

## Introduction to the Book of Colossians



This is the final of Paul's prison epistles, addressed to the church at Colossae. Paul centers much of his teaching along the lines of rooting out heretical theories that have infiltrated the church. This unique book provides us with a front row seat to Paul's anti-heretical tactics.

### Author:

Paul is universally known to be the author of Colossians. The book self-identifies him as the author (1:1; 4:18), and the testimony of the early church convincingly affirms this truth. Again, Paul penned this book during his Roman imprisonment for the sake of the gospel.

### Background & Setting:

Colossae was a city in modern Turkey known for its black wool and dyes. It was an area of tremendous economic wealth, but spiritual poverty. Paul has never visited Colossae, but his apostolic office still wields great spiritual influence over the congregation there.

### Themes:

The supremacy of Christ in all things is unmistakably the overarching theme of this book. Within this theme are encompassed differing aspects of salvation, forgiveness, the nature of the church, and anti-heretical teachings.

### Think about it:

As you read through the book of Colossians, here are a few things to pay careful attention to:

1. Note how Paul unpacks the supremacy of Christ in all things and allow his teachings to cause you to glory in His sufficiency.
2. Understand in a new way the glories provided to you in your salvation.
3. Focus on what is intended for you in Christ through the provision of your new nature.

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**Date:** Wednesday, June 19

**Passage:** Colossians 1

1. Summarize Paul's prayer on behalf of the Colossian believers (vv. 9-14). How does his prayer help you to know how you should pray for your own spiritual life and well-being?

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2. As Paul launches into a defense of the preeminence of Christ (vv. 15-23), remember that he does so in order to preserve His deity, which is under heretical attack. Choose three aspects of Christ's preeminence (there are more than 3!) that are highlighted in verses 15-20. Explain how they should impact how you live & think today.

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3. Once Paul finishes describing the preeminent Christ (vv. 15-20), he begins to describe who that Christ relates to humans (vv. 21-23). What was the ultimate point of Christ's reconciling work (vv. 22-23)?

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4. As you consider the point of Christ's reconciling work, take a look at your own life. Are you living a holy & blameless life before him? What are some areas that need to change for this purpose to be fulfilled?

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5. What was the point of Paul's gospel ministry (v. 28)? Who are you helping to become "mature" in Christ?

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Date: Thursday, June 20

Passage: Colossians 2

1. Where are all of the “treasures of wisdom and knowledge” found (v. 2)? What does this tell you about the way that you should pursue Him? Do you honestly think that you are pursuing Him with that mindset?

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2. “As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him.” What does it mean to *walk in Christ* (v. 7)? What are some ways that you can build yourself up in him? What are some things that you can give thanks for?

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3. As Paul encourages believers to avoid the traps of false teachers (vv. 8-15), he does so by bringing to mind what Christ has provided for us in the gospel. List several of the benefits that are found in these verses:

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4. As he concludes this chapter, Paul notes that the law is now powerless to control believers (vv. 16-23). No one can be “disqualified” by any legalistic element. “Legalism” is anything that you do thinking that you can achieve God’s favor by action. What are some of those things? What ultimately gives you victory over legalistic thinking?

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**Date:** Friday, June 21  
**Passage:** Colossians 3

Colossians 3 is the famous “put off & put on” chapter. In verses 1-17, Paul lists a series of things that every new creature in Christ should do, as well as a series of things that they should no longer do. In the tables below, select five from each section and describe how you can “put off” or “put on” today.

<u>“Put-Off” Principle</u>	<u>How I will apply this today:</u>

<u>“Put-On” Principle</u>	<u>How I will apply this today:</u>

There are many people who call for a “passive” Christianity in which the believer plays no role in the process of sanctification. This is not true Christianity at all. As the grace of Christ enables us, we must discipline ourselves to become more like Jesus by “putting off” those things that displease Him, and “putting on” the things that conform us into His image. God help us to claim His grace to do so today!



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**Date:** Saturday, June 22

**Passage:** Proverbs 17; Review Philippians 3-4

1. What kind of things does an evil person listen to (v. 4)? Why is it so easy to listen to those types of things?

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2. How is a true friend described in verse 17? Are you that type of a friend? Do you have a friend like that? Who is the ultimate example of that type of friendship?

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3. What is described as “good medicine” in verse 22? Where do true followers of Christ derive that kind of joy? Is it dependent on circumstances or not?

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4. What are some ways that you can exercise godly discipline today so that others could imitate you like the Philippians were told to imitate Paul in Philippians 3?

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5. Should your rejoicing be constant, or is there room for some pity-parties along the way? What verse in Philippians 4 tells you that? How can you resolve to rejoice in Christ at every moment?

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**Date:** Sunday, June 23

**Passage:** Proverbs 18; Review Ephesians 1-3

1. Where do righteous people go in order to find safety (v. 10)? How can the name of God give safety to the believer?

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2. Similarly to what we learned in chapter 17, what friend is being described in verse 24? Do you know Him? What has His friendship meant to you?

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3. What struck you the most about Paul's description of Christ in Colossians 1? Why? How does it impact the way that you think about Jesus?

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4. Are you alive or dead in Christ (Colossians 2)? Look back at the passage. How does a person who is alive in Christ act? Are you consistently acting that way?

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5. What one thing from Colossians 3 will you covenant to "put on" this week? What thing will you "put off?"

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**Date:** Monday, June 24

**Passage:** Colossians 4

What action does Paul want the Colossians to remain faithful in (v. 2)? What attitude should they have? What should they be praying for?

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2. How should we act towards “outsiders” (people outside of the faith), according to verse 5? How should we speak? Do you speak that way? Why is it so hard to learn to speak with a gracious tongue?

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3. Tychicus was sent by Paul in order to encourage the Colossian believers (v. 8). What kind of a person do you think has the ability to encourage others? Are you that kind of a person? How can you become that kind of a person?

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4. What does Paul mean when he says “remember my chains” in verse 18? What does that simple sentence tell you about his willingness to suffer for the sake of the gospel? Are you willing to do the same?

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Jesus is the preeminent one. His greatness overshadows all of human history and compels us to find our satisfaction in Him. May God help the truths that we’ve learned in Colossians to go down deeply into our hearts and inspire us with a thirst to discover the greatness of the one that we serve and call “Lord.”



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