

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

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INSTRUCTIONS Please Read Carefully

- The King James Bible is the text used to prepare these Bible study courses, but you may use your own Bible.
- Please read the lesson material carefully and then complete all the test questions at the end of the section.
- Send the Test with your answers to the address listed below. Please do not send the lesson material; it is yours to keep for future reference.
- Please make sure your name is on the test before you mail it back.
- Your tests will be graded and the results sent back to you as you finish each of the courses. At the end, you will be sent a **CERTIFICATE OF COMPLETION**.

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STUDIES
IN THE BOOK OF
COLOSSIANS

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Teaching the
Church how to
Think about
Christ and the
Gospel

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THIS STUDY

This is a free home Bible study. You will never be asked for money. Read Colossians through at least two times (more is preferable); have your Bible open as you study each lesson, then answer the questions at the end of this study booklet. Please return only the questions in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. Your lesson will be graded by a competent Bible teacher and returned to you, along with the next home Bible study lesson booklet. Feel free to ask any questions or make any comments you wish.

Each lesson will have a **chapter summary** followed by a “**definition of chapter terms**” list. These are provided to give the student an overview of what you’re about to study in detail and also to let the student learn important definitions of terms the Bible uses. The letter “**v**” refers to one verse and the letters “**vv**” refer to more than one verse.

The King James Version of the Bible has been used as the text in this study because it is the one most homes have. If you have a different translation, please feel free to use it, but know that the answers you give to the questions may be worded a little different. You will **not be penalized** for this different wording. Enjoy your study.

EPHESIANS AND COLOSSIANS

In our study of the book of Ephesians, we learned that it wasn’t enough just to know what the Bible teaches, but to be careful to live the Christian life so that God, Christ, the Holy Spirit and the church can be glorified. We termed Ephesians “The Book of the Heavenly Places”, learning that the church gets its instructions from heaven and the church itself is a heavenly place because the church is the only place in the world that adequately practices what heaven teaches.

The church at Ephesus really didn’t seem to have any problems, but the book of Colossians is a different story. The church at Colosse (pronounced “kuh-lah-see”) had a problem with a philosophy that denied that Jesus Christ was God in the flesh. Ephesians and Colossians are companion books and Paul teaches a lot of the same teachings in both books. Paul is teaching exactly the same truth [the Gospel] to both churches but addresses two different situations altogether.

You will enjoy this study of Colossians because there are many philosophies in the world today that challenge the deity of Christ. (The word “deity” does not mean “like God” [as the word “divinity” does], but rather means “God himself.”) Some believe Jesus was just a man and not God. Some teach that Jesus was an angel and not God himself. Some teach he was just a fantastic Jewish rabbi [preacher] who may have been the best one who ever lived. The Bible teaches that Jesus was God in the flesh and anyone who taught [and teaches] differently are “anti-Christ” (1 John 2,4; 2 John 7).

The City of Colosse

Colosse was a city in the ancient world region known as Phrygia, (our modern day Turkey), and was about 12 miles above Laodicea. Colosse was near the great road from Ephesus to the Euphrates River (our modern day Iraq) and was an important ancient city of business.

The Letter to the Colossian Church

Colossians was written by Paul at Rome during his first imprisonment there (Acts 28:16, 30) and most probably in the spring of A.D. 57 (but maybe possibly 62 AD), soon after he had written his Epistle to the Ephesians. Like his epistle to the Corinthians, Paul must have heard some information about this church that caused this letter (epistle) to be written (Colossians 1:4-8). As mentioned, Paul’s purpose was to pit the gospel truth against false teaching about the deity of Christ. Paul argues against such teaching, showing that in Christ Jesus Christians have things needed to please God. He sets forth the fact of the redemption Christ gives to sinful man. The mention of the “new moon” and “Sabbath days” (Col. 2:16) shows also that there were Judaizing teachers there who sought to draw away the disciples from the simplicity of the New Testament gospel back to the Old Testament as law.

Like most of Paul's epistles, this consists of two parts: doctrinal and practical.

- 1) The **doctrinal** (gospel teaching) part is found in the first two chapters. He begins to develop his main theme in chapter 2 by warning them against being drawn from the simple gospel truth through which salvation comes. He warns them against being drawn away from Him in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead, and who was the head of all spiritual powers. Christ was the head of the **body**, the **church**, of which they were members; and if they were truly united to him, what more did they need?
- 2) The **practical** part of the epistle (Colossians chapters 3 and 4) teaches many Christian duties which flowed from the doctrines he has just taught. They are encouraged to be **loyal** to the gospel teachings of Christ, and **practice** the things that are heavenly (Colossians 3:1-4), to squelch every **evil principle**, and to put on the new man (Colossians 3:5-14). Paul teaches to the Colossian church [as he taught to the Ephesian church] those things that must be the foundation of the character of every Christian, then and now. **Tychicus** took this letter to the church in Colosse as he also did for the church in Ephesus as well as the book of Philemon (Colossians 4:7-9).

From hints Paul gives in the book, it seems that he had not personally visited the city of Colosse itself, so we don't know who established this church.

LESSON ONE: CHAPTER 1, THE FIRST CHAPTER OF DOCTRINAL TEACHING

Chapter 1 Summary: What Paul had heard about Colosse; what a Christian must be filled with; how to increase in knowledge of God; the nature of Christ; what Christ has done; information God has given; Paul's purpose in preaching.

CHAPTER ONE DEFINITIONS OF TERMS: “**Saint**”, another word for ‘Christian’. “**Hope**”, that which a Christian expects from heaven. “**Fruit**”, how a Christian lives his/her life. “**The grace of God in truth**”, God shows his grace through the gospel truth. “**Fellow servant**”, one who serves the same master as another. “**Minister**”, servant. “**Will**”, that which is required by someone in authority. “**Desire**”, something that is of vital importance; a requirement. “**Spiritual understanding**”, spiritual knowledge. “**Worthy**”, after a godly manner. “**Patience**”, enduring cheerfully. “**Longsuffering**”, fortitude. “**Joyfulness**”, a great gladness. “**Meet**”, suitable; to make able. “**Partake**”, sharing. “**Power of darkness**”, another term for serving Satan. “**Translated**”, changed from something bad into something good; here meaning coming out of the darkness of evil into the light of the gospel. “**Image**”, a likeness; here meaning an exact likeness. “**Invisible**”, something present, but not seen with human eyes. “**Firstborn of every creature**”, a reference to Christ going through the entire ‘circle of life’. “**Thrones**”, power. “**Dominion**”, government. “**Principalities**”, local government. “**Powers**”, something that controls in heaven or earth. “**Preeminence**”, the very first. “**Reconcile**”, to change a relationship; here meaning what Christ has done for obedient people. “**Alienated**”, someone who does not participate in something. “**Enemies**”, adversaries; those against. “**Wicked**”, bad, evil, depraved. “**Unblameable**”, blameless, without spot. “**Unreproveable**”, practicing being blameless. “**Grounded**”, founded upon a good foundation. “**Settled**”, Solid, steadfast. “**Afflictions**”, persecutions. “**Dispensation**”, a period of time. “**Mystery**”, something hid; here meaning the gospel which was then being revealed. “**Ages**”, a reference to the Old Testament Jewish worship and law. “**Generations**”, families. “**Manifest**”, to make something obvious. “**Perfect**”, complete, mature. “**Striving**”, working and fighting hard. “**His working**”, what Christ was doing in Paul's life.

The **Timotheus** of verse 1 is none other than the **Timothy**, who was Paul's “**son in the faith**” (1 Timothy 1:2) and to whom Paul wrote two epistles (1 & 2 Timothy). Paul thanked God for the Colossian church's reputation of faith and love for other Christians (v 3), which was a reflection of the hope they had in Christ Jesus (v 4a). **Hope** [the expectation of going to heaven when we die **faithful** in the Lord] is a primary part of the gospel truth (v 5). Hope is the anchor of a Christian's soul (Hebrews 6:19) and it is **only** through the gospel truth that true hope can be had (v 6a). **People who reject the truth have no hope.**

The **truth** of God's **grace** through the gospel went to “all the world” and its fruit in Christians' lives is the **fruit of righteousness** in the world (v 6b). Christians must **practice** what they know is right. The Colossians evidently heard the truth from a Christian named Epaphras and Colossians 4:12 identifies this man as being from Colosse. When a person goes “back home” and there is no church meeting in his home town, if he loves the Lord, he will establish the church where he lives.

Paul Was a Praying Man

Paul was a man of prayer. He tells the Colossians that he did not cease praying for them (9a) because he wanted them filled “with the **knowledge** of His will in all wisdom and spiritual **understanding**” (v 9b). That’s the same thing he told the Ephesian Christians: **knowing** the Word of God must be followed by **doing** what is right. Matthew 7:21 makes a person’s responsibility very clear, “**Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.**”

(No writer of the New Testament taught anything except what Jesus taught them to teach. They did not add to Jesus’ teachings, nor did they take anything away from Jesus’ teachings. The Bible teaches exactly what heaven wants it to teach and it is a sad thing to hear people say, “Well, I know what the Bible teaches, but I believe differently.”)

What Paul Prayed For

When a Christian walks “**worthy of the Lord**” (v 10a), it means that he lives his life based upon the worthy thing Jesus did for him – sacrificing Himself for sins. Romans 8:8 puts it down to where we can understand it: “**So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.**” God is pleased when a Christian gives up a worldly life and lives the Christian life, filling himself with the knowledge of God (v 10b). When a person fills his life with the knowledge of God by knowing the word of God, there are some things that happen:

- ✓ He is made **strong by the power of God**. The power of God is the **gospel** as Romans 1:16 teaches, “For I am not ashamed of the **gospel of Christ**: for **it is the power of God** unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”
- ✓ He is made **patient and longsuffering**. “**Patience**” is enduring everything with gladness and “**longsuffering**” is sticking to something like Super Glue. Only then can we have real joy (v 11).
- ✓ He can **give thanks to God** because God has given us the right to inherit eternal life by living a life based on heaven’s light (v 12)
- ✓ He is out of the **darkness** of the devil and into the **church**, the kingdom of Christ, where there is light (v 13). Many believe that the kingdom of God has not come yet, but that is just impossible because **if there is no kingdom, people are still in darkness**.
- ✓ He is **redeemed** [forgiven] from his sins through the blood of Jesus, which a person gets when he’s baptized into the death of Christ (read Romans 6:3.4).

What Paul Begins to Say about Christ

Christ is the heart of the gospel. He is **God in the flesh** (the image of the invisible God) and we must believe this fact just as the apostle Philip was taught in John 14:9, “Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? **he that hath seen me hath seen the Father...**”

What does it mean that Jesus was “the **firstborn of every creature**”? (v 15b). Colossians 1:18 teaches, “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.” Jesus is the only person who has gone through the entire **cycle of life**: **conception, birth, life, death, burial, resurrection** and **ascension** to God. In Genesis 4:24 and 2 Kings 2:12, **Enoch** and **Elijah** did not die, but did ascend to be with God. In John 11, Jesus’ good friend, **Lazarus**, died, was buried and Jesus brought him back from the dead; however, he died **again** and is now awaiting the general resurrection of the dead and his own ascension to be with God.

Only Jesus has gone through the entire cycle of life and thus is the meaning of the phrase, “the firstborn of every creature” (v 15). 1 Corinthians 15:20 uses a different term to refer to this same thing, “But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the **first-fruits** of them that slept.”

One of the reasons that **Christ is the heart of the gospel** is that he was **God’s “agent” of creation**. God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit were all present in Genesis Chapter 1 in the creation process and Hebrews 1:1-2 teaches us, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath **appointed heir** of all things, **by whom also he made the worlds...**” Jesus created this world and all of it **belongs to him** which is why Revelation 19:15, teaches, “And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, **KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.**” Paul is teaching the Colossians that they were not to give up their faith in Jesus because **He is in charge of that which God instructed Him to create!**

We can’t emphasize enough that another reason that **Christ is the heart of the gospel truth** is that he is God in the flesh and is, therefore, **eternal**. “And he is **before all things** and by him all things consist” (v 17). Evidently some false teachers had come to Colosse and were teaching that there was somehow something different between Christ and God. The Bible teaches that since God is eternal (without beginning and without end) and since Jesus is “before all things”, he is also eternal and Paul teaches that’s just another reason why they should not stop believing the simple teachings of Jesus and believe false teachings.

Verse 18 continues Paul’s teaching about Christ being the **heart of the gospel** by saying “and he is the **head of the body, the church.**” Paul told the Ephesians that “there is one **body**” (Ephesians 4:4-6) and that does not mean two or more bodies [churches]. People who teach that it is religiously okay to be part of a church that has someone **else** as head of the church are wrong and will pay the price for denying Jesus in the judgment day. In Jesus Christ everything from heaven is fulfilled (v 19) and any church **less** than that—or more than that—is not the church of Jesus Christ.

Christ is the **heart of the gospel** because of his **sacrifice on the cross for sinful mankind** and only through the blood of Jesus can a sinner’s relationship with God be changed [reconciled] (v 20). Even sinful Gentile people who once were far away from God [alienated] and living wicked lives (v 21) now have a saved relationship with God “in the body of his flesh [church] through death” (v 22a).

Christ is the **heart of the gospel** because of the **results** that happen in a saved person’s life, the “**holy and unblameable and unproveable**” of verse 22, which was conditional upon their hearing the gospel which was preached to “**every creature which is under heaven**” (v 23). Within thirty years after Jesus said in Mark 16:15, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to **every creature**”, Paul reported that every creature in all the world had indeed heard the gospel. **Christians must do the same thing today.**

Christ in Paul’s Own Life

2 Timothy 3:12 scares some people: “Yea, and **all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.**” If a real Christian is **standing** up for Jesus, **teaching** his word and **living** the Christian life, he is going to have problems with people who do not want to be Christians. Paul suffered persecution (v 24), but many Christians today suffer other kinds of persecution.

Paul was a minister of God [servant of God] because God gave him this power in the gospel so that he could preach to the Gentiles (v 25). What he preached was something he called the “**mystery**” which is another word for the **gospel truth** “hid from ages...but now is made manifest to his saints” (v 26).

And Paul preached the gospel to lost people so that they could have the “glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory**” (v 27). Christ was preached through his gospel so that sinful man may be warned of the consequences of disobedience and that people who listened to the warnings and obeyed the Lord could be “perfect” in Christ, or “mature.”

Summary

Because of what God, Christ and the Holy Spirit planned for sinful man before the world began and what they did to bring that heavenly plan to light are sufficient reasons for any Christian to just be satisfied with the **simple truth** of the gospel and not be pulled away from the truth by the **opinions** [false teachings] of sinful man.

LESSON TWO: CHAPTER 2, THE SECOND CHAPTER OF DOCTRINAL REACHING

Chapter 2 Summary: Christ will always be the heart of the gospel; how to walk as a Christian; dealing with false philosophies; both Jew and Gentile are one with Christ through New Testament baptism; Christians use the Old Testament as example and not as law; warnings against believing false teachings

CHAPTER TWO DEFINITIONS OF TERMS: “**Conflict**”, a fight within. “**Knit**”, a ‘driving together’ in love. “**Assurance**”, entirely confident. “**Treasures**”, a ‘bank’ deposit with many riches. “**Beguile**”, to delude and deceive someone. “**Enticing words**”, foolish persuasion. “**Order**”, a regular arrangement. “**Stablished**”, established on solid ground. “**Rooted**”, the very foundation of something. “**Philosophy**”, false ways of thinking. “**Tradition of men**”, the opinions of men. “**Rudiments**”, principles. “**Godhead**”, ‘godhood’, the state of being God; God, Christ and the Holy Spirit. “**Circumcised**”, to cut around something; what the Jews did to boy babies who were born to Jewish parents; here, meaning not Jews, but Gentile Christians. “**Operation**”, a strong working. “**Quickened**”, made alive. “**Handwriting of ordinances**”, the ten commandments; here, representing the entire Old Testament. “**Triumphing**”, victory. “**Holiday**”, a religious festival day; a holiday. “New moon”, a period of time used for religious purposes. “**Shadow**”, something that has no substance; here, meaning the Old Testament as law. “**Voluntary humility**”, being religious where there is no commandment from God to be so; hypocrisy. “**Puffed up**”, a prideful way of religious thinking. “**Joints**”, literally, ligaments; here, meaning that which holds Christians together with Christ. “**Bands**”, a religious principle which unites people together. “**Increase**”, literally, to grow up. “**Ordinances**”, religious rules; here, meaning religious rules not taught in the Bible. “**Shew**”, a King James version word meaning ‘to show.’ “**Will-worship**”, taking pride in false teachings. “**Humility**”, a lowliness of mind; here, meaning false ways of thinking. “**Satisfying**”, filling up; gratification.

In many churches today, “**doctrine**” [teaching] means those teachings which make that church **different** from other churches. **People who try to make the simple gospel complicated are wanting something different from what the Bible teaches.** People who worship their church’s particular doctrines more than they believe the clear teachings of the Bible are **driven to be different**. People who search for something in the New Testament that’s not taught there and who try to be **different** should read Colossians chapter 3 because that devilish idea is **exactly** what Paul is discussing. **The Bible is right.**

In chapter **one**, Paul reminds the Colossian Christians that Christ was God in the flesh and here in chapter **two**, he discusses those who **teach differently**, what their teachings will **lead to** and what should be **done** about them.

In verse 1, Paul mentioned the church in the city of Laodicea which was about eighteen miles from Colosse. Also, Paul’s statement in verse 1 that they had not seen his face indicates that he did not establish the Colossian church. As an apostle, he had the heaven-given right to **teach** them and we remind you that’s one of the reasons why this book was written. Even though the Colossians had not met Paul face-to-face, they were still to be comforted in the fact that their love reflected their understanding and acceptance of the “**mystery**”, the **gospel** of Christ (v 2). **Only in the gospel** -- and in **no thing else** -- can a Christian be truly **rich in knowledge** and **wisdom** (v 3). **Christians don’t need false teachings** [enticing words] because such teachings only **confuse** people (v 5).

Verse 5 teaches that, though Paul’s face was not known to them, what he **taught** from heaven was **all** they needed. Unfortunately, in today’s religious society, there is too much **emphasis put on people** and not on the true teachings of the Bible. Some claim special **revelations** from God which go against plain Bible teaching and such revelations are **wrong**. Some claim that the **Holy Spirit** has taught them something that the Bible does not teach and such teachings are **wrong** no matter how sincere the preacher may be. The Colossian church didn’t need to **see** Paul to **believe** that what he taught was from God – the very **Word of God that he taught was enough** – and it **should be enough for us today**. **Put not your faith in men but in the Bible!**

Walking in Christ

What does it mean to “**receive Christ Jesus the Lord**” in our hearts? It certainly does **not** mean that we can ignore Jesus’ gospel, but it **does** mean that we must be very careful to follow the teachings of Christ **as written in the New Testament** and so must Christians walk in Christ (v 6).

When people “**walk in Christ**”, they are “**rooted and built up in him...in the faith**” (v 7). Anytime the definite article “**the**” comes before the word “**faith**”, it means “that which has been revealed from heaven”, the **Word of God, the Bible**. **Only by knowing what the Bible teaches and walking in those teachings can a human being please his/her creator, God.**

Walking in Christ means to **walk in the truth** as John taught in 2 John 4, “I rejoiced greatly that I found of thy children **walking in truth**, as **we have received a commandment from the Father.**” Christians do not “walk” in philosophies, which is a word meaning an **opinion of man which goes against what the Bible teaches**. These philosophies are **empty** things [vain things]. **False teachings do nothing but fool people into believing things God does not want them to believe.** These false teachings [ways of thinking] come from **worldly men** and not from Jesus Christ. People who believe these false things will be **spoiled** [absolutely ruined] (v 8).

Walking in Christ means to believe that he is the **fullness** of God, which is another way of saying that people **need no one else but Christ** and **need nothing else but his teachings** in order to please God (v 9).

Genesis 1:1 teaches, “In the beginning **God** created the heaven and the earth.” John 1:1 teaches, “In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was **with God**, and the **Word was God**.” John 1:14 tells us who this Word was: “And the Word was **made 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.” The **Word** was **Jesus**; the **Word** was **God**; therefore, **Jesus is God in the flesh**. Christians cannot walk in any other explanation of who Jesus Christ was and be pleasing to God.

Walking in Christ means believing that he is the **head** of everything in heaven and on earth (v 10) which leads to a sinner becoming one of God’s **chosen people**. The phrase “in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands” refers to the Jewish practice of **circumcision**. Genesis 17:12,13 says that young boy babies should be circumcised on the eighth day of their life. Modern medicine has learned that on the eighth day of an infant’s life, his blood has the highest clotting factor he will ever have, which is just another evidence that God is our creator.

Circumcision was the covenant God established with **Abraham** to be a sign that he and all his descendants by Isaac, the **Jews**, were **God’s chosen people**. In the New Testament, circumcision was **no longer a religious thing** to do because Gentiles could also become God’s chosen people. That’s the meaning of the phrase “the circumcision **made without hands**.” The sign of Jewish circumcision was the cutting away of an infant boy’s foreskin, and verse 12 teaches what the sign is of a person who becomes one of God’s chosen: “Buried with him **in baptism**, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the **operation of God**, who hath raised him from the dead.” **If a person has never been baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), that person cannot be one of God’s chosen people**. It is through being buried with Jesus in baptism that we are made alive [quickened] (v 13).

Walking in Christ means to know that **he is the heart of the new covenant**, which is also called the New Testament. But, what are the “**handwriting** of ordinances that was against us” (v 14)? Exodus 31:18 tells us: “And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, **two tables of testimony**, tables of stone, **written with the finger of God**.”

“**Ordinances**” is another way of saying “**commandments**”; so Jesus blotted out the **Ten Commandments** when he died on the cross. We know that this does **not** mean the Ten Commandments did not come from God. They did come from God, as did the entire Old Testament.

Paul is not discussing God’s **revelation** here; he **is** discussing the law under which Christians live, which law is the New Testament -- not the Old Testament. Many people teach that Christians should worship God on **Saturday**, the seventh day of the week [the Jewish **Sabbath**] but since the Ten Commandments have been blotted out by the death of Jesus, that would include “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8).

Walking in Christ means that Christians do **not use the Old Testament** as the true route to God, which is what is meant by verse 16 “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an **holyday**, or of the **new moon**, or of the **Sabbath** days...” The Jews were big on

keeping the law, doing every holy day [holiday] that came along and every monthly [new moon] celebration in the religion of Judaism. Paul teaches that these things are only **shadows** and not the real thing. The **real thing is Christ** (v 17) and his **body**, the **church** (Colossians 1:18).

Walking in Christ means **not doing false and silly things to prove that one is a Christian**. Some of these silly things are being so strict with your body that you cannot really serve Christ through the gospel [voluntary humility] and worshipping Michael the archangel (or any other angel) as if they were Jesus himself.

“Intruding into those things which he hath not seen” (v 18) means that people who make others do what they want instead of what the Bible teaches have no business doing such things. **Christians are only supposed to do what the Bible teaches and not what some man, or church teaches.**

Practicing Walking with Christ

Who is the head of the church? We’ve already learned that Jesus is (1:18) and it is only through Jesus that the church is united together, is walking in **love** and **growing** [increases] (v 19).

Christians practice real Christianity by sticking strong to the simple gospel truth of Jesus and not in the opinions of men. Men are wrong when they teach anything not in the Bible and Paul tells these Colossian Christians that if they were free from the world and from crazy religious ideas, **why would they want to even think about going back into those worldly things** (vv 21,22). They show nothing but the wisdom of man being substituted for the teachings of Christ. Listen to Jesus in Mark 7:9: “And he said unto them, Full well ye **reject the commandment of God**, that ye may **keep your own tradition**.” Be warned.

LESSON THREE; CHAPTER 3, PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY, # 1

Chapter 3 Summary: Christians prepare for heaven and the resurrection by seeking and doing heavenly things; Christians practice what they preach; Christians treat each other right; Christians do all things by the authority of Christ; the happiness of families is based on being in subjection to Christ; in the job workplace, Christians serve their employers as if they were serving Christ.

CHAPTER THREE DEFINITIONS OF TERMS: “**Risen with Christ**”, a reference to baptism (Romans 6:3,4). “**You are dead**”, free from sins through the blood of Jesus. “**Mortify**”, put to death; here meaning that Christians don’t practice evil. “**Members**”, body parts. “**Fornication**”, sexual immorality. “**Uncleanness**”, physical and moral nastiness. “**Inordinate affections**”, lust; here meaning homosexuality. “**Concupiscence**”, living for nothing except lust. “**Covetousness**”, wanting something someone has; here meaning idolatry. “**Malice**”, thinking vulgar thoughts; wickedness. “**Blasphemy**”, speaking against holy things. “**Barbarian**”, a foreigner; one who doesn’t speak the Greek language. “**Scythian**”, Scythia corresponds to our modern day area of Russia. “**Bowels**”, the innermost part of our innermost affections; here meaning tender mercy. “**Forbearing**”, being patient. “**Quarrel**”, blame, fault. “**Charity**”, Christian love. “**Perfectness**”, completion; maturity. “**Admonishing**”, teaching by warning. “**Name of the Lord Jesus**”, by the authority of Christ. “**Submit**”, loving obedience. “**Fit in the Lord**”, according to the word of Christ. “**Provoke**”, make angry without a just cause. “**Eye-service**”, working in such a way that someone always has to be watching. “**Singleness**”, sincerity. “**Heartily**”, with enthusiasm. “**Respect of persons**”, playing favorites; God doesn’t play favorites and neither should his children.

Because a person has been baptized [risen with Christ], his attention is turned from **practicing evil things** on this earth to looking forward to going to **heaven** (v 1). **Stephen** was the first Christian to die because he was a Christian and he said in Acts 7:56, “Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man **standing on the right hand of God.**” The right hand of God means that **Christ is reigning as king over his kingdom now. To teach that the kingdom has not yet come is to teach false doctrine and that Jesus is not our king.**

Christians do not love **earthly** things, but they love **heavenly** things as Jesus said in Matthew 6:21 “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (v 2). The meaning of “**you are dead and your life is hid with Christ in God**” refers to Romans 6:3-4: “Know ye 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.** .”Ephesians 2:1 also teaches that people who are not Christians are still dead in their sins.

What does it mean that **we shall appear with Christ in glory**? 1 Thessalonians 4:17 answers us: “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.**” After the judgment day, Christians will **never** set foot on the earth again because it will be burned up (2 Peter 3:10-12).

What do Christians have ahead of them after this life is over? They are promised **heaven**. They are promised to be part of the **glory** of Christ. They are promised to be with Christ **forever**. Paul’s point here in this chapter is that since those things await Christians, we must live a Christian life. Some things are specifically mentioned by Paul that Christians must avoid like the plague.

- ✓ **Fornication** is sexual immorality between a man and a woman (adultery), a man and a man (homosexuality), a woman and a woman (lesbianism) and a human being with an animal (bestiality).
- ✓ **Uncleanness** is an interesting word. It not only means immorality, it also means being nasty in our bodies. Being unclean in our bodies covers such subjects as drinking alcohol, doing dope, looking at pornography, gluttony, tobacco and other things which pollute our bodies which Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3:16 is the temple of God.
- ✓ **Inordinate affection** means loving things that are immoral. Here Paul is also teaching against same-sex sexual relationships.
- ✓ “**Concupiscence**” is another interesting word. It involves how sinners **think** and what **motivates** them. “**Evil concupiscence**” is thinking immoral and evil thoughts, which motivate sinners to do evil and immoral things. We are warned in Proverbs 23:7: “For as he **thinketh in his heart, so is he...**”
- ✓ “**Covetousness**” is the tenth of the Ten Commandments and the word means “**to set the heart upon something someone else has so much that you’ll do anything to get it.**” Here Paul says that covetousness is the way unfaithful Christians commit idolatry. Take warning.

These things (and more) were **practiced** by these Colossian Christians before they became Christians and they knew that if they practiced them **again**, they would pay the price (v 6,7). The sins listed in verse 5 are mostly **immoral** sins, sins of the flesh. Paul now turns to **other kinds** of sins which are just as bad. A large denomination says there are “**venal**” sins, which aren’t so bad and which a Christian can do just a little bit. They also say that there are “**mortal**” sins, which are so bad they’ll condemn a Christian’s soul to hell. **Paul makes absolutely no such difference in discussing sin. Sin is sin in God’s sight and there are no “little sins” and “big sins.”**

- ✓ Ephesians 4:26 says, “Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” Christians can get mad, but they cannot **live** in that condition. Holding **grudges** will probably hurt more people in the judgment than just about any other kind of sin.
- ✓ **Malice** is an **attitude** of being angry all the time and having a reputation for **not being in control of one’s temper and passions**.
- ✓ **Blasphemy** means “to speak against” something. Today people blaspheme the **name** of God by using it in a vain way. They blaspheme the **Bible** when they do not listen to the will of God. They blaspheme **authority** by not being “in subjection to the powers that be” (Romans 13:1).
- ✓ **Filthy communication out of your mouth needs no explanation**. Christians control their tongues.
- ✓ **Lie not one to another** means that, in Christian relationships with other Christians, Christians **always** tell the truth. Jesus said of the devil in John 8:44b, “...there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for **he is a liar, and the father of it.**” **The biggest lie being told people today is that they don’t have to believe the Bible, but can believe anything they want to in their religion.**

Paul says these sins are the “**old man**” -- not an old man but the old man which is a reference to those who serve the devil. **The “new man” is the person who has been born again and is a Christian** (read John 3:3-5; Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19). Christians “**image**” their master, Jesus, when we live the Christian life (v 10). All Christians are one in Christ as Galatians 3:27-28 teaches, “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ **have put on Christ**. There is **neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.**”

Paul continues this teaching of “**putting on Christ**” concept.

The “**elect of God**” means those who are chosen of God, those who have been called by God. 2 Thessalonians 2:14 teaches how we are called: “Whereunto **he called you by our gospel**, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” **People become Christians when they answer God’s call by obeying the teaching of the gospel truth of Jesus Christ.**

- ✓ **Called people** are **merciful** like God is merciful. Christians feel deeply in their very inner beings [their hearts] for other people.
- ✓ **Called people** show their feelings by being **kind** to all men.
- ✓ **Called people** are **humble**; they’re not interested in getting their way.
- ✓ **Called people** are **mEEK** and **longsuffering**; they **aren’t pushy** and, again, don’t want their way all the time. They want to see **Christ’s will** be done not their own.
- ✓ **Called people** are **patient** with others and **forgive** others when forgiveness is asked.
- ✓ **Called people** don’t **fuss** and **fight ever**.
- ✓ To called people, **love** is more than an emotion -- it’s a **way of life** because they know the only way they can become **mature [perfect]** in Christ is to have love one for another.
- ✓ **Called people** are **peaceful** people because Jesus taught “Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the **children** of God” (Matthew 5:9).
- ✓ **Called people** are **thankful** to be in one body, one church.

The Basis of Walking a Called Life

“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. And **whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (vv 16,17).

Christians worship God by **singing** praises to him with the human voice, which **God** made, and not by some instrument which **man** has made.

Christians do not do anything in the name of Christ without **authority** from the Bible to do so. **“The Bible says it; that settles it; Christians believe it.”**

The Basis of Walking a Christian Life at Home and at Work

Wives are to lovingly obey their own husband because it is the Lord’s will (v 18). **Husbands** are to love their wives without bitterness (v 19). **Children** obey their Christian parents because it is the right thing to do (v 20). **Fathers** don’t aggravate their children by making them mad, but treat them with firmness, love, kindness and consistency (v 21). People who **work for others** sincerely work for their bosses as if they were serving God himself (v 22). **Every** Christian in **all** walks of life knows that God wants them to **behave** themselves because God knows our every action (v 23). Christians also know that the Lord **rewards** those who **faithfully serve** him (v 24) and a Christian knows that if he lives his life doing wrong things, God will punish him because there “is no respect of persons” (v 25).

“There is **no respect of persons**” means that God treats every person alike. If a sinner obeys God as the Bible teaches, God will save him, no matter if he’s rich or poor, black or white or anything else. The important thing is to know what God wants and do it. **It depends on choices we make.**

LESSON FOUR; CHAPTER 4

Chapter 4 Summary: How Christian employers should act; Paul requests prayers; how Christians are to act toward those who are not Christians; Paul mentions several of his coworkers and says farewell

CHAPTER FOUR DEFINITIONS OF TERMS: “**Masters**”, slave owners in the ancient world; today, employers. “**Servants**”, here meaning slaves, people owned by other people. “**Withal**”, also. “**Door of utterance**”, an opportunity to preach the gospel. “**Bonds**”, in prison. “**Without**”, here meaning ‘outside’. “**Redeeming the time**”, working hard to take advantage of any opportunity to serve Christ. “**Speech seasoned with salt**”, Christians must watch their language. “**Your estate**”, how you’re doing. “**Jesus**”, here not the Lord, but a man nicknamed Justus. “**Of the circumcision**”, a Jewish Christian. “**Zeal**”, enthusiasm; a fire burning within the heart.

Before we begin this final chapter of Colossians, please turn to verse 16, “And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise **read the epistle from Laodicea.**”

The mentioned epistle to Laodicea is not in the books of the New Testament and people have often wondered why this is the case. The explanation is simple. Paul had **taught the same truth** in Ephesians as he did in Colossians, and this epistle to the Laodiceans **contained the same truth**. Ephesians and Colossians are part of the New Testament to teach us the lesson that **truth will never change** – we take God’s eternal truth and apply it to every generation and in every situation.

How Does a Master Treat Servants?

One person owning another person is a terrible thing as our own American history has taught us. The terror of slavery was a prominent part of life in the Roman Empire and was just as ugly then as it is now. So, why did Paul take time to talk to these masters as he talked to servants in chapter 3? Again, we have another simple reason: **when a person becomes a Christian, he is equal in God’s sight to anyone else**. His station in life doesn’t change. He may still be rich or poor; black or white; male or female; American or Chinese -- **but** now that he is a Christian, he has a higher and greater responsibility – **to please God in all things**. New Testament Christianity is designed by heaven to make any society a better place because it is the only religion approved by God and Jesus Christ. **Religious organizations and religious philosophies founded by men do not practice New Testament Christianity.**

Christian masters [present day people in charge; **employers**] are to always be **fair** toward their servants because they themselves are servants of God (v 1).

Paul’s Final Encouragement to the Colossian Christians

His instruction to “continue in **prayer**” reminds us of 1 Thessalonians 5:17, “**Pray without ceasing**,” meaning that a Christian is always **one prayer away from God**. An old preacher once said, “Pray. But when you get off your knees, hustle!” and that’s what Paul meant when he said “watch in the same.” **Prayer works – and so do we.**

Paul asked the Colossians to pray that more doors of **opportunity** would be opened so that he could preach the gospel everywhere to every person, even though he was in prison because he had preached the gospel (v 3).

Christians are to live a life characterized by **kindness, meekness** and **humility**. When those who are not Christians see this great way of life, they’ll respond as Jesus taught in John 13:35: “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye **have love one to another**.” This is how Christians “walk in wisdom toward them that are without” and “redeeming the time” means to take every opportunity to **live the Christian life** in front of sinners (v 5). And Christians are to **watch their language**, so they can teach the gospel to sinners (v 6).

Final Comments

Tychicus was a constant companion of Paul who was with him during Paul’s first Roman imprisonment and he was to report to Paul about how the Colossian church was doing (v 8). **Onesimus** was a slave who had escaped from his master, **Philemon**. The book of Philemon was written to ask Philemon to treat Onesimus like a brother and not as a slave. Onesimus was from Colosse (v 9). **Aristarchus** was also in prison with Paul in Rome.

Marcus, “sister’s son to Barnabas” [meaning Barnabas’ **nephew**] appears in Acts 12 as Paul’s companion on the first missionary journey. In Acts 12, he is called **Mark** and is reported to have returned back to Jerusalem before Paul’s work was done. Paul and Barnabas argued over John Mark in Acts 15 when Barnabas wanted to take him with them on the second missionary journey. Paul disagreed and “...the contention was so sharp between them, that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark...” (Acts 15:39). In verse 10, Paul says that this Marcus (Mark) was one through whom they “**had received commandments.**” This Mark is most probably the author of the second book of the New Testament, the gospel according to **Mark**. A good lesson can be learned from this: **even if a person shows weakness, through Christ he can become strong and accepted as a faithful worker for the Lord. Evil men can become good men; convicted prisoners can become convinced Christians; prostitutes can become morally pure; alcoholic sots can become saints and drug users can become dedicated to God.**

The “**Jesus**” of verse 11 is obviously not the Lord, but a man nicknamed Justus. The name “Jesus” is a word meaning “**Jehovah Saves**” and only one man named Jesus is the savior of the world -- Jesus, the Christ.

Epaphras also was a native of Colosse (v 12) and wanted his home folks to be strong in the Lord. Epaphras not only worked in Colosse, his home town, but he also worked in Laodicea (eighteen miles away from Colosse) and in a town close by called Hierapolis (v 13). Dr. **Luke** was Paul’s constant companion and the author of the book of Luke and the Acts. **Demas** is here mentioned as a companion of Paul but in 2 Timothy 4:10, Paul mourned the loss of Demas because Demas “loved this present world.” **Nymphas** was a man who owned a house where the church met (v 15).

“**Read**”, Paul told the Colossian Christians. Read the epistle addressed to them and read the letter from Laodicea. Today, **when we read the Bible, we’ll know what God thinks and what he wants.** The measure of a human being is how he/she responds to the preaching of the gospel. If we want to go to heaven, we’ll listen, learn and do. If we don’t want to go to heaven, we’ll ignore it. God bless us as we continue studying the letters of this great servant of Jesus, the apostle Paul.

We pray your study has been useful for you. God bless you as you continue.

**THIS CONCLUDES YOUR STUDY IN
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QUESTIONS ON THE INTRODUCTION:

Multiple choice: circle the correct answer

1. “v” is the abbreviation for **A** Several Bible verses **B** One Bible verse **C** A chapter
2. The false teaching “philosophy” that the Colossian church had among them was **A** Denying that Jesus was God in the flesh **B** Denying that God was human **C** Denying the apostles
3. The word “deity” means **A** Like God **B** Similar to God **C** God
4. Paul most probably wrote Colossians in **A** 70 AD **B** 57 AD **C** 33 AD
5. Another word for “doctrine” is **A** Gospel teaching **B** The gospel truth **C** Both of these
6. The man who took this letter to the city of Colosse was **A** Philemon **B** Timothy **C** Tychicus

QUESTIONS ON LESSON ONE, CHAPTER 1:

True/False: Put “T” or “F” in the blank

- ___ Saint is another word for Christian
- ___ The word “meet” means to catch up with somebody
- ___ Timothy was Paul’s “son in the faith”
- ___ The truth of God’s grace through the gospel went into all the world in those days
- ___ Paul prayed only at mealtimes
- ___ The gospel is the power of God to save people from their sins
- ___ Christians give thanks to God through Saint Joseph
- ___ Jesus is the only person who has ever lived who has gone through the entire cycle of life
- ___ God, Christ and the Holy Spirit had part in the creation of the world
- ___ Jesus is not eternal
- ___ Christians who live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution

Fill in the blanks

1. Christians must _____ what they know is right.
2. Matthew 7:21: "Not every one that _____ unto me, "Lord, Lord", shall _____ into the _____ of heaven, but he that _____ the _____ of my father which is in heaven."
3. "Romans 1:16: "For I am not _____ of the _____ of Christ; for it is the _____ of _____ unto _____ to every one that believeth; to the _____ first and also to the _____."
4. If there is no _____, people are still in _____"
5. Jesus is the only person who has gone through the entire cycle of life:

_____ and _____ up to God in heaven
6. Jesus is the _____ of the body, the _____.
7. 2 Timothy 3:12: "Yea, and _____ that will live _____ in Christ Jesus shall suffer _____."
8. Paul preached the _____ to _____ people so that they could have the "_____ of this mystery among the _____; which is _____ in you, the _____ of _____."

Matching

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| ____ Hope | A Suitable; to make able |
| ____ Minister | B Changed from something bad into something good |
| ____ Desire | C The very first |
| ____ Worthy | D Power |
| ____ Patience | E Founded on a good foundation |
| ____ Meet | F That which a Christian expects from heaven |
| ____ Partake | G Adversaries; those against |
| ____ Translated | H Servant |
| ____ Thrones | I Sharing |
| ____ Preeminence | J After a godly manner |
| ____ Enemies | K Something that is of vital importance; a requirement |
| ____ Grounded | L Enduring cheerfully |

QUESTIONS ON LESSON TWO, CHAPTER 2:

Multiple choice: Circle the correct answer

1. Another word for “teaching” is **A** Creed **B** Commentary **C** Doctrine
2. The Christian can be truly rich in wisdom and knowledge if he follows **A** The gospel **B** A woman preacher **C** The Pope
3. Walking in Christ means to walk in the **A** Catechism **B** Manual **C** Truth
4. Another word an “opinion of men” is **A** Gospel **B** Philosophy **C** Argument
5. Circumcision was a covenant sign only for the descendants of **A** Noah **B** Job **C** Abraham

True/False: Put a “F” or “T” in the blanks

- ___ Many religions just try to be different and not according to the Bible
- ___ Paul established the church in Colosse and was a frequent visitor there
- ___ We should put our faith in the Bible and not men
- ___ People who receive Jesus do what Jesus teaches
- ___ Philosophies of men are good enough to build the right church with
- ___ Young Jewish boy babies were circumcised on their first birthday
- ___ Baptism is the sign that a person has been buried with Jesus
- ___ The heart of the Old Testament was the Ten Commandments
- ___ The “handwriting of ordinances” Jesus nailed to the cross was the Old Testament
- ___ Christians walk under the New Testament as our law from heaven
- ___ The Old Testament is not inspired of God
- ___ False teachers in the church have no business doing what they do
- ___ People can receive Jesus in their hearts and ignore plain gospel teaching

Fill in the blanks

1. Anytime the definite article _____ appears before the word _____, it means the _____ of _____.
2. Walking in Christ means to _____ in the _____.
3. Walking in Christ means believing that he is _____ of _____ in heaven and on earth.
4. Walking in Christ means to know that he is the _____ of the _____ covenant, which is also called the _____.
5. Jesus is the _____ of the church
6. Christians _____ real Christianity by sticking _____ to the simple gospel _____ of _____ and not in the _____ of men.

QUESTIONS ON LESSON THREE, CHAPTER 3:

Multiple choice: Circle the correct answer

1. What things do Christians love? **A** Earthly things **B** Hellish things **C** Heavenly things
2. Romans 6:3,4 says that when a person is baptized, he's baptized into Christ's **A** Death **B** Manger **C** Robe
3. 1 Thessalonians 4:17: "Then we which are _____ and _____ shall be caught up _____ with them in the _____, to meet the Lord in the _____ and so shall we _____ be with the Lord."
4. "Concupiscence" is a word involving how some people _____ and what _____ sinful people.
5. _____ is an attitude of being _____ all the time and having a _____ for not being in _____.
6. Christians are to control their _____.
7. In Christian relationships, Christians _____ tell the _____.
8. The "old man" is a reference to those who _____ the _____, but the phrase "new man" means the person who has been _____ again and is a _____.
9. To called people _____ is more than an emotion – it's a _____ of _____ because they know the only way they can become _____ in Christ is to have _____ one for another.
10. An _____ treats his employees right if he is a _____.
11. Children obey their _____ parents because it is the _____ thing to do.

Matching

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| ____ Risen with Christ | A Thinking vulgar thoughts; wickedness |
| ____ You are dead | B Our innermost emotions; tender mercy |
| ____ Mortify | C According to the word of Christ |
| ____ Uncleaness | D Christian love |
| ____ Malice | E What happens when a person is baptized |
| ____ Blasphemy | F Nastiness in body and spirit |
| ____ Bowels | G Free from sins through the blood of Jesus |
| ____ Forbearing | H Being patient |
| ____ Admonishing | I Speaking against something or someone |
| ____ Charity | J Put to death; Christians don't practice evil |
| ____ Fit in the Lord | K Teaching by warning |

QUESTIONS ON LESSON FOUR, CHAPTER 4:

Who was it? Circle the correct answer

1. Paul was **A The one who wrote Colossians** **B An apostle** **C A bachelor** **D All of these**
2. The one who took the book of Colossians to the church was **A Timothy** **B Marcus** **C Justus** **D Tychicus** **E Nymphas** **F Epaphras** **G Luke**
3. Paul's "son in the faith" was **A Timothy** **B Marcus** **C Justus** **D Tychicus** **E Nymphas** **F Epaphras** **G Luke**
4. This man owned a house in which the church met **A Timothy** **B Marcus** **C Justus** **D Tychicus** **E Nymphas** **F Epaphras** **G Luke**
5. This man's other name was "Jesus" **A Timothy** **B Marcus** **C Justus** **D Tychicus** **E Nymphas** **F Epaphras** **G Luke**
6. This man wrote the gospel according to Mark **A Timothy** **B Marcus** **C Justus** **D Tychicus** **E Nymphas** **F Epaphras** **G Luke**
7. He was a doctor. **A Timothy** **B Marcus** **C Justus** **D Tychicus** **E Nymphas** **F Epaphras** **G Luke**
8. He wanted his home folks to be strong in the Lord. **A Timothy** **B Marcus** **C Justus** **D Tychicus** **E Nymphas** **F Epaphras** **G Luke**

True/False Put a "T" or "F" in the blank

- ___ The truth will never change
- ___ Truth changes as times change
- ___ A Christian is equal in God's sight to other Christians
- ___ Christians should pray always
- ___ Christians show that they are Christians when they love one another
- ___ Prayer works and so do we
- ___ Christians can say anything they want
- ___ Christians need to watch their mouths
- ___ Christians do anything to be able to teach the gospel to sinners

END