



See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ.
Colossians 2:8

COLOSSIANS: FOCUSING ON JESUS IN A BLURRY WORLD

Our world can be a confusing place because of its ever increasing pace, the massive volume of information, the influence of other religions, and the loud promotion of tolerance as the highest ideal. How are we as Christians to remain rooted deep in our faith when challenged from so many angles? We are comforted when we realize this is not the first time Christians have been challenged by the culture to waver in their faith. And thankfully the solution is the same today as it was nearly 2000 years ago, “Jesus is ALL, and He’s ALL you need!” The message of the book of Colossians is strikingly relevant as it focuses our attention on Jesus in a blurry world.

BACKGROUND ON COLOSSIANS

Author: The Apostle Paul (1:1; 4:18) **Date:** Early 60’s AD

Place of Writing: A prison in Rome (4:3, 10, 18)

Recipients: Christians in the town of Colossae. “Several hundred years before Paul's day, Colossae had been a leading city in Asia Minor (present-day Turkey). It was located on the Lycus River and on the great east-west trade route leading from Ephesus on the Aegean Sea to the Euphrates River. By the first century AD Colossae was diminished to a second-rate market town, which had been surpassed long before in power and importance by the neighboring towns of Laodicea and Hierapolis (see 4:13).

~ NIV Study Bible, *Introductions to the Books of the Bible, Colossians*, Copyright 2002
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Overview: “The church at Colossae apparently got its start during Paul’s three-year ministry in Ephesus (AD 52–55). During this time, a Colossian named Epaphras probably traveled to Ephesus and responded to Paul’s proclamation of the gospel (see Acts 19:10). This new believer returned to his hometown and began sharing the good news of Christ, which resulted in the birth of the Colossian church (Col. 1:7). At the time of this writing, Epaphras is with Paul in Rome and has likely shared the bad news that there was a dangerous teaching threatening the church at Colossae (4:12). Paul writes this letter to respond to this situation and to encourage these believers in their growth toward Christian maturity.”

~ <http://esvstudybible.org/wp-content/uploads/excerpt-colossians-intro.pdf>

Purpose: To focus the believers on the absolute supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus Christ (1:13-23; 2:8-15), as opposed to the false teachings which were threatening to derail them. The precise content of these heretical teachings are not known, but we can surmise from Paul’s arguments in 2:16-23 that they contained elements of Jewish legalism (2:16) and Greek mysticism (2:18).

Key Memory Verses

- 1:15-20
- 2:8-10
- 3:1-4
- 3:17
- 3:23-24

Basic Outline

- I. Introduction (1:1-14)
 - A. Greetings (1:1-2)
 - B. Thanksgiving (1:3-8)
 - C. Prayer (1:9-14)
- II. The Supremacy of Christ (1:15-23)
- III. Paul's Labor for the Church (1:24-2:7)
 - A. His ministry for the sake of the Church (1:24-29)
 - B. His concern for the spiritual welfare of his readers (2:1-7)
- IV. Freedom from Human Regulations through Life with Christ (2:8-23)
 - A. Warning to guard against the false teachers (2:8-15)
 - B. Pleas to reject the false teachers (2:16-19)
 - C. An analysis of the heresy (2:20-23)
- V. Rules for holy living (3:1-4:6)
 - A. The old self and the new self (3:1-17)
 - B. Rules for Christian households (3:18-4:1)
 - C. Further instructions (4:2-6)
- VI. Final Greetings and Benediction (4:7-18)

~ NIV Study Bible, Introductions to the Books of the Bible, Colossians, Copyright 2002 © Zondervan, <http://www.biblestudytools.com/colossians/>

STUDY GUIDE

Day 1 – Focusing on Jesus through Prayer – Part 1

Read: Colossians 1:1-5a

Reflect:

- ❖ According to this passage, for what should you be thankful?

- ❖ For whom could you give thanks to God for their example of faith in Christ and their love for others?

Respond: Give thanks for Christ's forgiveness and Christ's church.

Day 2 – Focusing on the Gospel

Read: Colossians 1:5-8

Reflect:

- ❖ What are some effects of the gospel message listed in these verses?

- ❖ How have you shown yourself to be convinced of the power of the gospel?

Respond: Praise God for the truthfulness of the gospel. Pray that it will continue to bear fruit and increase throughout the world.

Day 3 – Focusing on Prayer – Part 2

Read: Colossians 1:9-12

Reflect:

❖ How have you seen this prayer answered in your own life?

❖ For whom could you pray this prayer?

Respond: Pray this prayer for yourself and for at least one other person.

Day 4 – Focusing on Jesus' Supremacy – Part 1

Read: Colossians 1:13-23

Reflect:

❖ Make 2 lists answering these questions: Who is Jesus? What has He accomplished?

❖ What attribute or accomplishment of Jesus is especially meaningful to you? Why?

Respond: Worship Jesus for His supremacy.

Day 5 – Focusing on Jesus’ Supremacy - Part 2

Read: Colossians 1:13-23

Reflect:

- ❖ In what area(s) of your life is Jesus in second place? What needs to happen to give Him His proper place as first? (1:18)

- ❖ How have you demonstrated steadfastness in your faith in Christ? (1:23)

Respond: Speak honestly with the Lord about any area where you have allowed other things to take precedent over Him.

Day 6 – Focusing on Ministry for Jesus

Read: Colossians 1:24-2:5

Reflect:

- ❖ What are some difficult aspects of being involved in ministry?

- ❖ What goal are we striving to reach as we minister to others? (1:28)

Respond: Ask the Lord to give you the focus and strength to minister to others for Him.

Day 7 – Focusing on Jesus’ Sufficiency – Part 1

Read: Colossians 2:6-15

Reflect:

- ❖ List the many ways in which you have been united with Christ.

- ❖ What are the implications of Colossians 2:10 for your life?

Respond: Worship Jesus for His character and celebrate the 100% assurance you have in Him.

Day 8 – Focusing on Jesus’ Sufficiency – Part 2

Read: Colossians 2:16-23

Reflect:

- ❖ In what ways are you tempted to rely on yourself for salvation?

- ❖ Name some ways in which you need to walk in the freedom that is yours in Christ.

Respond: Confess any way(s) in which you have not fully relied on God’s grace. Thank God for the freedom you have in Christ.

Day 9 – Focusing on the Eternal

Read: Colossians 3:1-4

Reflect:

- ❖ What earthly things are distracting you from having an eternal mindset?

- ❖ How do the truths of 3:1 and 3:4 help you evaluate your current focus?

Respond: Ask the Lord to help the focus of your heart be on eternal matters.

Day 10 – Refocusing My Life

Read: Colossians 3:5-11

Reflect:

- ❖ List the deeds of the “old self” with which you are currently struggling. Write down an attribute of the “new self” which needs to replace them.

- ❖ How have you seen God renew your character since you’ve trusted Christ?

Respond: Praise God that He is at work in you, making you into a new creation.

Day 11 – Focusing on Right Relationships

Read: Colossians 3:12-14

Reflect:

- ❖ With which of the listed Christ-like attributes do you most struggle?

- ❖ With which person is God asking you to practice these attributes? How and when will you do it?

Respond: Ask the Lord to develop these Christ-like characteristics in your life, so you can show His love to others.

Day 12 – Focusing on Jesus in Daily Life

Read: Colossians 3:15-17

Reflect:

- ❖ How are you doing at having the word of Christ richly dwell within you?

- ❖ How can you daily surrender your heart to Jesus so that 3:17 is true of you?

Respond: Dear Jesus, please let Your peace and Your word so saturate my life that whatever I do is an act of worship and thanksgiving.

Day 13 – Focusing My Family on Jesus

Read: Colossians 3:18-21

Reflect:

- ❖ How can the family display the supremacy of Christ?

- ❖ How do you need to more fully surrender to Jesus so that you obey these commands for the family?

Respond: Seek the Lord, inviting Him to have first place in your family or future family.

Day 14 – Focusing on Jesus at Work

Read: Colossians 3:22-4:1

Reflect:

- ❖ What focus should Christian employees have in their work?

- ❖ Why should Christian employees and employers work for the Lord?

Respond: Confess any sinful attitude you've had about your work. Sincerely ask God to rearrange your focus so that you are working for Him.

Day 15 – Focusing on Sharing Jesus with Others

Read: Colossians 4:2-6

Reflect:

- ❖ What role does prayer play in evangelism? For whom are you praying?

- ❖ In what two ways are you to be a witness for Christ? What specific step do you need to take to be a witness for Christ?

Respond: Pray that God will open a door for the gospel message among your loved ones. Pray also that you will clearly speak and display the gospel.

Day 16 – Focusing on Serving Jesus – Part 1

Read: Colossians 4:7-11

Reflect:

- ❖ What words are used to describe the ministers listed in these verses?

- ❖ How have you shown yourself to be a faithful minister for the Lord?

Respond: Lord Jesus, I need your help to faithfully fulfill the ministry you have given me. Teach my heart to be wholly surrendered to You so others will be touched by your grace.

Day 17 – Focusing on Serving Jesus – Part 2

Read: Colossians 4:12-18

Reflect:

- ❖ What aspects of Epaphras' ministry are challenging to you?

- ❖ For whom does the Lord want you to “labor earnestly in prayer”?

Respond: Give thanks to the Lord for those who have prayed earnestly for you. Pray for a fellow Christian to “stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.”

Focusing on Jesus in a Blurry World Highlights

Summarize what God has taught you from the book of Colossians.