



The Book of Colossians

Discussion/Reflection Questions

Colossians 1:1-2

Like the books of Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians, Colossians opens with grace and closes with grace. Paul begins the letter to the saints and faithful brothers in Colossae by establishing his authority as an apostle and sending them a blessing. Even though he has never met them, he cares about them. Friends, I feel the same way about you today! Though I have never met you, I feel so blessed to get to study this book of the Bible with you!

So let's get started. Grace and peace are two essential qualities for our Christian walk that can only come from God our Father. Grace is God's unearned favor. We experience his saving grace through salvation and his grace continues to strengthen us as we walk with him, enabling us to do what we would ordinarily be unable to do. Peace is the tranquility we have when we know God our Father is with us and he is in control.

Both are free gifts from the Lord. How have you experienced the grace of God our Father in your life this week? How have you experienced the peace of God our Father in your life this week?

Colossians 1:3-8

Even though Paul had never been to the church in Colossae, he gave thanks to God when he heard of their faith and their love for their fellow believers. We see the familiar connection of faith, hope and love in today's reading as Paul rejoices over their salvation.

After we've walked with God for a while, the salvation of lost souls can grow ordinary, and we lose the excitement we once had when we hear of someone's salvation. Jesus said in Luke 15:10 that the angels rejoice over one sinner who repents! Don't you love that? Paul's response should be our response as well; that we thank God for each sinner who repents, even if we've never met them before.

When was the last time you had an opportunity to tell someone about Jesus? Do you pray regularly for opportunities to share the gospel? If not, begin praying today, and every day, that God will give you opportunities to share with one lost person the way to

eternal life. He wants to make you a missionary right where you are; in your neighborhood, at your workplace, in your child's school, at your gym, and every place you go. Who is one person God is bringing to mind right now that you know is unsaved. Write a prayer for them below.

Colossians 1:9-14

Yesterday we read that Paul gave thanks for the new believers in Colossae. Today we see that he did not stop praying for them. He prayed four things for them: That God would give them wisdom and understanding to know his will, that they would walk in a way that pleased the Lord, that they would bear fruit in their lives, and that they would be strengthened in God's might so they could endure with joy.

Paul went on to say that God had delivered them from the power of darkness to light through the redemption of Jesus Christ who had forgiven their sins. This is the motivation for the four things Paul prayed for the believers.

Walking is something we do all throughout the day. It is a lifestyle. We walk from the moment we get out of bed until the moment we go back to bed. Paul is instructing them to live a lifestyle that is worthy of the Lord and that pleases him when we're with others and when we're alone where no one can see.

Living a life that pleases God requires divine wisdom and understanding to know his will. When we live this way, we will bear fruit and be strengthened so that we can endure trials with all joy. Think about your life this past week, are you walking consistently in a way that fully pleases God? Are you the same at church and with friends as you are at home behind your four walls? Share some ways you can improve in this area of your life.

Colossians 1:15-23

In this passage, we clearly see the deity of Jesus Christ. All things were created by him, through him, and for him, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. Paul goes on to further confirm Christ's deity by saying that he exists before all things and that in him all things exist and are sustained. In the end, Paul settles any argument that Christ is not God by declaring that in Christ is all divine power because he is God.

It is very easy for us to limit our faith to mere mental agreement that God is almighty and has all power in heaven and earth. What can be difficult is believing that he will work out a solution for our personal struggle. Sometimes we think our problem is too small for him to care. Other times we may not have the trust and faith that he will work it out the way we feel it needs to be resolved.

Do you struggle with matching your trust in God with your faith? God wants us to trust him enough with our lives that we can allow him to work out his solution in his time, in his way, and according to his will. Trust in God has to be built like a muscle – the more we use it the bigger it grows. What problem in your life do you need to hand over to God today? Do you trust him enough to leave it in his hands? Why or why not?

Colossians 1:24-29

Paul was writing this letter to the Colossians during his first imprisonment in Rome. He understood that the suffering he was facing wasn't personal, but it was suffering for the cause of Christ and for the sake of the church. He endured this suffering because God had called him to reveal to them the mystery that had been hidden from generations past.

In a Biblical sense, a mystery isn't a puzzle, but a hidden truth that requires revelation to understand. All throughout the Old Testament, the truth of the gospel had been hidden; and while God gave his people prophecy, the truth remained hidden from them. But now it had been revealed to his saints. The mystery is that God's plan all along was the redemption of the Gentiles and to make those who were not his people, adopted sons and daughters of God.

The mystery is Christ in you, the hope – our expectation of the glory of eternity. Our life here on earth is short, but it is preparing us for eternity; and our sufferings serve a purpose to help shape and refine us. Just as Paul's sufferings were not just his sufferings, but Christ's and the church's sufferings, so our sufferings serve a greater purpose to help refine us to serve the body of Christ more effectively, and to prepare us for eternity.

Are you going through a time of suffering? How can you view your suffering in a Biblical way? How do you think God is using your suffering for a greater purpose? Can you see how he's using this suffering to build in you a greater hope for eternity?

Colossians 2:1-5

In chapter 2, Paul wanted to correct wrong thoughts that had infiltrated the church. One of the false teachings was Gnosticism, which is the superiority of knowledge. The Gnostics prided themselves in having knowledge of mysterious things; so Paul is using their own language against them saying that the treasure of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ, and the only way we can understand these mysteries is through knowing Christ.

We live in the information age where knowledge is always increasing. We can find the answers to anything we need to know in seconds by simply tapping on our device. But

true knowledge and wisdom is not found on search engines or through AI. True wisdom and knowledge is found in Jesus Christ.

Solomon said in the book of Proverbs that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. Solomon, the wisest man to ever live, knew that wisdom and knowledge are found in fearing and knowing God. The only way we can discern false teaching from true doctrine is by knowing what God's word says for ourselves. It is tempting to trust Bible teachers to tell us what the Bible says, but God wants us to read his word for ourselves. The Holy Spirit wants to speak to you directly through his word. In what area do you need to improve when it comes to reading and studying the Bible and letting the Holy Spirit personally guide you?

Colossians 2:6-7

As we saw in chapter 1, walking indicates a lifestyle. Walking is something we do every day, and at nearly every part of our day. Paul is encouraging the church that now that they have received Christ, by grace alone and through faith alone, they need to walk in him. They are to live a lifestyle that is rooted in him, built up in him, established in their faith, and abounding in thanksgiving.

Our faith is rooted in the gospel. As we understand the deep love of God for us, our roots grow deeper and we begin to be built up in him. As our faith grows we are like an established tree with our roots going deeper and deeper and our branches reaching toward the sky. Rather than living in guilt we are free to live a life that abounds in thanksgiving.

For those who have followed WomenLivingWell.org for a long time, you know that I end every blog post with these words, "Walk with the King." God is with us! Our relationship with the Lord is to be alive and active. I want us to daily acknowledge God's presence and walk with him being rooted, built up and established in him alone. Our strength comes from the Lord! When we live in this way, the result will be an abundance of thanksgiving. So let's take the time now to abound in thanksgiving. List five to ten things below that you are thankful for.

Colossians 2:8-15

Paul is reminding them to not allow man's philosophy, deceit and traditions to lead them away from the true message of the gospel. The issue in Colossae was that the message of the Judaizers mingled with the message of the Gnostics saying that Gentile Christians had to be circumcised in order to complete the work of salvation. Paul's argument here is that the work of circumcision is a work of the heart. Salvation is already complete through Christ's blood. There is no more room left for man's work to complete salvation.

When Christ died on the cross, he canceled the record of our debt and forgave our sins. Christ's work on the cross triumphed over Satan and all of his philosophies he uses to lead men astray. You see, there is a battle in the spirit world that we do not see. In that spirit world, the enemy has been put to shame and yet he still tries to lead us astray. He does not want us to rest in Christ's work on the cross which is sufficient for our salvation and acceptance by God.

You cannot be any more loved and accepted by God than you are right now, and it's not because of anything you've done or not done, it is because of the blood of Jesus sacrificed on the cross. What philosophies or human traditions have led you astray in the past? Do you find yourself trying to earn God's love and pleasure by living at a certain Christian standard? In what way does today's truths set you free so your motivation for living the Christian life is love for Jesus, and not an effort to earn his pleasure?

Colossians 2:16-19

The word "therefore" links this verse with the preceding passage; so, Paul is saying that because of Christ's work on the cross that granted them their salvation, they were not to allow others to judge them because of their diet or whether they chose to observe certain holy days. These commands God gave to his people in the Old Testament were a shadow or a foretelling of Christ and his sacrifice. In that day, there were Judaizers who were trying to impose Old Testament ceremonial laws on the Gentile Christians as a completion of their salvation, but Paul reminded them that Christ's blood alone is sufficient.

Paul was concerned that after having been freed from the bondage of the world, these Gentile Christians were now allowing Judaizers to place upon them another kind of bondage to ceremonial laws that Christ's sacrifice had fulfilled. It is easy to get led astray by false teaching that sounds good when we don't know what the word of God actually says. This is why it is important to know the word of God, so we can immediately recognize when someone is teaching a false gospel.

In what ways have you allowed man's teaching of certain rules or legalistic requirements in the church, to bind you in a false belief that your righteousness and holiness comes from following these rules and not by God's grace and Jesus' blood alone? In what way can you see now that this is a false gospel?

Colossians 2:20-23

Paul reminded the believers in Colossae that they had died with Christ and had been freed from the world's system. How then, could they become more righteous and holy by following man's laws of "do not handle, do not taste, and do not touch?" These legalistic rules were according to man's teaching and not God's. While these men appeared to be wise, they were actually promoting a self-made religion of no value. Rather than their rules restraining the flesh, it actually indulged it in subtle, and harmful ways.

Look at all the "do not's" in this passage. This is what legalism looks like. Legalism is a list of man made do's, do not's, restrictions and rules. The danger of legalism is that we are tempted to base our righteousness on all the things we "do not do" rather than on the finished work of Christ on the cross. While some say they are just trying to control the flesh with their list of rules, what actually ends up happening is they become prideful, judgemental and self-reliant, which is an indulgence of the flesh. They may have the appearance of humility, but it is a false humility based on external behavior rather than a pure heart.

As we can see, legalism in the church has been a problem for centuries. In what ways have you been tempted to follow man made rules in the church? A legalist leaves no room for the Holy Spirit to lead the believer. In what ways can you avoid legalism by walking in the Spirit and yielding to his guidance in your life?

Colossians 3:1-4

While this is a new chapter, this letter wasn't written divided up into chapters. Chapter 3 is a continuation of what Paul was saying at the end of chapter 2. If we died with Christ, man's legalistic laws cannot make us holy. Paul continues that thought in this chapter by saying we are then raised to new life in Christ, so we focus our minds on heavenly, eternal things, not on earthly and temporal things.

When we died and were raised to new life with Christ, our identity shifted from an earthly identity to a spiritual identity. It is important to understand that Paul isn't giving us a license to sin. In Romans 6, he talks about the danger of abusing God's grace. However, he is saying that man's laws will not make us righteous. This is why we need to focus our minds and affections on heavenly things, not on earthly things.

In what ways do you find that you still battle with allowing your mind and affections to get caught up in things of this world? How can shift your focus back to eternity?

Colossians 3:5-11

Paul continues urging the believers in Colossae to identify with their new life in Christ by putting to death behaviors that are ruled by the flesh. These behaviors and attitudes invite God's wrath, because they are rooted in disobedience to him. Notice, Paul did not just list deeds, but attitudes as well such as: anger, malice, slander, obscene talk and lying.

He goes on to urge them to put on the new self. Literally, he is saying, "Change your clothes". Take off the old man who is driven by earthly behaviors and attitudes and change into a new man who is focused on eternity. This new man is hungry for the knowledge of the word of God and identifies with the new image God has created for him.

When we renew our mind with God's Word, new, God-honoring habits are formed. God is able to reset our defaults so that instead of reverting back to old reactions, our responses are a reflection of his word in us. Look at the list of earthly ways we are to put to death in verses 5 and 8. Are you struggling with any of these old habits? In what way do you need to change your clothes so that you are clothed in the new self?

Colossians 3:12-15

Paul goes on to describe for them what their clothing should look like. He had instructed them to take off the old man, describing in detail what that old man looked like. He then said to put on the new man.

What is interesting to recognize is that the traits we are to put on all have to do with how we relate to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. We are to put on compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forbearance, and forgiveness. While there may be other good qualities we should seek to possess, the ones Paul listed specifically address how we interact as the body of Christ. Then, he goes on to say that above all of these we are to put on love, because it binds all of these together. Finally, he instructs us to let peace rule – or govern – our hearts and our body.

Many people are identified by their clothing like police officers, doctors, nurses, judges, fire fighters, military, and flight attendants. Paul is saying that our clothing should identify whose we are. How do your "spiritual" clothes currently identify you? Do they identify you as an old man or a new man? Are you expressing your identity through love and allowing peace to govern your interactions? Share one area where you may need to grow more?

Colossians 3:16-17

Now that the believers know what to put on, Paul instructs them about what they should put *in* themselves. We are to be abundantly filled with the Word of God. It should be dwelling in us. There is a big difference between visiting and dwelling. Visiting indicates that a person is in a place for a short amount of time; whereas dwelling lets us know that this is a place where someone has put their roots down.

As the Word of God dwells in us, it should be expressed through us in teaching and admonishing in all wisdom, as well as various kinds of worship. When we choose to identify with the new man God has created us to be, clothing ourselves in values that bring blessing and harmony to the body of Christ, binding it together in love, letting peace be the governor of our actions as we fill ourselves with the Word of God and worship, doing all in the name of Jesus, everything we do has eternal value.

It is easy to go about our day and forget to let Jesus be our motivation for everything we do. What are some ways you can remind yourself to let Jesus be your motivation behind your words and actions? List one or two below.

Colossians 3:18-21

Over the past several verses, Paul has been illustrating for us how our relationships should look in the body of Christ. Paul now turns to families to instruct them how they should relate to one another inside the home. The strength of the church depends on strong families, and the strength of a family depends on strong marriages.

Paul first instructs the wife to submit herself to her husband as is fitting to the Lord. This is a hard teaching that is not welcomed in our day in age. But as you can see, it is Biblical. Submission is an act of faith and trust in God and it identifies us as different from the world. (Please note: There are times when a wife should not submit. Some examples would be when a husband is being violent, intoxicated, committing adultery or is mentally unstable.)

God's appointed order is that the husbands be gentle with their wives, children obey their parents, and fathers not provoke their children. Children who are provoked by demanding, controlling and angry parents become discouraged. Instead, we must be gentle and filled with grace as we wisely handle conflict in our homes.

How strong is your family? Are you each giving sacrificially to the health and function of the home? Can you see how submission is a matter of trust, and not subservience? How does this change how you view the submission of a wife to her husband?

Colossians 3:22-24

Paul has addressed how we are to relate to one another inside the church and home, now he turns outward and addresses our relationships and interactions with those outside of our Christian structure. How we work is a reflection of either our new man or old man. If we've truly put on the new man, as Paul talks about in this chapter, it will be reflected in our actions.

Paul tells employees to obey in everything. However, we're not just to obey our employers simply to make them happy, but we're to work with a sincere heart as an act of worship to God. While we have an earthly employer, there is one who is above them – and that is God. No matter how high an employer's position is, whether they are the CEO or business owner, God holds the highest position, and we work for God, not for man.

When we work with this kind of attitude and motivation, it becomes our testimony. We have put on a new man, and that new man is expressed through our behavior. It opens the door for us to share the gospel because our motivation isn't the same motivation as those in the world.

In what ways do you need to shift your motivation, so that you are working heartily for the Lord, and not for men? If you work outside the home, how does this change how you view your employer and other relationships at work? How do you think this will change the atmosphere in your workplace?

Colossians 3:25-4:1

In Ephesians 6, Paul instructs masters to give up wrong behavior toward their bondservants because there is no partiality with God. In Colossians, he instructs bondservants to obey their masters and serve faithfully as unto the Lord, because those who do not serve well will be repaid accordingly, and there is no partiality with God.

In the Greek, "wrongdoer" means to act unjustly, to sin, to act in a hurtful way, or to do damage. As Christians, we are responsible to not only uphold our own personal reputation, but our witness and testimony as children of God. Our work should be done in integrity, knowing that in everything we do, not only is God watching but the world is watching as well. When we do not serve our employers in honesty and integrity, we bring harm and damage to the kingdom of God.

Has there ever been a time when you failed to work with integrity? How do you think it affected your testimony?

Colossians 4:2-4

As Paul begins to wrap up his letter to the Colossian believers, he reminds them that part of walking consistently, in how we relate to the body of Christ, our family, and the world around us, is giving ourselves to continual prayer. Prayer helps us keep our focus on eternity. He goes on to say that we need to give careful attention to giving thanks.

Many times, we allow our actions and attitudes toward those around us to reflect our old man, and not our new man, simply because we've failed to be consistent in prayer and thanksgiving. We become too focused on the physical world and not enough on eternity. We grow discontented and frustrated in our relationships, and that robs us of our testimony. Yet, Paul gives us the remedy. Give yourself to continual prayer and be careful that you are living your life with a thankful heart.

When we do this, God is able to help us maintain an eternal perspective in every circumstance. We're able to see every situation from his vantage point. This does not mean that we need to be actively praying twenty-four hours a day, but that we cultivate a prayerful heart; that our first response in every situation is to pray.

Paul goes on to ask them to pray for him, that God would open the door for them to share the gospel in a clear way. Take some time today to pray for your pastor, church leaders, and missionaries that God would give them open doors to share the gospel. Don't forget to pray for yourself, as well, that God would give you opportunities to share Jesus with someone who needs him. Write your prayer below.

Colossians 4:5-6

A part of Christian maturity is understanding how to interact wisely with those in the world. Paul reminds us how important it is that we make the most of every opportunity we're given to speak graciously, with divine wisdom. This is why an attitude of prayer is so important, because it helps us maintain an eternal focus and reminds us that every interaction we have with the world should be one that leaves them with a good impression of the gospel.

Salt gives our food a good flavor and makes us want to eat more of it. This should be what defines our speech. If we repel people more than we attract them, we need to ask the Lord to help us become more gracious and flavorful in our speech.

A part of living out of our new man is gaining a new perspective for why we are on earth. We are not here by accident, but by design; and God has given the church a specific mission to share the gospel. The way we accomplish this mission will look different for each person. Some will go on the mission field, while others may go into other areas of full-time ministry. Some will go into secular careers while others may stay at home

raising children. God's purpose is that no matter where we're serving, we live with the goal of reaching as many people for Christ as we can, making the best use of our time.

Consider your conversations lately with those who do not know the Lord. How did it go? Do you think they felt loved? In what ways can you make your speech more gracious and flavorful?

Colossians 4:7-18

Paul ends this letter to the Colossian church with final instructions. He introduces Tychius, who will bring them this letter, as well as a letter to the Ephesians and Laodiceans. Onesimus, Philemon's runaway slave, will also be traveling with Tychius, but we see that Paul's description of Onesimus isn't that he's a runaway slave but a "faithful and beloved brother". He will later plead with Philemon to free him and receive him in that way.

Paul goes on to mention several more brothers in Christ, including Epaphras who is laboring and struggling on their behalf in his prayers. Why? His prayer is that they will stand – be established and rooted in – maturity and be fully persuaded and convinced in all of the will of God for them.

God's desire and will for us is that we grow into full maturity as stable, strong believers. That is why God gave us his word – so that as we read it over and over, we are strengthened, established, and rooted in his will for our lives as stable and strong disciples of Jesus Christ.

Paul is writing this letter from prison. He was put in prison for sharing the gospel, and through all of the persecution he suffered for Christ, he was never shaken. He was "fully assured in all the will of God".

Have the storms of life shaken you? In what areas of your Christian life do you think God is wanting you to become more mature and established? Write them down below and then keep on going and keep walking with the King!