

# Colossians

*Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord,  
so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and  
established in the faith, just as you were taught,  
abounding in thanksgiving.*

*Colossians 2:6-7*

## A Note About This Study...

These “all-in-one” study packets were born out of struggle for me. Soon after I had my second baby I realized that at that season of my life, I needed simplicity if I was going to be consistent in my devotional life. I might pull out my Bible and notebook, open everything up, copy the Scripture reference down onto paper, and begin to read and make notes, only to be interrupted by a toddler or a newborn. When I came back to study later I would not even remember where I was in the passage, and even the effort it took to pull out my resources, looking back and forth from notebook to Bible, seemed to be too much.

So, in a rare moment of ingenuity for a postpartum brain, I thought maybe if I printed out the Scripture I was studying on paper, added some wide margins, and kept it on the kitchen table throughout the day, it might just eliminate some of those hindrances. I could write directly on the passage, so that I would always know exactly where I was in the study. I would always be able to see what I had just studied and observed. I didn’t have the self-imposed guilt of writing a new date in my journal and seeing the gap from the last one. It just made things more simple. And...it worked! This format was a lifesaver for me during those chaotic days, and even as my seasons have change I still have grown to love this method.

This study is the same format – wide margins, triple spaced – so that you can keep track of your observations and insights all in one place. I have added some guiding questions in the margins, but don’t feel limited to those. Observe the passage for details. Circle, underline, or highlight words and ideas that are repeated or emphasized. Look up definitions of unfamiliar terms and jot down their meaning. Think about other passages that relate to what you are reading. Ask what the passage is teaching about God. If you are not confident in studying the Word of God in this way, please consider reading a book like *Women of the Word* by Jen Wilkin.

May the Lord bless you as you seek Him.

# Introduction

Use a bible dictionary, background commentary, or study bible to help answer the following questions before you begin the study.

## What

- What type of literature is Colossians?

## Who

- Who is the author?
- To whom is it written?

## When

- When was Colossians written?

## Where

- Where was Colossae located?
- Where was Paul when he wrote this epistle?

## Why

- Why did Paul write this letter?

Begin Date: \_\_\_\_\_ End Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy  
our brother, 2 To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at  
Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

*As you read through this  
chapter, mark or  
highlight every reference  
Paul makes to hope.*

*Note the  
characteristics of  
faith, love, and hope  
in verses 4-5. How  
does Paul describe  
each trait, and how  
are these three  
traits interrelated?*

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when  
we pray for you, 4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and  
of the love that you have for all the saints, 5 because of the hope  
laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the  
word of the truth, the gospel, 6 which has come to you, as indeed  
in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing--as it also does  
among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of  
God in truth, 7 just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved  
fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf 8  
and has made known to us your love in the Spirit. 9 And so, from  
the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that  
you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual

## Colossians 1

What does it mean to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord (verse 10)? How does Paul define it within that verse? How is it possible to achieve (see verses 13-14)?

wisdom and understanding, 10 so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. 11 May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. 13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

What do we learn about hope from 11-14?

Verse 12 describes what our hope is:

Verses 13-14 describe what our hope is founded upon:

In verses 13-22, use two different colors of pens or highlighters to mark the following: nouns/adjectives that describe who Jesus is in one color, and verbs that describe what Jesus has done in another color.

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. 16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. 17 And 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, the

What is my response to who Jesus is as revealed in verses 13-22? How does this view of Jesus bring hope and encouragement in my life?

*Colossians 1*

firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and

through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or

in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross. 21 And you,

who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, 22

he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to

present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, 23

if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting

from the hope of the gospel that you heard, which has been

proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul,

became a minister.

*Meditate on the complete transformation from verse 21 to verse 22. Jot down characteristics of the "before and after."*

24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I

am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of

his body, that is, the church, 25 of which I became a minister

according to the stewardship from God that was given to me for

*In verse 25, how does Paul define faithful stewardship of the gospel?*

*Colossians 1*

you, to make the word of God fully known, 26 the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. 27 To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. 29 For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.

## *Colossians 1*

In wrapping up Colossians 1, reflect on what you have learned.

What have you learned about God through this passage?

What does Colossians 1 teach you about the gospel?

In light of this chapter, is there anything you need to confess or repent of?

What encouraging truths have you learned through these verses?

On the following page, take some time to write out a prayer to God in light of what you have learned from His word this week.

[illegible]

What godly  
leadership qualities  
does Paul model in  
these first verses?  
Where can we  
apply these in our  
own lives?

1 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, 2 that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. 5 For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.

Contrast worldly  
wisdom and godly  
wisdom as described in  
the first half of this  
chapter.

Receive: accept,  
acknowledge, join  
oneself to

How did we receive  
Christ (v6)? How  
does this apply to  
the way we are to  
walk in Him?

6 Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, 7 rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. 8 See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in him the whole fullness of

deity dwells bodily, 10 and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. 11 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. 13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

*Highlight or circle every action that God has taken in verses 13-15. Which of these truths do you most need to remember/believe/meditate on at this season of your life?*

*Read the following passages to gain a better understanding of circumcision:*

*Genesis 17:9-14 – In the old covenant, what did circumcision represent?*

*Romans 2:25-29 – What could physical circumcision not accomplish?*

*Ezekial 36:26-27 – In the new covenant, where does circumcision take place?*

*So when Paul talks about “a circumcision made without hands” (v11), what does this mean practically for the believer?*

Colossians 2

16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food

*Reflect (v17):*

and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

*Do I worship*

*the shadow or*

*the substance?*

17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance

belongs to Christ. 18 Let no one disqualify you, insisting on

asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions,

puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, 19 and not holding

*In verses 18-19, contrast the characteristics of what makes us disqualified versus qualified.*

*Paul warns the*

*Colossians against*

*relying on two*

*different sets of*

*rules in verse 16.*

*What are they?*

fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit

together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that

is from God. 20 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of

the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you

*How does this*

*sort of legalism*

*creep into our*

*lives today? What*

*"regulations"*

*(v21) do you*

*tend to fall back*

*on to define your*

*own godliness?*

submit to regulations-- 21 "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not

touch" 22 (referring to things that all perish as they are used)--

according to human precepts and teachings? 23 These have indeed

an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and

asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in

stopping the indulgence of the flesh.

*Why are rules useless in stopping the indulgence of the flesh (v23)?*

*What then is the secret to godly living?*

## *Colossians 2*

In wrapping up Colossians 2, reflect on what you have learned.

What have you learned about God through this passage?

What does Colossians 2 teach you about the gospel?

In light of this chapter, is there anything you need to confess or repent of?

What encouraging truths have you learned through these verses?

On the following page, take some time to write out a prayer to God in light of what you have learned from His word this week.

[illegible]

*Colossians 3*

*What does it mean to “seek the things that are above”?*

1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3

*Where does this battle take place (v2 – Set your \_\_\_\_)? Why is this important to understand?*

For you have died, and your life is 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 what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 On account of these the wrath of

*In verses 5–9, underline or highlight everything that Paul tells us to “put off” in one color. Then in verses 12–17, use a different color to mark everything that he tells us to “put on.”*

*Reflect (v5,8): Which of these do I struggle with the most? What can I “put on” in place of this sin pattern?*

God is coming. 7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. 11 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. 12 Put on then, as

*Verse 9 – Why would Paul mention lying right here? What do you think he is specifically warning them not to lie about?*

*How does verse 11 encourage honest openness rather than lying to one another?*

*Colossians 3*

God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts,

*Verse 12 – What is your identity in Christ?*

kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one

another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each

*How do the rest of these qualities in verses 12-17 flow out of that understanding?*

other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14

And above all these put on love, which binds everything together

in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your

hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be

thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching

and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and

hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

*Reflect (v16): How can I let the word of Christ dwell in me richly? What differences would that make in my own life and in my relationships?*

17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the

name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through

him.

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

*V18-21 – Why would Paul transition to talking about family relationships right after the previous verses?*

Colossians 3

*How does each instruction here cut to the heart of our humanity/sin nature? If we obeyed these commands, how would our families be different?*

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the

Lord. 21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become

discouraged. 22 Slaves, obey in everything those who are your

earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but

with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, work

heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the

Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are

serving the Lord Christ. 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back

for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

Verse 18 – Definition of “submit”...

Grk “Hupotasso” = to arrange under, to subordinate, to subject one's self, obey, to submit to one's control, to yield to one's admonition or advice

Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader". In non-military use, it was **"a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden"**.

### *Colossians 3*

In wrapping up Colossians 3, reflect on what you have learned.

What have you learned about God through this passage?

What does Colossians 3 teach you about the gospel?

In light of this chapter, is there anything you need to confess or repent of?

What encouraging truths have you learned through these verses?

On the following page, take some time to write out a prayer to God in light of what you have learned from His word this week.

[illegible]

1 Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

What does verse 1 teach us about authority?

Underline three descriptions of how we are to pray in verse 2.

<sup>2</sup> Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. <sup>3</sup> At the same time, pray also for us, that God may

Reflect: Does my prayer life mirror these characteristics? Which do I struggle with the most?

open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— <sup>4</sup> that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

What are some examples of gracious speech (v6)?

<sup>5</sup> Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. <sup>6</sup> Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Jot down further observations from the following verses:

<sup>7</sup> Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant<sup>[b]</sup> in the Lord. <sup>8</sup> I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know

Ephesians 4:20

Proverbs 31:26

how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, <sup>9</sup> and with him

Proverbs 12:18

Colossians 4

*Circle each name that is mentioned in verses 7-14, and then underline or highlight the descriptions that Paul uses of his friends in these verses.*

Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you.

They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

<sup>10</sup> Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin

of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if

he comes to you, welcome him), <sup>11</sup> and Jesus who is called Justus.

*What do these greetings reveal to us regarding the importance of fellowship and Christian friendship?*

These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow

workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to

me. <sup>12</sup> Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus,

greet you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that

you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

<sup>13</sup> For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for

those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. <sup>14</sup> Luke the beloved physician

greet you, as does Demas. <sup>15</sup> Give my greetings to the brothers<sup>[c]</sup>

at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. <sup>16</sup> And

when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the

*Verse 12 – What can we learn about prayer from Epaphras' example?*

church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from  
Laodicea. <sup>17</sup> And say to Archippus, “See that you fulfill the  
ministry that you have received in the Lord.”

Verse 17 – Why might  
Archippus need to be  
given this  
encouragement?

Why might Paul  
ask the Colossians  
to remember his  
chains? In what  
ways would this  
benefit both Paul  
and the Colossian  
believers?

<sup>18</sup> I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my  
chains. Grace be with you.

In what ways do we  
need the same  
encouragement?

## *Colossians 4*

In wrapping up Colossians 4, reflect on what you have learned.

What have you learned about God through this passage?

What does Colossians 4 teach you about the gospel?

In light of this chapter, is there anything you need to confess or repent of?

What encouraging truths have you learned through these verses?

On the following page, take some time to write out a prayer to God in light of what you have learned from His word this week.

