

**THE
COLOSSIAN
LETTER**

Written By

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Chapter One

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

Who was Paul? The Scriptures gives us a lot of information about Paul. He was a Jew born in Tarsus, a city of Cilicia (Acts 21:39). Paul was a Pharisee of the tribe of Benjamin (Philippians 3:5-6) who was brought up in the city of Jerusalem. He was educated by Gamaliel, a reputable doctor of the law (Acts 5:34; 22:3). Paul was more zealous in keeping the traditions of the Jewish fathers than many of his peers (Galatians 1:14). He was a free-born citizen of Rome (Acts 22:28-29). In Acts 23:1 he said he had "lived in all good conscience before God." Yet he saw himself as the chief of sinners, "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious" (1 Timothy 1:13). In Acts 26:9-11 he describes his zeal in persecuting Christians,

"I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme."

Paul also is the man of whom Jesus said,

"...he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15).

In 1 Timothy 2:7 Paul said,

"Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not,) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity."

In Ephesians 3:8 Paul wrote,

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

As an apostle, Paul was given power and authority to act on behalf of Christ. What he spoke and wrote was by the direct inspiration of Christ. Though he wrote the letter to the Colossians, he wanted them to understand that its message contained

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instructions from Christ. In 1 Corinthians 14:37 Paul said, "The things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." And in Galatians 1:11-12 Paul said,

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

Paul includes Timothy in the introduction of the Colossian letter. Timothy was a very special companion to Paul. There were times that he referred to Timothy as "my own son in the faith.... And my dearly beloved son" (1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2).

Paul first met Timothy on his second missionary journey. In Acts 16:1-3 we read,

"Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek; which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters; for they knew all that his father was a Greek."

In 2 Timothy 1:5 Paul made mention of the faith of Timothy, which dwelt first in his grandmother, Lois, and in his mother, Eunice. In 2 Timothy 2:14-15 he wrote,

"But continue in the things which you have learned and have been assured of, knowing of whom you have learned them; and that from a child you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

In Philippians 2:19-22 Paul wrote of Timothy,

"But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But you know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he has served with me in the gospel."

Colossians 1:2, "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colossae;

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grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Christians are saints. They are not sinless, but have been sanctified by the blood of Christ (Hebrews 13:12). In 1 John 1:7-9 we read,

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Paul said the Christians at Corinth were sanctified in Christ (1 Corinthians 6:11), and were called to be saints (1 Corinthians 1:2). However, among them there were many imperfections. For example, there was envy, strife, and divisions (1 Corinthians 3:3); there was sexual immorality (1 Corinthians 5:1); they were defrauding one another and taking the matters before the courts of the unjust (1 Corinthians 6:5-8); they were abusing the Lord's Supper, which had caused their coming together to do them more harm than good (1 Corinthians 11:17-30); and some even were denying the resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:12). Yet they are identified as saints. A saint is one who has been sanctified by Christ, and who works to improve his life by the principles of righteousness set forth in the gospel. We need to understand that God does not demand perfection in Christian living, but rather that we be faithful in our service to Him.

Paul is addressing his letter to "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colossae." And for them, he wishes the greatest blessings any person could hope to receive, "God's grace and peace." By God's grace we receive salvation (Ephesians 2:8) and every spiritual blessing in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-7), and by His peace we are able to find rest and calmness in our souls (Philippians 2:6-7; Matthew 11:28-31).

Colossians 1:3, "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,"

Paul and Timothy are great examples of men of prayer. When they heard of the faithfulness of Christians, they expressed prayers of thanksgiving to God, and when they heard of Christians who struggled with problems, they prayed to God for their strength. The church would be better and stronger today if we followed the examples of Paul and Timothy. There is a tendency for us to criticize and condemn the faults in others, rather than to pray for them to find strength and wisdom to overcome their faults. Are we ignoring the Golden Rule (Matthew 7:12) when we do this? How do we want others to react to our faults? We do have faults! Would we be encouraged to know that someone

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is praying for us to overcome our weaknesses and faults?

Colossians 1:4, "Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have to all the saints.

What Paul had heard about the Christians in Colossae was good news. How can anyone know of another's faith. Faith is in the heart, which cannot be seen by others. But we can see the evidences of faith by its action. In Mark 2:1-12 we read of four men who brought a paralyzed man to Jesus. In verse 5 we read,

"When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy,
Son, your sins be forgiven you."

Jesus saw their faith by the efforts they made in bringing the man to Him. What good is faith if it is not expressed in action? In James 2:14-16 James wrote,

"What does it profit, by brethren, though a man say he has faith, and has no works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithstanding you give them not those things which are needful to the body; what does it profit? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being alone."

The same is true of love. Love is also in the heart and cannot be seen. However, we can see the evidences of love by its action. For example, in 1 John 3:17-18 we read,

"But whoso has this world's goods, and sees his brother have need and shuts up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwells the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

John continued to say (1 John 4:9-11).

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

The Colossian Christians had expressed their faith and love to all the saints in active, helpful ways. And because of this, Paul offered thanksgiving to God the Father.

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Colossians 1:5, "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;"

The third thing for which Paul expressed thanks was their hope. Faith, love, and hope are all motivations for our service to God, and others. If there is no hope, why would we serve? We do most things in view of some type of reward. The Christian's reward is in heaven. In 1 Peter 1:3-4 Peter wrote,

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you."

Will the reward be worth any sacrifice or service we are called upon to make?

These Christians had learned of this reward from the gospel. In Colossians 1:22-23 Paul said that Christ would,

"...present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight; if you continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from **the hope of the gospel**, which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven."

Colossians 1:6, "Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and brings forth fruit, as it does also in you, since the day you heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth."

Jesus had commissioned the apostles to preach the gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:15), and Paul said in Colossians 1:23 this had been accomplished. The gospel will produce fruit in those who hear and obey it. The fruit produced by the gospel is righteousness (Philippians 1:11). The gospel also produces the fruit of the Spirit, which is,

"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance...."

The fruit of the gospel had begun developing within them from the first day they heard it and learned of the grace of God. It is through the gospel that we learn of God's grace. In Acts 20:24 Paul spoke of "the gospel of the grace of God." And in Acts 20:32 he said,

"I commend you to God, and to **the word of his grace**, which is

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able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”

Colossians 1:7, “As you also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ.”

Epaphras is mentioned here as a dear fellow servant, and a faithful minister of Christ. What a great commendation Paul gives Epaphras! In Colossians 4:12-13 Paul wrote,

“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, salutes you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he has a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.”

And in Philemon 23 Paul said that Epaphras is “...my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus.”

Epaphras was with Paul in Rome, and possibly was a prisoner in Rome. Paul speaks of Epaphras as a dear fellow servant. The use of the word “dear” would indicate a very close, loving relationship with Paul. Epaphras stood with Paul in preaching and defending the gospel. He is described as “a faithful minister of Christ.” What greater commendation could have been given than this? Of such, Jesus said, “Well done, you good and faithful servant...” (Matthew 25:21).

Colossians 1:8, “Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.”

Epaphras had brought encouraging news to Paul. He declared unto Paul and his companions the report of the Colossian Christians’ love in the Spirit. What does Paul mean by his “love in the Spirit?” In Romans 8:9 Paul said,

“But you are not in the flesh, **but in the Spirit**, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”

In Ephesians 2:22 Paul said that these Christians were built together “for a habitation of God **through the Spirit**.” And in 1 John 4:7-8, John wrote,

“Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and every one that loves is born of God, and knows God. He that loves not, knows not God; for God is love.”

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To “love in the Spirit” is to express the love of God. In Romans 5:5 Paul said, “...the Love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.”

Colossians 1:9, “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;”

Paul’s prayers often expressed his desire for the best for others. In Romans 10:1 he said, “My heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.” His prayer for the Christians in Colossae was for knowledge, wisdom, and spiritual understanding. This prayer is much like what Solomon wrote in Proverbs 2:2-6,

“So that you incline your ear unto wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures; then shall you understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom: out of his mouth comes knowledge and understanding.”

How can we be filled with the knowledge of God’s will? It begins with a strong desire to know His will. In 1 Peter 2:2 we read,

“As newborn babes, **desire** the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.”

This desire involves a deep love for God’s word. As David expressed in Psalm 119:97,

“O how **love** I your law! It is my meditation all the day.”

In Psalm 119:127 David wrote,

“I **love** your commandments above gold; yes above fine gold.”

This love will cause the diligent reading of God’s Word. In 1 Timothy 4:13 Paul wrote,

“Till I come, give attendance to **reading**, to exhortation, to doctrine.”

Then in 1 Timothy 4:15-16 Paul said,

“**Meditate** upon these things; give yourself wholly to them. Take heed unto yourself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this you shall both save yourself and them that hear you.”

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In 2 Timothy 2:15 Paul said,

“Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth.”

So, how do we become filled with the knowledge of God’s will? (1) Desire it; (2) Love It; (3) Read it; (4) meditate on it; (5). Study it; (6) Give yourself wholly to it; and (7) continue it it.

How do we get wisdom and spiritual understanding? In Proverbs 2:6 Solomon said, “For the Lord gives wisdom; out of his mouth comes knowledge and understanding.” In James 1:5 we read,

“If any man lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, that gives to all men liberally, and upbraids not; and it shall be give him.”

In Hebrews 5:14 we read,

“But strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of **use have their senses **exercised** to discern both good and evil.”**

Wisdom and understanding comes from the study and exercise of God’s Word in our life.

Colossians 1:10, “That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;”

To walk worthy of the Lord is related to being filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. In Jeremiah 10:23 we read,

“O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walks to direct his own steps.”

In order to walk pleasing unto the Lord we must have instruction to direct our walk. This instruction is not within our own intelligence. It must come from God. In Isaiah 55:8-9 we read,

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher that your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

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The knowledge of God's Word also is required in order to be fruitful in every good work. In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 Paul wrote,

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

To increase in the knowledge of God also requires the study of, and growth in, God's Word. We cannot grow without food and exercise. God's Word is the food that nurtures our spiritual growth. In Acts 20:32 Paul wrote,

"And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them which are sanctified.

Colossians 1:11, "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness;"

The strength comes from the divine power of Christ. In Ephesians 6:10-11 Paul wrote,

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Each item of armor in some way is directly related to the Word of God. Through the exercise of God's Word in our lives we gain spiritual strength. In 2 Peter 1:3 we read,

"According as his divine power has given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue."

We are strengthened with all might in order that we might build patience and long-suffering into our character, and do so with a joyful spirit. In James 1;2-4 we read,

"My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into different temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith works patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

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The strength we gain through God's Word helps to fortify our souls with patience and longsuffering.

Colossians 1:12, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light."

What is the inheritance for which we should be thankful? In 1 Peter 1:3-4 we read,

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy has begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in heaven for you."

God has made it possible for us to enjoy all blessings, both physical and spiritual. In Ephesians 1:3 Paul wrote,

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

God has given us "richly all things to enjoy" (1 Timothy 6:17). How thankful are we for these blessings? God wants us to be thankful. In 1 Thessalonians 5:18 Paul wrote,

"In every thing give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

Colossians 1:13, "Who has delivered us from the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."

The power of darkness is the domain of Satan. Paul explained his mission to the Gentiles in Acts 26:18 saying,

"To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me."

The only hope we have of deliverance from the power of Satan is Christ. In Galatians 1:4 Paul said that Christ,

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“gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.”

God delivered us from the domain of Satan and translated us into the domain (or Kingdom) of Christ. Colossians 1:13 shows that the kingdom was present at that time. Jesus was born to be a King. In Luke 1:31-33 we read,

“And, behold, you shall conceive in your womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.”

Jesus began reigning as King when he ascended back to His Father (Daniel 7:13-14). His kingdom is not of this Earth (John 18:36), but is a spiritual kingdom, which is the church.

Colossians 1:14, “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:”

In 1 Peter 1:18-19 Peter wrote,

“Forasmuch as you know that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

There was nothing we could have done to pay the price for our redemption. We were helpless to redeem ourselves. In Romans 5:6-9 Paul wrote,

“For when we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet perhaps for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.”

Both redemption and forgiveness were possible only by the blood of Christ. Redemption is the result of the ransom paid to free us from the bondage of sin. Forgiveness is the erasing of our debt caused by sin. Redemption and forgiveness have the same end result. The price was paid, and the debt was erased.

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Colossians 1:15, "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature"

The word "image" is from the Greek word *eikon*, which is defined in reference to Christ as His being "the visible representation and manifestation of God." In John 14:9 Jesus said, "he that has seen me has seen the Father."

The word "invisible" is from the Greek word *aeirotos*, which refers to things unseen, as of the power and Divinity of God; of God Himself. In John 1:18 Jesus said,

"No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which
Is in the bosom of the Father, he has declared him."

In the flesh, Jesus is the visible representation and manifestation of the invisible God. We see God in the person of Christ.

The word "firstborn" is from the Greek word *prototokos*, which is used occasionally to indicate superiority or position. Christ is certainly superior to all creation. Being the firstborn of every creature does not mean or imply that Christ was a created Being. He is, in fact, the Creator of all things.

Colossians 1:16, "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him."

In John 1:1-3 we read,

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made."

And in John 1:14 we also read, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...." The Word is a reference to Christ. All things were created by His Divine power, and nothing was created without Him. In Hebrews 11:3 we read,

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made from things which do appear."

Colossians 1:17, "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."

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The word “consist” is from the Greek word *sunistemi*, and is defined as, “to stand together.” In Hebrews 1:3 we learn that Christ “upholds all things by the word of his power...” Christ was before the creation of all things, and through His power they are under His control continually.

Colossians 1:18, “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, The firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”

The church is pictured as a body over which Christ is the head. In Ephesians 1:22-23 we read that God has,

“put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that fills all in all.”

As head over His body, He has authority over all things to the body, the church. No man, or group of men, has any authority to legislate or delegate rules and regulations over the other members of the body. Every member of the body is to be subject to the head. Jesus was the first before all creation, the first to be born of a virgin, and the first to rise from the dead never to die again. Jesus did raise some from the dead, including the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:35-43), the widow’s son of Nain (Luke 7:11-15), and Lazarus (John 11:38-44). However, these would all die again. Once Jesus was raised, He would never taste of death again.

“Preeminence” is from the Greek word *proteuo*, which means “to be first.” As head over all things to the church, Christ is to be given first place in all things.

Colossians 1:19, “For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell.”

It pleased the Father to exalt Christ to the position of preeminence in all things, and to have all power and authority to rule over His kingdom. In John 5:22 Jesus said,

“For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son.”

In Acts 17:31 Paul said that God,

“has appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained, whereof he has given assurance unto all men, in that he has raised him from the dead.”

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In Christ dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

Colossians 1:20, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

In Ephesians 2:13-14, 16 Paul wrote concerning Jews and Gentiles,

"But now, in Christ Jesus, you who sometime were far off are made near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of partition between us.... And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

Christ came to break down the barriers that separated both man and God. The greatest barrier was that of sin, which separated man from God. In Romans 5:8-10 Paul wrote,

"But God commended his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For it, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

The blood of His cross brought redemption, forgiveness, justification, sanctification, and reconciliation. The word "reconcile" is from the Greek word *katallasso*, which is defined as "to change the relationship of an enemy to friendship."

Colossians 1:21, And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has he reconciled."

The word "alienated" is from the Greek word *apallotrioo*, which means "to be estranged or separated from." The thing that separates man from God is sin. In Isaiah 59:2 we read,

"But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

God is willing to forgive man's sins, and bring him back into friendship with Himself.

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Colossians 1:22, "In the body of his flesh through death to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight."

In 1 Peter 2:24 We read,

"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes you were healed."

God made Christ "to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). In Ephesians 5:25-27 Paul wrote,

"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Only by the blood of Christ can we be made holy, unblamable, and unreprouvable in the sight of God. But there are conditions in order for this to be accomplished.

Colossians 1:23, "If we continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."

To continue in the faith is to continue in the gospel. "The faith" is often a term used for the gospel. In Galatians 1:23 Paul speaks of **preaching** the faith. In Galatians 3:2 he speaks of the **hearing** of faith, and in Galatians 3:23 he speaks of the faith being **revealed**. Jude 3 speaks of "the faith which was once **delivered** unto the saints." And in 2 Corinthians 13:5 Paul said, "Examine yourselves whether you be **in the faith**."

The word "grounded" is from the Greek word *themelioo*, which is defined as "to lay the foundation of." "Settled" is from the Greek word *hedraios*, which means "to be seated." To be grounded and settled is to be firmly established in the faith of the gospel.

The hope of the gospel is the assurance of eternal life to those who are faithful. The gospel is the power to save us from our past sins (Romans 1:16), and to keep us saved in view of eternity, if we do not drift or depart from it. In James 5:19-20 we read,

"Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converts the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."

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The Christians in Colossae had heard the gospel, which, Paul said, "had been preached to every creature which is under heaven." In Mark 16:15 Jesus instructed the apostles to "go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The word "creature" is from the Greek word *ktisis*, which refers to "mankind in general." The question is asked, "Had the gospel been preached to every person on earth when the Colossian letter was written?" In Acts 19:10 Luke tells the extent of Paul's preaching in Ephesus, saying, "all they who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks." There are times when the word "all" is used in a limited sense. For example, in Acts 2:17 Peter quoted Joel 2:28 where God said, "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." The Spirit was not poured out upon every person living on the Earth, but upon both the Jews and Gentiles, who obeyed the gospel (Acts 5:32). The Spirit was not given to unbelievers. The gospel was designed for all nations of people. The apostles were to preach the gospel to all nations, but it is not likely that every living person had heard it.

Colossians 1:24, "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church."

Paul could rejoice in suffering on behalf of others. In Romans 8:18 Paul wrote,

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

When suffering is compared to the eternal reward, it is meaningless. In Philippians 1:21, 23 Paul wrote,

"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. For I am in a strait between two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ which is far better."

What is a few moments of suffering compared to being with Christ forever? In Philippians 2:17 Paul said,

"And if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all."

It was a joy for Paul to suffer when it brought salvation to many others. The suffering of Christ made it possible for many to be saved, and if there was anything lacking in the suffering of Christ to bring salvation, Paul was willing to fill up (make complete) the afflictions of Christ by his own suffering for the body's sake (which is the church).

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In Philippians 3:10 Paul said of Christ,

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death.”

Colossians 1:25, “Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God.”

Paul was a “chosen vessel” unto Christ (Acts 9:15). His assigned mission was to bear the name of Christ before the Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. The word dispensation is from the Greek word *oikonomia*, which means “stewardship.” Paul had been entrusted with God’s Word to preach it throughout the world. In 1 Thessalonians 2:4 Paul said,

“But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which tries our hearts.”

And in Acts 20:23-24 Paul wrote,

“...the Holy Spirit witnesses in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.”

Colossians 1:26, “Even the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.”

In Ephesians 3:2-5 Paul wrote of this mystery, saying,

“If you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote before in few words; whereby, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.”

The mystery is the revelation of God’s grace in the gospel of Christ. The gospel is no longer contained in a mystery but has been made known through the preaching of the apostles of Christ.

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Colossians 1:27, "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

The mystery involved the salvation of the Gentiles as well as the Jews. In Ephesians 3:6 Paul said,

"That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel."

It was difficult for the Jews to understand that the Gentiles would receive the same benefits of the gospel as the Jews. For centuries the Jews had regarded the Gentiles as being unclean and unfit for fellowship with Jews. In Acts 10:28 Peter told Cornelius (a Gentile),

"You know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God has showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

The mystery was made known to the Gentiles that they might know the riches of the glory of God, which was Christ in the Gentiles, the hope of glory (eternal life).

In Ephesians 3:8-9 Paul wrote

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world has been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ."

Colossians 1:28, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus."

The preaching of Christ and Him crucified was the focus of Paul's ministry. In 1 Corinthians 2:2 Paul said,

"For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified."

Paul warned Christians of the many dangers they would face by those who hated them, and of false teachers, whose aim was to lead them away from Christ. In Acts 20:29-31 Paul said,

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“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter In among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.”

In Galatians 1:6-7 he warned of the effect false teachers could have on them,

“I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.”

The wisdom of God, which Paul taught all men, is contained in the gospel of Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 1:18,23-24 Paul wrote,

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us which are saved, it is the power of God.... But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

The gospel is designed to make those who believe and obey it perfect or complete. In 2 Timothy 3:17 Paul taught that the Scriptures are designed, “that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

Colossians 1:29, “Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working; which works in me mightily.”

Paul was an instrument that God used to accomplish His purpose. In Philippians 2:13 Paul said,

“For it is God which works in you both to will and to do his good purpose.”

And in Galatians 2:8 Paul said,

“For he that worked effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles.”

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Paul had committed himself to the service of Christ (2 Timothy 1:12). In Philippians 1:21 he said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." And in Philippians 3:7-8 Paul said,

"But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yes doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ."

In 1 Corinthians 9:16, 18, 22 Paul said,

"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel.... For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.... I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."

Paul's labors often brought him suffering and hardships (see 2 Corinthians 11:16-22). In 2 Timothy 4:6-8 he was a man that could honestly say,

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day..."

STUDIES IN COLOSSIANS 1

Chapter One

1. Define the following words using Vine's Expository Dictionary.

- 1). Consist (sunistemi) _____
- 2). Preeminence (proteuo) _____
- 3). Alienated (apolotrioo) _____
- 4). Dispensation (oikonomia) _____
- 5). Firstborn (prototokos) _____

2. The following are either true or false from Colossians 1:1-29.

- 1). _____ The hope of glory is the Spirit dwelling in us.
- 2). _____ The Colossians had been enemies of God.
- 3). _____ They were strengthened unto all patience by their love.
- 4). _____ Paul had heard of their love to all the saints.
- 5). _____ The gospel was preached to every creature in heaven.
- 6). _____ Timothy is described as a faithful minister in Christ.
- 7). _____ Paul mentioned the church as the body of Christ two times.
- 8). _____ Paul reminded them of the inheritance which was laid up in heaven for them.
- 9). _____ Paul said they were filled with the knowledge of God's will.
- 10). _____ By Christ things in heaven and earth were reconciled unto God.

3. What kind of relationship did Paul and Timothy have? _____

4. How did Paul describe the Christians at Colossae? _____

5. What did Paul and Timothy give to God? _____

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6. What had they heard about the Colossians? _____
7. What was laid up in heaven for them? _____
8. What had the Colossians heard? _____
9. What had the gospel brought them? _____
10. Who was Epaphras? _____
11. What had Epaphras declared to Paul? _____
12. What was Paul's prayer and desire for them? _____

13. What would the results of his prayer for them help them do? _____

14. For what were they to give God thanks? _____
15. What had God done for them? _____
16. What do we have in the kingdom of Christ? _____
17. What is Christ in relationship to every creature? _____
18. What was created by Christ? _____
19. By Christ all things do what? _____
20. Of what is Christ the head? _____
21. Of what is He the firstborn? _____ Thus he is to have what? _____
22. What pleased the Father? _____
23. What two things were accomplished by Christ's blood? _____
25. What were they in the past? _____ What caused this? _____
26. How does Christ want to present us to God? _____

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27. On what conditions could Christ present them to God? _____

28. What was Paul's attitude toward suffering for them? _____
29. For what was Paul willing to suffer? _____
30. What was given to Paul? _____
31. Why was this given him? _____
32. What had been hidden in the past? _____
33. What would God make known? _____ To whom? _____
34. What was the objective of Paul's preaching? _____

35. What worked in Paul to accomplish this objective? _____
36. **Memory Verse: Colossians 1:13.**

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Chapter Two

Colossians 2:1, "For I would that you knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh."

The word "conflict" is from the Greek word *aton*, which "implies a conflict." Some translations (A.S.V. and R.S.V.) word this verse as, "For I want you to know how greatly I strive for you..." Another translates this verse as, "For I wish you to know what great concern I have for you..." In the preceding verse (Colossians 1:29) Paul wrote,

"Whereunto I also labor, **striving** according to his working which works in me mightily."

The word "striving" is from the Greek word *agonizomai*, which is translated as "contend or agonize" Paul had agonizing concerns for the Christians of Colossae and Laodicea, and wanted them to know that his concerns were for their spiritual well being. False teachers were imposing ordinances and doctrines of men, which Paul said would perish with the using (Colossians 2:20-22). These doctrines had changed the spiritual worship of God into a worship expressed by their own personal will. Paul had good reason for being anxious for their spiritual well being.

Many of the Christians in Laodicea, and Colossae, had not seen Paul personally, which would indicate that Paul probably had not started the church in either Laodicea or Colossae. (More can be read about the church of Laodicea in Revelation 3:14:22.)

Colossians 2:2, "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ."

The word "comforted" is from the Greek word *parakaleo*, which is to "alleviate from grief." It would include alleviating the mind from stress, strife, and anxiety. The churches in both Colossae and Laodicea were pressured by various false teachings. There were some who were teaching "philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men" (Colossians 2:8), and there were Jews who taught the carnal ordinances of the law and the keeping of certain religious days (Colossians 2:16); others were teaching angel worship (Colossians 2:18), while still others taught various doctrines about will-worship (Colossians 2:23). The teaching of these different doctrines caused Paul concern for these Christians. Paul's desire for them was that they have comfort and peace. In Colossians 3:15 Paul wrote,

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also you are called in one body; and be you thankful."

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Paul's concern for all Christians was "that their hearts be knit together in love." The threads that knits the hearts of Christians together in unity is love. In Colossians 3:12-15 Paul wrote,

"Put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you. And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts...."

Their hearts could be free from stress, and could be knit together in love by the full assurance of understanding of the mystery of God. The mystery involved the "dispensation of the grace of God" (Ephesians 3:2-3), which was designed to bring all men into fellowship with God. In Ephesians 3:8 Paul said the mystery involved preaching "among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." This would include the Gentiles as "fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel."

To have full assurance of understanding and acknowledgment of the mystery of God was truly a rich and rewarding blessing. In Proverbs 3:13-18 Solomon wrote concerning wisdom,

"Happy is the man that finds wisdom, and the man that gets understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things you can desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retains her."

The riches of God's eternal purpose were not fully disclosed until the coming of Christ.

Colossians 2:3, "In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

After Jesus ascended back into heaven, "He through the Holy Spirit gave his commandments unto the chosen apostles" (Acts 1:1-2). In 1 Corinthians 2:7,9-10 Paul wrote,

"But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory....But as it is written, Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love

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him. But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searches all things, yea the deep things of God.”

All the treasures and blessings of God’s wisdom and knowledge are made available to those who are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).

Colossians 2:4, “And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.”

The word “beguile” is from the Greek word *paralogizomai*, which is defined as “to reckon wrong, to reckon falsely, to deceive by false reasoning.” Apart from the wisdom and knowledge of God’s word, we are easy prey to false teachers. Isn’t it strange that God gave us **one** Bible and **one** church (Matthew 16:18; Galatians 1:6-9), and warned all to speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among us (1 Corinthians 1:10)? Yet there are thousands of different churches in the world all speaking, believing, and practicing different things, and all claiming to be based directly on the Bible. How can this be? Obviously, many are deceived by false reasoning. In 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 we read that Satan has ministers who appear as the ministers of righteousness. In 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10 Paul wrote,

“Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.”

The only thing that can save us is the truth! But Satan’s ministers claim to speak the truth. In Galatians 1:6-9 Paul wrote,

“I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another, but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received let him be accursed.”

Consider an example of this from Acts 15:1,

“And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, and said, Except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved.”

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Was this teaching truth? In Galatians 5:2 Paul said, "If you be circumcised Christ shall profit you nothing." Circumcision had nothing to do with salvation. Some taught this, but it was based on false reasoning. We need to examine every doctrine and belief by the Scriptures. What is truth? John 17:17 Jesus said that God's word is truth.

Colossians 2:5, "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ."

At the time Paul wrote this letter to the Colossians, he was a prisoner in Rome. But though he was absent from the churches physically, he was with them in spirit. His fellow companions had kept him informed concerning the spiritual conditions of the churches. Epaphras had made known to Paul the faith, love, and hope of the Colossian Christians, which caused Paul to pray daily for them (Colossians 1:4-9). To learn of the steadfastness of their faith had brought great joy to Paul.

Colossians 2:6, "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in him."

Being united with Christ is a conditional matter. We are not just "automatically united" with Him. Many believe that we receive Christ into our lives by asking Him to come into our lives, or by just believing in Him. But what does the Bible say regarding our receiving Christ? In John 14:23 Jesus said,

"If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

We receive Christ by an obedient faith. In Hebrews 5:9 the writer stated that Christ

"became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that **obey** him."

In Matthew 7:21 Jesus said,

"Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that **does** the will of my Father which is in heaven."

Christ has given us a simple plan to follow in order to be united with Him. This plan is not our trying to persuade Christ to come unto us; but rather, His plan teaches us to come to Him. In John 6:44-45 Jesus said,

"No man can come to me, except the Father which has sent me draw

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him.... And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that has heard, and has learned of the Father, comes unto me.”

This is the reason for preaching the gospel to every person (Mark 16:15). The gospel is the power of God unto salvation to all who will believe it (Romans 1:16). Those who do not obey the gospel will be “punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord” (2 Thessalonians 1:8-9). We receive Christ by receiving His word by an obedient faith. In Romans 6:3-4 Paul wrote,

“Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized **into** Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.”

As they had received Christ (by an obedient faith) they were to walk in Him by continuing to trust and obey Him. Christ demands that we be “faithful unto death” (Revelation 2:10).

Colossians 2:7, “Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”

The word “rooted” is from the Greek word *rhizoo*, which is defined as “to cause to take root; in the sense of being firmly planted, or established.” How are we rooted and built up in Christ? In Acts 20:32 Paul told the elders of the church in Ephesus,

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to **build you up** and give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”

The word of God is the ground into which we are rooted, and the nourishment by which we are built up. “The faith” is a reference to the gospel, which is the source from which our faith comes. They had been taught by “the faith” (the gospel of God’s grace), and were to stand fast (be established) in it. In 2 Corinthians 13:5 Paul said,

“Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith; prove your own selves...”

The word “abounding” is from the Greek word *perisseuo*, which means to increase. They were to increase (grow) in their knowledge of the gospel. In 2 Corinthians 8:7 we read,

“Therefore, as you abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that you abound in this grace also.”

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They were to abound in what they had been taught because it is by the gospel that we grow spiritually. The gospel instructs us regarding the life that is above the ordinary (the abundant life that Jesus promised, John 10:10).

Colossians 2:8, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."

The word "spoil" is from the Greek word *sulagogeo*, which is defined as "to carry off as spoil, lead captive." The false teacher, through his "philosophy and vain deceit," world carry the Colossian Christians off as so much booty.

"Philosophy" is from the Greek word *philosophia*, which "denotes the love and pursuit of wisdom, hence the investigation of truth and nature. To the Greeks it denoted the highest standard of the intellect." When Paul was in the Grecian city of Athens, he encountered certain philosophers of the Epicureans and Stoics. In Acts 17:21 Luke wrote,

"For all the Athenians, and strangers which were there, spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing."

These philosophers, whether Jews or Greeks, exalted their knowledge of the rudiments (elements) of the world above the knowledge of Christ. Paul wrote of some of the teachings of these philosophers in Colossians 2:20-23.

"Wherefore if you be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not, handle not; which are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh."

These doctrines of men were based on the intellect of men rather than on the revealed wisdom of Christ.

Colossians 2:9, "For in him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

Vines defines the word "Godhead" (*theiotes*) as, "the absolute and perfect God; to express this essential and personal Godhead of the Son." In John 14:9,11 Jesus said, "...he that has seen me has seen the Father.... Believe me that I am in the Father, and The Father in me...." In John 1:1,14 we read,

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“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.”

Jesus was fully God though living in the flesh. In 1 Timothy 3:16 Paul wrote,

“God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

Colossians 2:10, “And you are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”

In Christ we have been abundantly supplied with all spiritual blessings, and with every need in order to live righteously and godly in this present world. In Ephesians 1:3 Paul wrote,

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

And in Philippians 4:19 Paul wrote,

“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

As the Creator of all things in heaven and Earth, Christ is the Head (authority) over all of them. In Colossians 1:16-17 Paul wrote,

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or **principalities**, or **powers**: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

Colossians 2:11, “In whom also you are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.”

Under the Old Testament physical circumcision was required in order to be under God’s covenant, which He made with Israel. However, under the New Testament there is a new kind of circumcision. In Romans 2:28-29 we read,

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“For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.”

The circumcision that brings one into a new covenant relationship with God is not made with men's hands, but by Christ in the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh.

Colossians 2:12, “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised him from the dead.”

Physical circumcision was a surgical operation to remove the foreskin of all male children of Israel. Spiritual circumcision is also an operation performed by God in the removal of our sins. This operation takes place when we are buried in baptism, and raised through faith in the **operation** of God. In Romans 6:1-6 Paul describes this operation more,

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid, how shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”

We are buried by baptism into the death of Christ. The blood of Christ was shed in His death (John 33-34). It is the blood of Christ that washes away our sins (Revelation 1:5). Our sins are washed away by the blood of Christ when we are baptized (Acts 22:16). Therefore, it is at the point of baptism that the spiritual circumcision of Christ takes place.

Colossians 2:13, “And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.”

The penalty for sin is death. This was the promised penalty to Adam and Eve. In Genesis 2:17 God commanded Adam,

“But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die.”

In Ezekiel 18:20 the Lord said, “The soul that sins, it shall die.” The word “death” means a separation of two essential things required for life. Physically, death is the separation

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of the spirit from the body (James 2:26). Spiritual death is our separation from God because of our sins (Isaiah 59:1-2). In Romans 5:12 Paul wrote,

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

Jesus came to forgive us our sins, thus reuniting us with God in life (John 10:10). In Ephesians 2:1 Paul wrote,

“And you has he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;”

Colossians 2:14, “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.”

The words “blotting out” are from the Greek words *ek*, out, and *aleipho*, to remove, wipe away, or obliterate. Peter used these words in Acts 3:19 saying, “Repent you therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be **blotted out.**” “The handwriting of ordinances that were against us” was the Old Law. In Ephesians 2:15 Paul wrote,

“Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances.”

The Old Law was against the people, and contrary to them because it was “a ministrat-
ion of death and condemnation, written and engraved in stones” (2 Corinthians 3:7-9). Those who despised the Old Law, “died without mercy under two or three witnesses” (Hebrews 10:28). Jesus took the Law of the Old Testament away, nailing it to His cross (Ephesians 2:14-15). In Matthew 5:17 Jesus said,

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For I say unto you...one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, **till all be fulfilled.**”

In Galatians 3:19 Paul wrote,

“Wherefore then serves the law? It was added because of transgression **till the seed should come** to whom the promise was made...”

In Galatians 3:16 Paul said “**the seed**” in God’s promise to Abraham was Christ. And in Galatians 3:23-25 Paul wrote,

“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the

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faith which afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.”

The Old Testament law was fulfilled with the coming of Christ, and He removed it at the cross. In His death upon the cross, Jesus shed His blood, and ushered in (and dedicated) the New Testament law – “the perfect law of liberty” (James 1:25).

Colossians 2:15, “And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.”

The “principalities and powers” were the forces that Christ faced in what He accomplished at the cross. We also are faced with forces of opposition to living righteously in Christ. In Ephesians 6:10-12 Paul wrote,

“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against **principalities**, against **powers**, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.”

In Christ’s death on the cross, and resurrection from the dead, He was victorious over the devil and all opposing forces. In Hebrews 2:14 we read,

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part in the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil. And deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

Colossians 2:16, “let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days.”

How could the Colossian Christians keep men from judging them in the keeping these ordinances of the Old Law? By not observing them. The observance of these special days and sacrifices was commanded by God for the children of Israel (Numbers 28:11-15; 1 Chronicles 23:31). They were not observances for Christians. All of the Old Testament laws and observances were fulfilled by Christ, and ended at the cross. In Hebrews 8:6-7 we read,

“But now has he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much

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also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.”

In Hebrews 8:8-9 God promised to make a new covenant, which would be different from the covenant He made with Israel when he brought them out of Egypt. In Hebrews 8:13 we read,

“In that he said, A new covenant, he has made the first old. Now that which decays and waxes old is ready to vanish away.”

In Hebrews 10:9 the writer said, “He took away the first, that he may establish the second.” Christians are not to go back to the Old Covenant for religious practices. In Galatians 5:4 Paul wrote,

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified By the law; you are fallen from grace.”

Colossians 2:17, “Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.”

The word “shadow” is from the Greek word *skia*, which is defined as “an image or outline cast by an object, Colossian 2:17, of ceremonies under the Law.” In Hebrews 10:1 we read,

“For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which were offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect.”

The ordinances and sacrifices of the Old Testament were a shadow of things to come under the New Covenant. The blood of bulls and goats could not remove sin; rather, they were a shadow of the sacrifice of Christ and His blood, which could remove sin.

“The body is of Christ” could be either a reference to the body of Christ (which was sacrificed for those under the New Covenant) or it could refer the church (which is the body of Christ). Israel was a shadow of the church.

Colossians 2:18, “Let no man beguile you of your reward in the voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.”

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The word “beguile” is from the Greek word *katabrabeuo*, which means to rob one of his reward by misleading him believing and practicing false doctrines. In this case it was the practice of a false humility (a pretentious humility) and the worshipping of angels. When Satan tried to entice Jesus to fall down and worship him in Matthew 3:10, Jesus said,

“Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God, and **him only** shall you serve.”

The Lord has promised a great reward to those who faithfully complete the Christian race. In Revelation 2:10 Jesus promised,

“Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.”

And in James 1:12 we read,

“Blessed is the man that endures temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him.”

Those who run in a race, whether physically or spiritually, must run according to the rules set for the race. There are no shortcuts to winning a race. False teachers have always offered shortcuts to the rules God designed for us to successfully completing the Christian race.

These false teachers of whom Paul warned the Colossians were claiming authority in realms where they had no divine revelation. Paul said they were intruding into things which they had not seen. “Intruding” is from the Greek word, *embateuo*, which is defined by Vine as “to dwell in, to enter on; perhaps used in this passage as a technical term of the mystical religions.” It is not uncommon for those in mystical religions to claim direct revelations from God. The Bible clearly teaches that all divine revelations have been given (Jude 3; 2 Peter 1:3-4). In Acts 20:27 Paul told the Ephesian elders,

“For I have not shunned to declare unto you **all** the counsel of God.”

In Galatians 1:8-9 Paul wrote,

“But though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. as we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed.”

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And in 2 Peter 1:3 we read,

“According as his divine power has given unto us **all things** that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue.”

There are no new revelations from God today. All divine revelations have been given by inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16). Those who make claims that God orally speaks to them today are “vainly puffed up by fleshly minds.” Those who make such claims attempt to exalt themselves above others by claiming to be the direct spokesmen for God.

Colossians 2:19, “And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increases with the increase of God.”

Christ is the Head over all things to the church, which is His body (Ephesians 1:22-23). As the Head over the body, Christ has all authority over each member in the body (Matthew 28:18). In our physical body, all members are held together by the joints and ligaments, and through the nervous system every muscle and ligament is nourished, and thereby functions by the authority of the head. The same principle is true with the spiritual body of Christ. The body is knit together as one unit, and each member helps to build up and strengthen the other members of the body of Christ. In Ephesians 4:15-16 Paul wrote,

“But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”

False teachers exalt their philosophies and doctrines above the authority of Christ. Their false doctrines deny that Christ has absolute authority over all things to the church. Any and every false doctrine denies Christ as the Head. There are no members in the body of Christ who have over other members. In the church, only Christ, the Head, has authority. Christ has revealed, through His written word, every thing that we need to know, believe, practice regarding God’s will for us.

Colossians 2:20, “Wherefore if you be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances,”

Once we are dead to something, we cannot continue to live in it. For example, In

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Romans 6:2 Paul asked, "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" In Colossians 3:3 Paul said, "For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Since they had died to the elements (rudiments) of the world, their focus was not to be on the things of the world. In Colossians 3:1-2 Paul wrote,

"If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things of the earth."

Our focus must be upon Christ and His word, and not upon the philosophies, commandments, and doctrines of men. The basis of human reasoning is nothing when compared to the divine revelation of God.

Colossians 2:21, "(Touch not; taste not; handle not;)"

These were rules of men, not of God. We are not told the specifics of these ordinances, but they were after the commandments and doctrines of men, who did not hold to the authority of Christ.

Colossians 2:22, "Which are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?"

Since the commandments and doctrines of men are not from God, they are temporal and will eventually perish. In 1 Peter 1:25 we read, "the word of the Lord endures for ever." In Matthew 24:35 Jesus said,

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

Colossians 2:23, "Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh."

Not all worship is acceptable to God. In Matthew 15:9 Jesus said,

"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

The worship being imposed upon the Colossians was one expressed by self-will, and thus was "will-worship" designed to show an outward humility and self-sacrificing life. It involved neglecting the needs of the body and inflicting punishment upon the body, as if the body is what causes one to sin. But the practice of self-neglect of the body did not bring honor or satisfaction to the flesh. It was all in vain. Acceptable worship involves a true expression of the heart to God in doing the things that He has instructed.

STUDIES IN COLOSSIANS 2

Chapter Two

1. Define the following words from Vine's Expository Dictionary.

- 1). Philosophy (philosophia) _____
- 2). Tradition (paradosis) _____
- 3). Rudiments (staicheion) _____
- 4). Spoiled (sulagogeio) _____
- 5). Shadow (skia) _____

2. The following are either true or false from Colossians 2:1-23.

- 1). _____ They were being subject to worldly ordinances.
- 2). _____ The Sabbaths were a shadow of things to come.
- 3). _____ In Christ we are to be circumcised.
- 4). _____ The Colossians were well acquainted with Paul.
- 5). _____ They were built up in Christ by their love for one another.
- 6). _____ They had intruded into things which they had not seen.
- 7). _____ Their wisdom in will worship had brought them satisfaction.
- 8). _____ They had been spoiled by principalities.
- 9). _____ Paul said Christ had nailed their sins to His cross.
- 10). _____ They were told how to walk in Christ.

3. For whom did Paul have great conflict? _____

4. What had many of the Colossians not seen? _____

5. What did Paul say about their hearts? _____

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6. They were knit together unto what 6 things? _____

7. What was hid in Christ? _____
8. What concern did Paul have for them? _____
9. Though absent, Paul was beholding what? _____
10. How were they to walk in Christ? _____
11. What four things were they to do in Christ? _____

12. Of what were they to beware? _____
13. What dwells in Christ? _____
14. Of what is Christ the head? _____
15. Circumcision in Christ puts off what? _____
16. Where does this circumcision take place? _____
17. When Christ quickens us, what does He do? _____
18. What did Christ blot out? _____
19. What did He do with that which He blotted out? _____
20. Over what did Christ triumph? _____
21. In what were they to not be judged? _____
22. They were not to let any one beguile them in what? _____
23. What holds the body together? _____
24. What ordinances were they being subject to? _____
25. These ordinances were after what? _____

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Chapter Three

Colossians 3:1, "If you then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God."

Before we can be raised with Christ, we must be buried with Him. In Romans 6:3-5 we read,

"Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection."

And in Colossians 2:12-13 we read,

"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who has raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses."

Our new life begins when we die to sin (Romans 6:2), bury our old man by baptism into death of Christ where His blood washes us from our sins (Romans 6:4; Revelation 1:5), and are raised with Christ to walk a newness of life. We are baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27), and in 2 Corinthians 5:17 Paul said,

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

"If you be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God." The word "seek" is from the Greek word *zeteo*, which is used here as "to covet earnestly, strive after, and to desire." What things are we to seek (or desire) from the throne of God and Christ? In Hebrews 4:16 we read,

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

The throne of God is the source from which we obtain mercy and grace. Through God's

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grace we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). For an example, in Ephesians 1:7 Paul wrote,

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”

Colossians 3:2, “Set your affection on things above, not on things of the earth.”

The word “affection” is from the Greek word *phroneo*, which is defined as “to think, to set the mind on.” Christians are to keep their minds focused on spiritual things, not on the things of this Earth. In 1 John 2:15-17 we read,

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides for ever.”

In James 4:4 we read,

“...know you not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.”

In Matthew 16:26 Jesus showed why we need to keep focused on things above,

“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”

Colossians 3:3, “For you are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

In Romans 6:6-11 Paul wrote about our being dead to sin and alive with Christ;

“Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.... Likewise reckon you also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

When we are baptized into Christ the old life in sin ends, and our new life in Christ begins.

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There is no spiritual life apart from Christ (1 John 5:11-12). Like the kingdom, which does not come with observation (visibly), "for the kingdom is within us" (Luke 17:20-21), we cannot see life, but we can see evidences of it. Our new life is concealed in Christ.

Colossians 3:4, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory."

Apart from Christ we are dead in our sins (Romans 5:12). Christ said that He came that His followers might have life (John 10:10). In 1 John 5:11-12 we read,

"And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that has the Son has life; and he that has not the Son of God has not life."

The word "appear" is from the Greek word *phaneroo*, which is "to be manifested." Vine adds, "To be manifested is more than to appear. A person may appear in a false guise or without a disclosure of what he truly is; to be manifested is to be revealed in one's true character; this is especially the meaning of *phaneroo*." In 1 John 3:2 we read,

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

When Christ returns, then we shall be with Him in glory In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 we read,

"For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Colossians 3:5, "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affections, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry;"

The word "mortify" is from the Greek word *nekroo*, which means "to put to death, to make dead." In Romans 8:13 Paul wrote,

"For if you live after the flesh, you shall die; but if you through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, you shall live."

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And in Romans 7:21-23 Paul wrote,

“I find a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.”

The law in our members is the corrupt lusts that war against doing good. In Ephesians 2:2-3 Paul described our life before becoming a Christian saying,

“Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

We are to put to death the lust that leads to **fornication**. “Fornication” is from the Greek word *porneia*, which is defined as “illicit sexual intercourse.” The only sexual intercourse authorized and approved by God is in the marriage relationship. In Hebrews 13:4 we read that “marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled.” In 1 Corinthians 7:1-2 Paul wrote,

“Now concerning the things whereof you wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.”

Fornication simply means **any kind of illicit sexual immorality**, which can occur: (a) between two unmarried people; (b) between one unmarried person and one married person; or (c) between two married people who are not married to each other.

We are to put to death **uncleanness**. Uncleanness is from the Greek word *anatharsia*, which is defined as “filthiness, sensuality, and defilement.” In Galatians 5:19 uncleanness is listed with adultery, fornication, and lasciviousness (Galatians 5:19). In Romans 1:24 Paul wrote,

“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, through the lust of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves.”

Paul continued in Romans 1:26-27 to show how they dishonored their bodies

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Paul continued in Romans 1:26-27 to show how they dishonored their bodies saying,

“For even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly.”

They were to mortify (put to death) **inordinate affection**. The word “affection” is from the Greek word *pathos*, which is defined as “lust, passion, and affection.” “Inordinate” is defined as, “lacking restraint or moderation; excessive.” The Colossian Christians were to put to death unrestrained passions. In 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 Paul wrote,

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God.”

In Romans 1:26-27 vile affections are described as the practice of homosexuas.

They were to mortify **evil concupiscence**. “Concupiscence” is from the Greek word *epithmia*, which is defined as “lust, passion desire.” The word “evil” indicates something sinful and wicked. They were to put all sinful lusts or passions to death. In 1 John 2:15-17 we read,

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the lust thereof: but he that does the will of God abides for ever.”

They were to mortify **covetousness**. “Covetousness” is from the Greek word *pleonexia*, which is the lust or desire to have more and more, or to be greedy. In Luke 12:15 Jesus said,

“Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man’s life consists not of the things which he possess.”

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In Colossians 3:5 Paul equates covetousness with idolatry. Vine said that the “idolater is a slave to the depraved ideas his idols represent.” Man cannot serve both God and money (Matthew 6:24).

Colossians 3:6, “For which things’ sake the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience.”

The **children of disobedience** are those who walk according to the course of this world, and according to the prince of the power of the air (the devil) (Ephesians 2:2). In Ephesians 2:3 Paul further describes the children of disobedience saying,

“Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.”

And in Ephesians 4:22 Paul wrote,

“That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.”

Those who choose to live according to the sinful lusts of the flesh will receive the outpouring of God’s wrath. In 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 Paul describes God’s wrath saying,

“The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his might angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”

Colossians 3:7, “in the which you also walked sometime, when you lived in them.”

As we read in Ephesians 2:3, we all had our manner of life in the lusts of our flesh. In Titus 3:3 Paul wrote,

“For we ourselves also were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving different lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another.”

Our lives were focused on satisfying ourselves by doing what we wanted rather than doing what God wanted. We may not have done all the things Paul listed in Colossians 3:5, but our choices in life often were determined by what we personally wanted.

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Colossians 3:8, "But now you also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

To "put off" is the same as to "mortify" or "put to death." How serious are the things listed in this verse? The word **anger** is from the Greek word *orge*, which is defined as "a strong unpleasant feeling toward personal offences that causes a desire to avenge self." In Ephesians 4:31 Paul wrote,

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice."

And in Matthew 5:21 Jesus said,

"You have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shall not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment."

Anger is the emotion that causes stress, and stress is the cause of many physical and mental diseases.

Christians must put off **wrath**. "Wrath" is from the Greek word *thumos*, which is defined as "hot anger, wrath, passion, fierceness." Wrath is the degree of anger that seeks vengeance. In Romans 12:17-19 Paul wrote,

"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord."

In Matthew 5:38-42 Jesus taught,

"You have heard that it has been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, that you resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite you on your right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue you at the law, and take away your coat, let him have your cloak also. And whosoever shall compel you to go a mile, go with him two."

Christians must put off **malice**. The word "malice" is from the Greek word *kakia*,

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which is defined as “viciousness, wickedness, malicious.” Malice also is defined as “a “a deep-seated animosity that delights in causing others to suffer or in seeing them suffer.”

Christians are to put off **blasphemy**. “Blasphemy” is from the Greek word *blasphemia*, which is defined as “defamatory and evil speaking.” In Ephesians 4:29,31 Paul wrote,

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth.... Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and **evil speaking** be put away from you, with all **malice**.”

Christians are to put off all **filthy communication** out of their mouth. The word filthy is from the Greek word *aselgeia*, which is defined as “wantonness, licentiousness, lasciviousness, that which is disgraceful, and characterized by moral impurity.” Christians are to be pure in heart (Matthew 5:8). All words and actions are expressions of the heart (Matthew 15:19). In Matthew 12:34-37 Jesus said,

“O generation of vipers, how can you being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.”

Filthy words come from a filthy heart. In Titus 1:15 Paul wrote,

“Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.”

And in Titus 2:14 Paul wrote of Christ,

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

Colossians 3:9, “Lie not one to another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds.”

In Ephesians 4:22,25 Paul wrote,

“That you put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.... Wherefore putting away

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lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor; for we are members one of another.”

Christians are to walk honestly (Romans 13:13) and always speak the truth. To lie is to speak falsely with the **intention** of deceiving or misleading another regarding what is true. In becoming a Christian we put the old man (our former life in sin) to death. We must not continue to live in sin. In Romans 6:1-2 Paul wrote,

“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid, How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?”

Colossians 3:10, “And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.”

Paul pictured the old man to be corrupt according to deceitful lusts (Ephesians 4:22). In Ephesians 2:24 Paul pictures the new man saying,

“And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

Before we can put on the new man we first must put off the old man. We cannot wear the clothing of the old man and the clothing of the new man at the same time. Before we can begin living the new life, we must die to the old life. In Romans 12:1-2 Paul said,

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.”

The new man is renewed in the knowledge of God every day, and is transformed by the renewing of the mind in the knowledge of God. The knowledge of God is the food that nourishes our souls. By knowledge we grow spiritually (1 Peter 2:2), and is through the knowledge of God that we are built up (Acts 20:32). Through the knowledge of God we pattern our lives after the image of Christ. Jesus left us an example for us to follow (1 Peter 2:21).

Colossians 3:11, “Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all and in all.”

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In Galatians 2:28 Paul wrote,

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Christ broke down the walls that separated people. The Greek word is often used to refer to Gentiles in general. Under the Law, the Jews were forbidden to have close relationships with other nations. In Acts 10:28 when Peter addressed Cornelius, a Gentile, he said,

“You know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God has showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.”

In John 4:9 when Jesus asked the woman of Samaria for a drink of water, she said,

“How is it that you being a Jew, ask drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.”

The barrier between the circumcision (Jew) and the uncircumcision (Gentile) was the theocratic differences between people of different nationalities. The barriers between Barbarian and Scythian were cultural and language barriers. Unger describes Barbarian as “a people speaking any other than the Greek language. After the Persian wars it began to carry with it associations of hatred and to imply vulgarity and lack of culture.” In Acts 28:1-2 the people of the island of Melita were called a “barbarous people.” However, these people showed kindness to Paul and the other prisoners of the ship wreck. And when Paul and the others left the island of Melita, the barbarous people “honored us with many honors.” So the term “Barbarian” does not always mean a group of vicious, uncaring heathens. The people of ancient Scythia were described as vicious, warlike people. The Scythians are described in contrast to the Barbarians, but in Christ all become one. In Christ the class barriers were broken down between master and slave. All are of equal importance in the sight of God.

Colossians 3:12, “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;”

The elect of God are the chosen in Christ. In Ephesians 1:4 Paul wrote,

“According as he has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

Christians are the **holy and beloved**: children of God. We have been washed from all sin

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by the blood of Christ (Revelation 1:5), and are continually washed from our sins as long as we continue to walk in the light of Christ (1 John 1:7). To follow in the footsteps of Jesus (1 Peter 2:21), Christians are to put on certain characteristics of their new lives. They are to put on **bowels of mercy**. The word "bowels" is from the Greek word *splanchnon*, which is a reference to the deepest, innermost affections. The word bowels sometimes is connected to the word "compassion." Christians are to have deep feelings of compassion, pity, and mercy. These feelings promotes expressions of sympathy, comfort, and helpfulness toward the misfortunes and needs of others.

Christians are to put on **kindness**. "Kindness" is from the Greek word *chrestotes*, which is defined as "goodness of heart, kindness, gentleness." In 1 Corinthians 13:4 Paul said, "love is kind." To be kind is to be "tenderhearted" (Ephesians 4:32).

Christians are to put on **humbleness of mind**. Humility is the opposite of pride and arrogance; it means to be lowly as to how one thinks of himself. We are certainly unworthy of the sacrifice Christ made for us. How could we think of ourselves as being important? What contribution have we made in serving Christ? James 4:10 we read, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord."

We are to put on **meekness**. "Meekness is from the Greek word *prautes*, which is defined as "an inwrought grace of the soul; and the exercises of it are first and chiefly toward God. It is that temper of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting." In Romans 12:1-3 Paul gives a good concept of meekness,

"...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world, but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Christians are to put on **longsuffering**. "Longsuffering" is from the Greek word *makrothumeo*, which is defined as "forbearance, patience, and longsuffering." In every relationship we need to be patient. No other person feels, thinks, speaks, or does things in the exact way as we do. To be patient often requires us to exercise self-control.

Colossians 3:13, "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do you."

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signifying to bear with, endure.” To be forbearing is to practice self-restraint. Since God puts up with us, we must learn to put up with the weaknesses and flaws in others.

Christians must learn to be forgiving to others. In Ephesians 4:32 we read,

“Be you kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake has forgiven you.”

In Matthew 6:12,14-15 Jesus said we should pray,

“And forgive us our debts, as we forgive others.... For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

Colossians 3:14, “And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of \ perfectness.”

“Charity” is from the Greek word *agape*, which is defined as “Christian love; it is not an impulse from the feelings, it does not always run with the natural inclinations, nor does it spend itself only upon those for whom some affinity is discovered. Love seeks the welfare of all; love seeks opportunity to do good to all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of faith.” In 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 Paul wrote,

“Charity suffers long, and is kind; charity envies not; charity vaunts not itself, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unseemly, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil; rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Charity never fails.”

The word “bond” is from the Greek word *sundesmos*, which is defined as “that which binds together as ligaments of the body.” The word “perfectness is from the Greek word *teleiotes*, which denotes “a fulfillment, completion, perfection, an end accomplished as the effect of a process, stressing perhaps the actual accomplishment of the end in view.” It is charity that binds all Christians together as ligaments of a body.

Colossians 3:15, “And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also you are called in one body; and be you thankful.”

In Philippians 4:6-7 Paul wrote,

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“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

To let the “peace of God” rule in our hearts is to let God be in control of our lives. When we encounter stressful problems in life, we should let God take control. He promises to bring us peace within.

When we allow God’s peace to rule our hearts, it will promote peaceful relationships with others. In Romans 12:17-19 Paul wrote,

“Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says the Lord.”

We have been called to peace (1 Corinthians 7:15) in one body. A body is designed so that all members work together in harmony. The church is the body of Christ, and all members are to be bound together in love and harmony. In Ephesians 4:2-3 Paul describes how Christians are to walk in the one body of Christ.

“With all lowliness, and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Christians should be thankful for the love and peace in the one body of Christ. In Titus 3:3 Paul describes the attitudes of the world,

“For we ourselves also were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving different lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”

And in Romans 1:29-31 Paul continues to describe the corruption of the world saying,

“Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without

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understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affections, implacable, unmerciful.”

How thankful Christians should be to live in a realm of love and peace in the body of Christ.

Colossians 3:16, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

Christians are to allow the word of Christ to dwell within them richly (abundantly). This suggests a voluntary receiving of the word into our hearts, which requires a constant intake of the word. Our inner man is renewed in knowledge (Colossians 3:10), and is to be renewed daily (2 Corinthians 4:16). In Colossians 1:9 Paul prayed that the Colossians be “filled with the knowledge of God’s will.” And in Colossians 1:10 Paul prayed that the Colossians “increase in the knowledge of God.” God’s word provides nourishment and guidance for Christian living.

The Colossian Christians were to teach (provide instruction) and admonish (warn) one another in psalms (sacred songs), and hymns (songs of praise), and spiritual songs (songs designed to teach and admonish the Christian spiritually). Spiritual songs also are designed to praise God (Hebrews 2:12). It is significant to note that psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are to be **sung** rather than to be **played** upon an instrument. Playing an instrument would not teach and admonish Christians in spiritual living. Playing instruments are for personal entertainment. In Ephesians 5:19 Paul wrote,

“Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”

Sacred songs of praise are to be **spoken**, not **played**, and the **melody** is to be made in the **instrument** of the **heart**. Each Christian is to sing praises to God, and is to do so using the instrument of the heart to accompany the singing and speaking.

Colossians 3:17, “And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”

Whatever is taught or practiced religiously is to be done in the name of the Lord. To speak or act in the name of the Lord is to do so by the authority of the Lord. In 1 Peter 4:11 we read,

“If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man

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minister, let him do it as of the ability which God gives; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ: to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”

In 1 Corinthians 1:10 Paul wrote,

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you.”

Christians can speak the same thing only when they speak from the same authority, which is Christ. And they should do so with thanksgiving that they have the opportunity to speak and act on behalf of Christ.

Colossians 1:18, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

In Ephesians 5:22-24 Paul wrote,

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. for the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.”

God designed roles for both husbands and wives. He also designed the role for Christ and the church. The church is to submit to and be subject to Christ. Does this mean that the church is not important to Christ? Some women feel that they are considered inferior to their husbands. Both husbands and wives have important roles to perform in order for the family to function as God designed it.

Colossians 3:19, “Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.”

In 1 Peter 3:7 we read,

“Likewise, you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving **honor** unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”

Husbands are to love their wives, “even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it” (Ephesians 5:25). And in Ephesians 5:28-29 Paul wrote,

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“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourishes and cherishes it, even as the Lord the church.”

Husbands are not to treat their wives with bitterness or cause their wives to feel worthless, but instead are to give their wives honor and treat them with loving respect.

Colossians 3:20, “Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.”

In Ephesians 6:1-3 Paul wrote,

“Children obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor your father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with you, and you may live long on the earth.”

God’s role for children is to be obedient and respectful to their parents. God decreed severe punishment for stubborn and rebellious sons. In Deuteronomy 21:18-21 God said that a stubborn and rebellious son, who would not obey his father and mother, was to be brought to the elders of the city and be stoned to death. This was God’s way for Israel to put away evil from among them.

Colossians 3:21, “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.”

In Ephesians 6:4 Paul wrote,

“And, you fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

Fathers have a serious role in training their children. In Deuteronomy 6:6-7 we read,

“And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart: and you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.”

In Proverbs 22:6 we read,

“Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

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In Proverbs 23:24-26 we read,

“The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begets a wise child shall have joy of him. Your father and your mother shall be glad, and she that bare you shall rejoice. My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways.”

Colossians 3:22, “Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service as men pleasers but in singleness of heart, fearing God:”

In Ephesians 6:5-8 Paul instructed Christian servants saying,

“Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye service, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man does, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.”

This same principle would be true for one who is employed to work for another. Christians are servants of Christ, and should serve their employer as if they were serving Christ. We are not to serve well only when our employer is watching; nor are we to serve only to please our employer. Our concern should be to please both Christ and our employer. When the focus of our heart is on pleasing Christ, we will more than likely please our employer as well.

Colossians 3:23, “And whatsoever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.”

The word “heartily” is from the Greek word *psuche*, which is defined as “heart or soul; it is doing the will of God from the heart.” Heartily is also defined as “with zeal, vigor, or enthusiasm.” The things we do may not be seen of men, but they certainly are seen by the Lord. Christians must keep in mind that whatever they do, they must strive to please God.

Colossians 3:24, “Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for you serve the Lord Christ.”

In Hebrews 6:10-12 we read,

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“For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which you have showed toward his name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: that you be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promise.”

If we keep focused that all service is to Christ, we are assured that we will receive the promised inheritance of eternal life (1 Peter 1:3-4). Though our employers may not be so mindful as to reward our diligent service, the Lord does not forget.

Colossians 3:25, “But he that does wrong shall receive for the wrong which he has done: and there is no respect of persons.”

We do wrong when we shirk in the work we are paid to do. To serve only when our employer is watching, and to shirk when he is not watching, is to do wrong. To shirk is in reality to steal from our employer. The seriousness of this conduct is that we are stealing from Christ as well as from our employer. The way we treat our employer is the way we treat Christ (Matthew 25:40.45). With God there is no respect of persons (Romans 2:11). In Romans 2:12-13 Paul wrote regarding God’s impartiality saying,

“For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.”

God will reward all who do right, and punish all who do wrong; there is no respect of persons with God.

STUDIES IN COLOSSIANS 3
Chapter Three

1. Define the following words from Vine's Expository Dictionary.

- 1). Mortify (nekroo) _____
- 2). Concupiscence (epithumia) _____
- 3). Barbarian (barbaros) _____
- 4). Admonish (noutheteo) _____
- 5). Heartily (psuche) _____

2. The following are either true or false from Colossians 3:1-25.

- 1). _____ Whatever we do in word or deed must be done by the guidance of the Spirit.
- 2). _____ Paul said there is no respect of persons with God.
- 3). _____ They had previously walked as children of obedience to God.
- 4). _____ They had been called to to walk in the love of God.
- 5). _____ Whatsoever they did was to be done by faith in Christ.
- 6). _____ Paul said, Let the love of Christ dwell in you richly.
- 7). _____ They were to set their affections on the things of this earth.
- 8). _____ Above all they were to put on faith as shield against the fiery darts,
- 9). _____ There was a reward of inheritance for their service to one another.
- 10). _____ The peace of God is the bond of perfectness.

3. If they were risen with Christ what were they to seek? _____

4. Where were they to set their affections? _____

5. What was hid with Christ? _____

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6. What is Christ to us? _____
7. What were they to do with their sinful members? _____
8. What do sinful practices bring upon us? _____
9. How had the Colossians lived in the past? _____
10. What were they to put off? _____

11. Because they had put off the old man, they were not to do what? _____
12. In what is the new man renewed? _____
13. What was not in Christ? _____
14. What were they to put on? _____
15. What two things were they to do to one another? _____
16. What is the bond of perfectness? _____
17. What is to rule in the Christian's heart? _____
18. What was to dwell in them richly? _____
19. How were they to express grace in their hearts? _____
20. All things are to be done in what? _____
21. What are wives to do? _____ Husbands? _____
Children? _____ Fathers? _____
22. How were servants to obey their masters? _____
23. How were all things to be done? _____ Why? _____
24. What about those who do wrong? _____
25. The Lord is not what? _____

26. **Memory Verse: Colossians 3:17.**

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Chapter Four

Colossians 4:1, "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that you also have a Master in heaven."

The word **master** is from the Greek word *kurios*, which is defined as "a lord, one who exercises power." In Ephesians 6:9 Paul wrote,

"And, you masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him."

Masters were to give their servants that which was just and equal. The word **just** is from the Greek word *dikatos*, which is defined as "righteous, right conduct, standards of what is right and fair." In James 5:4 we read,

"Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, cries; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth."

The Master in heaven sees when the servants are cheated and defrauded, and as Jesus said in Matthew 25:40,

"Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."

In Titus 2:9-10 Paul wrote,

"Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God."

Both masters and servants were to treat each other with the fairness they would want their Master in heaven to treat them.

Colossians 4:2, "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."

Prayer is an important part of the Christian's life. In Luke 18:1 we read,

"And he spoke a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

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In Philippians 4:6 Paul wrote,

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

The word **watch** is from the Greek word *gregoreo*, which is defined as “to keep awake, to be spiritually alert and vigilant.” Paul warned the Colossian Christians of the dangers of false teachers who would attempt to deceive them with “enticing words, philosophy vain deceit, after the commandments and doctrines of men.” In 1 Peter 5:8 Peter warned,

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour.”

In 2 Corinthians 2:11 Paul wrote,

“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.”

There is no time for Christians to sleep on the job. We must be diligent in our service to the Lord. We are engaged in a war with the most subtle enemy of all. He will do any and everything to cause us to lose this battle.

Colossians 4:3, “Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:”

Figuratively, prayer is the key that opens many doors. In Acts 14:27 Paul rehearsed to the church in Antioch how God “had opened the **door of faith** unto the Gentiles.” In 2 Corinthians 2:12 Paul said,

“Furthermore, when I cam to Troas to preach Christ’s gospel, and a **door was opened** to me of the Lord.”

Paul requests the Christians at Colossae to pray that God would **open a door** of utterance for Paul and his fellow workers to speak the mystery of Christ. In Ephesians 6:19 Paul requested prayers for himself

“that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.”

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Utterance is the ability to speak. Paul wanted an open **door of opportunity**, which would allow him and his fellow workers to speak the mystery of the gospel of Christ. Regarding the mystery, in Ephesians 3:3-6 Paul wrote,

“How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote before in few words; whereby, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ,) which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.”

In Galatians 1:11-12 Paul wrote,

“But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

Before Christ came, God’s plan for man’s redemption was not fully known. It was through the preaching of the gospel that God completely made known His will. The gospel is a message of hope and salvation to all who believe and obey it. In Romans 1:16 Paul said that the gospel is “the power of God unto salvation” to all who believe it. The gospel is a message for every creature of every nation (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15).

Colossians 4:4, “That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.”

Paul not only wanted an open door to preach the gospel, but he also wanted to make it clear and easily understood by all. Paul’s desire was to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15), with gentleness (2 Thessalonians 2:7), and persuasion (2 Corinthians 5:11). with In 1 Corinthians 2:4-5 Paul said,

“And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

Paul did not preach to receive personal praise from others. In 1 Corinthians 9:16-17

he said,

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“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me.”

Colossians 4:5, “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.”

In Ephesians 5:15-16 Paul wrote,

“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time. because the days are evil.”

The example life of a faithful Christian is a great influence toward those outside the body of Christ. Peter shows how faithful Christian wives may win their husbands by their example. In 1 Peter 3:1-4 we read,

“Likewise, you wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without a word be won by the conversation of their wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning, let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.”

Jesus not only gave us His word to follow, but He also left us an example to follow as well (1 Peter 2:21). If Christians live consistently with the world, how can they persuade those in the world to become Christians? Non-Christians have said to unfaithful Christians, “I am as good as you are, so why do I need to become a Christian?” How does the world see us? We must “walk in wisdom toward them that are without,” and be an example for good.

We redeem the time by seizing every opportunity to show the world the beauty and rewards of righteous living. The world is watching us. We must be careful to live the right example so others can see the beauty of the Christian life in us.

Colossians 4:6, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man.”

There is power in words. Our speech can tear down, or it can build up. With words

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we can criticize and condemn, or we can compliment and strengthen others. Our use of words is a serious matter. In Matthew 12:34-37 Jesus said,

“...for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned.”

Our speech should be always with grace. But what does this mean? In Ephesians 4:29 we read,

“Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

To speak with grace is to speak words that comfort, encourage, compliment, strengthen, and build up the hearers. Our speech is to be “seasoned with salt.” As salt seasons food to make it more flavorful, the tone and way that we express our words can make them more pleasant to receive. We should answer every man with words that express love, kindness, and gentleness. We should use thought and wisdom before speaking. In James 3:17-18 we read,

“But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”

Colossians 4:7, “All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved and faithful minister and fellow servant of the Lord.”:

Paul had sent Tychicus to Colossae and also to Ephesus (Ephesians 6:21-22) along with other faithful brethren to make known Paul’s affairs. Tychicus was a very cherished companion to Paul, as well as a faithful minister and servant of the Lord. A faithful minister is one who is loyal and trustworthy in executing the work of a minister. The word **servant** is from the Greek word *diakonos*, which is defined as “a servant, attendant, minister, and deacon: of attending, in a more general way, to anything that may serve another’s interests.” Tychicus was with Paul at Rome where Paul was bound with a chain

(Acts 28:20). He attended faithfully to Paul's needs, and in preaching the gospel also.

Colossians 4:8, "Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;"

Tychicus was sent to the Christians in Colossae to make known Paul's affairs, to evaluate the affairs of the church in Colossae, and to comfort their hearts. They were being troubled by false teachers, certain ordinances, commandments, and doctrines of men (Colossians 2:20-23). Tychicus was to evaluate the extent of how much they had been misled by the false teachers, and to comfort their hearts by the knowledge of the truth.

Colossians 4:9, "With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here."

In Philemon 10 Paul spoke of Onesimus as "my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds." Onesimus had been an unprofitable servant of Philemon in Colossae (Philemon 11). He left home without the consent of Philemon, and had gone to Rome where he met Paul. He was obviously taught and converted to Christ by Paul's teaching, and after his conversion he ministered to Paul (Philemon 13).

Paul sent Tychicus and Onesimus to Colossae to report on how things were with Paul, and he was sending Onesimus back to Philemon. In Philemon 12-18 Paul wrote,

"Whom I have sent again: you therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels; whom I would have retained with me, that in your stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel. For perhaps he therefore departed for a season, that you should receive him for ever; not now as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved, especially to me, but how much more unto you, both in the flesh, and in the Lord? If you count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he has wronged you, or owes you anything, put that on my account."

Colossians 4:10, "Aristarchus my fellow prisoner salutes you, and Mark, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom you received commandments; if he come unto you, receive him:)"

Aristarchus was a Macedonian of Thessalonica. He was with Paul at Ephesus when Demetrius, the silversmith who made silver shrines for the goddess Diana, caused an

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uproar over Paul's preaching that there were no gods made with men's hands. Following the uproar in Ephesus, Paul returned to Macedonia, and was accompanied by Aristarchus and other fellow companions to Troas (Acts 20:4-6). When Paul was sent to Rome, Aristarchus was with Paul on the ship Adramyttium (Acts 27:1-2). In Paul's letter to Philemon, Aristarchus is described as a "fellow prisoner" (Philemon 24). Obviously Aristarchus was well known to the Christians in Colossae.

John, whose surname was Mark was the son of a woman by the name of Mary (Acts 12:12) who was living in Jerusalem. It seems that Mary was a sister to Barnabas, which would make Mark his nephew. Some translations refer to Mark as a cousin to Barnabas. It is of no significance whether he was a nephew or cousin. John Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 12:25), but when they arrived in Perga in Pamphylia, for some unstated reason Mark left the work and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13). This caused a serious contention between Paul and Barnabas, as they planned to visit the cities where they had preached. Barnabas was determined to take John Mark with them, but Paul thought it not good to take him because Mark had left the work in Perga. As a result of this contention, Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus, and Paul took Silas and went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches (Acts 15:39-41). Mark obviously proved himself to be a faithful minister of Christ. In 2 Timothy 4:11 Paul wrote,

"Take Mark, and bring him with you: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."

Of Mark they had received commandments from God. From the false teachers they had received commandments and doctrines of men (Colossians 2:22). If Mark came to them, they were to receive him as a true and faithful minister of Christ.

Colossians 4:11, "And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort to me."

We know very little about some of Paul's companions, but sometimes a brief statement tells a lot about them. In Acts 18:7 while at Corinth, Paul entered a certain man's house, "named Justus, who worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue." This may have been the same Justus mentioned in the Colossian letter. Justus, along with Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, and Mark were fellow workers with Paul in the work of kingdom of God. Paul's primary work was in preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and to establish Christians firmly in the faith of Jesus Christ. Though Paul had the freedom to preach the gospel to all who came to him (Acts 28:30-31), he was bound with a

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chain (Acts 28:20), which limited his going throughout the city preaching the kingdom of God. But he was comforted by his fellow workers who could take the gospel to places where Paul was not permitted to go. His fellow workers were an encouragement to Paul.

Colossians 4:12, "Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, salutes you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."

In Colossians 1:5-7 Paul wrote,

"Whereof you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel.... Since the day you heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth: as you also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant, who is one of you a faithful minister of Christ."

It is possible that Epaphras had worked in founding the church in Colossae, but if not, he was a faithful minister who had worked to help the church grow to spiritually. Epaphras was not only a servant and minister, but also was a man of prayer. He prayed regularly, diligently, and earnestly for the Colossian Christians to be faithful and mature in all the will of God.

Colossians 4:13, "For I bear him record, that he has a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolos."

Paul bore personal testimony to the great zeal of Epaphras for the Christians in Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolos. This testimony involved his personal knowledge to the earnest prayers and concerns that were always expressed on behalf of these Christians. When Paul wrote the Colossian letter (A. D. 60), the churches in Laodicea and Hierapolos were seemingly faithful to Christ. However, when John wrote the book of Revelation (A. D. 95-96), the church at Laodicea had drifted into a state of self-sufficiency. In Revelation 3:14 John was instructed to write them regarding their spiritual condition. In Revelation 3:16-17 Jesus said,

"So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth. Because you say, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and know not that you are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

According to Revelation 3:20 they had shut Christ out of their lives. We read,

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“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with men.”

Nothing is known about the church in Hierapolis except that they were Christians for whom Epaphras prayed earnestly, and for whom he was zealously concerned regarding their spiritual well being.

Colossians 4:14, Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

Obviously Luke and Demas were in Rome at the time Paul wrote the Colossian letter, and were sending greetings to the Christians in Colossae. Paul had taught, “Salute every saint in Christ Jesus: (Philippians 4:21). Their greeting was a sign of recognizing others and extending fellowship to other Christians.

Luke evidently joined Paul’s company at Troas (Acts 16:8-11) and sailed with them to Philippi. Luke seems to have remained in Philippi, and later joined Paul’s company when Paul returned to Philippi (Acts 20:6). Luke accompanied Paul to Jerusalem (Acts 20:12-16; 21:1-17) and also into Italy (Acts 27:1-28:16) Luke is accepted as the writer of the “Gospel According to Luke” and “The Acts of the Apostles.”

The Scriptures list three references to Demas: (1) Colossians 4:14.(2) Philemon 24, and (3) 2 Timothy 4:10. In Philemon 24 Demas is spoken of as “my fellow laborer.” Nothing is said about him in Colossians 4:14, but in 2 Timothy 4:10 Paul wrote,

“For Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica.”

Colossians 4:15, “Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.”

Nymphas had apparently opened his house as a meeting place for the Christians in Laodicea. There is no record of church buildings as we know them today. The first-century Christians often met in homes owned by other Christians (Romans 16:3-5; Philemon 1-2). As the churches grew numerically, larger meeting places would be needed.

Colossians 4:16, “And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.”

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The Colossian letter was to be read among the churches of Colossae and Laodicea. Since there was only one copy of the writing, the oral reading of the letters would have been important. Paul mentions an epistle from Laodicea; however, we have no record of this letter. We do not know who wrote it or what happened to it. It is doubtful that the letter from Laodicea was written by the inspiration of God. In Matthew 24:35 Jesus said, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." God has preserved His word for all time. We are not missing out on some important truths from God. In 2 Peter 1:3 we read

"According as his divine power has given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that has called us to glory and virtue."

Is it logical to believe that God, Who is in control of all things, would lose part of His word, which is essential to our salvation or spiritual growth? Such a belief would be an insult to the omniscience of God.

Colossians 4:17, "And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you fulfill it."

In Philemon 2 Archippus is referred to as "our fellow soldier." He was a minister to the church in Colossae. He had received the appointment as a minister in the Lord. Paul does not tell us the details of the ministry of Archippus, but encouraged him to fulfill it. In Romans 12:6-8 Paul wrote the Christians in Rome

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is give to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teaches, on teaching; or he that exhorts, on exhortation; he that gives, let him do it with simplicity; he that rules, with diligence; he that shows mercy, with cheerfulness."

Whatever gift one may have received, he is to fulfill it according to the grace given him. Every member in the body of Christ has a gift to use. In 1 Peter 4:11 we read,

"If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God gives; that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ: to whom be praise for ever and ever."

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Colossians 4:18, "The salutation by the hand of me Paul, Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.

In his conclusion to the Colossian letter, Paul sends his personal salutation written by his own hand. This would indicate his personal love and concern for them. Paul wanted them to remember his bonds in their prayers. In Colossians 4:2-3 Paul wrote,

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds."

It is encouraging to know that fellow Christians are praying for us when we are struggling with problems in life

Paul began and ended this letter with "Grace be with you." Through God's grace we find the strength needed to press on in the face of opposition.

STUDIES IN COLOSSIANS 4

Chapter Four

1. Define the following words from Vine's Expository Dictionary.

- 1). Watch (gregoreo) _____
- 2). Redeem (exagorazo) _____
- 3). Seasoned (artios) _____
- 4). Estate (hupos – see notes) _____
- 5). Fervent (zeo – see notes) _____

2. The following are either true or false from Colossians 4:1-18.

- 1). _____ They were to stand perfect in all the will of God.
 - 2). _____ Paul asked for their prayers to deliver him from persecution.
 - 3). _____ Justice was a loyal Gentile.
 - 4). _____ The church met in the house of Nymphas.
 - 5). _____ Paul said that Epaphras was a beloved brother in Christ.
 - 6). _____ Tychicus had a great zeal for the church in Laodicea.
 - 7). _____ Paul mentions two men who were "one of you."
 - 8). _____ Their speech was to be seasoned with love.
 - 9). _____ Mark was a nephew of Barnabas.
 - 10). _____ Paul mentions one physician in this letter.
2. What were masters to give their servants? _____
Why? _____
3. How were they to be watchful? _____
4. For what did Paul request prayers? _____

5. What did Paul want to do with the Mystery? _____
6. How were they to walk? _____ And do what? _____
7. How were they to speak? _____
8. Ephesians 4:29, How were they to speak? _____
9. How did Paul describe Tychicus? _____

10. Why did Paul send Tychicus to them? _____
11. How did Paul describe Onesimus? _____
12. What would Onesimus do? _____
13. Who was Aristarchus to Paul? _____
14. Who was Mark? _____
15. Who was Justus? _____
16. What had Justus been to Paul? _____
17. Who was Epaphras? _____ What did he do? _____

18. Of what did Paul bear record regarding Epaphras? _____

19. Who was Luke? _____
20. What is said of Nymphas? _____
21. With whom were the Colossians to exchange letters? _____
22. Of what were they to warn Archippus? _____
23. What did Paul want them to remember? _____
24. **Memory Verse: Colossians 4:6.**

Final test over Colossians

- 1). _____ Paul wanted to present them perfect in Christ.
- 2). _____ They had learned of the grace of God from Epaphras.
- 3). _____ The church met in the house of Aquila and Priscilla.
- 4). _____ Above all things they were to put on the shield of faith.
- 5). _____ Whatever they did in word or deed was to be done in love.
- 6). _____ Tychicus had a great zeal for the Colossians.
- 7). _____ When Christ appears we shall appear with him in glory.
- 8). _____ They were to judge no man in respect of a holyday.
- 9). _____ The ordinances of the doctrines of men will perish.
- 10). _____ Paul rejoiced in suffering for the Colossians.
- 11). _____ Paul had great conflict for the Colossians and Laodiceans.
- 12). _____ Paul said they were dead.
- 13). _____ Paul had heard of their faith and love for Christ.
- 14). _____ We are to walk worthy of the Lord.
- 15). _____ As they had received Christ, they were to walk in Him.
- 16). _____ They were to seek the things that are above.
- 17). _____ Paul referred to them as the elect of God.
- 18). _____ Epaphras was a beloved brother, and faithful minister in Christ.
- 19). _____ Paul warned them about lying one to another.
- 20). _____ Paul requested prayers that he might be delivered from the Jews.