

## **Rooted in Christ**

### **A Study of Colossians**

#### **Week 1, Day 1:**

**Pray:** Everyday, begin your study in prayer. Don't rush, but linger over your conversation with God, savoring it like the blood-bought gift that it is. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring the Words of Scripture to your mind as you pray. Today, let's pray together. Follow the directions below, pausing to pray after each step, before moving on to the next step:

1. First, praise God for Who He is. Think of at least one specific attribute of God from the Scriptures and praise Him for it. For example, He is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love (Psalm 103:8)...
2. Next, think of the current needs in your life. In your prayer tell God those needs and then ask (supplicate) Him to fill those needs according to His will. Remember that it is God Who supplies every need of yours according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19)...
3. Now, thank God (Philippians 4:6). Think of a specific blessing He has put in your life, think of a specific promise He has given in His Word and thank Him for them. Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise! Give thanks to Him; bless His name! (Psalm 100:4)...
4. Ask God to show you ways in which you are not living according to His Word. Acknowledge those things as sin and repent (turn from them), remembering that when we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9-10)...
5. Out of the outpouring of God's forgiveness of you, choose to forgive those who have sinned against you. Remember that when Jesus was reviled He did not revile in return, when He suffered He did not threaten, but kept entrusting Himself to God Who judges justly (1 Peter 2:23). Trust God Who judges justly.
6. What temptations are you currently facing? Be sober minded and watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8). Ask the Lord to equip you with His Word today that you will be able to resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by believers throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you (1 Peter 5:9-10).

7. To Him be the dominion forever and ever (1 Peter 5:11). In Jesus name, Amen

**Read:** Is there someone you look up to in the Lord? Maybe it's the person God used to share the Gospel with you. Maybe it's a pastor or parent. Maybe it's someone you have never even met before, but whose ministry has blessed you. Now imagine receiving a letter from that person. How would you feel? How would you approach reading that letter?

Today read the book of Colossians as you would read a letter. Read it from beginning to end. Don't stop to dissect, take notes, or look up words. Just read the letter-- it was written to you.

You will find the English Standard Version of Colossians in the appendix. Chapter and verse divisions were not in the original text, they were added later. For convenience's sake I have left the chapter and verse markers; however, to help us grasp the original flow of the letter, I have minimized the markers' prominence.

**Apply:** The Bible calls us to be doers of the Word, and not hearers only (James 1:22). Hiding God's Word in your heart is a critical step in being a doer of the Word. Psalm 119:11 says, "I have stored up Your Word in my heart, that I might not sin against You." How can you meditate on, how can you obey, how can you live by what you do not know? So, let's memorize God's Word together.

This week's memory verse is **Colossians 1:9-10** "And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to Him; bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."

Write the passage on a notecard and put it in your pocket, or write it in the space below and snap a picture of it with your phone. Read it three times every time you eat. (Over the next two weeks we will memorize Colossians 1:9-12, so you may want to read all four verses everyday).





**Apply:** Why are you doing this study? As I said, sometimes knowing why someone does something is as important as knowing what they have done. So why are you studying the book of Colossians? Write out your reasons below.

2 Timothy 2:15 says, “Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the Word of truth.” And 3:16-17 goes on to say, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” Do the reasons you wrote above line up with God’s Word? If not, repent, ask God to change your heart and then, Keep Studying!!

### **Week 1, Day 3:**

**Pray:** O God, You are my God; earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh faints for You, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. Because Your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise You (Psalm 63:1, 3).

**Read:** Who wrote the book of Colossians? Colossians 1:1 says, “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother.” However, 1:23 and 4:18 make it clear that Paul was the primary author (though probably not the scribe) of Colossians.

Do you ever struggle to retain what you read? Have you ever gotten to the end of a page and thought, “What did I just read?” When asked how to pass a class, the first thing most of my college professors said was, “Read the text, highlight as you go, and take notes.” Looking for something specific as you read, gives your reading purpose, and helps to tame any mind wandering.

Your only task today is to read Colossians and highlight the verses which teach you something specific about Paul (I use a blue highlighter). Do not highlight every time you see his name mentioned. Just because a verse mentions Paul, doesn’t mean you learn something specific about him from that verse. Use discernment as you read and only highlight verses that teach you something about the author. You may have to read the book slowly to do this, but slowing down as you read and using discernment to highlight only the references to Paul which teach you something specific about him will yield bountiful results. Just think, a year from now, you will

still be able to open the book of Colossians and teach someone else about the life of Paul, just by following the blue highlighter road. (And just imagine if you do the same in the book of Acts and in Paul's other letters. Exciting right?)

If you're ever unsure if a verse actually teaches you something about Paul, then ask yourself if it answers a *Who, What, When, Where, Why, or How* question. Who was Paul? Where was he? What did he do? How did He feel? And so on.

**Apply:** Yesterday we addressed *why* you are studying. Today, think about *how* you are studying. How do you approach Bible study? How do you plan for it? What is your attitude towards it? Take some time to ask God if you have any attitudes that need to change. Studying the Bible requires a lot of mental effort—it's hard work. But let me encourage you to press on. You do not want to only drink spiritual milk; you want to take solid food (1 Corinthians 3:2). Everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the Word of Righteousness, but solid food is for the mature (Hebrews 5:13-14). Solid food takes so much more effort to break down and digest, but oh how nourishing! Press on!

### **Week 1, Day 4:**

**Pray:** Lord God, You are God, the faithful God Who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those Who love You and keep Your commandments, to a thousand generations. (Deuteronomy 7:9)

**Read:** Yesterday you highlighted every verse which taught you something specific about the author. Now, it's time to take notes. In a notebook write "The Life of Paul" at the top of a clean page, and write everything you have learned about Paul from the book of Colossians. (This will be your Cross-Referencing Journal. If you already have a Cross-Referencing Journal, use it.) Always take notes using the words of Scripture, and don't forget to include the verse's reference so you can easily locate it later. If you still can't decide if a verse teaches you something specific about Paul or not, then just write it down. God's Word is living and active (Hebrews 4:12) and it does not return void but accomplishes what God purposes and succeeds in the thing for which God sent it (Isaiah 55:11). Writing the Bible is a powerful tool to help you know *His* Word, to hide *His* Word in your heart.

**Apply:** Philippians 3:17 tells us to join in imitating Paul and keep our eyes on those who walk according to the example Paul set. Read over what you have learned about Paul this week. What are some things that you should be imitating in Paul's walk? Which aspects of Paul's walk do you need to imitate today? Write it below.

**Week 1, Day 5:**

**Pray:** Dear Lord, “Give me understanding, that I may keep Your law and observe it with my whole heart. Lead me in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it. Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in Your ways.” (Psalm 119:34-37)

**Read:** Answer the questions below. Don’t elaborate, just answer using the words of Scripture.

1. How does Paul describe himself in 1:1?
2. Where is Paul when he writes this letter? (4:10,18)
3. Has Paul ever met the Colossian church in person? (1:4, 8, 9; 2:1)
4. How does he regard the Colossian church? (1:9, 24, 29; 2:1,5)
5. What is Paul a minister of? How does he describe his own ministry? (1:23,25,28)

6. What does Paul do while suffering? (1:24)

7. With Whose energy does Paul toil, is it through his own strength that he ministers? (1:29)

Note: If Colossians 1:24 is causing you confusion, don't worry. We will take a closer look at this passage next week, but for now, put a question mark beside it and every time you come to it stop and pray asking that the Holy Spirit will give you understanding (John 14:26, 16:13). 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 says, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit Who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual."

If Paul didn't first share the Gospel with the Colossians, then who did? Read Colossians 1:7-8 and 4:12 and then answer the questions below.

1. Who first shared the Gospel with the Colossians?

2. How does Paul describe Epaphras? (1:7, 4:12)

3. How does Epaphras continue to labor for the Colossians? (4:12)



Last thing for today. Did you notice Paul's and Epaphras' prayers for the Colossians in 1:9-12 and 4:12; as well as Paul's request for prayer for himself in 4:3-4? Colossians 4:2 says, "Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving."

1. Underline the prayers in 1:9-12, 4:3-4, and 4:12 with a pencil and in the margins write "Prayer for Believers" so you can easily locate them later when praying through the Scriptures.

**Apply:** Paul didn't travel to Colossae himself, but Epaphras brought the good news to them (Colossians 1:7-8, 2:1). We don't know for sure where Epaphras heard the Gospel for the first time. But in Acts 19 we learn that Paul carried the Gospel to Ephesus and, after first teaching in the synagogue for three months, he then reasoned daily in the hall of Tyrannus (Acts 19:1-9). "This continued for two years, so that all the residents of Asia hear the word of the Lord, both Jew and Greeks." In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." Look again at Epaphras' ministry and continued labor for the Colossians. How does his example apply to your life? Journal what God is teaching you below.

In the book of Ephesians, Paul tells us to "keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18b). Let's follow Paul and Epaphras example and pray for fellow believers. Think of a specific believer and pray for Colossians 1:9-12 for them.

All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted