

Colossians

Always. Only. Jesus.



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Dear Reader,

The Elders and staff at Bible Center Church are excited to jump into a verse-by-verse study of Colossians! In your hands is a study guide to assist you (or your group) in your reading, understanding, and applying of God's Word to your life. We want everyone to **Be in the Bible** and to form **HABITS** that transform us into the likeness of Christ.



Have a group
Attend Regularly
Be in the Bible
Invest Faithfully
Talk to God
Share your Faith

If you are using this guide in any way, please let us know (by scanning the code) that you will **Be in the Bible** and I will send you additional thoughts, tools and resources for your journey.



Colossians emphasizes the nature, preeminence, and sufficiency of Christ to a church faced with opposition and false teaching. Many are trying to get the Colossians to **subtract** from the Gospel and sufficiency of Christ by teaching the need to worship angels and practice self-denial to fully experience their salvation. Other false teachers are **adding** to the Gospel, suggesting that additional traditions and regulations need to be included for salvation.

Just like in Paul's day, we are pulled in both directions today. There are messages all around us questioning the sufficiency of Jesus and the Gospel. We must listen to the Words of Scripture and see if there are ways we are subtracting from or adding to the Gospel.

Like a lighthouse in a dark harbor, Colossians shines forth the message: **Always. Only. Jesus.**

Peace.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Graham". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mike Graham,
Pastor of Discipleship & Multiplication

How to Use This Study Guide

The following study guide can be used in a variety of ways: your personal study, with a friend, with your family, or with your group. It is divided up into nine sections (following the preaching schedule). The text is printed out for you to make notes and engage with the text. By writing, circling, and underlining the text, it becomes easier to make connections, process your thoughts, and truly learn and apply God's Word.

- Take a moment to read and review the **Historical Context** of Colossians before you jump into the study. You will most accurately understand the text when you have a working knowledge of the **author, audience and occasion** of the letter.
- **The Bible Project** (bibleproject.com) offers a great introductory video to Colossians. Scan the QR code to learn more.
- For each passage, you will first “Interact With the Text.”
- The passage will then conclude with an “Interpret and Apply the Text” section with five questions to answer (and discuss if you are in a group).



The passages could be read and studied together or they could be assigned as homework so that people come prepared with answers already prepared for discussion.

Colossians

Always. Only. Jesus.

HISTORICAL SETTING

Author: Paul (Timothy is with Paul). Paul was writing from prison.

Date: 60-62

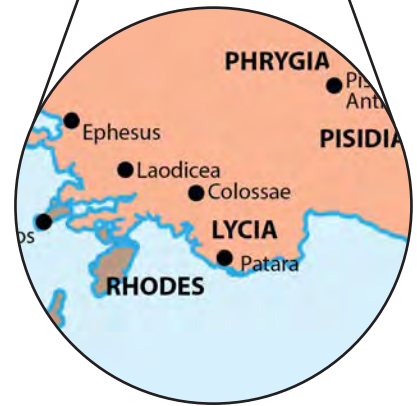
Location: Colossae was a second-rate market town. It had peaked centuries before and was struck by a major earthquake and became a very minor city even within its region. It is located 100 miles east of Ephesus in the region of the seven Asian churches of Revelation. It plays basically no role in church history after the death of Christ. In size and demographic comparisons to its larger neighbors, it may have been much like a West Virginia of its day.

This letter was also sent to the larger city of Laodicea located West of Colossae.



The Colossians: to the “saints and faithful brothers in Christ” (1:2)

- Paul has not personally met the Colossians, but he has heard about them from **Epaphras** (1:7-8). Paul had apparently not visited (1:4; 2:1). He may have visited later, but he was in prison when he wrote this Epistle (4:3, 10, 18).
- “Colossae was one of the least important places to which documents that were later canonized were ever sent.”¹
- Colossians is often considered a sister letter to Philemon and a twin letter to Ephesians.
- Epaphras was from Colossae and was probably instrumental in evangelizing the area (1:7, 4:12-13).
- Archippus seems to have had a leadership role (4:17; Philemon 2).
- A congregation met in the house of Philemon, apparently a wealthy slave owner. Onesimus was his slave who ran away and was converted under Paul’s ministry (4:9, Philemon 10).



Occasion: The church was swimming in a culture of polytheism, mysticism and spiritualism while the church itself seemed to have a sect of Judiazers pushing for an adherence to Old Testament laws and rituals. They were facing issues from within and from without. **Some were trying to add to the Gospel while others were subtracting from it.**

False teaching and syncretism (the squishing together of several religions) was eroding the person of Christ and the nature of Christian living (2:4). "It was apparently a religious system that combined elements from Greek speculation (2:4, 8-10), Jewish legalism (2:11-17), and Oriental mysticism (2:18-23). It involved a low view of the body (2:20-23) and probably nature as a whole. Circumcision, dietary regulation, and ritual observances were included in this system, which utilized asceticism (do not handle, do not touch), worship of angels and intermediaries, and mystical experiences as an approach to the spiritual realm" (Wilkinson & Boa, 412).

The Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to vehemently and uncompromisingly oppose this strange blend of religion and philosophy. It was a "self-made religion" (2:23), constructed by mere human wisdom (2:8). Paul contends that all fullness dwells in Christ and we have no need for any other mediator between us and God. Christ is the highest wisdom (2:2-3), and he is available to all people, not just an elite (1:26-28)

COLOSSIANS: ALWAYS. ONLY. JESUS.

Jesus Over All

- 1:1-8 Greeting & Thanksgiving
- 1:9-14 Prayer
- 1:15-17 The Supremacy of Christ
- 1:18-23 The Head of the Church

Jesus Alone

- 1:24-2:5 The Ministry of Paul
- 2:6-23 Christ versus False Teachings

Jesus in All

- 3:1-17 Christian Living
- 3:18-4:1 Christ in our Relationships
- 4:2-18 Sharing Christ and Final Greetings

CSB – The Christian Standard Bible: “The CSB uses optimal equivalence as its translation philosophy. In the many places throughout the Bible where a word-for-word rendering is understandable, a literal translation is used. When a word-for-word rendering might obscure the meaning for a modern audience, a more dynamic translation is used.”

The CSB was completed in 2016 and optimizes the strengths of the NASB (New American Standard Bible; word-for-word, literal equivalence) and the NIV (New International Version; phrase-for-phrase, dynamic equivalence).

No translation is perfect. Each translation has strengths and weaknesses. The best case scenario is that you use the CSB in conjunction with another translation (or two). The next level up would be using a commentary to help with a deeper dive into the original text (several are listed in the Bibliography section).

Colossians 1:1-8 (CSB)

Interact With the Text

1. *Circle stuff about the author.*
Who is the author?
Who is with him?
Is there anything he says to describe himself or those with him?
2. *Put a box around stuff about the recipients.*
What does Paul say about them?
How are they described?
3. *Underline info about the occasion.*
Why has Paul written the letter?
What has he heard about them?
4. *Give this section a descriptive title in the blank provided at the top of the passage.*

.....

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, and Timothy our brother:

²To the saints in Christ at Colossae, who are faithful brothers and sisters.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints ⁵because of the hope reserved for you in heaven. You have already heard about this hope in the word of truth, **the gospel** ⁶that has come to you. It is bearing fruit and growing all over the world, just as it has among you since the day you heard it and came to truly appreciate God's grace. ⁷You learned this from Epaphras, our dearly loved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, ⁸and he has told us about your love in the Spirit.

Interpret and Apply the Text

1. Paul has never personally met the Colossians. How does Paul describe himself to the Colossians?
2. What things has he heard about the Colossians?
3. Who brought the Gospel to the Colossians? What do we learn about him?
4. What do you learn about the Gospel from this passage?
5. In what ways is the Gospel bearing fruit in your life? How can God use you to increase the amount of fruit the Gospel is bearing around the world?

Colossians 1:9-14

Interact With the Text

1. Put a box around every reference to the Father and underline what we learn about Him and His work in our salvation.
2. Choose a different color and put a box around every reference to the Son and underline what we learn about Him and His work in salvation.
3. Give this section a title.

⁹**For this reason** also, since the day we heard this, we haven't stopped praying for you. We are asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, ¹⁰**so that** you may **walk** worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and growing in the knowledge of God, ¹¹being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, so that you may have great endurance and patience, joyfully ¹²*giving thanks* to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the saints' inheritance in the light. ¹³He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son he loves. ¹⁴In him we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Rescued / Delivered (Ruomai) - This verb is in the aorist tense that represents a completed one time action. "Properly denotes to draw with force and violence, to grab, pull, meaning to deliver or to draw out of danger or calamity and to liberate."²

Redemption - "Because we as sinners are in bondage to sin and to Satan, we need someone to provide redemption and thereby 'redeem' us out of that bondage. When we speak of redemption, the idea of 'ransom' comes into view. A ransom is the price paid to redeem someone from bondage or captivity. Jesus said of himself, 'for the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many' (Mark 10:45)."³

Interpret and Apply the Text

1. Paul is praying for the Colossians. What is he requesting from God for the Colossians?
2. What is the desired and expected result of their increased knowledge and spiritual wisdom and understanding (it comes after the “*so that*”)?
3. “**Walk** worthy of the Lord” is the main verb of this long Greek sentence. There are four participles (italized in the text) that describe what it looks like to “walk worthy of the Lord.” List these below. Which of these do you consistently see in your life and which one is an area of needed growth?
4. What stuck out to you the most about the work of the Father and the Son in your salvation?
5. Where do we find our redemption and forgiveness? What can happen if we think that we play a role or contribute to our forgiveness?

Colossians 1:15-17

Interact With the Text

1. Circle everything that we learn about Christ.
2. Underline everything you learn about Jesus' relationship with creation.
3. Give this section a title.

.....

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn over all creation.

¹⁶For everything was created by him,
in heaven and on earth,
the visible and the invisible,
whether thrones or dominions
or rulers or authorities—
all things have been created through him and for him.

¹⁷He is before all things,
and by him all things hold together.

Image - Eikon – to be like, resemble. A bodily representation, an image as of a man made of gold or silver. A monarch's likeness impressed on a coin. The reflection of the sun or moon on the water.⁴

Firstborn – is a tricky word. It does point to Jesus as the “firstborn” of Mary (Matt 1:25), but here it represents Christ as the one who existed before all things - preeminent in every way. Jesus is also the firstborn from the dead (Col. 1:18). It does not speak to a moment when Jesus came into being - as taught here, He is the Creator of all things!

Interpret and Apply the Text

1. Read John 14:8-9. How does Colossians 1:15 help us better understand what Jesus was teaching the disciples?
2. Describe Jesus' relationship with and to creation:
3. What do we learn about the purpose of creation in this section? How does this passage change your understanding of Genesis 1?
4. Read Psalm 19:1-2, how does creation respond to its Maker? What does this teach us about all of creation?
5. How does this change your view of yourself, your life, your family, and your stuff?

Colossians 1:18-23

Interact With the Text

1. Circle everything you learn about Christ.
2. Put a box around descriptions of us before we knew Christ.
3. Underline what is true of us after knowing Christ.
4. Give this section a title.

.....

¹⁸He is also the **head of the body**, the church;

he is the beginning,

the firstborn from the dead,

so that he might come to have

first place in everything.

¹⁹For God was pleased to have

all his fullness dwell in him,

²⁰and through him to reconcile

everything to himself,

whether things on earth or things in heaven,

by making peace

through his blood, shed on the cross.

²¹Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds as expressed in your evil actions. ²²But now he has reconciled you by his physical body

through his death, to present you holy, faultless, and blameless before

him—²³if indeed you remain grounded and steadfast in the faith and

are not shifted away from the hope of the gospel that you heard. This

gospel has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and I, Paul,

have become a servant of it.

Reconcile – to remove hostility and make peace.

Verses 15-20 is a hymn. Like most hymns or songs it crescendos. It begins with Jesus' supremacy over creation, it then describes Him as the **head of the church**, and the hymn ultimately crescendos in verse 20 with the Gospel—the work of Jesus on the cross.

Interpret and Apply the Text

1. What does it mean that Jesus is the **head of the church**? What did it cost Jesus for us to be reconciled to Him?
2. What do Colossians 1:15, 1:19 and 2:9 teach us about the deity of Christ?
3. In light of Colossians 1:13 & 1:21, how would our motivations, perceptions, and actions change if we could see our unsaved family members, friends, and neighbors as enslaved in “the domain of darkness” and “alienated and hostile” in their minds toward God?
4. How does Jesus present us before the Father (1:22)? Why do our feelings and thoughts often not align with this Gospel reality?
5. What do we learn about the centrality of the Gospel for Paul in 1:23? How can the Gospel be central in the life of every believer?

Colossians 1:24-2:5

Interact With the Text

1. *Underline how Paul describes his effort and his ministry.*
2. *Circle the word “mystery” and everything that explains what it is.*
3. *Give this section a title.*

.....

²⁴Now I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and *I am completing in my flesh what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for his body*, that is, the church. ²⁵I have become its servant, according to God’s commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, ²⁶the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints. ²⁷God wanted to make known among the Gentiles the glorious wealth of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸We proclaim him, warning and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. ²⁹I labor for this, striving with his strength that works powerfully in me.

^{2:1}For I want you to know how greatly I am struggling for you, for those in Laodicea, and for all who have not seen me in person. ²I want their hearts to be encouraged and joined together in love, so that they may have all the riches of complete understanding and have the knowledge of God’s mystery—Christ. ³In him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

⁴I am saying this so that no one will deceive you with arguments that sound reasonable. ⁵For I may be absent in body, but I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see how well ordered you are and the strength of your faith in Christ.

Interpret and Apply the Text

1. What sticks out to you in this passage about Paul's heart and commitment to ministry?
2. What is the mystery that has been made known? How was it "hidden for ages and generations"? What is our "hope of glory"?
3. Verse 1:28 - Highlight the word "everyone." Paul passionately proclaims (evangelizes) and teaches (disciples) everyone. What is his end goal? How would our day-to-day life change if this was our primary goal?
4. Paul's passion comes from his belief in the supremacy of Jesus and priceless value of the Gospel (1:15-23). How can we increase our passion for Jesus and the Gospel?
5. Based upon 2:4-5, what is Paul's next concern?

Verse 1:24 — ***I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's suffering.*** — "Paul is not, of course, suggesting that the redemptive suffering of Christ requires any supplementation. As 1:19-20 and 2:15 in this letter make clear (quite apart from the evidence of other Pauline letters), Paul is convinced that Christ's death on the cross is completely and finally capable of taking care of the human sin problem.

"It is not that there is anything lacking 'in' the atoning suffering of Christ but that there is something lacking 'in regard to' the tribulations that pertain to Christ as the Messiah as he is proclaimed in the world. The difference may even be suggested in the vocabulary that Paul uses, since he shifts from 'sufferings' (Greek pathema) to 'afflictions' (thlipsis), this latter word never being used in the New Testament for Christ's redemptive sufferings."⁵

Colossians 2:6-23

Interact With the Text

1. Circle the work of Jesus in our salvation (particularly 2:9-15).
2. Underline any way that people are adding to or subtracting from the work of Jesus in the Gospel (particularly 2:16-23).
3. Give this section a title.

.....

⁶So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in him, ⁷being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude.

⁸Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elements of the world, rather than Christ. ⁹For the entire fullness of God's nature dwells bodily in Christ, ¹⁰and you have been filled by him, who is the head over every ruler and authority. ¹¹You were also circumcised in him with a circumcision not done with hands, by putting off the body of flesh, in the circumcision of Christ, ¹²when you were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. ¹³And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, he made you alive with him and forgave us all our trespasses. ¹⁴He erased the certificate of debt, with its obligations, that was against us and opposed to us, and has taken it away by nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵He disarmed the rulers and authorities and disgraced them publicly; he triumphed over them in him.

¹⁶**Therefore**, don't let anyone judge you in regard to food and drink or in the matter of a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day. ¹⁷These are a **shadow** of what was to come; the **substance** is Christ. ¹⁸Let no one condemn you by delighting in ascetic practices and the worship of

angels, claiming access to a visionary realm. Such people are inflated by empty notions of their unspiritual mind. ¹⁹They don't hold on to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and tendons, grows with growth from God.

²⁰If you died with Christ to the elements of this world, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations:

²¹"Don't handle, don't taste, don't touch?" ²²All these regulations refer to what is destined to perish by being used up; they are human commands and doctrines. ²³Although these have a reputation for wisdom by promoting self-made religion, false humility, and severe treatment of the body, they are not of any value in curbing self-indulgence.

Therefore – notice that this word connects the following concerns and commands to the content of 2:8-15. It is because of the work of Jesus they must view the following practices and beliefs as dangerous and wrong.

Ascetic practices – refers to actions of avoidance or refusal over particular foods, drinks, or activities. It is an attempt to use self-denial to make one more spiritually "perfect."

Interpret and Apply the Text

1. Describe the warning given in 2:8. Why do we have a tendency to drift from Christ?
2. Verses 2:9-15 - What sticks out to you about the supremacy of Christ in our salvation in these verses?
3. Describe the difference between **shadow** and **substance** (2:17). What are the shadows people are relying upon instead of Christ?
4. **Subtracting from the Gospel:** 2:16-19 In each of the examples of “**shadows**” given in 2:16-19, there is an underlying theme that Jesus is not enough. Some are using self-denial while others are turning to angels and visions to make up for what they perceive to be a **lack in Jesus and His work on the cross**. Paul denounces their actions as a disconnection from Christ - the head of the church (2:19).

Verses 2:10-23 - How do we see people adding to the work of the Gospel in these verses?

5. **Adding to the Gospel:** Instead of relying on Jesus and trusting in His sufficiency, some are adding rules and regulations (self-made religion and false humility) believing that they are now considered more acceptable before God. They are **adding** to the Gospel!

There is a constant tendency within the church and each of us to **add or subtract** from the Gospel. Why does this happen? Can you see it presently in any of your tendencies, actions, or thoughts?

Colossians 3:1-17

Interact With the Text

1. *Underline in red the things we are supposed to “put off” (things we are not supposed to do).*
2. *Underline in blue the things we are to “put on” (things we are supposed to do).*
3. *Give this section a title.*

¹So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

⁵**Therefore, put to death** what belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry.

⁶Because of these, God’s wrath is coming upon the disobedient, ⁷and you once walked in these things when you were living in them. ⁸But now, **put away** all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, since you have **put off** the old self with its practices ¹⁰and have **put on** the new self. You are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your Creator. ¹¹In Christ there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all.

¹²**Therefore**, as God’s chosen ones, holy and dearly loved, **put on** compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, ¹³bearing with one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a grievance against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you are also to forgive. ¹⁴Above all, **put on** love, which is the perfect bond of unity. ¹⁵And let the peace of Christ, to which you were also called in one body, rule your hearts. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Interpret and Apply the Text

1. In the previous section, Paul teaches the supremacy of Christ and the sufficiency of His work in the Gospel. Chapter 3 is the application of that truth to Christian living. What truths do we learn about our salvation in verses 3:1-4?
2. How does our mindset (focus) change our thoughts and behaviors?
3. List the things we are to “put off.” Circle two things from your list that you would like to work on.
4. List the things you are to “put on.” Circle two things from your list that you would like to work on.
5. How can you work on these areas of growth? How will you incorporate other people?

Colossians 3:18-4:1

Interact With the Text

1. Circle each audience / group that he is addressing and then underline the instructions given to them.
2. In the margin, write out the names of the people in your life who are living in each of these roles.
3. Give this section a title.

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¹⁸Wives, **submit** yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹Husbands, **love** your wives and don't be bitter toward them.

²⁰Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

²¹Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they won't become discouraged. ²²Slaves, obey your human masters in everything. Don't work only while being watched, as people-pleasers, but work wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. ²³Whatever you do, do it **from the heart**, as something done for the Lord and not for people, ²⁴knowing that you will receive the reward of an inheritance from the Lord. You serve the Lord Christ. ²⁵For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong he has done, and there is no favoritism.

^{4:1}Masters, deal with your slaves justly and fairly, since you know that you too have a Master in heaven.

Slaves / Masters – This first century relationship was more than an employer / employee relationship (though some of these principles can be applied to an employer / employee relationship). The master would basically own and be responsible for the slave. The book of Philemon informs our understanding of this context (our American history is not the context). In Philemon, Paul encouraged Philemon (the master) to consider Onesimus (the slave) first as a brother in the Lord (Philemon 15-16). Every 'one another' expectation for love in the New Testament would have been expected in this relationship. And the master of the household is quickly reminded that he lives under the authority of the Master in heaven (4:1).

Master in heaven – Everyone on this list, including earthly masters, are all slaves to Jesus - the ultimate "Master in heaven." Each person first lives their lives under the rule and authority of Jesus and His commandments and expectations.

Interpret and Apply the Text

1. Which relationships apply to you? How are you and your family doing at living out the Biblical expectations of the household?
2. What are your thoughts on how the word “submit” is to be understood in this verse? How is it lived out appropriately and how is it lived out inappropriately?
3. Everyone lives in submission. We live in submission to the Lord and to one another.
 - Jesus submits to the Father – John 6:38, 12:50
 - We are to submit to one another – Ephesians 5:21
 - All of us submit to God – James 4:7

And in each circumstance, we are to be loved by the one to whom we are called to submit. What happens if love is taken out of this equation (see Ephesians 5:25-30 as the description and expectations of this love)?

4. Verse 3:23 - There is a principle in this verse that seems applicable to every role listed in this section. How do you know if you are doing something “from the heart” (other translation, “with all of your heart”)? What prevents or hinders us from doing something with all of our heart?
5. Jesus is called our Lord, our Savior, our Brother, our Shepherd... What is the significance of Jesus being called our “Master in heaven” in verse 4:1? How does this change or add to your understanding and view of Jesus?

Colossians 4:2-18

Interact With the Text

1. *Underline anything new that you learn about Paul, his condition, or the occasion for the letter (make sure you notice what is in 4:16).*
2. *Put a box around everything said about prayer.*
3. *Circle each person listed and put a bracket around anything said about them.*
4. *Give this section a title.*

²Devote yourselves to prayer; stay alert in it with thanksgiving. ³At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains, ⁴so that I may make it known as I should. ⁵Act wisely toward outsiders, **making the most of the time.** ⁶Let your **speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt**, so that you may know how you should answer each person.

⁷Tychicus, our dearly loved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. ⁸I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know how we are and so that he may encourage your hearts. ⁹He is coming with Onesimus, a faithful and dearly loved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you about everything here.

¹⁰Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you greetings, as does Mark, Barnabas's cousin (concerning whom you have received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), ¹¹and so does Jesus who is called Justus. These alone of the circumcised are my coworkers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. ¹²Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. He is always wrestling for you in his prayers, so that you can stand mature and fully assured in everything God wills. ¹³For I testify about him that he works hard for you, for those in Laodicea, and for those in Hierapolis. ¹⁴Luke, the dearly loved physician, and Demas send you greetings. ¹⁵Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her home. ¹⁶After this letter has been read at your gathering, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. ¹⁷And tell Archippus, "Pay attention to the ministry you have received in the Lord, so that you can accomplish it."

¹⁸I, Paul, am writing this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

Interpret and Apply the Text

1. How would you describe and define the word “**devote**”? How do you know if you are devoted to something?
2. Paul is requesting prayer; what is his prayer request?
3. List some people in your life (you can just use initials) you would like to pray for—pray that they’ll be open to spiritual conversations.
4. What does it look like to “**make the most of the time**” and to speak with “**gracious**” speech?
5. Pick two people mentioned and described in 4:7-18 whom you find interesting. Using the notes in your Bible, a concordance, or a simple word search on Google (e.g.: verses about Demas in the Bible), write out what you learn about this individual.

Final Thoughts

How would you summarize the main point of the book of Colossians into a sentence or two?

What are your big takeaways / application points from Colossians?

What will be the next thing you read and study?

Footnotes

1. Pao, *Colossians & Philemon*, p. 24
2. Zodhiates, *The Complete WordStudy Dictionary*, p. 954
3. Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, p. 580
4. Zodhiates, *The Complete WordStudy Dictionary*, p. 909
5. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, p. 151

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