



Although Paul was in prison, his letter to the Philippians frequently mentioned the joy he has in spite of his suffering. Being united with Christ in his life, he is given the strength to find peace and contentment in any circumstance. And Paul reminds the Philippians of his conviction in the surpassing greatness of Jesus Christ's salvation. 12 students are young adults and a world of independence and possibilities await them. It's sobering to think of all their life decisions in relation to death and judgment day. But the inevitability of God isn't meant to frighten but to comfort. Paul never thought of Jesus Christ and death as dreaded ends; he saw them as indescribable joy and a far greater existence. And although Paul mentions working out salvation "with fear and trembling," Jesus Christ was always a positive motivation in his life of faith. God wants to be the same for us. Through the ups and downs in our lives, God wants to be a positive motivation on our spiritual focus so that we may progress in faith.

# Colossians

Listed Scriptures

Colossians

Lesson Aim

- 1) To help students understand the background and main teachings of Colossians.
- 2) To encourage students to be rooted and built up in Christ.
- 3) To encourage students to pursue a life of renewal in Christ.

Memory Verse

"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." (Col 2:6-7)

Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Col 1-4

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



Colosse was a minor city, situated in the fertile Lycus Valley by a mountain pass about 100 miles east of Ephesus in Asia Minor. Colosse was an important center of commerce and was well-known for its glossy black wool. The area was rich in mineral deposits and subject to frequent earthquakes. However, by the time of Paul, the city of Colosse was already in decline in terms of its vibrancy and prominence.

Paul wrote the letter to the Colossian church circa 61 AD while imprisoned in Rome. Paul had never visited this church, as indicated in verses 1:7, 2:1 and 4:12. It is possible that the church in Colosse was founded by a Colossian believer, Epaphras. Epaphras came to visit Paul during his imprisonment in Rome. The Colossian's visit and report prompted Paul to write a letter to the church in Colosse.

At the time, heresy was threatening the predominantly gentile church. The nature of the heresy combined elements such as Greek speculation (2:4; 8:10), Jewish legalism (2:11-17), and Oriental mysticism (2:18-23). Circumcision, dietary regulations, and ritual observances were included in this system, including asceticism, worship of angels, and using mystical experiences as an approach to the spiritual realm. Heresy caused Colossian church members to seek salvation through human intellect and reasoning. They denied the glory of Christ, His redemptive work and the assurance of His salvation. In order to protect the truth of the word of God and the purity of the believers' faith, Paul wrote to warn the Colossian believers against heretical teachings.

## W A R M U P



Have you met someone who reads and believes in horoscopes, uses science or philosophy to disprove the existence of God, or practices yoga in order to achieve enlightenment? How do you preach to such a person about Christ? How do you defend your faith if they try to preach to you instead? In the book of Colossians, Paul writes to a church that is under attack from heretical beliefs such as these. Through this lesson, let us learn how to defend against false teachings and stand firm in Christ.

## B I B L E S T U D Y



### *Part 1* *Outline*

Colossians may be regarded as the most Christ-centered book in the entire Bible. It stresses that we can obtain God's grace and His spiritual wisdom only through the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ is the only one whom we worship as the head of all principalities and powers. Chapters 1 to 3 explain the doctrines of Christian theology while the latter part of chapters 3 and 4 contain Christian living exhortations.

- a. In Christ's Kingdom (Ch 1)
  - i. We can receive true hope
  - ii. We can experience God's fullness
  - iii. We have part in the Lord's work

- b. Building up in Christ (Ch 2)
  - i. Avoiding the secularization/misconstruction of faith
  - ii. Preventing a habitual, legalistic faith
  - iii. Building a firm faith in Christ
- c. Life in Christ (Ch 3)
  - i. Characteristics of life in Christ
  - ii. The renewal of life
  - iii. The manifestation of life
- d. Pursuing Christ (Ch 4)
  - i. In prayer
  - ii. In our relationship with others
  - iii. In our relationship with co-workers in Christ



## *Part 2* *Teachings in the Book of Colossians*

### *A. In Christ's Kingdom (Ch 1)*

- a. We can receive true hope (1:3-8, 12-14)
  - i. True hope is not earthly or material. It is heavenly (v. 5), does not decay (1 Pet 1:4), and is the inheritance of the saints of light (Col 1:12). We can receive this eternal hope only through Christ.
  - ii. Only the precious blood of Christ can forgive our sins, deliver us from the power of darkness, and allow us to live in the kingdom of God (v. 13-14).
- b. We can experience God's fullness (1:9-12)
  - i. In Christ's kingdom, we can be fully reconciled with God (v. 20-22). Through Christ's blood on the cross, we can reconcile with God and be at peace with Him. When we ask of Him, we can be sanctified and blameless. This is something non-Christians hope to achieve through human means but can never be successful in (2:23).
  - ii. We can be filled with God's knowledge and spiritual understanding (v. 9). Through the Holy Spirit, we will have wisdom to differentiate right from wrong. We will be able to focus on spiritual matters, understand and

- obey God's plan for us, and please the Lord (v. 10).
- iii. We can experience the fullness of God's power (v. 11). God's power will allow us to have patience and joy.
  - iv. In Christ's kingdom, we can experience the fullness of God's glory (v. 15-19). We will know that Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God (v. 15), that He has preeminence in all things (v. 18), and all fullness dwells in Him (v. 19).
- c. We have part in God's work
- i. Christ's work is to save us. Therefore, we should hold fast to our faith so God's work can be completed (v. 23).
  - ii. Christ's work is to save all mankind. Since we have received the grace of God, we should view preaching as our responsibility. We should imitate the work ethic of the saints before us (v. 24-29), and preach in and out of season to complete the work of salvation.

## **B. Building Up in Christ (Ch 2)**

- a. Avoiding the secularization/misconstruction of faith (2:8-18)
  - i. In the Colossian church, heretics secularized the faith and denied Christ's identity as God and Savior. They used human philosophy, empty deceit, the traditions of men, and the basic principles of the world to interpret Christ's deity and humanity. Likewise, people today use philosophy and science to discredit Christ and the miracles He performed.
  - ii. Heretics promoted the Jewish practices of circumcision, observance of festivals and angel worship.
  - iii. All these are faulty concepts of worship. Only when we are rooted in Christ can we resist temptation and hold fast to the truth.
- b. Preventing a habitual, legalistic faith (2:20-23)
  - i. Heretics tried to prove their faith through asceticism (denying oneself all pleasure). At the end, they became like the Pharisees, whose faith was legalistic and based on superficial, outwardly conduct.
  - ii. We should rely on the Holy Spirit to build up a genuine faith that begins from the inside and emanates outward.
- c. Building a firm faith in Christ (2:6-7)  
 These verses tell us that we must be rooted and built up in Christ and established in the faith. To do this, we must:

- i. Truly know Christ (v. 3,9-10)  
 Our Lord Jesus is the one foundation of our faith (1 Cor 3:11). We can receive all wisdom, knowledge, and grace through Him alone.
- ii. Understand the purpose of the law (v. 16-17)  
 Through Christ, we can understand the spirit of the Law. The purpose of the law is to prove Christ's identity and lead people to believe in Him.
- iii. Encourage and connect with each other (v. 16)  
 As the body of Christ, we can help each other by teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (interceding for one another).
- iv. Live a steadfast life of faith (v. 5)  
 The best defense against heresy is to live a steadfast life of faith that is free from the bondage of sin.

## **C. Life in Christ (Ch 3)**

- a. Characteristics of life in Christ (3:1-4)
  - i. Life in Christ is new. In 3:1, the verse begins with, "If then you were raised with Christ..." When we resurrect, we receive a new life. With this new life, we should set new goals and set our minds on things above, not on things of the earth (v. 2).
  - ii. Life in Christ is stable. When our life is hidden with Christ in God (v. 3), our faith will be stable, firm, and unmoved by outward pressures (Rom 8:35-37). Stability in Christ can be especially valuable to teenagers dealing with fast-paced change and peer pressure.
  - iii. Life in Christ is glorious. When Christ who is our life appears, we also will appear with Him in glory (v. 4).
- b. The renewal of life (3:5-17)
  - i. Taking off the old man (v. 5-9). After we accept a new life from God, we should put to death all our bad habits, evil thoughts, and bad deeds. These include fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, covetousness (greed), anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of our mouths, and lies.
  - ii. Putting on the new man (v. 10-17). The new man is constantly renewed in the knowledge of Christ (v. 10). He is holy, merciful, kind, humble, meek, and longsuffering. He bears with his fellow brethren and is forgiving. He is loving, thankful, peaceful, and filled with God's word and wisdom.

- c. The manifestation of life in Christ (3:18—4:1)
- In the Christian home (3:18-21). When our “new self” is manifested at home, Christ will be the head of the household. Everyone will fulfill their duties to build a happy, blessed family. Husbands and wives will love one another, children will be obedient, parents loving, and everyone respectful toward one another.
  - In society (3:22—4:1). We should fear the Lord as we work and live in society. If we fulfill our duties at work and serve our earthly masters, we will be able to edify others.

## D. Pursuing Christ Application of Faith (Ch 4)

- In prayer (4:2-4)
  - Pray for ourselves. Let us pray vigilantly and earnestly and give thanks so our spirituality may grow and be preserved.
  - Pray for the work of God. As we prepare for Christ’s second coming, let’s pray for the workers of God. Pray that God will open doors to preach the word and to speak the mystery of Christ.
- In our relationships with others (4:5-6)
  - Use wisdom in dealing with outsiders. We should use every opportunity to preach the word. However, we should exercise caution and wisdom so that we may not be led astray.
  - Treat others with gentleness. Let us keep a humble heart and pursue peace with everyone so that the Lord’s name may be glorified.
- In treating our co-workers in Christ (4:7-18)
  - Show hospitality to the workers. As Christians, it is our duty to show hospitality and support to our ministers. Let us welcome them and accept their teaching and encouragement.
  - Work together with one heart. Let us utilize our different gifts to edify the believers and build up the church.

### C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



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- According to Colossians 1, what three benefits can we gain from being a part of God’s kingdom?
- In what areas will we be able to experience God’s fullness?

- According to Colossians 2, what kinds of problems existed in the Colossian church? How can we avoid the same pitfalls? (hint: 2:6-7)
- What four things can we do to build up a firm faith in Christ?
- What are three characteristics of life in Christ?
- How can we experience the “renewal of life” and manifest Christ?
- In what areas should we pursue Christ, according to Colossians 4?

### L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



#### *Taking Off the Old Man, Putting on the New*

Pursuing a life in Christ is a life-long process that requires the discipline and determination to take off bits and pieces of our old man and replace them with qualities of our new man. In this exercise, let us explore the qualities of the old man and the new man and think about how we can get rid of or gain each quality.

- Taking off the Old Man**
  - Turn to Colossians 3:5-9. Please list all the qualities of the “old man.”
  - Write an example of each negative quality in the space provided (11 total).
    - fornication – (being sexual with someone before marriage)
    - uncleanness – (not being pure in thinking, watching bad movies)
    - (fleshly) passion – (indulging in video games with no self control)
    - evil desire – (the desire to hurt someone)
    - covetousness – (feeling greedy and wanting more brand name clothes)
    - anger – (blowing up at little brother)
    - wrath – (having an uncontrollable temper)
    - malice – (trash talking about someone to lower their popularity)
    - blasphemy – (using God’s name in vain)
    - filthy language – (using bad words when talking to friends)
    - lies – (lying to parents about the reason for coming home late)
  - Circle and number the top 5 bad qualities that you struggle with.
  - Write five determinations (one each) to help you strip away “old man” qualities in the next month (see Diagram 1):

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Diagram 1:

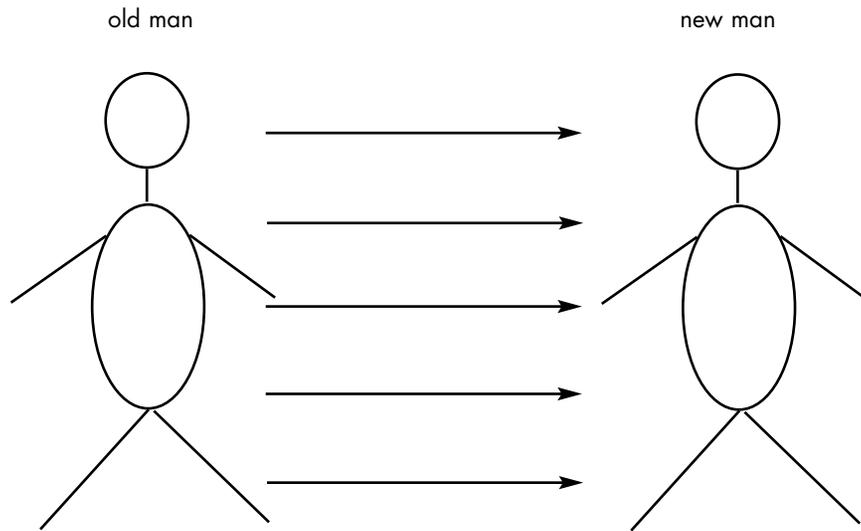
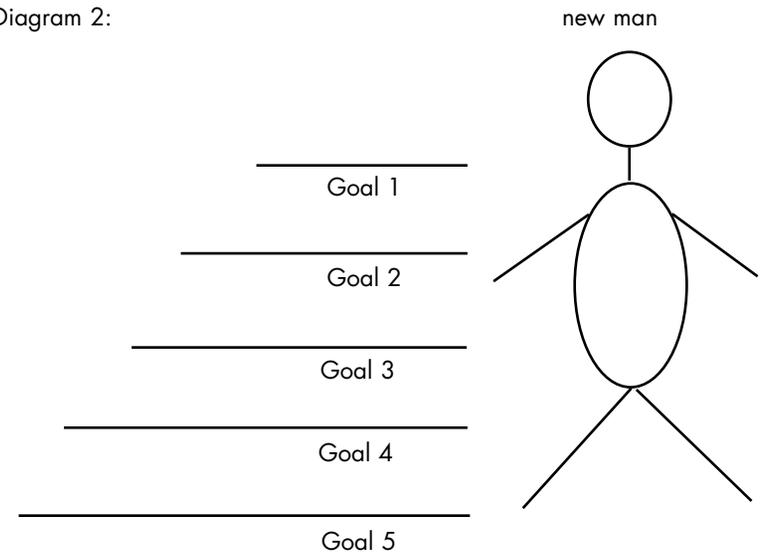


Diagram 2:



**b. Putting on the New Man**

1. Turn to Colossians 3:12-15. Please list all the qualities of the "new man."
  - a. holy
  - b. merciful
  - c. kind
  - d. humble
  - e. meek
  - f. longsuffering
  - g. bearing with one another
  - h. forgiving one another
  - i. loving
  - j. peaceful
  - k. thankful
  - l. the word of Christ dwells in him richly
  - m. teaches and admonishes one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs
  - n. sings with grace in his heart to the Lord
  - o. does everything in the name of Christ
2. Circle 5 "new man" qualities that can replace your "old man" struggles.
3. In Diagram 2, list each "new man" quality and one goal you can achieve in the next month to work toward becoming the "new man."

**R E F L E C T I O N   &   P R A Y E R**



*We must not take for granted our position and standing as a precious child of God. We were in bondage once, but our Lord Jesus paid a heavy price to bring us out of sin's clutches and into His redeeming grace. Since Christ died for us, there's nothing we need to do to "earn" our salvation. We don't have to use outward conduct such as starvation, circumcision, or observation of religious festivals to prove our faith. Yet, our world is filled with heresies that confuse us and make us doubt. At school or work, we will find people who use science, logic, philosophy, worldly wisdom, and traditions of men to attack or diminish our faith. In order to stand firm in Christ, we must be rooted and built up in the truth of the Bible. May we encourage each other to pursue a steadfast life in Christ and to renew our lives daily so we may keep our faith and boldly preach the word of God.*