossian heresy took an inferior view of Jesus Christ. Paul was warning the Colossians (and us) to stay away from beliefs and philosophies not built on Christ. How does this remind you of this day and age? Don't we hear people say: "All roads lead to God" "God loves everyone and would never send anyone to hell." Let's take a look at how Paul would respond to these type of statements.

6. Read Colossians 1:13-14. What gives Christ the authority to do this? (Paul answers in verse 15-17).

7. Summarize these additional verses, identifying why God is supreme and Christ is the only way to salvation:

Hebrews 1:3

John 1:3

John 1:18

John 10:30

1 Corinthians 8:6

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Hebrews 1:2

8. Read Colossians 1:21-23. Jesus died to make us holy. Reflect on why do we go to church? Why do we do good works? (What we do is not as important as WHY we do it)

Prayer focus: Are we God concerned or self-concerned? Since God was willing to send His Son to die for us, we should be so grateful to RESPOND to that love. Let your prayer today be a heartfelt response to God's love for you.

DAY THREE: Read Colossians – Chapter 2

Prayer focus: Reflect on Colossians 2:2 - "That their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself." (NASB) Consider making this verse your prayer for yourself and our church body.

9. Focus on Colossians 2:6-8. How does Paul describe false teaching?

10. Who should we be built up in? (v7)

11. Review Colossians 2:8-15. What are some ways that Paul describes (us) believers in Christ?

12. Look at Colossians 2:16-19. List some ways that the false teachings were impacting the believers in Colossae.

13. Have you ever been impacted by false doctrine? If so, in what way?

DAY FOUR: Read Colossians – Chapter 3: 1-17 [*Today's study is an excerpt from Dr. Charles Stanley's Daily Devotionals*]

Prayer focus: Most, if not all of us, at one point or another have struggled with negative thoughts. The Bible talks a lot on the importance of controlling our minds. Reflect on Colossians 3:2, "Set your minds on

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what is above, not on what is on the earth.” (HCSB) Ask God today to help guard your thoughts and to have a mind fully devoted to Christ.

Why should we set our minds on things above?:

To Obey Jesus: Romans 8:7-8 states, “For the mind-set of the flesh is hostile to God because it does not submit itself to God’s law, for it is unable to do so. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” (HCSB) He told His disciples, “Seek first {God’s} kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matthew 6:33)

14. What promise does Jesus give if we will follow this command? (Matthew 6:31)

To Prepare for Eternity: Speaking about His return, Jesus said, “Be on guard, so that your hearts will not be weighted down with dissipation and drunkenness and the worries of life, and that day will not come on you suddenly like a trap” (Luke 21:34)

15. What pleasure or worry distracts you from God’s priorities for your life?

16. Read Colossians 3:1-4. What two reasons (v. 2-3) does Paul give for setting our minds on things above?

To Have Victory over Sin: Read Romans 8:5-8. Romans 8:13 also says “for if you live according to the flesh, you are going to die. But if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.” (HCSB) Those who determine ahead of time to obey God are far more likely to resist temptation when it strikes. Purposing ahead of time to make a righteous choice does not guarantee that we will obey God at the moment of testing. But it does set the stage for spiritual victory.

To Overcome Fear, Anxiety, and Stress: Romans 8:6 states, “For the mind-set of the flesh is death, but the mind-set of the Spirit is life and peace.” (HCSB) By focusing on heavenly realities, we gain God’s outlook. His eternal viewpoint puts earthly worries in perspective.

17. List some negative emotions that won’t be present in eternity. (Revelation 21:4)

18. What do believers have the privilege of doing (1 Peter 5:7)?

How do we set our minds on things above?

By Renewing Our Minds: Our world is, for the most part, hostile toward God and His Kingdom. That’s why we must take time on a regular basis to refresh our minds with truth. The best way to do this is by reading Scripture. “Therefore, prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.” (1 Peter 1:13) NIV

19. Read Hebrews 4:12. What is able to “judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart?”

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20. After being inundated with worldly thinking, what happens within you through the reading of God’s Word?

21. Romans 12:2 says when we renew our minds, we will “prove what the will of God is.” What do you think that means?

If you want to be happy even in difficult times, you must think rightly. You must screen your thoughts, reject ungodly thoughts, and cultivate godly thoughts. Ask yourself these questions: What’s the source? Where will it lead me? Is this scripturally sound? Is this thought going to build me up or tear me down? Can I share this thought with someone else? Does this thought make me feel guilty? Does this fit who I am as a follower of Jesus?

Prayer focus: Reflect on Colossians 3:15. “And let the peace of the Messiah, to which you were also called in one body, control your hearts. Be thankful.” (HCSB) Consider ending your study today “casting your cares on Him” and thanking Him in advance for how He meets your needs.

DAY FIVE: Review Colossians 3: 12-17

In Day Four, we covered the importance of eliminating negative thoughts from our lives. Today, we will cover virtues we should be working to add to our lives.

Prayer focus: Read Colossians 3:17. Say a prayer for yourself or you and your family that Colossians 3:17 will be true of all of you.

22. Read Colossians 3:12-17 and write the positive qualities noted by Paul:

23. According to Col. 3:13 and Matthew 6:14-15, why is forgiveness so important to believers?

24. How does the command about love in Col. 3:14 relate to the list of virtues in Col. 3:12-13?

25. Col. 3:15 says, “And let the peace of the Messiah, to which you were also called in one body, control your hearts. Be thankful.” (HCSB) How can being thankful bring us peace?

26. Read Col. 3:17. Consider what, if anything, you would do differently if you lived your life each day with this verse in the forefront of your mind?

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27. Read Col. 4:5-6. What is Paul saying about how our interactions with unbelievers should be?

Prayer focus: In Colossians 4:2, Paul encourages us to “devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving.” (HCSB) Spend some time in your prayer today, thanking God for what He has taught you, or done in your life through your study in Colossians.