



NOON DAY BIBLE STUDY

That I May Know Him: The End Times

January-March 2021

PHILIPPIANS / COLOSSIANS

LESSONS 1-9

Information Used for Study Only!

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That I May Know Him: The End Times

THE STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS & COLOSSIANS

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Resources/Used for Study Only:

1. Kay Arthur, David Lawson, *That I May Know Him*, Harvest House Publisher, Eugene, Oregon, @1996
2. Chuck Swindoll, *Great Lives from God’s Word series*, Insight for Living Ministries, @1997
3. Revelation, *New International Bible*
4. The New Inductive Study Bible, *Precept Ministries International*, Harvest House Publishers.com

KNOWING HIM, KNOWING JOY PHILIPPIANS

Life is tough. Sometimes it's filled with pain and betrayal – or if not betrayal, at least the tensions of interpersonal relationships that can divide us and separate us from what we need most – unconditional love and fellowship with others.

Sometimes our circumstances seem so difficult, so hard, and so confining that it seems like we live in a prison with invisible bars and a door that has rusted shut.

Yet ... despite it all, whatever may come your way, do you realize that you can have a deep and abiding joy? That's the message of the book of Philippians. During the four weeks of this study, you're going to discover for yourself how to have joy no matter what the circumstances of your life.

So, whatever it may cost in the way of discipline to stay with this study, do it. I guaranteed you that it will be worth the effort! *-Kay Arthur, David Lawson*

INTRODUCTION

Who wrote the book?

Paul ministered at Philippi during his second missionary journey, spending about three months in the city. The ministry at Philippi marked Paul's entrance into Macedonia, which came about as a result of a vision he had in the city of Troas, just across the northeastern corner of the Aegean Sea from the port city of Neapolis and its close neighbor Philippi ([Acts 16:8–12](#)).

During this first stay in Philippi—he later briefly visited the city on his third missionary journey (20:6)—Paul brought to faith in Christ people who would form the core of the burgeoning congregation in the city. Among them were Lydia, a businesswoman who opened her home to Paul and his coworkers (16:13–15), and the Philippian jailer, who was converted under Paul's ministry after an earthquake miraculously broke open the prison (16:22–34).

Where are we?

Of the four Prison Epistles, Paul likely wrote Philippians last, near the end of his Roman imprisonment in AD 61 or 62. Paul sent the other three Prison Epistles—Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon—by the hand of Tychicus, as their destinations were near one another. However, the letter to the Philippians was to be delivered by Epaphroditus, who had come to Paul in Rome with financial help from the church at Philippi ([Philippians](#)

[2:25](#); [4:18](#)). But during his time in Rome, Epaphroditus took ill, which delayed his return home and, therefore, the delivery of the letter ([2:26–27](#)).

Why is Philippians so important?

The apostle Paul did not write Philippians in response to a crisis, as he did with Galatians and Colossians. Instead, he wrote to express his appreciation and affection for the Philippian believers. More than any other church, the believers in Philippi offered Paul material support for his ministry ([2 Corinthians 8:11](#); [Philippians 4:15–18](#)). Paul's affection for these people is clear throughout the letter as he encouraged them to live out their faith in joy and unity ([1:3–5](#), [25–26](#); [4:1](#)).

What's the big idea?

Philippians brims over with often quoted passages: “He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” ([Philippians 1:6](#)), “To live is Christ and to die is gain” ([1:21](#)), and “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” ([4:13](#)) are just a few. But the portrait of Jesus Christ as a humble servant serves as the core of Paul's teaching in this letter ([2:5–11](#)).

Paul's joy at the mere thought of the Philippian church is undeniable in the letter, and it's that same joy that he wanted the recipients to possess as well. To lead the Philippians to this truth, Paul took them directly to Jesus, teaching them that a community of believers living in harmony with one another comes only through mutual humility modeled after the Savior. Paul wrote that he poured out his life as an offering for the sake of Christ, leading Paul to find great joy and contentment in Christ's service. His letter to the Philippians showed them that by centering their lives on Christ, they, too, might live in true joy.

How do I apply this?

Though we all have much to be thankful for, the pace and the pressure of life often squeeze the joy from us. Our shoulders slumped, and our heads bowed, we find some days—or months—very difficult to get through. Desperate, we often search for joy in all kinds of ways—acquiring possessions, visiting places, or seeing people. But none of these can provide lasting joy. Where do you find joy in the midst of a trying circumstance?

Paul knew, as did the Philippians, that true joy comes only through humble faith in the saving work of Jesus Christ, joining ourselves in harmony with His followers, and serving others in the name of Christ. This was the life experienced by the Philippian believers, and it is a life available to us today.

Allow the joy you find in Christ to keep you from useless quarrels and divisions and to instead guide you into harmonious relationships with God's people. *-Chuck Swindoll*

OH, TO BE ABLE TO SAY, “TO LIVE IS CHRIST” AND MEAN IT!

Philippians 1 New International Version (NIV)

1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all God’s holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons^[a]:

² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

³ I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

⁷ It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God’s grace with me. ⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

⁹ And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Paul’s Chains Advance the Gospel

¹² Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters,^[b] that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. ¹³ As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard^[c] and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. ¹⁴ And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

¹⁵ It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. ¹⁶ The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. ¹⁷ The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. ¹⁸ But what does it matter? The

important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, ¹⁹ **for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.**^[d] ²⁰ **I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death.** ²¹ **For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.** ²² If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! ²³ I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; ²⁴ but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. ²⁵ Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, ²⁶ so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

Life Worthy of the Gospel

²⁷ Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit,^[e] striving together as one for the faith of the gospel ²⁸ without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. ²⁹ For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, ³⁰ since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

Looking back over these first eleven verses, what are some ways we benefit from the community we experience through the family of God? We are members of a family bound together through the love and grace of God. This foundation can help us grow our relationships with other Christians to the point where we're as affectionate, prayerful, and joyful as Paul is in this letter.

What's been the result of Paul's imprisonment? Who has been influenced by his faithfulness to God? Even though Paul's in prison, suffering for Christ, God's using him. Not only are people coming to Christ, but other Christians are also boldly sharing the gospel, inspired by Paul's words and actions.

Why is it important to Paul that the church stands together? What is the church facing? As we see in Acts 16, and as is outlined in these verses, the church in Philippi faced opposition. We don't know if it was the same people who threw Paul in prison. But we do know it was serious enough to cause fear and for Paul to write to encourage the church to stand firm.

IN SUMMARY

Wouldn't it be wonderful to live in such a way that, with confidence, you could say the very words recorded for eternity by the apostle Paul, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain" (Phil 1:21)? Wouldn't it be wonderful to know your life had been spent for the defense of the gospel?

We know from 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 and 2 Corinthians 5:10 that Paul was acutely of his accountability to the Lord. Paul had been appointed by God to proclaim the gospel to Jew and Gentile. He knew he was a steward of the mysteries of God, and he ordered his life accordingly. The Lord Jesus Christ and His glorious gospel were the focus of Paul's life, and he made every moment and every situation count. Thus, we have to assume that if God had taken Paul home to heaven during the time of his first Roman imprisonment, he would not have been ashamed.

If Paul's passion, as stated in Philippians 1:20, becomes our passion, then we will have the same confidence. Think about these words. Meditate on them during the week. Use them as a divine plumb line against all that you do ...and watch how it affects your decisions, your responses, and your relationships with others and with God.

"According to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death" (Philippians 1:20).

We must remember, that we are *living in the last days*, which began with the coming of our Lord to earth. Since we are *in the final hour*, can we really expect to avoid suffering as God's kingdom clashes with the kingdom of darkness? Remember, that although it is given you to suffer for Christ's sake, you are to stand firm. You are not alone because Jesus is at the door. He will soon come to take you home. He who began a good work in you, the work of salvation, will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus. Suffering is part of His perfecting work, so live in such a way as to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ.

TAKING CARE OF THAT ATTITUDE

Philippians 2 New International Version (NIV)

Imitating Christ's Humility

1 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature[a] God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Do Everything Without Grumbling

12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

14 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.”[c] Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky 16 as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. 17 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

Timothy and Epaphroditus

19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 20 I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. 21 For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. 23 I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. 24 And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

25 But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. 26 For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. 27 Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. 28 Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. 29 So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, 30 because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

What aspects of Jesus’s character do you see? Which of these aspects stands out to you the most? Why? Jesus humbled himself in a way we cannot easily understand. He stepped down from glory as a human, yet still fully God. He had a scandal surrounding his birth, a small-town upbringing, and thirty years of obscurity. His short, three-year ministry ended in a cruel death. He reminded us that the cross was a scandalous image in the first century—it was a death reserved for thieves and rebels.

What does it mean to you that you’re a “living example” of following Jesus? What kind of example are you setting?

IN SUMMARY:

When God tells us, through Paul, to “work out” our own salvation with fear and trembling, the phrase *work out* means “to carry out to completion.” God is telling us that we are to allow Him to carry out the work He is doing in us. We are not to quench or grieve the Spirit of God.

The key to pleasing God, to having the mind of Christ, is to lay down our lives for Him, to release our supposed rights or privileges, to surrender them, and to let God have His full way in us. As a believer, you share all that is God’s in common with the Holy Spirit – this is the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. You have found encouragement in Christ, and have received the consolation of His love. As Romans 5 tells us, God has shed His love abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. You have found affection because you are beloved of God. You have received compassion because you have become God’s child.

Since all of this is yours, and since God has worked it in you, let it flow out to others. Let it flow to other believers and to the world. Be of the same mind, maintain the same love, remain united in spirit, be intent on one purpose: glorifying God and walking worthy of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Live above reproach. Show the world what Jesus Christ is like. Let Christ’s attitude be in you. When you do this, you’ll see that others notice! The world is longing for such an example. Give it to them!

TORN BETWEEN HOLDING ON TO EVERYTHING OR GIVING IT ALL UP FOR JESUS

Philippians 3 New International Version (NIV)

No Confidence in the Flesh

1 Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. 2 Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. 3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— 4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in[a] Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. 10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Following Paul's Example

15 All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. 16 Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

17 Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. 18 For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. 20 But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

What are some modern examples of people adding to the gospel message? Why can it sometimes be tempting for us to believe those things are necessary for salvation?

The core problem of the Judaizers was pride—they boasted in their status as Jews and thought everyone had to be like them to be saved.

What is the threefold purpose Paul presents behind his life?

Knowing Jesus, being found in Christ and his righteousness, and hoping in the future resurrection when Jesus returns.

According to verses 18-19, what characterizes a person who has an earthly mindset? In what ways is having an earthly mindset different from having Jesus's mindset?

As followers of Jesus, we imitate him in all areas of our lives, including our attitude. That means the way we think about our friends, family, finances, career, and resources should be the same as how Jesus thought about those things. It means selflessness, sacrifice, and humility.

IN SUMMARY

Do you eagerly await our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform this body of ours into conformity with the body of His glory? His coming becomes very precious to us when the passion of our life is Christ.

It was for the righteousness which came through faith that Paul counted all things as loss – considered them but dung. He put no confidence in his flesh. Whatever was gain to him, he counted as loss. His passion was to be identified with Christ – to know Him and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings ...to be conformed to Christ's death. The cross of Christ was not Paul's enemy, but his friend.

Paul realized that he had not yet attained, but he still didn't look back. Instead, he forgot those things which were behind, and reached forward to press on toward the goal of the prize of the upward call in Christ Jesus.

Here is our example. Surely if we follow Paul as our example we will be able to say, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness ..." (2 Timothy 4:7,8). Paul attained the righteousness he so desired! And so can you, if you will count all things as loss even as Paul did. Press on, Valiant One. Press on.

WHERE DOES A PERSON FIND PEACE AND CONTENTMENT?

Philippians 4 New International Version (NIV)

Closing Appeal for Steadfastness and Unity

1 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

2 I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. 3 Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Final Exhortations

4 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! 5 Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

8 Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. 9 Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Thanks for Their Gifts

10 I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. 11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

14 Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. 15 Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; 16 for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. 17 Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. 18 I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. 19 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

20 To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

21 Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. 22 All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

23 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.[a]

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

What's Paul's goal for the Philippians? What does it mean for them to stand firm in their faith?

The church faces opposition on all sides—from Judaizers to Roman persecution. Paul wants the Philippians to keep going—to remain faithful to God even when it is hard.

Why is it important to confront disunity in the church with love? What could the negative consequences be if we don't confront in love?

Paul wants a unified church full of mature followers of Jesus. As Paul moves into his closing remarks, he offers practical ways the Philippians can obey God. These are tools to a sacrificial life.

What's at the source of Paul's contentment?

Jesus is the one constant in our lives. He will never change. Paul leans on that truth in the turbulence of his life.

What does it mean to rejoice in God?

To be generous, learn contentment, remember God is working and recognize that it is all about Jesus.

IN SUMMARY

Peace. Peace and plenty. We all want it, but can we have it? Peace? Plenty? No! Philippians 4 makes it clear that in spite of life's difficulties we can rejoice. In fact, we are told to rejoice, for the rejoicing is not in our circumstances, but in the Lord who is in control of every circumstance of life.

How well Paul demonstrates this in his epistle to the Philippians, a letter which was preserved in the pages of God's Book, written for our doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. The Bible is a book that helps us know how to handle every situation of life. As we see in Philippians 4, whether anxiety or great need, God's presence and His promises are there, sufficient for all we really need. We can do – we can bear – all things through our precious Lord Jesus Christ who strengthens us.

Now, we may take the things which we have learned, received, heard, and seen in Paul and practice them. If we do, we can rest assured that the God of peace will be with us.

KNOWING HIM, KNOWING HIS POWER COLOSSIANS

Paul sat under house arrest in Rome. The accommodations were not bad, but his freedom was gone! A visitor came – a man who had come to believe in Jesus Christ after hearing Paul preach the truth of a risen Savior. “Good to see you again. Of course, I remember you. From Ephesus, right? How is your walk with the Lord, brother?” the conversation might have gone. “You started a church in Colossae? Wonderful! Trouble? What kind of trouble?”

After Epaphras explained the trouble that was destroying his congregation, Paul called his scribe and began to dictate a letter. A short letter to a small insignificant market town. But it was a powerful letter with the imprint of God upon it. What could we, almost 2000 years later, learn from such a letter? The Truth. *-Kay Arthur, David Lawson*

INTRODUCTION

Who wrote the book?

Before Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Colossae, he had never been to their city ([Colossians 2:1](#)). This helps explain the personal greetings he included at the end of the letter, a practice he usually reserved for letters to churches he had not visited (for example, Romans). Paul sought to develop personal connections with the people he hoped to teach and serve, rather than just going around from city to city asserting his apostolic authority. The more personal tone at the close of this letter would have been especially significant in creating a connection with the Colossian believers, given the fact that part of Paul’s reason for writing involved calling out the heretical teachers who had infiltrated the Colossian church.

Where are we?

In AD 60–61, during his first imprisonment in Rome, Paul penned this letter to the Colossian church after he had received a report that they were struggling with a Christological heresy. The report came from Epaphras, likely the leader of the church at Colossae and a convert of Paul’s from his more than two-year ministry in Ephesus. Epaphras had come to Rome in part to serve Paul during his imprisonment ([Philemon 1:23](#)) but also to confide in him regarding the dangerous teachings the Colossians were hearing. So Paul sent this letter, along with the letters to Philemon and to the Ephesians, with Tychicus, accompanied by Onesimus ([Colossians 4:7](#); [Philemon 1:10–12](#)). Tychicus was a coworker of Paul who would have been able to help the Colossian believers understand and apply the apostle’s teachings in the letter.

Why is Colossians so important?

The church at Colossae was under attack from false teachers who were denigrating the deity of Jesus; they were teaching that He was not actually God. Though Paul had never been to the church itself, he addressed these issues head-on. The nature of Jesus Christ as Creator and Redeemer was nonnegotiable, so Paul wrote to them that he might bring his wisdom to bear on this difficult and trying situation. It was critical to him that this church know God in His greatness and glory, rather than in the deficient view given them by the false teachers ([Colossians 1:25](#); [2:1–2](#)).

What's the big idea?

In this book, the apostle Paul described Jesus with some of the loftiest language in all the New Testament, focusing on Christ's preeminence and sufficiency in all things. Paul presented Christ as the center of the universe, not only as the active Creator but also as the recipient of creation—in His taking on of human flesh. Christ was and is the visible image of the invisible God, containing within Himself the fullness of Deity ([Colossians 2:9](#)). Because of His divine nature, Jesus is sovereign, above all things with an authority given Him by the Father. As such, Jesus is also Head over the church. He has reconciled all things to Himself through His death on the cross, making believers alive to God and setting them on the path to right living. This proper view of Christ served as the antidote for the Colossian heresy as well as a building block for Christian life and doctrine both then and now.

How do I apply this?

Your view of Jesus Christ will impact every area of your life. Many today want only practical instruction and helps for living, eschewing “esoteric” topics such as doctrine and theology because they seem to be out of touch with their day-to-day reality. Paul's view was different. He saw that the Christological problems in the Colossian church had practical importance as well. Believers have died with Christ; therefore, we need to die to our sins. We have also been raised with Christ; therefore, we must live well in Him and put on qualities that are motivated by Christian love. And because He is Lord over all, the life of the Christian is a life of submission to Jesus. Are you following after Jesus as you should? Our faith in Jesus Christ should transform the relationships we have in every area of our lives—in our homes, our churches, and our world. -Chuck Swindoll

THAT I MAY BE RECONCILED TO HIM – THAT I MAY KNOW THE TRUTH

Colossians 1 New International Version (NIV)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
 2 To God’s holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters[a] in Christ:
 Grace and peace to you from God our Father.[b]

Thanksgiving and Prayer

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God’s people— 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel 6 that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace. 7 You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant,[c] who is a faithful minister of Christ on our[d] behalf, 8 and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,[e] 10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, 12 and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you[f] to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The Supremacy of the Son of God

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether

things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of [g] your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— 23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Paul's Labor for the Church

24 Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. 25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— 26 the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. 27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

28 He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. 29 To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

How would you say our culture defines supremacy? How do you think that compares to the biblical definition of supremacy? Cultural defines supremacy as the best or highest or something that has the most. Biblical supremacy refers to God's authority, rulership, and power over all creation. The passage we're studying talks specifically about Jesus— His supremacy, authority, and power.

How does verse 16 describe Jesus's authority? He is over heaven, earth, the visible and invisible, thrones, powers, rulers, and authorities because He created them.

What specific things does Jesus have authority over in your life? Some answers include: your job, family, boss, salary, friendships, president/representative, spouse, habits, natural disasters, etc.

IN SUMMARY

As believers we have been delivered from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of light. The word “delivered” in Greek has the idea of drawing something to yourself or rescuing something. While we were under the power and authority of darkness, lost and unable to tell the truth from a lie, God rescued us; He drew us to Himself! What do we have in the new kingdom of light? We have “redemption, the forgiveness of sins” in Jesus Christ. The Greek word for *redemption* is also expressed by our English word “emancipation.” We have been set free from slavery to sin; our debt has been paid. In Ephesians 1:7, we see that the price of our freedom was the blood of the Lamb.

Information like this is too important to keep secret, so Epaphras went home to Colossae to tell everyone he could the good news, the “gospel.”

As you do this study, our prayer for you is that you will “be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthY of the Lord” in order to please Him, be strengthened, and increase in the knowledge of God. You are already on your way because you are in His Word. It is here that you will find the knowledge of His will and gain spiritual wisdom and understanding. So, make it your goal, my friend, to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel.

THAT I MAY KNOW ALL HE HAS DONE FOR ME

Colossians 2 New International Version (NIV)

1 I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. 2 My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. 5 For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

Spiritual Fullness in Christ

6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces[a] of this world rather than on Christ.

9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, 10 and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. 11 In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh[b] was put off when you were circumcised by[c] Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you[d] alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. 15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.[e]

Freedom From Human Rules

16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. 17 These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. 18 Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. 19 They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

20 Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: 21 “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”? 22 These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. 23 Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

If we have received Christ by grace through faith, what does that say about what it means to live in Him? It means we should continue to follow Him by grace through faith. Paul urges the Colossians to “live your lives” in Jesus. He uses that phrase often in his books to mean that Christians should continue to walk in their faith. Louie described

it as “follow up.” We continue to keep in step with Jesus after choosing to follow Him, all by His grace through faith.

If our sinful flesh has been completely removed, what does that mean for us now? Does it mean we don't sin? Why not? Jesus has taken away the consequence of sin, given us new life, and given us a new identity in Him. We will still sin this side of eternity, but we now operate out of Jesus's power and under His rule, not the rule of the flesh, sin, and death. When we decide to follow Jesus, our old selves die with Him and we're raised to new life. Paul is clear that it's the power of God that both raised Jesus from the dead and brought us to life again.

IN SUMMARY

Paul's primary warning to the church at Colossae is found in Colossians 2:4, “I say this in order that no one may delude you with persuasive argument.” Someone, perhaps a false teacher, was trying to convince the Colossians to believe a lie about Jesus Christ. The basic lie of all false religious systems has been to deny the deity of Christ or His sufficiency to save us. Many times, this lie is made even more dangerous by the fact that the false teachers are within the church.

Are we immune to this problem in our culture, or do we also need to heed Paul's warning in 2:4? Are there people in churches today whose teachings about Jesus Christ do not line up with what you have seen in His Word this week? Your only protection against believing a lie and being deluded by a persuasive argument is to know the Truth. Who does Paul talk about most in this chapter? Who is the Way, the Truth, the Life?

Who is Jesus? In relation to God, He is His image. In relation to creation, He is the first born...the One who is before all things. What does that mean to you?

THAT I MAY WALK IN A MANNER WORTHY

Colossians 3 New International Version (NIV)

Living as Those Made Alive in Christ

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

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.[b] 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Instructions for Christian Households

18 Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

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

21 Fathers,[c] do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. 25 Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Would you say the right hand of God is an indication of Jesus's authority? If so, why? Jesus is at the right hand of God, which means He intercedes for us, has authority,

and offers us hope as we persist in following Him. He is God. He hears our prayers. He acts on our behalf. He loves us. And He will one day return.

How would you define the new self? What's been different in you since following Jesus? How have your actions also changed?

All of these sins listed in these passages have relational consequences, and all the things Paul encourages the Colossians to “put on” are also relational. In verse 10, Paul talks about how our new selves are being “renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator.” Verse 11 reminds us of the unity we have in Jesus. No religious, cultural, racial, or social divisions divide Christians any longer because Jesus demolished them when He died and rose again. His blood has redeemed all of us—none of us is above the other.

IN SUMMARY

Is everything that you do a reflection of the name of Jesus? In Colossians 3:17 Paul writes, “Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Are your actions reflecting who you are? What impressions do your actions give about the kingdom of God?

When speaking about relationships, Paul’s first command is to wives. Wives are to be subject to their husbands. Three things about this verse are very important, but sometimes overlooked. First, the verb tense in Greek indicates that the action by the wife is voluntary. In other words, she is not forced to obey by a demanding, over-bearing husband. She chooses to be submissive because of her personal relationship to Jesus Christ. Second, her action is motivated by a husband who loves his wife as stated in verse 19. The third thing is that this action is “fitting in the Lord” or proper in the scheme of Christianity.

In the culture to which Paul is writing, this attitude actually elevated women beyond the societal norms. In most cultures, the obedience of the wife was not an issue because the wife had no real rights and therefore no alternative. Paul gave the woman responsibility to decide what she would do because, in the Lord, male and female are equal. This issue is an issue of authority, not equality. Every institution must have a head, and the home is no exception. Wives, pray through this study and seek God’s face. I know that for some this sounds like a difficult teaching, but if you choose obedience to God, He provides grace to do what He has called you to do. Husbands, the issue of being under the authority of the husband is between your wife and God.

Paul demanded of the husband that he treat his wife with a self-sacrificing love, not a self-satisfying love. The husband is not to be embittered against his wife. The word “embittered” could also be translated “harsh.”

Fathers, which probably should include both parents are commanded not to exasperate their children. The idea is not discipline them in such a way that your children lose heart.

Paul cared for people. God loves people. Jesus died for people. We are to handle people gently, because we are dealing with someone God values highly. Do you see people as individually important? Jesus summed up the commandments into just two. You remember them, don't you? You shall love the Lord your God...You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

This has been the goal in this study. First, that you would know God better and therefore love Him more. And second, by being obedient to what the Holy Spirit has taught you, that you would love your neighbor as yourself. This has been a great study. May God bless you, and give you a hunger for His Word. May you walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

THAT I MAY BE LIKE HIM

Colossians 4 New International Version (NIV)

1 Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

Further Instructions

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. 5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Final Greetings

7 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant[a] in the Lord. 8 I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our[b] circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. 9 He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

10 My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) 11 Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews[c] among my

co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. 12 Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. 13 I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. 14 Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. 15 Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

16 After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.

17 Tell Archippus: “See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord.”

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

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

How would you define the new self? What’s been different in you since following Jesus? How have your actions also changed?

All of these sins listed in these passages have relational consequences, and all the things Paul encourages the Colossians to “put on” are also relational. In verse 10, Paul talks about how our new selves are being “renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator.” Verse 11 reminds us of the unity we have in Jesus. No religious, cultural, racial, or social divisions divide Christians any longer because Jesus demolished them when He died and rose again. His blood has redeemed all of us—none of us is above the other.

IN SUMMARY

Jesus is all and in all. What else do you need? Whatever is required, you can do. Whatever you need, you have because Jesus is all and in all. You don’t have to work hard to get God to accept you. If you are a true child of God, a new man or new woman, then you are complete in Christ. God loves you and He is not angry with you. You are in Christ and He is in you.

The “New Man” list of proper behavior you made this week is not unreasonable. On the contrary, it is reasonable, even normal. When you gave your life to Christ, when you became a Christian, God linked you with Christ so that, in essence, you have been crucified with Him. The old man was crucified, cast aside, put off. The new man, who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him, was put on. Keep seeking the things above, and day by day you will become more and more like Christ. By an act of your will, you keep your mind set on things above. You have put on

the “new man” who is constantly being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of his Creator. This renewal is a process which is energized by constant exposure to the Word of God. As you stay in the Word and keep seeking the things above, you will look more and more like who you are in Christ, and less and less like who you were.

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

“I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Introduction

This book is the Revelation of Jesus Christ; the whole Bible is so; for all revelation comes through Christ, and all relates to him. Its principal subject is to discover the purposes of God concerning the affairs of the church, and of the nations as connected therewith, to the end of the world. These events would surely come to pass; and they would begin to come to pass very shortly. Though Christ is himself God, and has light and life in himself, yet, as Mediator between God and man, he receives instructions from the Father. To him we owe the knowledge of what we are to expect from God, and what he expects from us.

The subject of this revelation was, the things that must shortly come to pass. On all who read or hear the words of the prophecy, a blessing is pronounced. Those are well employed who search the Bible. It is not enough that we read and hear, but we must keep the things that are written, in our memories, in our minds, in our affections, and in practice, and we shall be blessed in the deed. Even the mysteries and difficulties of this book are united with discoveries of God, suited to impress the mind with awe, and to purify the soul of the reader, though he may not discern the prophetic meaning. No part of Scripture more fully states the gospel, and warns against the evil of sin.

Revelation 1 New International Version (NIV)

Prologue

1 The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2 who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. 3 Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

Greetings and Doxology

4 John,

To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits[a] before his throne, 5 and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, 6 and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

7 “Look, he is coming with the clouds,”[b]

and “every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him”;

and all peoples on earth “will mourn because of him.”[c]

So shall it be! Amen.

8 “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.”

John’s Vision of Christ

9 I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10 On the Lord’s Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, 11 which said: “Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea.”

12 I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13 and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man,[d] dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. 14 The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. 15 His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. 16 In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

17 When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18 I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

19 “Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. 20 The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden

