
Colossians

Author: Paul

The book of Colossians is Paul's letter to a church he had not visited ([Col 2:1](#)).

Book Background

Paul wrote because the church in Colossae was drifting away from the truth of the gospel and no longer found Christ sufficient ([Col 1:19](#), [Col 2:9-10](#)).

Two influences were pulling people away from their faith in Christ.

- Jewish legalism: thinking that besides Christ, they needed the Old Testament law ([Col 1:23](#)).
- Pagan mysticism: thinking that only some people had access to a secret knowledge that made them spiritually superior. Gnostics thought all spiritual things were good and all physical things were evil, which led them to conclude that God would not have taken on the form of a man ([Col 2:4](#), [8-9](#)).

Key Word

complete

Theme

The preeminence and deity of Christ and our completeness in Christ.

Outline

Col 1-2 doctrine	Who you are in Christ
Col 3-4 application	How to apply what you know in Christ

Book Highlights

- Jesus is the ICON of the invisible God ([Col 1:13-15](#)).
- Jesus is the fullness of God ([Col 2:8-9](#)).
- Our forgiveness comes from Christ alone ([Col 2:13-14](#)).
- Believers are to seek the heavenly ([Col 3:1-4](#)), slay the earthly ([Col 3:5-9](#)), and strengthen the Christlike ([Col 3:10-11](#)).
- Believers are to manage their mouths by praying ([Col 4:2-3](#)), speaking God's Word ([Col 4:3-4](#)), and doing and saying things that honor God and reach seekers ([Col 4:5-6](#)).

Personal Reflection and Application

- Are you full of faith? Read [Colossians 1:1-2](#). "Saint" is a term that means "Christian." Why does Paul list "saint" and "faithful brethren" as two separate things? What is the difference?

Paul understands that not all who believe Jesus are faithful. If you wish to be more faithful, fill yourself with God's Word ([Rom 10:17](#)).

- What have you learned about God that helps you know how to please Him (**Col 1:10-12, 1John 5:20**)?
 - ▶ Do you know about His power (**2Cor 12:9-10**)?
 - ▶ Do you know about the importance of patience (**Jas 1:2-4**)?
 - ▶ Do you know what He expects from you regarding thanks (**1The 5:18, Psa 107:21-22**)?
 - ▶ What one thing could you do to please your Savior beginning today?
- If you have accepted Christ as Savior, you will sometimes feel like a stranger in a strange land. You will experience times when your flesh, your heart, and your mouth disappoint you and fight against you. Read **Colossians 3:5-17**. When Paul tells us to put to death our members, he is telling us to avoid allowing our flesh to control us. Sheer determination will not be enough. You will need to ask for God's help and allow Him to replace your old ways with the ways of Christ. To put on the new man as Paul instructs, you must stay as close to Christ as possible.
 - ▶ What do you do to stay close to Christ?
 - ▶ Make a plan to keep prayer and hearing God's Word top priorities in your daily life. Begin today to put your plan in action.

Small Group Conversation Guide

- What does it mean to be faithful? In what ways are you faithful? Read **Colossians 1:3-6**.
 - ▶ How do those around you see Christ in you?
 - ▶ In what ways do you show kindness and compassion to fellow believers?
 - ▶ In what ways do your actions demonstrate your faith in Christ (**John 10:37-38, 1John 2:3-4**)? Discuss opportunities for you as a group or as individuals to demonstrate your faith in Christ.
- Paul placed great importance on unity (**Col 2:1-3**). There are many benefits to unity. One is that we are better able to understand God, who is the ultimate example of unity (**1John 5:7**).
 - ▶ What are other benefits of unity?
 - ▶ Discuss ways that we can promote unity as a church (**Eph 4:1-3, Rom 14:7-8**).
- When Christ is your focus (**Col 2:18-23**), you don't need to worry about heavenly rewards (**Col 2:8, Eph 5:6, 2Tim 4:7-9**). Discuss strategies for keeping your focus on Christ.
 - ▶ What have you tried to keep your focus on Christ?
 - ▶ What were some of the difficulties you encountered?
 - ▶ Which strategies worked best for you?
- **Colossians 4:2** tells us how we can pray with a purpose. Regardless of the content of specific prayers, when we pray we are to **continue**, be **vigilant**, and be **thankful**.
 - ▶ Rather than view prayer as a task to check off your list, view it as part of your nature, like breathing. You wouldn't take a deep breath in the morning, check it off your list, and forget to breathe the rest of the day. Pray without ceasing (**1The 5:17**). When do you pray?
 - ▶ To be vigilant in prayer, pay attention to the needs around you. Look for opportunities to pray (**Eph 6:18**). In a

typical day, where are you likely to observe prayer needs?

- ▶ Pray with thanksgiving and praise [[Php 4:6](#), [Psa 33:1](#)]. Make thanking God a regular part of your prayers. Remember to thank Him for who He is, as well as what He does. What about God makes you especially thankful?

- ▶ **Unceasing, vigilant, thankful prayer** is prayer with a purpose that pleases God. As a group, pause now to give prayers of thanks to God.

Leadership Principles from Colossians

Dear Fellow Servant

Are you noticing that faith in Christ is perfecting you as a leader? Notice the example of Epaphras in [Colossians 1:7-8](#) and [Colossians 4:12-13](#). Think of other leaders with whom you interact. Would they describe you as a dear fellow servant? In other words, do they enjoy serving alongside you as a leader? Would they tell others how determined you are to develop those under your care?

Direction of Your Affection

Leader, what is the **direction of your affection**? Is it **inward, outward, or upward** [[Col 3:1-4](#)]? Do you sometimes find your affection torn in different directions? Consider the caution that John gives us [[1John 2:15-17](#)]. David, a man after God's own heart [[Acts 13:22](#)], expressed this struggle in [Psalm 119:36-37](#). In your own words, pray back those verses to God.

Prayer List

Who is on your prayer list? Read [Colossians 4:7-12](#). Do you pray for beloved brothers, faithful ministers, and fellow servants of Christ? Make a list of those you know who fit in one or more of those categories. Then beside each name, write the needs you believe they have. Pray over the list. Consider enlisting someone from that list to be a prayer partner with you. Praying together regularly may strengthen each of you.

Beloved brothers:
Faithful ministers:
Fellow servants of Christ:

Something to Find in Each Chapter

01. Why we are to proclaim and teach Christ to everyone	02. What Jesus did to Old Testament Law at the cross
03. How we are to interact with the Word of God	04. What Epaphras was praying for the church in Corinth