



COLOSSIANS

WALKING WORTHY WITH CHRIST

Lesson One

Introduction to Colossians

Colossians 1:1–8

The Background of Colossians

- ▶ **Paul authored this epistle.**
 - ◉ Paul **dictated** this letter.
 - ◉ Paul had **never visited** this church.
 - ◉ Paul wrote out of **general** concern for this church.
 - ◉ Paul wrote a similar letter to the **Ephesian** church.

The Background of Colossians

- ▶ Paul wrote to the church at Colossae (1:1–2).
 - Colossae was a small, diverse city.
 - The Colossian church was primarily Gentile.

Themes and Characteristics of the Letter

- ▶ Christ is the foundation for our spiritual growth.
- ▶ Christ completely changes our actions and desires.
- ▶ Christians should continue to grow spiritually.

Paul's Greeting (1:3–8)

- ▶ This church was known for Christian faith and love (1:3–4).

What is God's definition of love?

Is it a feeling?

Why does God command us to love others?

Paul's Greeting (1:3–8)

- ▶ This church was known for Christian faith and love (1:3–4).
- ▶ Paul rejoiced over the gospel at Colossae (1:5–8).
 - ◉ The gospel provides a future hope (1:5).
 - ◉ The gospel keeps producing fruit (1:6).

In what ways has the gospel made a difference in your life, or in the life of someone you know?

Paul's Greeting (1:3–8)

- ▶ **Epaphras was a messenger of the gospel (1:7–8).**

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Lesson Two

Walking Worthy

Colossians 1:9–12

Paul's Prayer Requests for Believers **(vv. 9–11)**

- ▶ To increase in knowledge of God's will with wisdom and understanding (v. 9)
 - We learn about God's will through Scripture.

Who has God used to help you understand
Scripture?

Paul's Prayer Requests for Believers **(vv. 9–11)**

- Wisdom is applying our knowledge of God.
- We learn and understand better with time and obedience.

Paul's Prayer Requests for Believers **(vv. 9–11)**

- ▶ Walking worthy of God and desiring to please Him in all things (v. 10)
 - Walking is an ongoing process.
 - Walking worthy of God means living out who we are in Christ.

Is Paul saying that we need to measure up to God's standard when he prays that believers will walk worthy of Christ?

Paul's Prayer Requests for Believers **(vv. 9–11)**

- ◉ Pleasing God means choosing Him rather than sin.

Paul's Prayer Requests for Believers **(vv. 9–11)**

- ▶ Bearing fruit in every good work (v. 10)
 - ◉ “Fruit” describes how we act out our faith.
 - ◉ Faith results in doing good works.

Paul's Prayer Requests for Believers **(vv. 9–11)**

- ▶ Increasing in the knowledge of God (v. 10)
- ▶ Strengthened for endurance and patience (v. 11)
 - ◉ This strength comes from God.
 - ◉ We can rejoice over God's care.

Paul's Praise to God (v. 12)

- ▶ We have a heavenly inheritance in Jesus Christ (v. 12).
- ▶ We are people of light (v. 12).

Why do you think Scripture uses light and darkness to describe righteousness and sin?



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Lesson Three

The Hymn of Christ, Part 1

Colossians 1:13–17

Chiasm in Colossians 1:13–17

- A. Christ is the redeemer (vv. 13–14).
- B. Christ as the image of God (v. 15)
- C. Christ as creator and sustainer (vv. 16–17)
- D. Christ is the head of the church (v. 18).
- C'. Christ as the beginning of all, the firstborn from the dead (v. 18)
- B'. Christ has the fullness of God dwelling in Him (v. 19).
- A'. Christ as reconciler (v. 20)

Christ the Redeemer (vv. 13–14)

- ▶ God delivered and transferred us into light (v. 13).
 - ◉ Just as light and darkness are opposites, Jesus and sin have no part in each other.
 - ◉ Jesus rescued us from the power of sin.

Christ the Redeemer (vv. 13–14)

- ▶ Christ brought us back to God (v. 14).
- ▶ Christ forgave our sins (v. 14).

Christ the Image of God (v. 15)

- ▶ We can't physically see God.

Why might making images of God be a bad idea?

Christ the Image of God (v. 15)

- ▶ We can't physically see God.
- ▶ But Jesus gave us a perfect picture of what God is like.

Christ the Firstborn of All Creation (v. 15)

Do you think the oldest child in your family is treated differently, or that they are given different privileges and responsibilities?

What are they?

Christ the Firstborn of All Creation (v. 15)

- ▶ The firstborn in a family held special honor and duties.
- ▶ The firstborn received favor and an inheritance.

Christ the Creator (vv. 16–17)

- ▶ God made heaven and Earth, visible and invisible (v. 16).
- ▶ God made all authority and power (v. 16).
- ▶ Christ preceded all of these things (v. 17).
- ▶ Christ sustains all things (v. 17).



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Lesson Four

The Hymn of Christ, Part 2

Colossians 1:18–23

The Head of the Church (v. 18)

- ▶ Christ created the church.
- ▶ Christ sustains the church.
 - ◉ He provides and cares for it.
 - ◉ He guides it.
- ▶ Therefore, Christ is the sole foundation of the church.

How can we guard against distortions of the gospel?

The Beginning and Firstborn from the Dead **(v. 18)**

- ▶ Christ has first place over all.

Does Jesus' authority mean that everything
and everyone in the world submits to Jesus?
If not, then how can this be true?

The Beginning and Firstborn from the Dead (v. 18)

- ▶ Christ has first place over all.
- ▶ Christ's resurrection foreshadows our own.

The Fullness of God and Reconciler (vv. 19–22)

- ▶ The fullness of God dwelled in Christ
(v. 19).

Do you ever feel like you need to do more to grow spiritually?

How can we know if we're doing enough?

Why might it be difficult to depend only on Christ for our standing with God?

The Fullness of God and Reconciler (vv. 19–22)

- ▶ The fullness of God dwelled in Christ (v. 19).
- ▶ Christ reconciled us to God (v. 20).

What are some of the effects that sin has on our world?

On the way people treat each other?

On the kinds of civil rules we have?

The Fullness of God and Reconciler (vv. 19–22)

- ▶ The fullness of God dwelled in Christ (v. 19).
- ▶ Christ reconciled us to God (v. 20).
 - We have peace with God through Jesus' blood (v. 20).

The Fullness of God and Reconciler (vv. 19–22)

- Before this, we were separated from God and hostile toward Him (v. 21).
- Christ saved us for holiness (v. 22).

A Charge to Persevere in the Faith (v. 23)



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Lesson Five

Discipleship Within the Church

Colossians 1:24–2:5

Paul's Ministry (1:24–25)

- ▶ Although he suffered, Paul rejoiced to serve the church (v. 24).
 - ◉ Paul was persecuted for preaching the gospel.
 - ◉ Believers share the affliction of Christ.
- ▶ God gave Paul a responsibility to care for the church (v. 25).

What does leadership look like when a leader is self-focused?

What does it look like if the leader practices stewardship instead?

Paul's Message (1:26–27)

- ▶ The gospel was a mystery (v. 26).
 - ◉ “Mystery” means something not fully revealed or understood.
 - ◉ The mystery of the gospel was revealed in the coming of Jesus.

Paul's Message (1:26–27)

- ▶ The hope of glory is Christ in believers (v. 27).
 - The gospel was sent to the Gentiles through Paul.
 - Christ gives us His riches now, as well as hope for the future.

Paul's Mission (1:28–2:5)

- ▶ Paul's goal was to help believers become complete in Christ (vv. 28–29).
 - He taught, warned, and encouraged the believers.

What are some specific ways we can teach other believers?

When is it appropriate to warn others?

Paul's Mission (1:28–2:5)

- ▶ Paul's goal was to help believers become complete in Christ (vv. 28–29).
 - ◉ He taught, warned, and encouraged the believers.
 - ◉ He pointed others to Christ instead of creating his own followers.

Paul's Mission (1:28–2:5)

- ▶ Paul wanted believers to be encouraged (2:1–4).
 - ◉ Paul wanted them to be unified in love and truth (2:1–2).
 - ◉ Paul wanted believers to have all the riches that Christ offers (2:2–3).

What are some of the riches we have in Christ?

What does Christ offer us that we didn't have before we accepted Him?

Paul's Mission (1:28–2:5)

- ▶ Paul wanted believers to be encouraged (2:1–4).
 - ◉ Paul wanted them to be unified in love and truth (2:1–2).
 - ◉ Paul wanted believers to have all the riches that Christ offers (2:2–3).
 - ◉ Paul did not want believers to fall for error (2:4–5).



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Lesson Six

**Established in
Christ**

Colossians 2:6–15

Live Out Your Faith (vv. 6–7).

- ▶ As we received Christ by faith, we should continue to follow Him in faith (vv. 6–7).
 - Christ is the root of our faith.

What are some specific ways to regularly abide in Jesus' words?

How can we remind ourselves to do this?

Live Out Your Faith (vv. 6–7).

- ▶ As we received Christ by faith, we should continue to follow Him in faith (vv. 6–7).
 - Christ is the root of our faith.
 - Christ builds our faith.
- ▶ Give thanks to God (v. 7).

How did Christ show gratitude?

What are some things He was thankful for?

Don't Follow Human Traditions for Holiness (v. 8).

- ▶ Do not be taken captive (v. 8).
 - ◉ This teaching is deceptive.
 - ◉ This teaching ensnares us.
- ▶ Basic principles of the world are not of Christ (v. 8).

We Are Complete in Christ (vv. 9–15).

- ▶ Christ is God (vv. 9–10).
- ▶ Christ is the one who transformed us (vv. 11–13).
 - ◉ He “circumcised” us—that is, brought us into His favor and identified us with Him.
 - ◉ He raised us from spiritual death to life.

We Are Complete in Christ (vv. 9–15).

- ▶ Christ took away our sin (vv. 13–14).
 - He forgave our sin.
 - He rescued us from sin's consequences and directed them at Himself instead.

We Are Complete in Christ (vv. 9–15).

- ▶ Christ triumphed over the forces of evil (v. 15).
 - ◉ Jesus demonstrated His ultimate authority by overcoming sin and death.
 - ◉ Jesus easily defeated the schemes of political powers to kill Him and end His message.



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Lesson Seven

Freedom in Christ

Colossians 2:16–23

Asceticism Won't Make Us Grow (vv. 16–19).

- ▶ Don't let others judge you (v. 16).
 - ◉ Judging is passing approval or disapproval on someone.
 - ◉ People judge based on their own knowledge, not God's.

Can you identify any spiritual practices that your church leaders encourage?

Do you think these practices are helpful or unhelpful?

What makes the difference in whether these are used rightly or wrongly?

Asceticism Won't Make Us Grow (vv. 16–19).

- ▶ Don't let others judge you (v. 16).
 - ◉ Judging is passing approval or disapproval on someone.
 - ◉ People judge based on their own knowledge, not God's.
 - ◉ Instead of judging others, we should examine ourselves.

Asceticism Won't Make Us Grow (vv. 16–19).

- ▶ These rules point toward something greater—
Christ (vv. 17–18).
 - ◉ Human rules for spirituality attempt to solve real problems.
 - ◉ But only Christ has the answer to those problems.
- ▶ Christ is the one who grows us (vv. 18–19).

If Christ is the one who grows us spiritually,
what, if anything, is required on our part?
Should we practice spiritual disciplines?

Asceticism Excludes Christ (vv. 20–22).

- ▶ Christ has freed us from such regulations (vv. 20–21).
- ▶ Asceticism deals only with the physical, which has no lasting value (v. 22).

Asceticism Doesn't Really Prevent Sin (v. 23).

- ▶ Sin comes from our heart, not our environment (see Matt. 15:1–20).
- ▶ It is possible to keep rules and still sin.



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Lesson Eight

Characteristics of the Old Life, Part 1

Colossians 3:1–7

A New Life in Christ (vv. 1–2)

- ▶ A new life means pursuing a new goal (v. 1).
- ▶ God's values and the world's are opposed to one another (v. 2).

Our Fate Is Tied to Christ's (w. 3–4).

- ▶ We are secure in Christ (v. 3).

Where do you think is the safest place on Earth?

Our Fate Is Tied to Christ's (w. 3–4).

- ▶ We are secure in Christ (v. 3).
- ▶ We anticipate future glory with Christ (v. 4).

Characteristics of the Old Life (v. 5)

- ▶ **Immorality / Fornication**

Sexual sins

- ▶ **Impurity / Uncleanness**

Evil living

- ▶ **Passion / Inordinate Affection / Lust**

Immoral sexual passion

Characteristics of the Old Life (v. 5)

▶ **Evil Desire / Evil Concupiscence**

A desire to do evil

▶ **Greed / Covetousness and Idolatry**

Looking for satisfaction outside of Christ

What's the opposite of greed?

What are some practical ways to help us avoid greed or coveting?

God Judges Sin (vv. 6–7).

- ▶ A time of future judgment will come (v. 6).
- ▶ But change is possible (v. 7).



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Lesson Nine

Characteristics of the Old Life, Part 2

Colossians 3:8–11

Christ Changes Our Speech (vv. 8–9a).

- ▶ Get rid of selfish talk (v. 8).
 - ◉ **Anger, Wrath / Rage, and Malice**
Venting or blowing up at people
 - ◉ **Slander / Blasphemy**
Cutting down people behind their backs

Christ Changes Our Speech (vv. 8–9a).

- ◉ **Abusive Speech / Obscene Talk / Filthy Communication / Filthy Language**

General speech that doesn't reflect God

- ▶ **Get rid of lying (v. 9a).**

What is a lie? Does lying include only false information, or can it also include withholding information?

Is deceit always wrong?

Are there cases when withholding some information can be the most loving thing to do?

Christ Renews Us into God's Image (vv. 9b–11).

- ▶ We replace the old with the new (v. 10).
 - ◉ This change results from Christ working in us, not from our own effort.
 - ◉ This change comes through knowledge of Christ.

Christ Renews Us into God's Image (vv. 9b–11).

- ▶ Our transformation should produce unity with other believers (v. 11).
 - We are all equal before Christ.
 - Christ works equally in each of us.



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Lesson Ten

Characteristics of the New Life

Colossians 3:12–14

Chosen by God (v. 12)

What are some differences in the process of adopting a child versus pregnancy?

So what does it mean that Christians are God's people? What are the implications of being chosen by God?

Chosen by God (v. 12)

- ▶ We are different from the world.
- ▶ We have God's favor.
- ▶ We are becoming more like Christ.

Acting Like Christ (w. 12–14)

▶ Compassion / Tender Mercies / Bowels of Mercies

Mercy put into action

- ◉ We help with physical needs like hunger, sickness, and lack of shelter.

What are some physical ways we can help people?

Acting Like Christ (vv. 12–14)

- We help with physical needs like hunger, sickness, and lack of shelter.
- We help with spiritual needs like salvation, grief, discouragement, and meaning.

What are some spiritual ways we can help people?

If we see someone who needs to hear the gospel but also has great physical needs, where should we start?

Acting Like Christ (w. 12–14)

▶ **Kindness**

Doing good to others without expecting anything in return

▶ **Humility / Humbleness of Mind**

Having a realistic view of ourselves

Acting Like Christ (w. 12–14)

- ▶ **Gentleness / Meekness**
Controlling ourselves
- ▶ **Patience / Longsuffering**
Waiting with trust

Acting Like Christ (w. 12–14)

▶ **Forbearance and Forgiveness**

Letting go of offenses

- ◉ We can choose to overlook minor offenses.

What might be some bad consequences if we avoid confrontation?

How can we decide if it's best to address an offense?

Acting Like Christ (w. 12–14)

- Some offenses should be addressed, but some cannot be addressed safely.
- We can choose to forgive regardless of the other party's response.

Acting Like Christ (w. 12–14)

▶ **Love / Charity**

Seeking the highest good for others



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Lesson Eleven

**Peace and
Gratitude**

Colossians 3:15–17

Let Christ's Peace Rule in Your Hearts (v. 15).

- ▶ Peace is a state of calmness, the opposite of anxiety and fear.
- ▶ We can have peace by trusting God.

What are some specific promises God has given that help us have peace?

Let Christ's Peace Rule in Your Hearts (v. 15).

- ▶ Peace is a state of calmness, the opposite of anxiety and fear.
- ▶ We can have peace by trusting God.
- ▶ We have peace through reconciliation with God.

Let Christ's Peace Rule in Your Hearts (v. 15).

- ▶ We are called to make peace.
 - ◉ We work toward peace with other people.

Is it ever right to get revenge?

Why does revenge feel so good?

Let Christ's Peace Rule in Your Hearts (v. 15)

- ▶ We are called to make peace.
 - We work toward peace with other people.
 - We work for peace within the world.

Some Christians believe that since God calls us to peace, we should never fight against others, even during war. Do you think this is a valid application?

What biblical support do you find for or against this idea?

Be Thankful (v. 15).

- ▶ Gratitude helps us love and understand God better.
- ▶ Gratitude aligns our will with God's.

Let Christ's Word Dwell in You (v. 16).

- ▶ Believers can remind one another of Christ's words through teaching.

What are some other specific ways we can remind ourselves of God's truth? How can we keep it fresh in our minds?

Let Christ's Word Dwell in You (v. 16).

- ▶ Believers can remind one another of Christ's words through teaching.
- ▶ Believers can encourage one another through singing and meditation.

Do All in Jesus' Name (v. 17).

- ▶ Jesus' name identifies us with Him.

What can Christians do when other
Christians do evil in Jesus' name?

Do All in Jesus' Name (v. 17)

- ▶ Jesus' name identifies us with Him.
- ▶ Jesus' name represents His approval.



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Lesson Twelve

Transforming Our Relationships

Colossians 3:18–4:1

Two Guiding Principles

- ▶ Our relationships today look different from the ones in Paul's day.
- ▶ Live as you were called (1 Cor. 7:17–24).

Serving God in Relationships (3:18–19)

- ▶ **Wives and Husbands (3:18–19)**
 - ◉ Wives should **submit** to their husbands.

What are some ways that Christians can serve one another?

Serving God in Relationships (3:18–19)

- ▶ Wives and Husbands (3:18–19)
 - Wives should submit to their husbands.
 - Husbands should care for and guide their wives.

What are some common obstacles to unity in marriage? Even if you are not married, what challenges have you observed in marriages around you?

What do you think can make it difficult to love a spouse sacrificially?

Serving God in Relationships (3:18–19)

- ▶ **Children and Fathers (3:20–21)**
 - ◉ Children should **honor** and obey their parents.

What are some ways in which we can show respect to our parents?

How can we honor them even after we become independent adults?

How can we honor parents who are no longer living or who are absent?

Serving God in Relationships (3:18–19)

- ▶ **Children and Fathers (3:20–21)**
 - Children should honor and obey their parents.
 - Parents should not exasperate their children.

Serving God in Relationships (3:18–19)

- ▶ Slaves and Masters (3:22–4:1)
 - Slaves should obey masters, ultimately serving the Lord.
 - Masters should govern with mercy and humility.

How can we apply Paul's principles in our workplaces?

Takeaways from Paul's Examples

- ▶ Live for God wherever you are.
- ▶ All people are equal before God.
- ▶ Believers serve one another in love.



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Lesson Thirteen

Paul's Final Instructions

Colossians 4:2–18

For the Sake of the Gospel (vv. 2–6)

- ▶ Be devoted in prayer (v. 2)
 - ◉ We should pray regularly and consistently.

What are some practical ways we can make time for prayer?

How can we remind ourselves to pray persistently?

For the Sake of the Gospel (vv. 2–6)

- ▶ Be devoted in prayer (v. 2)
 - We should pray regularly and consistently.
 - We need to stay alert.
 - Give thanks to God.

For the Sake of the Gospel (vv. 2–6)

- ▶ Pray for the presentation of the gospel (vv. 3–4)
- ▶ Walk in wisdom, answering with grace (vv. 5–6)

Final Greetings (vv. 7–18)

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