

## A STUDY OF COLOSSIANS

Is there  
More?



HOPE  
KNOWLEDGE  
VISION  
GOSPEL  
GROWTH  
FREEDOM  
FOCUS  
UNITY  
SERVING  
DEVOTION  
PURPOSE



MONTGOMERY  
COMMUNITY  
CHURCH

Everyone wants to  
**LIVE FOR MORE...**

**HOPE.**  
**KNOWLEDGE.**  
**VISION.**  
**GOSPEL.**  
**GROWTH.**  
**FREEDOM.**  
**FOCUS.**  
**UNITY.**  
**SERVING.**  
**DEVOTION.**  
**PURPOSE.**

What kind of  
**MORE** are you pursuing?

Are you pursuing the kind of  
more that just brings more of what  
you already have?

Or is it the kind that brings  
life transformation?

This **pursuit of MORE**  
that brings life change  
begins with following the guidelines  
we read in Scripture.

**Join us as we spend time  
studying and learning from the  
Epistle (a letter) written to the Colossians.**  
We'll hear a sermon each week, then use  
this companion study guide with family,  
friends, or your Life Group to gain a deeper  
understanding of **living for more of Christ.**

## A STUDY OF COLOSSIANS

*Is there More?*

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## THERE ARE 3 SECTIONS EACH WEEK:

*Sermon Takeaways*

In this space, write your key takeaways from each sermon.

Use your notes to enhance discussions with your family or group.

*Digging Deeper*

When you meet with your family or group, start by reading the entire passage together. Discuss your sermon takeaways, then use the questions provided as an opportunity to go deeper and discover how these Scriptural truths can impact your life.

*Personal Reflection & Study*

At the end of each week, you will be challenged with personal insights, additional readings to connect with the passage that week, and a prayer focus to reflect on what you've learned.



# History

COLOSSAE

WEEK 1 **COLOSSIANS 1:1-2**

Is there More?

**Colossians is named for the city where the church was located: COLOSSAE.**

Because Colossae was originally located at the center of the main trade routes, it had once been a thriving and major commercial center. However, in the centuries to follow, the main road was re-routed to go through Laodicea, and Colossae eventually began to decline.

During the time Paul was building the church in Ephesus, one of his leaders, Epaphras, took the gospel to Colossae and established the church there.

Paul sent this letter to the church in Colossae through Tychicus and the converted slave Onesimus (whom we read about in Philemon). Interestingly, Paul never actually visited the church in Colossae, making this letter to the people there so significant. Without a visit, he needed to write this letter to combat some of the false teachings that had started to creep up. Because the church was predominantly Gentile, pagan beliefs and ungodly practices were beginning to have influence over the people, and some Jewish Christians in Colossae were practicing legalism.

**Paul wrote this letter while he was imprisoned in Rome.** How amazing that someone in prison encourages others!

Did You Know?

*These false teachings were a part of Gnosticism. This damaging heresy taught a dualism between spirit and matter. Gnostics believed that matter is inherently evil and spirit is good. In other words, anything done in the body, no matter what the sin, had no meaning because life only truly existed in the spirit realm. Gnostics believed they had a higher knowledge that was only known to a few, and they used this thinking to claim that salvation is gained only through this knowledge – and not from Jesus.*

SERMON TAKEAWAYS



# Digging Deeper

**1** As with each of his Epistles, Paul opens with validation to explain his identity to the readers of his letter. Paul states that he is an apostle of Jesus Christ.

Why do you think he introduced himself this way? What is the difference between an apostle and a disciple?

What are two or three words that you would use to introduce and define yourself to others? Would you use these types of words to describe yourself: I am a husband, a wife, a parent...or would you use these types of words to describe who you are: I am an accountant, a janitor, a vice-president?

How often do you start a conversation with, "Hello my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a follower of Jesus?"

**3** Paul had never visited Colossae, but he was greatly concerned about their well-being. He strongly desired for them to live for more, but to do it correctly.

Discuss examples of things people desire that are detrimental to a fruitful Christian life.

Be honest - what do you desire to have more of in life? Do your desires match up to what God desires for you? Why or why not?

What are some deterrents to deep discipleship in Christ?

**4** It is often said that Paul mentored Timothy. He equipped Timothy to serve as a church leader, to deepen his faith, and to remind Timothy of his value in extending the Gospel.

Have you been mentored by someone in faith? Can you share the benefits of that relationship?

Can you think of a person that you could mentor?

Why do you think Paul included Timothy's name in this opening to his letter? Read the following passages to help you learn more about Paul's relationship with Timothy.

**ACTS 16:1-3**

**ROMANS 16:21**

**1 CORINTHIANS 4:17**

**1 CORINTHIANS 16:10-11**

**PHILIPPIANS 2:19**

**1 THESSALONIANS 3:2, 6**

*Did You Know?*

"Christ" is not the last name of Jesus – but a title. It comes from the Greek word *christos*, which means "anointed one". The Hebrew equivalent is *mashiach*, which translates to "messiah".

**2** In verse 2, Paul addresses the people of Colossae as "faithful brothers and sisters in Christ."

What does "in Christ" mean? How does "in Christ" differ from just saying that you love Christ?

Jews would never have referred to Gentiles as "brothers and sisters" in this society. But Paul was a devout Jew, and the people of Colossae were primarily Gentiles. What is the implication of this?

*Did You Know?*

The early believers were Christians, that is, Christ's men, but they were not merely a group of followers of a man, like many other groups of whom the Empire at that time was full. So they never used that name themselves. It occurs twice only in Scripture, once when King Agrippa was immensely amused at the audacity of Paul in thinking that he would easily make 'a Christian' of him; and once when Peter speaks of 'suffering as a Christian,' where he is evidently quoting, as it were, the indictment on which the early believers were tried and punished. What did they call themselves then?

Alexander MacLaren (1826-1910), a Baptist preacher from Manchester, England

# Is there More?

We all wish we had more of something. Sometimes we think if we had more income, we could have a better life. Some of us think if we had more love from our spouse or family, we would be happier. And nearly all of us think we need more time. But does any of that bring life transformation? This week, pray that God reveals to you the gaps in your life – the aspects of life you really do need more of to be the person God created you to be.

**Read through all of Colossians in one sitting as if you were reading a letter written to you personally.** Pause often as you read, praying and asking God to speak to you through His Word.

# More Hope



# Digging Deeper

**1** “Faith, hope and love” is a familiar trio in Scripture (1 Cor. 13:13, 1 Thess. 1:3, 1 Thess. 5:8.) But faith and love can only be fully realized when pursuing more of the right kind of hope.

**1 PETER 1:3-4**

**HEBREWS 11:1**

**ROMANS 8:24-25**

What is the right kind of hope? Read these verses and use them to discuss why we need hope.

How does biblical hope differ from other forms of hope?

Which of these Christian virtues are most challenging for you personally: faith, hope or love?

**2** When we pray, we pray for ourselves, we pray for others, we might even pray for non-believers and the world around us. But we are also called to pray for the church. Take a few minutes right now to pray for Montgomery Community Church.

**3** In Colossians 1:4, Paul says, “We have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus...” This is amazing considering that Paul was in Rome, over 1,300 miles away – in a time with no internet or cell phones.

Other than people you know from church, who has heard of your faith in Jesus?

What would neighbors, co-workers, or extended family members say about your faith?

Paul says in verse 6 that “the gospel is bearing fruit...”

How does the gospel bear fruit?

Does fruit-bearing have to be grand to be impactful?

What is one way the gospel is bearing fruit in your life?

All three persons of the Trinity are mentioned in this passage. Identify where that occurs. The doctrine of the trinity is one of the hardest biblical concepts to understand. Discuss what the doctrine of a triune God means, and your own difficulties in understanding the Trinity.

*Did You Know?*

The word “Trinity” is never mentioned in Scripture. It is a term that we use to attempt to describe God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Epaphras started the church in Colossae because Paul instilled that same hope in him that Jesus instilled in Paul.

What are the ways you think Paul instilled that hope?

Share the names of someone’s writing that instilled hope in you. How can you instill that hope in the life of someone you know?

What does it mean to “love in the Spirit” (verse 8)?

# More Hope

This week spend some time thinking about hope. Think about what you typically hope for in life. Are those hopes aligned with what God hopes for you? Hope is more than wishful thinking. Biblical hope is the confident expectation that God will be present, that He will be your strength, that what is to come is better than what is now. And as Paul always prayed for the church, spend time praying for Montgomery Community Church – that we will continue to move forward in our mission to be a diverse community seeing future generations transformed by the Gospel.

**Read through all of Colossians again this week, but try a new version, like the NLT, NASB, or ESV.** Specifically pray when the text mentions prayer and give thanks when it mentions gratitude. Additionally, read Romans 5:1-5 and Romans 12:9-13. Ponder how you can have more hope and spread more hope to others.

# More Knowledge



# Digging Deeper

## 1 Verse 9 starts the passage where Paul says, “We have not stopped praying for you.”

How often have you said the words, “I will pray for you” without actually praying for that person? The other person does not know you did not say that prayer – so where is the harm?

When someone is in crisis, we pray often for them.  
But how often do we pray when times are good, and why would that be needed?

What keeps us from a more authentic prayer life?

## 2 Knowledge is important, but simply acquiring knowledge is not always helpful.

How can we take the knowledge we gain and apply it meaningfully to where God wants us to?

Discuss what kind of knowledge is important to pursue as we are all bombarded with all sorts of news, entertainment, and information.

## 3 Paul asks God to fill us all with the knowledge of his will. What are ways Christians can discover God’s will for their lives?

## 4 In verse 10, Paul describes what a “life worthy of the Lord” would look like. Discuss practical ways you can begin to implement these two aspects in your life:

- Bearing fruit in every good work
- Growing in the knowledge of God

*Did You Know?*

*“Faith rests not on ignorance, but on knowledge. And this is, indeed, knowledge not only of God but of the divine will.”*  
-John Calvin,  
Institutes of the Christian Religion

Compare “spiritual wisdom” to the wisdom and advice you receive from social media, political and educational sources.

In verse 12, Paul tells the Colossians they have been qualified to “share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.” This statement was possibly intended to partly counteract the idea that Jews were exclusively due the inheritance as descendants of the Israelites since the Promised Land belonged to Israel, and each tribe received a portion of the land.

Discuss what the inheritance is in this context and who should be able to receive it.

How would you feel if your parents left their estate to strangers?

How would you describe the “dominion of darkness” mentioned in verse 13?

Read the following Scriptures to aid in this discussion.

Jesus rescued us from the dominion of darkness – who are you helping to lead to the light that He brings?

MATTHEW 25:41  
ROMANS 6:23  
ACTS 26:18

WEEK 3

# More Knowledge

This week spend time connecting the knowledge you gain from reading the Bible and hearing sermons, to applying the knowledge of spiritual wisdom. Reflect on the steps you can take to grow in that knowledge. The more time we spend with Him, the more we will know what it is that God wants us to learn.

**Read James 1:5-8.** Begin the habit of praying for wisdom before you read Scripture. God will give wisdom generously to all who ask. He wants to teach you and reveal truth to you, but you will receive so much more when you ask. Go to [Biblegateway.com](http://Biblegateway.com) and search "knowledge." Pray God would give you wisdom and teach you as you read through additional verses on knowledge.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & STUDY

WEEK 4 **COLOSSIANS 1:15-20**

# More Vision

SERMON TAKEAWAYS



# Digging Deeper

1

After reading this week's passage, read Proverbs 8:22-31. How are these passages similar? How are they different?

2

Paul uses the term "the firstborn over all creation" in verse 15. The word "firstborn" signified priority or rank and did not refer to birth order. Read through the Scriptures below and discuss how the term "the firstborn over all creation" points to Christ's supremacy.

MATTHEW 28:18  
PSALM 89:27  
ROMANS 8:29  
REVELATION 1:5

3

In verse 17, Paul writes "in him all things hold together." In light of the chaotic world we live in (wars, Covid, political division, terrorism, even natural disasters), how is Jesus holding all things together? Discuss how Jesus holds you together in day-to-day life.

4

Christ as the head of the body is a theme throughout many of Paul's letters. What does Scripture mean when it refers to Christ as the "head?"

The "fullness" is a reference to the temple in the Old Testament when it was filled with the Presence of God. How does this definition provide a deeper understanding of the context of verse 19?

EXODUS 40:34-35  
1 KINGS 8:10-11

Did You Know?

The word "fullness" in Greek is: *pleroma*. In Gnosticism, it meant the totality of God's divine power. But in Christianity, fullness means the totality of the Godhead dwelling in Christ.

Some Bible scholars believe verses 15-20 take the form of a hymn. Why do you think Paul chose this format? How does reading this passage as a hymn enhance the reading of these verses?

This passage addresses the false teachers in Colossae who denied supremacy of Christ. What are three words you would use to describe Jesus? Are they the same words you would use if you were speaking to a non-Christian?

Knowledge does give you power. Knowledge can even give you a sense of control over others. Many of us can say we "know" God – but explain the difference between knowing about God and knowing God?

WEEK 4

# More Vision

Knowledge is power. But what we do with that power is so vitally important. Sharing our knowledge of God is using power in a positive way. This week spend time in prayer focusing on how you can share your knowledge with others. Think about whether you know more about God rather than knowing more of God. Think about whether you know God intellectually more than you know God relationally.

**Read Revelation 1-3.** Pay particular attention to all the ways Jesus is described in these chapters. Spend some time praising Jesus for who He is and asking God to help you know Him more as you read.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & STUDY

WEEK 5 **COLOSSIANS 1:21-29**

# More Gospel

SERMON TAKEAWAYS



# Digging Deeper

1

How would you define “Gospel?”

- a. The first four books of the New Testament
- b. The teachings of Jesus
- c. The general message of the Bible
- d. The Good News
- e. A type of music
- f. All of the above

2

When Scripture tells us to go into the world with the Gospel, what does that mean for us as individuals today?

3

How do you explain the ability to rejoice under suffering? Why is Paul saying he is suffering for the people of Colossae?

4

It was important for Paul to remind the people they had an obligation to be faithful. Why would a Christ follower need to be reminded to be faithful?

5

Alienation can be described as a feeling of isolation, loneliness, or separation. Have you ever felt “alienated from God?” What caused you to feel that way, and how did you resolve those feelings?

6

The term “without blemish” referred to Old Testament requirements for animal sacrifice (see Exodus 12:5). Why would it have been a requirement for an animal to be without blemish to be a good sacrifice? Why are we no longer required to sacrifice animals (See John 1:29, Hebrews 7:27 and 9:22)? How are we presented to God “without blemish” if we are still sinners?

*Did You Know?*

*Legalism is the belief that by doing good works, you earn salvation. In other words, by obeying the law, you gain God's approval and more of God's love. Legalism puts a stronger focus on God's law than on a personal relationship with God, and puts aside the concept of grace. Just like with the word “Trinity”, “legalism” is not a word used in the Bible, but its principles are evident throughout – particularly with regard to the Pharisees.*

7

Verses 26 -27 discuss the “mystery” that had been kept hidden and has now been disclosed. What was the mystery and how has it been revealed? Why do you think this mystery was kept hidden?

ROMANS 16:25  
EPHESIANS 3:2-6

8

Paul begins this passage by explaining how we are separated from God through sin, but find reconciliation through Jesus – providing us with the hope of glory. Explain what is meant by “the hope of glory.” Do you find it difficult to hope for better things to come in such a broken world?

9

What general steps do believers need to take to be “fully mature in Christ?” Based on where you are in your faith, discuss the next steps you might personally take toward a more mature faith.

# More Gospel

To become “fully mature in Christ” seems so far away for some. We can let our past mistakes and our current struggles distract us from the goals God has for us. We can get to a point that we stop growing. This week spend some time focused on the spiritual disciplines that can move us forward in becoming fully mature in Christ: prayer, journaling, fasting, meditating, reading Scripture, and serving others.

**Read Romans 10.** Think about what steps you can take to spread the Gospel to others.

# More Growth



# Digging Deeper

**1** This section begins with a reference to the church at Laodicea. Read Revelation 3:14-22 where Christ criticized the believers for having a lukewarm commitment to the Gospel. Discuss how the church today may be lukewarm.

**2** The false teaching that Paul refers to is Gnosticism. There were several aspects to this false belief. Discuss why these beliefs are not true:

Important secret knowledge about faith is hidden from most believers.

The body is evil.

Jesus was only human.

**3** What are some of the false teachings, or those “fine-sounding arguments”, that we hear about today? Have there been any in particular that have swayed you personally? Some examples may include: the prosperity gospel, the belief that there is no literal heaven/hell, or that there is more than one way to heaven.

**4** What are the ways we can dispute those false teachings, or more importantly, is there a way we can prevent false teaching from even being heard?

Christian denominations can disagree about certain viewpoints of theology. For example, Methodists baptize infants, Presbyterians believe in pre-destination, Pentecostals believe that the Holy Spirit empowers all believers to speak in tongues. What is the difference between a false teaching and denominational interpretations?

Traditions are very important to some Christians. Many feel traditions can bring them closer to God. In Colossae people were connecting ceremonial activities (a.k.a. traditions) to faith. What role should tradition play?

In verses 6-7, Paul encourages people to go beyond their faith in Jesus, and to be “rooted and built up in him.” How does one become rooted in Jesus? Read these passages for additional thoughts on the meaning of “rooted.”

MATTHEW 13:1-23  
JEREMIAH 17:7-8

In verse 2:9, Paul repeats the message he first stated in verse 1:19. The fullness of God is in Jesus, and in Christ you have been brought to the fullness. What does the “fullness of God” mean in this context? How are we brought to that “fullness”?

*Did You Know?*

28 While there were several influential Jewish sects identified by the historian Josephus, the two that get the most attention are the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The Sanhedrin, the “supreme court” of ancient Israel, had members from both the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Pharisees were known to be ultra-strict and gave oral traditions equal authority to the written Scriptures. The Sadducees were a wealthier class of people who denied the existence of angels and resurrection believing there was no afterlife.

5

6

7

8

# More Growth

As Peter warned us in 2 Peter 2:1, false prophets and teachers are among us. False teachers are just as prevalent today as they were in Biblical times – and our access to them has greatly increased because of technology. Podcasts, books, and online resources all claim to offer biblical truth. Your focus this week should be in asking God to reveal those false teachers and to help you identify those counterfeit claims. The more time we spend reading God's Word, the easier it will be to recognize.

**Spend some time this week reading Matthew Chapters 5-7, the Sermon on the Mount.** Read slowly, taking in the teachings of Jesus, asking the Holy Spirit to reveal where you may have had false ideas or values, and praying God will continue to grow you to be more and more like Christ.

# More Freedom



# Digging Deeper

**1** Many Jews believed a true Christian must be circumcised. Paul disputes this belief here in Colossians as well as in other letters (i.e., Gal. 5:2-11, Rom. 2:25-29, Acts 15:5-11). He tries to help the Jewish people understand that Gentiles, while they may not be physically circumcised, they are spiritually circumcised.

What does it mean to be spiritually circumcised?

What are some “rules” today that some people say you must follow to be a Christian that are not biblical requirements?

**2** In verse 14, Paul alludes to a practice that was common in his time – nailing a sign with the criminal’s charge to their cross as they were crucified.

What was the charge against Jesus (John 19:19-22)?

What does this metaphor mean to us as believers?

**3** What is the difference between judging someone and holding a person accountable for their actions? What are some ways that you have been held accountable by a partner, family member or friend?

**4** Discuss your thoughts on angels using these questions to guide you.

Is there such a thing as a “guardian angel?”

When someone passes away, some say, “Heaven has a new angel.” Is this Biblical?

Sometimes paintings, sculptures, and Christmas cards depict angles as floating men or women dressed in white flowing robes, wearing wings, with a halo, and holding a harp. Some even depict angels as chubby looking babies. How does the Bible describe an angel?

Reference these verses of biblical accounts of angels for further discussion, and to help us understand the role of angels.

GENESIS 19:1-22  
1 KINGS 19:5-9  
ACTS 12:6-10  
LUKE 1:19-20  
LUKE 26-38  
REVELATION 12:7-9

*Did You Know?*

*The word angel literally means “messenger”. Angels can be described not only as messengers, but warriors, ministering spirits, and worshippers. Only two angels are called by name in the Bible: Michael and Gabriel, but angels in general are mentioned over 300 times.*

**5** We read two warnings from Paul in this passage. Verse 16 says, “do not let anyone judge you.” Verse 18 says, “do not let anyone disqualify you.”

How does this passage infer that judgment might lead us to feel disqualified?

What is it that we would be disqualified from exactly?

Can you recall a time when you felt judged by other Christians? How did that affect you?

**6** Compare Colossians 2:17 with Hebrews 10:1. How do these verses relate, and how are they different?

**7** Rules are written to clarify right from wrong. How do we weigh the desire to please God with right behavior by following the rules in the Bible, with an understanding that we cannot achieve perfection since we are all sinners?

# More Freedom

There are times when we can be hard on ourselves when we make mistakes. Then there are other times when we deliberately disregard biblical guidelines that we know we should be following. This week is about finding balance. Spend time praying that God reveals to you those times when you need to seek forgiveness from Him, and times when you need to forgive yourself.

**Read Galatians Chapter 5.** Take note of the words “free” or “freedom.” Ask God to reveal to you the freedom that He wants you to experience in Christ.

# More Focus



# Digging Deeper

**1** This week the key word is “trust.” What are the qualities of a trustworthy person? Do you trust in Christ who has redeemed you from your past, or do you trust in things that keep you anchored to your past? As you discuss “trust”, reference these Scriptures.

PSALM 56:3-4  
JEREMIAH 17:7-8  
PHILIPPIANS 3:13  
HEBREWS 12:1-3

**2** Paul tells us to set both our hearts and our minds on things above.

What is the difference between setting your heart on things above and setting your mind on things above?

How often do we set our mind on something, but not our heart?

What are the challenges we face when our minds and our hearts disagree?

**3** Verse 3:4 is a rich image of the final days. When you pass from this world, you will be “with him in glory” – you will be face to face with Jesus. Read these additional verses below that paint that beautiful and complete picture of salvation. The question is, how do you continue to trust in that hope when you are struggling?

ROMANS 8:17  
1 PETER 1:13  
1 JOHN 3:2

**4** In verses 3:5-9, Paul provides a list of behaviors that are a part of our earthly nature but should be “put to death.” This is not an exhaustive list, but it includes some heavy hitters.

Discuss ways we can consistently turn from the behaviors on this list. Can you share a spiritual practice that has helped you?

Why is it necessary to turn from these vices through repentance to be in right relationship with the Lord?

**5** Verse 9 admonishes us to not lie to each other. Lying can be considered an “acceptable sin” by many people, especially if they call it a “little white lie.”

Is there a situation where it is ok to lie? Why or why not?

How far can you “bend the truth” for it to be considered a lie?

Is omitting the truth considered a sin in the same fashion as lying is?

**6** Jesus told us that the second greatest commandment is to love our neighbor. In Col. 3:11 (and similar verses in Galatians 3:28 and Romans 10:12) we read that despite our differences, we humans are all the same.

How is the commandment to love our neighbors clarified by these verses?

What are characteristics of people that some feel should be excluded from the church today? Think in terms of race, culture, sexual identity, or social differences. In what way are these people still our neighbors?

*Did You Know?*

The word “Scythian” is not used anywhere else in the New Testament other than here in verse 3:11. It refers to the people who lived north of the Black and Caspian Seas. It is a title used almost as a synonym to “barbarian”, meaning an uncivilized and nomadic race of people. The implication is that even people who are considered savages are not excluded from God's love.

**7** As mentioned earlier, verses 3:5-9 list behaviors we should avoid as Christians. Verses 3:12-14 provide a list of behaviors we should exemplify as Christians. Do you find it more difficult to stop (or avoid) a questionable behavior or to begin a new acceptable behavior?

**8** Can you look back on your life right now and see a progression of change as you have grown closer to Jesus? Discuss ways you can continue to grow towards sanctification – the process of being fully obedient to God's Word – to being transformed – to becoming Christlike.

# More Focus

We can sometimes get bogged down by instructions for behavior in Scripture. But instructions are meant to help us become more obedient and closer to God. This week pray about your personal growth process. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal an area you need to address in your life, something you may need to repent of, and where you need to seek Christ more.

**Reflect on what God is showing you about your priorities,** how you can reflect Him more in your life, and how you can trust Him more.

# More Unity



# Digging Deeper

**1** Knowing who we are impacts how we express ourselves. If we know how much we are dearly loved, we will lean towards loving others. If we know we have been chosen for a purpose, we will make sure we live with that purpose in mind. Yet our backgrounds and the chaos in our culture often warps our self-perspective. What can help align our self-perspective with biblical truth?

**2** Verse 12 starts by saying we are “God’s chosen people,” or in other versions, “the elect of God.” With this election comes a responsibility to reflect these virtues: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Being chosen by God challenges us to choose right behavior. We are to be a living example of what God’s people should look like. Of all these virtues that Paul mentions here, which one is most difficult for you?

There can be a sense of superiority when we are the one who is chosen for something. What is the correct response to living as one “chosen” by God?

Compare this verse to Luke 9:35. What is the difference?

If you were to explain to someone that you are “God’s chosen”, what might you say?

**3** As we all know, even Christians are not perfect (Romans 3:23), and all of us need forgiveness.

Why is it so necessary and important to forgive? What harm comes when you do not forgive someone who has harmed you?

Can you think of a person you have not fully forgiven? Why has full forgiveness been so difficult?

What prevents us from feeling like we can forgive?

*Did You Know?*

*“Love is not simply a further item brought alongside the others; rather it is the source from which all those qualities hitherto mentioned derive their existence.”*  
- Paul’s Letters from Prison by George B. Caird

**4** Verse 14 reminds us that above all else is love. 1 Corinthians 13 lays out the qualities of spiritual love (though this passage is often read in weddings as the guide for romantic love). Read this chapter and discuss how love can bring believers together into unity.

**5** At the beginning of Chapter 3, Paul describes the things we put in our past – the old way of life. Then he describes the things we should put at the front – the new way of life. How has loving Jesus radically changed your life?

**6** Paul encourages the Colossians to become the image of Christ in their daily lives. He gives us a complete picture. How does this passage inspire you?

WEEK 9

# More Unity

Take one virtue each day this week and reflect on that single virtue the entire day: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Spend time praying for God to reveal the ones that challenge you, the ones that are not fully living in your heart. Ask that He show you how to live out each virtue so that those who know you will see something new in you, they see a change in you.

**Read 1 Peter 2:11-24.** Make note of all that God has done for you personally. Think about how this can help you put on Christlikeness.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & STUDY

WEEK 10 **COLOSSIANS 3:15-4:1**

# More Serving

SERMON TAKEAWAYS



# Digging Deeper

**1** What does the “peace of Christ” mean to you? How would someone recognize that peace of Christ in your heart? Reflect on the following passages that help support our understanding.

JOHN 14:27  
EPHESIANS 2:14  
PHILIPPIANS 4:7

**2** Paul tells us that we must “be thankful” (verse 15) and have “gratitude in your hearts” (verse 16). How do we live daily with that gratitude, even as we face challenges?

**3** Verse 17 reminds us that we are to “do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” All does mean all, which can be tough at times. What aspect of your life is not fully reflecting Jesus? What steps can you take to realign this part of your life?

**4** Colossians 3:18-4:1 is a parallel passage to Ephesians 5:21-6:9. Read each of these passages and discuss the similarities and the differences.

**5** At the time of Paul’s letter, the wife was legally obligated to obey her husband, and the husband had legal power over property and authority over all family members. Paul does not dispute this, but when we dig into the specific words and phrases he uses, we will see a deeper picture. Read each of these clarifications and discuss whether this changes your views of this passage.

The Greek word “submit” from verse 18 was *hupotasso*. “*Hupotasso*” does not convey inferiority, but represents a modest, cooperative demeanor that puts others first: a basic concept for all Christians, regardless of gender.

Paul does not tell wives to “obey” their husbands as he instructs children. The wife’s submission therefore becomes a willing choice, not an indication of dominance.

The Book of Sirach by Jewish author Ben Sira (written around 200 BCE) says, “If [your wife] does not go as you direct, separate her from yourself.” Paul advises husbands quite differently. Despite a wife’s attitude, a husband is still obligated to love her.

When Paul says that children should obey parents, he adds: “this pleases the Lord.” Obedience, even for a child, is therefore a way of loving and honoring Jesus.

When we read passages about slaves, it can be troubling since we consider slavery repulsive. Many white supremacists have misused these passages to further their cause. This may be a very difficult discussion, but it is important to openly talk about it for the sake of unity. If you have not already been through Multiethnic Conversations Experience, we encourage you to register for the next session.

Read these clarifications and discuss whether they change your views of this passage in Scripture.

For Paul to address slaves at all was unusual for that time period, but he goes even further and addresses them as people. He does not state that he approves of slavery; but instead, subtly undermines the premise of it.

In the Old Testament, people could be sold into slavery or became slaves after being captured in war. In New Testament times, a slave was often someone who could not pay his or her debts and was enslaved to make restitution.

The word “slave”, from the Greek word “*doulos*”, translates to “bondservant”, which was a form of slavery where the bondservant was a part of the household but did not have the same freedom as others in the home. The term was used many ways, from a slave to a bonded servant. However, throughout the New Testament, the word “bondservant” is applied to describe someone’s devotion to Jesus. James, Peter, and Paul, all described themselves as servants or bondservants of Jesus: James 1:1, 2 Peter 1:1, Romans 1:1. And Jesus himself taught that we must be, “the servant of all”, Mark 9:35.

The belief was that slaves were incapable of choosing to do good, and that they were controlled by a desire to be wicked. Only through the demands of the slave masters would they be able to behave. Paul instead treats them as independent people completely capable of acting with Christian morality and values. He allows them to be responsible for their hearts.

The phrase “you will receive” was typically followed with punishment for disobedience. But Paul follows this phrase with the promise of a reward in Heaven.

Typically you would only see instructions for how masters can handle slaves better. But since Paul addresses both slaves and masters, he is encouraging unity and harmony between them.

When we read Paul’s letter to Philemon, we see a fuller picture of Paul’s viewpoint. He encourages Philemon to free Onesimus voluntarily. Paul even offers to pay any debts that Onesimus owes to Philemon. Philemon 1:16b, “He is very dear to me, but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord.”

# More Sowing

**This week, memorize this verse:** *And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks for God the Father through him.* Colossians 3:17

Let this verse guide you. Everything that you do this week, remind yourself that Jesus is in your heart, that the Spirit is with you through all the struggles, through all the challenges. Be thankful that you will spend eternity with Him and find ways to begin to share that with others.

To help you find ways to live out this memory verse, read Philippians 2:1-5.

# More Devotion



# Digging Deeper

**1** Verse 2 begins with three different commands. These three commands are reminiscent of 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 and Ephesians 6:18. Read those passages before starting.

“Devote yourselves to prayer...”. In what way is praying and devotion to prayer different? Read Acts 1:12-14 to enhance your discussion.

“...being watchful...” can imply several things. It could mean to always stay alert since you never know when Jesus will return. Or it could mean to be on the lookout for temptations as they are all around us. Which one of these meanings are most important, or most needed in your life?

“thankful”. How often are you spending prayer time thanking God? Can you share something you have practiced in times of trouble that helped you remain thankful?

**2** When was the last time you shared the message of Christ with someone? What are the challenges Christians face with sharing faith? Discuss ways we can overcome those challenges and ways we can open the door in conversations to make it easier to share.

**3** If someone were to ask you what you were devoted to in your life, what would be your first answer? What should your first answer be? If we measured devotion in terms of time commitment, how would you respond?

**4** When we hear the word “mystery”, we often think of something puzzling, difficult, or almost impossible to understand. When the word “mystery” is used in Scripture, it typically refers to something that has not previously been known or revealed. If we are to “proclaim the mystery of Christ”, we need to understand what that mystery is. How would you explain the mystery of Christ? Reference these verses to help with the discussion.

JOHN 8:58

JOHN 3:16

PHILIPPIANS 2:6-11

EPHESIANS 3:6

The world today can be hostile towards Christians. We are often called opinionated, judgmental and hypocritical. Yet Paul wants us to be “wise” in how we act towards outsiders.

Are the accusations against Christians true in some respects? Is our polarized culture reflected in the church today?

What kinds of persons may be considered by some Christians as outsiders? Why would they be considered outsiders?

What does it mean to be “wise?” How do we overcome preconceived notions of Christians even though some of those accusations may be true of some of us? Reference 1 Peter 3:15-16.

Do you seek ways to share Jesus with others, or are you waiting for people to ask about Him? How can we purposefully “make the most of every opportunity” to share God's Word?

Paul provides guidance for effective communication when sharing the Gospel. If we are rude or presumptuous, the message will lose its effectiveness. We are to be “full of grace” and “seasoned with salt.” Using the verses below, discuss how to apply those characteristics when sharing the Good News.

1 PETER 3:15-16  
EPHESIANS 4:29  
MARK 9:50

Knowing about the Bible is one thing. Studying the Bible is a much deeper activity. Studying Scripture gives us a richer understanding of how the historical and cultural context affect the meaning and understanding of Scripture. Why is this important?

# More Devotion

This week's theme was "More Devotion." Focus your prayers this week on total devotion to God: devotion of your time, your thoughts, your energy, your words. We may be intimidated by the word "evangelizing", but when we change that phrase to, "sharing the Gospel", it might give us a different response. Simply telling someone how Jesus has changed you personally may have a bigger impact than anything else. Write down the name of someone you know who needs to hear the message of Christ. Pray over that person. Then pray you will have the boldness to share Jesus with them as Jesus opens opportunity.

**Read James 5:13-20 to learn more about the power of prayer.**

# More Purpose



# Digging Deeper

**1** In much of this passage, Paul is sharing the names of all the people that have helped him in his ministry. He never stops saying thank you, and giving credit where credit is due. Paul knows ministry is a “team effort.”

Who is on your team?

Who helps you as you walk through this difficult life?

Who can you turn to when you need help?

**2** Early Christians relied heavily on each other and their network of friends and family. Individually they could not have accomplished much, but together they spread the Gospel across the world. They were completely unified. Looking at the Christian church today, how unified do you feel we are now? How can a lack of unity affect our efforts in sharing the Gospel? Read through these verses to learn more about the unity of the church in the early days.

ACTS 2:42-47

ACTS 4:32

1 CORINTHIANS 1:10

ROMANS 12:4-8

**3** Paul refers to Onesimus as a “dear brother”. This is remarkable considering Onesimus is a slave, who has now become a believer. Do you have any hidden prejudices that might prevent you from referring to someone as a “dear brother or sister?” What if that person was a paroled felon? A prostitute? A gay person? An immigrant? A former drug dealer? A person with a different ethnicity? Someone who votes differently than you?

## Did you know?

**Aristarchus** was a Macedonian from Thessalonica who was a traveling companion to Paul. He is also mentioned in Acts 19:29, 20:4, Acts 27:2 and apparently also imprisoned with Paul.

**Mark** was also known as John Mark and believed to be the writer of the Gospel of Mark. He was also the cause of disagreement between Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:36-41, although the dispute had clearly been resolved – a great example of forgiveness.

**Jesus** (not Christ) was also called Justus. Since Justus was a Roman name, this was likely the name he used around Romans. Also referred to as one of the only Jews that assisted Paul, indicating he was willing to put aside his Jewish entitlement to help spread Christianity. This person was not Jesus Christ, but a different man named Jesus.

**Epaphras** was probably who started the church in Colossae. Paul uses endearing phrases to describe him in Colossians: our dear fellow servant, faithful minister, servant of Jesus, praying for others, working hard for you

**Luke** was also a Gospel writer and frequent companion to Paul. Here we learn that Luke is a doctor, and based on how Paul refers to him, we conclude he was clearly not a Jew.

**Demas** later deserted Paul (see 2 Timothy 4:10), but we do not know why.

**Nympha.** There is a question if this person was male or female. The NIV, ESV, CSB, NASB all refer to the name as Nympha and “her” house. The KJV, GNV, TLB, WEB translate the name as Nymphas, which is the male version of the name.

## Digging Deeper

**4** In verse 17, Paul advises Archippus to “complete the ministry you have received in the Lord.” What do you think the ministry is that the Lord has called you to? What are ways you can continue to work towards that purpose?

**5** Paul adds a personal touch at the end of this letter. It was a common practice to dictate letters, but Paul added that he personally writes the ending – adding value and authenticity to the letter. What are ways you can add authenticity when you share the message of Jesus with others?

**6** “Remember my chains” (verse 18). Paul may or may not have meant physical chains. He was jailed, so he may have been referring to actual chains, but what other chains could he have meant?

Why do you think Paul includes this sentence?

What are some of your own metaphorical chains that may keep you from a vibrant life in Christ?

WEEK 12

## More Purpose

Focus your prayers this week on people who have made a personal impact on you. Pray for those that have helped or encouraged you to get where you are in your life right now. Pray for the person who brought the message of Jesus to you.

Think about the former things that bound you – think about what keeps you from being the person that God has created you to be. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you remove those chains and live a life that honors Him fully.

**Take this time to re-read all of Colossians again.** Underline or circle words, phrases or verses that stand out to you, and make notes in the margin of personal responses God has revealed to you through this study.

PERSONAL REFLECTION & STUDY



## CONCLUSION

# Is there More?

We hope that you've enjoyed this study of Colossians, and that it has enriched your spiritual journey.

Everyone wants to LIVE FOR MORE! At the beginning of this study we asked, ***"What is the 'more' that you are pursuing?"*** Our prayer is that this study has helped you refocus your pursuit on the kind of more that brings life and transformation!

**WHAT ARE FIVE PERSONAL TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS STUDY?**

1

2

3

4

5

LIVE FOR  
**MORE**

HOPE.  
KNOWLEDGE.  
VISION.  
GOSPEL.  
GROWTH.  
FREEDOM.  
FOCUS.  
UNITY.  
SERVING.  
DEVOTION.  
PURPOSE.





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