

2026 Q1 L10 Discussion Leader Notes – Colossians 2

Listen to the [2026 Q1 L10 Discussion Leader Episode](#) and print the [Participant Handout](#).

BIG IDEA: Everything we need for salvation, wisdom, and spiritual growth is found exclusively in Jesus Christ. When we realize we are entirely complete in Him, we stop relying on human philosophies, strict rules, and spiritual substitutes.

Day 1 Afternoon: Introduction

-  [Preview Episode — Don't Settle for Substitutes](#)
-  [Reel #1 — The Ultimate Treasure \(Col 2:3\)](#)

Day Theme - We do not need any extra human rules or secret knowledge to be saved; we are complete in Christ.

Poll 1: When you picture someone becoming a stronger Christian, what usually causes the growth?

- A) Learning more doctrines
- B) Trying harder to obey
- C) Spiritual experiences
- D) Walking daily with Jesus
- E) Seeking to do good for everyone

Follow-up question - Which of these do you personally rely on the most?

Opening Engagement: Have you ever bought a cheap "knockoff" that promised to be just as good as the real thing, only to have it break the next day? How do people sometimes try to sell "spiritual knockoffs" in the church?

Read the Text (*Ask someone to read*)

"Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power." — **Colossians 2:8–10 (NKJV)**

John 1:16 "And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace."

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- **Contrasts:** "Tradition of men" / "principles of the world" vs. "according to Christ."
- **Key terms:** "Beware," "cheat," "philosophy," "fullness," "complete."
- **Movement of thought:** A warning of danger, followed immediately by the safety found in Christ's nature.

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Guided Discussion

- What does the word "cheat" (or "spoil") suggest about what false teachings actually do to a believer?
- Why are human philosophy and tradition often so appealing to religious people?
 - *(Ask follow-up: What makes them feel "safe"?)*
- What does it mean practically to be "complete" in Him? *(Invite multiple responses)*
- If we are fully complete in Jesus, why do we still struggle with feelings of spiritual inadequacy?

Discovery Insight In the early church, false teachers were trying to sell spiritual substitutes—a dangerous mix of human philosophy, legalism, and mysticism. Paul writes to warn the believers that adding anything to Jesus actually subtracts from Him. If all the fullness of God dwells in Christ, no external traditions are necessary.

Christ Connection Jesus is the fullness of God in human form. Because He lacks nothing, when we are united with Him, we lack nothing. He is all we need to stand approved before the Father.

Life Response Identify one area where you are trying to "earn" your completeness through a personal rule or tradition, and surrender it to Christ's finished work today.

Encouragement Bridge Don't settle for substitutes. People spend their lives searching for the "secret" to success or spiritual enlightenment, but the search is over: all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Jesus.

Day 2: The Wisdom and Knowledge of God

Listen to:  [Supplemental Episode — The Colossian Heresy](#)

Poll #2 - When life gets confusing, where do you instinctively look first?

- A) Advice from people
- B) Research / books / internet
- C) My own reasoning
- D) Prayer and Scripture
- E) Doing anything to get my mind off it

Follow-up: Why is that your first instinct?

Point to draw out: We believe Jesus is wisdom, but we rarely treat Him as our primary source.

Day Theme True wisdom isn't a secret concept or a hidden philosophy—it's a Person.

Opening Engagement People spend millions of dollars on books, seminars, and gurus searching for the "secret" to life. Why do we naturally assume that true wisdom must be hidden, complex, and expensive?

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Read the Text (*Ask someone to read*)

" 2 For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and *for* as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, ² that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.." — **Colossians 2:1–3 (NKJV)**

Matthew 11:25–27 Jesus reveals truth to the humble, not the intellectual elite.

“²⁵ At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. ²⁶ Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. ²⁷ All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and *the one* to whom the Son wills to reveal *Him*. ”

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- **Key terms:** "Conflict," "knit together," "riches," "mystery," "treasures."
- **Movement of thought:** Paul’s internal struggle leads to a desire for their encouragement, which results in unity, ending in the ultimate treasure of Christ.

Guided Discussion

- Why does Paul connect being "knit together in love" with having a "full assurance of understanding"? (*Allow discussion*)
- What do you think is the "mystery of God" that Paul is referring to here?
 - *Ask follow-up: How is a biblical mystery different from a mystery novel?*
- If all the treasures of wisdom are in Christ, how does this change the way we view secular or worldly knowledge? (*Invite multiple responses*)
- Where are you currently looking for answers to your deepest life problems?

Discovery Insight Paul is writing to a church he has never visited, expressing deep concern for them. The false teachers were promoting a "secret knowledge" available only to an elite few.

Paul counters this by hijacking their vocabulary: the true **mystery** is now an open secret, and *all* the treasures of wisdom are freely available to everyone in Jesus Christ.

Christ Connection Jesus is the ultimate treasure. He is the answer to the deepest questions of human existence. To know Him is to possess the highest form of education and wisdom possible.

Life Response Instead of turning to an article or a self-help book for advice this week, spend 15 minutes asking Jesus for wisdom regarding a specific problem you face.

Encouragement Bridge Are you looking for answers in the wrong places? The world offers endless philosophies, but true **wisdom isn't a secret concept—it's a Person**. Find your answers in Jesus today!

Day 3: Rooted and Growing in Christ

- 📺 [Reel #2 — Rooted Like a Tree](#)

Day Theme - Accepting Jesus isn't just a one-time event; it's a daily journey of walking and growing in Him.

Opening Engagement - What happens to a massive, beautiful oak tree if its roots only go one inch deep into the soil? How does this relate to the Christian life?

Read the Text (*Ask someone to read*)

"As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving." — **Colossians 2:6–7 (NKJV)**

Psalms 1:2–3 The righteous are like a tree planted by water.

"...And in His law he meditates day and night. ³ He shall be like a tree, planted by the rivers of water."

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- **Action words:** "Received," "walk," "rooted," "built up," "established," "abounding."
- **Metaphors:** "Rooted" (agriculture) and "built up" (architecture).
- **Condition:** "As you therefore have received... so walk."

Guided Discussion

- What is the difference between "receiving" Christ and "walking" in Him? (*Allow discussion*)
- Why do you think Paul mixes two different metaphors—a tree (rooted) and a building (built up)?
 - *Ask follow-up: What does each add to the picture?*
- How does "thanksgiving" act as proof that someone is truly rooted in faith?
- What current "storms" in your life are testing the depth of your spiritual roots right now?

Discovery Insight The Colossian believers had a great start; they had "received" the truth. But salvation is not just a past-tense transaction; it requires ongoing, active participation. Just as a tree must send roots deep to survive a storm, and a building needs a solid foundation to stand, faith must be deeply anchored in Christ's teachings to resist the pull of false doctrines.

Christ Connection Christ is both the soil in which we grow and the foundation upon which we are built. Our spiritual life does not exist apart from a constant, living connection with Him.

Life Response Identify one area of your life where you have stopped "walking" and started sitting still. Take one intentional step today to resume your walk with Him.

Encouragement Bridge Accepting Jesus isn't just a one-time event; it's a daily journey. Send your roots down deep into His love today so you can stand strong against the storms of life.

Day 4: The Cancelled Debt

Listen to  [Reel #3 — Your Debt is Cancelled](#)
 [Bonus Episode — Nailing the Debt to the Cross](#)

Day Theme Jesus took the massive record of your sins, wiped it out, and nailed it to His cross.

Opening Engagement Imagine owing a debt of sixty million dollars that you could never possibly repay in a lifetime. Suddenly, someone walks in, takes your IOU, stamps it "Paid in Full," and nails it to a post for everyone to see. How would you react?

Read the Text (*Ask someone to read*)

"And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." — **Colossians 2:13–14 (NKJV)**

Isaiah 43:25 "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions..."

Romans 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation..."

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- **Contrasts:** "Dead in trespasses" vs. "made alive."
- **Action phrases:** "Forgiven you all," "wiped out," "taken it out of the way," "nailed it."
- **Key terms:** "Handwriting of requirements," "cross."

Poll 3 - Which statement sounds closest to how you *feel* spiritually most days?

- A) God forgives me, but I still owe Him better behavior
- B) God forgives me when I improve
- C) God forgives me, but I must maintain it
- D) My debt is fully paid in Christ
- E) Nothing in my hand I bring, only to the cross I cling

Guided Discussion

- What does the phrase "handwriting of requirements" sound like in everyday language?
- How does the physical act of "nailing it to the cross" illustrate what Jesus did with our guilt?
- If this record of our sins has been entirely wiped out, why do we so often continue to carry guilt and shame? (*Invite multiple responses*)
- How does this passage completely destroy the idea that we can earn our salvation?

Discovery Insight The Greek word for "handwriting" (*cheirographon*) was an ancient business term for a certificate of debt or an IOU. We were spiritually dead, trapped by an impossible debt of sin. The law stood as a witness against us. But Jesus took that record of debt, wiped it clean, and nailed it to the cross, showing the universe that the penalty was fully paid.

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Christ Connection Christ bore the full penalty of our brokenness. By taking our "IOU" to the cross, He disarmed the evil powers that used our guilt to condemn us, turning the cross into a symbol of cosmic victory.

Life Response Write down one past failure or sin that the enemy constantly brings up to make you feel guilty. Physically cross it out or tear the paper, thanking Jesus that it is nailed to the cross.

Encouragement Bridge We were spiritually dead, trapped by an impossible debt of sin. But Jesus took that record of debt that stood against us and nailed it to His cross. You are forgiven and free!

Day 5: Shadows vs. Reality

Listen to  [Reel #4 — Don't Chase Shadows](#)

Day Theme - We don't need to chase the shadows when the Reality—Jesus Christ—has already come.

Opening Engagement If you were waiting at the airport for a loved one you hadn't seen in years, would you hug their shadow cast on the ground as they approached, or would you hug the actual person?

Read the Text (*Ask someone to read*)

"So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ." — **Colossians 2:16–17 (NKJV)**

Hebrews 10:1 "The law, having a shadow of the good things to come..."

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- **Key terms:** "Judge," "festival," "shadow," "substance" (or "body").
- **Contrast:** "Shadow of things to come" vs. "the substance is of Christ."
- **List of items:** Food, drink, festival, new moon, sabbaths.

Guided Discussion

- What is the primary function of a shadow? (*Allow discussion*)
- Why were they tempted to hold onto the "shadows" instead of fully embracing the "substance"?
- What are some modern "shadows" or religious rituals that we might be tempted to put ahead of a real relationship with Jesus?
- How do you respond when other Christians judge you because of how you serve God?

Discovery Insight The false teachers were demanding that Gentile Christians observe Israel's ceremonial laws, festivals, and ritual sacrifices. Paul explains that these ancient ceremonies were simply a preview—a shadow cast backward into the Old Testament by the approaching cross of

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Christ. Now that Jesus (the Reality) has arrived, obsessing over the shadows is entirely missing the point.

Christ Connection Jesus is the fulfillment of all the Old Testament sacrificial and ceremonial systems. Every lamb slain, every festival kept, pointed directly to His saving work. He is the Reality we cling to.

Life Response Identify any religious habit you perform purely out of rote tradition. Is this something you do because you grew up that way, or to make God love you more? Ask God to help you see the "Reality" of Jesus in your worship this week.

Encouragement Bridge In the Old Testament, the festival sabbaths and sacrifices were like a shadow pointing forward to the coming of Jesus. Now that the Reality has come, we don't need to chase the shadows!

Day 6: Commandments of Men

Listen to:  [Reel #5 — Rules Can't Save You](#)

 [Supplemental Episode — The Colossian Heresy](#)

Poll 4 — Which tends to change people more long-term?

- A) Clear rules
- B) Accountability pressure
- C) Fear of consequences
- D) Love and relationship
- E) Cooking and eating good food together

Day Theme - Strict human rules might look impressive on the outside, but they have no real power to change a sinful heart.

Opening Engagement - Have you ever tried to break a bad habit purely by making a list of incredibly strict rules for yourself, only to fail miserably a few days later? Why doesn't sheer willpower work for heart change?

Read the Text (*Ask someone to read*)

"Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations— 'Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,' which all concern things which perish with the using—according to the commandments and doctrines of men? These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh." — **Colossians 2:20–23 (NKJV)**

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Ezekiel 36:26–27 Heart change comes from God, not regulation.

“²⁶I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*.”

What Do You Notice? (Observation Only)

- **Direct quotes:** "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle."
- **Source of rules:** "Commandments and doctrines of men."
- **Contrast:** They have "an appearance of wisdom" but are "of no value" against the flesh.

Guided Discussion

- Why is asceticism (strict self-denial and severe bodily rules) so appealing to religious people? (*Allow discussion*)
- What does Paul mean when he says these rules have "an appearance of wisdom"? (*Ask follow-up: How do people who follow strict human traditions usually appear to others?*)
- Why do human rules completely fail to stop "the indulgence of the flesh"? (*Invite multiple responses*)
- How can we tell if our own religious practices are based on Christ or just "doctrines of men"?

Discovery Insight - The false teachers in Colossae believed that spirituality was achieved by harsh treatment of the physical body and strict dietary regulations. Paul exposes this as "self-imposed religion." Making up strict rules may look super-spiritual and humble to onlookers, but it cannot change human nature or conquer sin.

Christ Connection True holiness does not come from a checklist of human regulations; it comes from dying with Christ and having His life replace ours. Only Jesus has the power to conquer the flesh.

Life Response - Audit your spiritual life today. Are you depending on a strict checklist of behaviors to feel right with God, or are you depending on His grace? Let go of one "self-imposed" burden today.

Encouragement Bridge - Trying to be holy by making up a bunch of strict rules might look impressive, but it has no power to change the heart. True transformation comes from a relationship with Jesus!

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Day 6 Summary

Listen to the [2026 Q1 L10 Discussion Leader episode](#).

5 Weekly Takeaways

- **Complete in Him:** We do not need secret knowledge or extra traditions; we lack nothing when we have Jesus.
- **The Ultimate Treasure:** All the treasures of true wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ.
- **Deep Roots:** A strong Christian life requires actively walking in Jesus and sinking our roots deeply into His truth.
- **Debt Cancelled:** Jesus took the unpayable record of our sins and nailed it to the cross, securing our total forgiveness.
- **Substance Over Shadows:** Human rules and ceremonial shadows cannot save or transform us; only the reality of Christ can change the heart.

Closing Poll - Where do you think you can make the most progress this week in trusting God in your salvation, knowing you are already complete in Christ?

- A) Past failures
- B) Current habits
- C) Spiritual inconsistency
- D) Lack of knowledge
- E) Happiness and Contentment
- F) Facing life with faith

Final Reflection Question *(Pause and allow the class to reflect silently or share)* Because you believed that you are entirely "complete in Christ," what is anxiety, fear, or religious burden you will you drop from your shoulders today?

Closing Appeal Christ is not a stepping stone to higher spiritual knowledge; He is the destination. He is not a partial Savior who needs our human traditions to finish the job; He is the complete Savior who nailed our debts to the cross. Let's refuse to settle for the cheap substitutes of the world, choosing instead to walk in the freedom, the fullness, and the perfect peace of being complete in Christ.

Colossians 3:3 "Your life is hidden with Christ in God."

Philippians 1:6 He finishes the work.

"⁶being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ;"