

*Life For Today*  
*Bible Commentary*

*The Book Of*  
*Colossians*

*Andrew Wommack*

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## **SPECIAL NOTE**

These commentary ebooks are just the footnotes from Andrew's Life for Today Study Bible And Commentary. Because these footnotes appear without change from the printed books, there are certain things that may not make sense. For example, the footnotes are numbered in a way that seems confusing in the ebooks; there are references to page numbers and marginal references, etc. These all serve a purpose in the printed books, but not in the ebook. Understanding that the footnotes originated in a printed book will help avoid confusion.

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# **Introduction To The Epistle Of Paul To The Colossians**

## **OVERVIEW**

As has already been detailed in the Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Ephesians, the epistle to the Colossians and Paul's epistle to the Ephesians are remarkably similar. Therefore, Paul's teaching can be better understood by closely comparing them with each other.

Paul stated his purpose for writing this letter very clearly in Col 2:1-8. He wanted to make sure they had a full revelation of Christ and what He had accomplished for them, while warning them against false teaching. Paul believed that the Colossians' best defense against false teaching was for them to be fully aware of all they had in Christ. So, in the remainder of Col 2 and into Col 3, Paul expounded on the completeness we have in Christ. Paul exhorted the Colossians to a holy lifestyle and concluded with instructions to parents, children, slaves, and masters, as he did in the letter to the Ephesians.

## **BACKGROUND**

Colosse was just fourteen miles from Laodicea, one of the seven churches of Asia to whom John wrote the book of Revelation (Re 1:4 and 3:14-22), and about 100 miles east of Ephesus (see note 3 at Ac 18:19). Colosse was an important city in Phrygia (see note 15 at Ac 2:9) on the upper Lycus River in what is known today as south-central Turkey. It served as a trading center at a crossroads on the main highway from Ephesus to the east.

Colosse was close to Hierapolis (Col 4:13) and Laodicea, both of which are mentioned in the New Testament. Colosse was known as a prosperous city as early as the fifth century B.C., but by the start of the Christian era, it was beginning to be eclipsed by its two neighbors.

In A.D. 61, the cities of the Lycus Valley suffered a devastating earthquake. Laodicea, which is mentioned four times in this letter (Col 2:1; 4:13, and 15-16) and twice in the book of Revelation (Re 1:11 and 3:14), suffered the greatest damage. They rebuilt the cities, but Colosse was increasingly overshadowed by Laodicea and Hierapolis. However, it retained considerable importance into the second and third centuries A.D. Later, the population of Colosse moved to Chonae (modern Honaz), three miles to the south.

## **THE RECIPIENTS**

There is no mention in the book of Acts that Paul ever went to the city of Colosse, a city of Asia Minor (see note 3 at Ac 16:6). In fact, Paul mentioned in Col 2:1 that the people of Colosse had not seen his face. Therefore, it can be assumed that the Colossians were some of those to whom the Gospel had been taken while Paul preached in Ephesus for three years (Ac 20:17 and 31). Ac 19:10 says that the Gospel spread from Ephesus (Ac 19:1) into all of Asia.

Since Ephesus was a capital city, the Colossians would have done business there, and the Ephesians would have traveled to Colosse as well. It appears that Epaphras, who was from Colosse (Col 4:12), was a convert of Paul's preaching in Ephesus. He returned home to Colosse and shared the Gospel with others, thus beginning the church there (Col 1:7).

## **AUTHORSHIP**

The author of this epistle is Paul the apostle, as stated in Col 1:1, 23; and 4:18. Early church leaders such as Eusebius (A.D. 330), Origen, Tertullian, and Irenaeus all attested to Paul as its author. Colossians is one of the four prison epistles written by Paul, the others being Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon.

## **DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING**

Paul wrote this letter from prison (Col 4:3, 10, and 18). It is commonly believed that this took place during his imprisonment in Rome. The earliest this epistle could have been written would be A.D. 61, and some believe it may have been written as late as A.D. 64 (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Ephesians, Date and Place of Writing). Epaphras, who was a Colossian (Col 4:12), was the bearer of this letter and apparently the one who took the Gospel to the Colossians (Col 1:7).

# COLOSSIANS CHAPTER 1

## COLOSSIANS 1:1

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and  
Timotheus [our] brother,*

Note 1 at Col 1:1: In nine of Paul's thirteen epistles, he designated himself as an "apostle." Paul did not choose to be an apostle or confer this honor upon himself. He saw and received his commission to be an apostle from the risen Christ (Ac 9:3-6, 22:6-15; 1Co 9:1, and 15:8-9), and showed the signs of an apostle by miraculous power (2Co 12:12).

Note 2 at Col 1:1: Timothy is first mentioned in the New Testament in Ac 16:1, where he was described as a disciple whose mother was a Jewish believer and his father was a Greek. Paul first met Timothy on his second missionary journey (Ac 19:22), and that led to a special bond that lasted throughout Paul's ministry. Paul referred to Timothy as "my own son in the faith" (1Ti 1:2), "my workfellow" (Ro 16:21), one of the "servants of Jesus Christ" (Php 1:1), "our brother" (2Co 1:1), and "my dearly beloved son" (2Ti 1:2). Although Paul was in prison, Timothy was still with him. Paul's feelings for Timothy are best expressed in Php 2:20-22 - "For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel."

It was to Timothy that Paul wrote his last letter from Rome (2Ti 4:6-8), encouraging Timothy to fulfill his ministry (2Ti 4:5).



## **COLOSSIANS 1:2**

*To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace [be] unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Note 3 at Col 1:2: The greeting "Grace be unto you and peace" or its equivalent is used in all of Paul's thirteen epistles (Ro 1:7, 1Co 1:3, 2Co 1:2, Ga 1:3, Eph 1:2, Php 1:2, this verse, 1Th 1:1, 2Th 1:2, 1Ti 1:2, 2Ti 1:2, Tit 1:4, and Phm 3). God the Father and Jesus Christ are always the source of these great spiritual blessings.

## **COLOSSIANS 1:3**

*We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,*

Note 4 at Col 1:3: All of Paul's epistles, with the exception of Galatians and Titus, begin with thanksgiving to God (Ro 1:8, 1Co 1:4, 2Co 1:3, Eph 1:16, Php 1:3, this verse, 1Th 1:2, 2Th 1:3, 1Ti 1:12, 2Ti 1:3, and Phm 4). Thanksgiving to God was characteristic of Paul's letters and prayers (Eph 1:16 and this verse).

Thanksgiving in the early church was expressed regularly to God and was a natural part of Christian worship (1Co 14:16-17; Php 4:6; Col 2:7, and 4:2). Thanksgiving was expressed to God for such things as deliverance from enemies (Ps 44:7), His goodness and mercy (Ps 100:4-5), His grace and acceptance of us through Christ (Eph 1:6), forgiveness of our sins and healing for our bodies (Ps 103:2-4 and Lu 17:15-16), Christ's deliverance of the believer from the principle of sin (Ro 6:17-18), the unspeakable gift of grace in Christ (2Co 9:15), and the like precious faith of all Christians (Ro 1:8).

Thanksgiving is expressed through His saints (Ps 145:10), people's lips (Heb 13:15), the righteous (Ps 140:13), and prayer (Col 4:2).

## **COLOSSIANS 1:4**

*Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love [which ye have] to all the saints,*

Note 5 at Col 1:4: Notice that Paul heard of the Colossians' faith. Col 1:7 reveals that it was Epaphras who gave Paul this report. Paul did not preach the Gospel to the people in Colosse personally. This body of believers was a byproduct of his ministry in Ephesus. Either people from Colosse came to Ephesus, which was the main city of that region, and heard the Gospel and took it back to Colosse, or some of the Ephesians who received the Gospel took it to Colosse.

Because of the mention of Epaphras in Col 1:7 as "a faithful

minister of Christ" to the Colossians, it has been supposed that Epaphras was the vessel God used to preach the Gospel in Colosse. Col 4:12 says that Epaphras was from Colosse. See note 10 at Col 1:7.

Note 6 at Col 1:4: One of the visible fruits of faith is love. Paul stated, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love" (Ga 5:6).

John Wesley (1703-1791), the primary figure in and founder of Methodism in the eighteenth century, believed that love, not faith, became the final goal of our salvation. Faith is the "handmaid of love.... Biblical faith, for Wesley, is so entangled with love...that it does not exist without [it].... True Christianity is to 'have the mind of Christ,' which is demonstrated in love for God and neighbor. The real freedom of the Christian is not the freedom from guilt or release from the pangs of hell but the freedom to love with the love of God Himself shed abroad in the heart by the indwelling Holy Spirit. In his 'Plain Account,' Wesley summarized freedom as 'nothing higher and nothing lower than this...love governing the heart and life, through all our tempers, words, and actions'" (Five Views on Sanctification, Zondervan Publishing; brackets mine).

Christ's love not only brings people to Himself (Ro 2:4), but it is the force that reaches out to others (1Jo 4:20). Paul thanked God for the love that the Colossians had shown to each other. "True saving faith is more than a conviction of the mind. It transforms the heart to love" (MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Volume 12, p. 19).

## COLOSSIANS 1:5

*For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;*

Note 7 at Col 1:5: The Gospel gave the Colossians such a hope of the future (in heaven) that it actually affected their present lives. It was this that Paul gave thanks for (Col 1:3).

## COLOSSIANS 1:6

*Which is come unto you, as [it is] in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as [it doth] also in you, since the day ye heard [of it], and knew the grace of God in truth:*

Note 8 at Col 1:6: The Gospel is a universal message for all mankind. It encompasses all ethnic and cultural groups. It is the good news from God that He has come to seek and to save those who are lost (Mt 18:11-14 and Lu 19:10).

The Scripture repeatedly conveys that this message is for all people, of all ages, in all nations: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations" (Mt 24:14). "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations" (Mt 28:19). "And the gospel must first be published among all nations" (Mr 13:10). "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mr 16:15). "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations" (Lu 24:47). "And ye shall be witnesses

unto me...unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Ac 1:8). "And be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Col 1:23). "Having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people" (Re 14:6).

Note 9 at Col 1:6: The Gospel is not only universal in its scope, but it is also alive and produces fruit (Mt 13:8 and Jas 3:17). Such spiritual fruit consists of the conversion of people's lives (Ro 1:13); eternal life (Joh 4:36); the life of Christ manifested in the believer (Joh 15:4-5); holiness (Ro 6:22); the evidence of repentance in people's lives (Mt 3:8 and 7:20); good works (Col 1:10); thanksgiving to God (Heb 13:15); love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Ga 5:22-23); and goodness, righteousness, and truth (2Co 9:10, Eph 5:9, and Php 1:11).

## **COLOSSIANS 1:7**

*As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;*

Note 10 at Col 1:7: Epaphras is mentioned three times in the New Testament (this verse, Col 4:12; and Phm 23).

The word "fellowservant," as Paul described Epaphras in this verse, is used ten times in the New Testament (Mt 18:28-29, 31, 33, 24:49; Col 1:7, 4:7; Re 6:11, 19:10, and 22:9) and means "one who serves the same master with another...one who with others

acknowledges the same Lord" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). Paul connected Epaphras' ministry with his own by using this term.

Col 4:12 says Epaphras was "one of you," meaning that Epaphras was a Colossian. Putting this together with this verse, which says Epaphras was "for you a faithful minister of Christ," implies that Epaphras was the one who brought the Gospel to Colosse.

In Phm 23, Paul called Epaphras "my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus." It is not known if this is literal, or if he was simply saying Epaphras was a fellow believer in Jesus.

Note 11 at Col 1:7: Faithfulness is a prized characteristic that separates godly ministers from all the rest. Faithfulness carries the idea of being loyal, reliable, and having or being full of faith. Paul spoke of only a few of his associates as faithful, such as Tychicus (Eph 6:21 and Col 4:7), Epaphras (this verse), Onesimus (Col 4:9), and Timothy (1Co 4:17). Faithfulness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Ga 5:22) and must be developed in our lives as we look unto Him.

## **COLOSSIANS 1:8**

*Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.*

Note 12 at Col 1:8: This is speaking of Epaphras (see note 11 at Col 1:7) as the one who declared the love of the Colossians for the Apostle Paul and his company.

Note 13 at Col 1:8: The Colossians had never met Paul, yet they loved him. To a person who doesn't know God's kind of love, that would be impossible. But God's love doesn't know the limitations of carnal love. This love was "in the Spirit." The Lord knew Paul and loved him, and the Holy Spirit within the Colossians was releasing that love toward Paul.

## **COLOSSIANS 1:9**

***For this cause we also, since the day we heard [it], do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;***

Note 14 at Col 1:9: Paul had just spoken about how Epaphras expressed the Colossians' love for him. Here, he was saying that he loved them also and expressed that love through praying for them.

Note 15 at Col 1:9: Two prominent and distinct characteristics found in the lives of the apostles were that they gave themselves continually to prayer and to the preaching and teaching of God's Word (Ac 6:4).

Before the Apostle Paul began his instruction to the Colossians, we are privileged to see into his prayer life (Col 1:9-14). Sometimes we have a tendency to think that people's lives cannot be touched by us without us physically being there. Paul showed us that through prayer, God will impart such things as knowledge, wisdom, understanding, and strength in helping others in their

spiritual walk, even without the physical presence of an individual.

The Scripture says that the prophetess Anna "served God" night and day through prayer (Lu 2:36-37). When used in establishing others in Christ, prayer is an awesome tool that is often overlooked. Trusting faith in God is a vehicle that works on the behalf of others.

Note 16 at Col 1:9: Paul's desire was that the Colossians might be filled with the knowledge of God's will. The word "filled" means "to put into as much as can be held" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary). Such knowledge is to permeate all of one's being.

Note 17 at Col 1:9: Knowledge of God's will is foundational in developing Christian conduct and character. The first thing Paul desired for the Colossians was that they be filled with the knowledge of God's will. Only then would they be able to "walk worthy of the Lord" and be "fruitful in every good work" (Col 1:10). There is no way people can fulfill God's will if they don't know what it is. The starting point for all Christians must be understanding God's will for them.

How can people obtain such knowledge? The first step is to desire it. Jer 29:13 says, "And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." People ask the Lord for knowledge of His will but don't receive, because they aren't seeking with all their heart. No one who has ever sought the Lord with all their heart has ever been disappointed.

Second, the Holy Spirit is the dispenser of God's wisdom. It is through Him that we know the things God has revealed to us (1Co 2:10-12). One of the primary ministries of the Holy Spirit is to reveal God's will to us (Joh 16:13). There has to be a dependency on the person of the Holy Spirit (see note 4 at 1Co



2:9, note 5 at 1Co 2:10, note 6 at 1Co 2:11, note 7 at 1Co 2:12, and note 8 at 1Co 2:13).

Finally, we must study the Scriptures because they reveal the will of God concerning our actions and attitudes. To be filled with the knowledge of God's will, we must be filled with God's Word. God's Word is His will! Those who are ignorant of God's Word will be ignorant of God's will.

Note 18 at Col 1:9: Notice that Paul desired for the Colossians to be filled with spiritual understanding. There is a big difference between carnal understanding and spiritual understanding. All spiritual understanding originates from and conforms to God's Word. Any reasoning that violates God's Word is not spiritual understanding.

Note 19 at Col 1:9: The Greek word for "wisdom," "SOPHIA," is used fifty-one times in the New Testament, including six times in Colossians (Col 1:9, 28; 2:3, 23; 3:16; and 4:5). Wisdom is more than just knowledge; it is the ability to use knowledge correctly.

The Greek word "SUNESIS" was translated "understanding" a total of six times in the New Testament (Mr 12:33; Lu 2:47; 1Co 1:19; Col 1:9, 2:2; and 2Ti 2:7). It literally means "a mental putting together" (Strong's Concordance).

The words "wisdom" and "understanding" are used in combination a total of fifty-three times in Scripture. To utilize our facilities fully, wisdom and understanding have to work together.

These terms can be explained in relation to a computer. The mind is like the hardware of a computer. It has the capacity to store all kinds of information, but it is useless without software and data. The understanding is the data, and wisdom is the software that allows us to retrieve, combine, and put out that information.

## COLOSSIANS 1:10

*That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;*

Note 20 at Col 1:10: Being filled with the knowledge of God's will as Paul described in the previous verse results in all the benefits listed in this verse and also those of Col 1:11. There is no way we can walk worthy of the Lord, please Him, and be fruitful if we don't know His will. Knowing God's will is not a one-time experience. We increase in the knowledge of His will.

As we experience these blessings, then the results will be as Col 1:11 describes. We will be strengthened through God's power "unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness."

Note 21 at Col 1:10: Being filled with the knowledge of God (Col 1:9) results in a lifestyle that is pleasing unto the Lord.

"Walk," in the Scriptures, is many times used figuratively to indicate a pattern of conduct, or lifestyle (1Jo 1:7, 2Jo 6, and 3Jo 3-4). Here, it also suggests acting in conformity to our union with Christ (Ro 7:4). We are to walk "worthy" of the Lord, the Greek term "AXIOS." AXIOS comes from a word meaning a lifestyle of "equal weight" to the object with which it is compared (Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words).

So, how could we possibly "walk worthy of the Lord"? The answer is that we can't if we try in our own strength. Jesus said, "Without me ye can do nothing" (Joh 15:5), and with Him, you "can do all things" (Php 4:13). The secret to the Christian life is living from the strength and resources of Christ Himself (Ga 2:20). As Martin Luther (1483-1546) stated in one of the most powerful hymns of the Protestant Reformation, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," "Did we in our own strength confide, / our striving would be losing, / were not the right man on our side, / the man of God's own choosing."

Note 22 at Col 1:10: Paul stated, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." The Greek word for "pleasing" used here is "ARESKEIA," and it means a "desire to please" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon).

What pleases the Lord? Heb 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please him." Therefore, faith certainly pleases the Lord. This God-pleasing faith is specifically a faith in God's grace and not in our acts of holiness. If our faith is in our actions, then that type of faith is not pleasing to the Lord (Ro 8:8).

Once our faith for justification is in the Lord and not in ourselves, then there are things we can do that are pleasing to the Lord. Col 3:20 says that children obeying their parents is "well pleasing unto the Lord." Doing good and giving of our finances is pleasing to the Lord (Heb 13:16). Offering prayers, especially for all in authority, pleases the Lord (1Ti 2:2-3, New International Version). Basically, a lifestyle consistent with the Word pleases God if it originates from a heart of love and faith.

Heb 11:5 states that before Enoch's translation, he pleased God. Therefore, pleasing the Lord is possible and has great reward. We need to "find out what pleases the Lord" (Eph 5:10, NIV; emphasis mine).

Note 23 at Col 1:10: In this verse, the emphasis is upon every good work bearing fruit. We could say that Paul was praying that the Colossians' lives would produce all kinds of good works through their union with Christ and that their lives would continue to keep growing and producing this fruit. Good works are often spoken of as being the fruit, not the root, of our salvation (Eph 2:8-10 and 1Jo 3:10; see note 2 at Ro 6:22 and note 2 at Ga 6:12).

The Scripture describes "fruit" in a variety of ways. Among them are the following:

- fruit in keeping with repentance (Mt 3:8)
- good and evil fruit (Mt 7:17)
- fruits of the kingdom of God (Mt 21:43)
- fruit unto eternal life (Joh 4:36)
- the fruit of abiding in Christ's life (Joh 15:5)
- fruit of discipleship (Joh 15:8)
- the fruit, or harvest, of souls (Ro 1:13)
- fruit unto holiness (Ro 6:22)
- fruit unto God (Ro 7:4)
- fruits of righteousness (2Co 9:10)
- the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Ga 5:22-23)
- fruit of goodness, righteousness, and truth (Eph 5:9)
- fruit of one's labor (Php 1:22)
- fruit of giving (Php 4:17)
- fruit of the Gospel (Col 1:6)
- being fruitful in good works (this verse)
- the fruit of our lips giving thanks to God (Heb 13:15)

Note 24 at Col 1:10: Even Jesus had to increase in knowledge (Lu 2:52). That's an awesome truth. Jesus was God in the Spirit, but He had a physical mind that had to be educated. He had to be taught how to walk, talk, eat, and so forth. At twelve years of age,

He was not only teaching the teachers in the temple, but He was also asking them questions (Lu 2:46). If Jesus had to grow in wisdom, how could any of us think that we have it all figured out?

## COLOSSIANS 1:11

***Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;***

Note 25 at Col 1:11: The Greek word "DUNAMOO," which was translated "strengthened" here, is a present participle, signifying continuous action. That means God doesn't just strengthen us one time; it is a continuous process.

The laws of gravity don't stop when a plane flies. The plane must continuously produce thrust to stay in flight. If the engines are cut off, the plane will begin to fall. Likewise, Satan's warfare against us doesn't stop just because we are born again. If we aren't continuously strengthened by the power of God, we are headed downward as surely as a plane whose engines have quit (see notes 5-6 at Eph 3:16).

Note 26 at Col 1:11: Where does this might come from? It comes from God, of course, but it comes through the Holy Spirit. Ac 1:8 says, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." The same Greek word that was translated "power" in Ac 1:8 was translated "might" in this verse.

Note 27 at Col 1:11: The word "longsuffering" is primarily

denoting self-restraint. The Expository Dictionary of Bible Words (p. 478) says this Greek word, "MAKROTHYMIA," "focuses our attention on restraint: that capacity for self-control despite circumstances that might arouse the passions or cause agitation."

Patience and long-suffering are closely related. However, it seems that long-suffering is used more in relationships and involves forbearance, endurance, and slowness in avenging wrongs.

Note 28 at Col 1:11: Sometimes people mistake tolerance of others or situations as patience and long-suffering, but there is a difference. The difference is joy. It is easy to distinguish the counterfeit patience and long-suffering that the world offers, because it lacks this critical ingredient. We are miserable when we try to operate in temperance from the flesh. In fact, tolerance is about the best we can do on our own to bear with situations and people. When we are strengthened by the glorious power of God's might, we can move into true patience and long-suffering that actually rejoices before the desired end comes into view.

## **COLOSSIANS 1:12**

***Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:***

Note 29 at Col 1:12: Notice that Paul said the Father "hath made us meet" (emphasis mine). The Lord is not going to enable us in the future. He's already done it. As Joh 1:12 says, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." The Greek word for "meet" is "HIKANOO," and it means

"to make sufficient [or] render fit" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, brackets mine) to partake of God's inheritance for the saints. We, as children of God, have been supernaturally enabled to manifest the blessings of our inheritance. The New International Version says "has qualified you." The ability is there; we just have to use it.

Note 30 at Col 1:12: An "inheritance" is actually an "allotted portion" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). It is described as "eternal life" in Mt 19:29 - "And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life" (emphasis mine). Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon describes it as "the part which one will have in eternal salvation...eternal salvation itself...i.e. the eternal salvation which God has assigned," and all the benefits and blessings of which it consists.

## **COLOSSIANS 1:13**

***Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated [us] into the kingdom of his dear Son:***

Note 31 at Col 1:13: "Who hath delivered" us is in the Greek aorist tense. This means that the action spoken of is to be viewed as complete, as a whole, or as a one-time action. The Christian life is walking by faith in accordance with that which God's grace has already freely given. Ro 6:11 states, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." We don't reckon ourselves as becoming

dead to sin; instead, we reckon ourselves already dead, because we are dead through Jesus Christ our Lord. We are not heading toward victory; we are coming from a victory--the victory of Christ over the devil, which has already taken place.

Since we have already been delivered "from the power of darkness," Satan does not have any real power over us. His only weapons are deception and intimidation. Those who know the truth this verse is presenting have nothing to fear.

Note 32 at Col 1:13: The Greek word for "translated" is "METHISTEMI," and it means to "remove from one place to another...of change of situation or place" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). It is used of a steward being "put out" of his stewardship (Lu 16:4), of Saul being "removed" from his kingdom (Ac 13:22), of Paul turning people away from idols (Ac 19:26), of faith removing mountains (1Co 13:2), and of being "translated" from the power of darkness (this verse). This verb is relating the fact of the believer being totally removed from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

## **COLOSSIANS 1:14**

*In whom we have redemption through his blood, [even] the forgiveness of sins:*

Note 33 at Col 1:14: The Greek word that was translated "redemption" here is "APOLYTROSIS," and it means "a buying



back, a setting free by paying a ransom price" (The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament Edition).

APOLYTROSIS was used in the following scriptures: Lu 21:28; Ro 3:24, 8:23; 1Co 1:30; Eph 1:7, 14, 4:30; this verse; Heb 9:15, and 11:35. God created us for Himself, but we sold ourselves into slavery to the devil. The Lord bought us back through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. The Lord illustrated this in the Old Testament through the prophet Hosea (Ho 1:2-3 and 3:2).

Note 34 at Col 1:14: It is through Christ's blood that redemption has been provided. No amount of effort, human works, or mankind's own righteousness could bring the divine favor that we needed. Therefore, Christ's blood was a gift of divine provision in payment for our sin.

In the Old Testament, we see that sin was so serious, it demanded punishment by death. Eze 18:20 states, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The shedding of blood in the O.T. sacrifices symbolized this death penalty. The blood of Jesus was not symbolic but the actual life of God (Le 17:11) that purchased our redemption.

The Scriptures mention a number of things that the blood of Jesus accomplished for us: it purchased the church of God (Ac 20:28), it instituted the New Covenant (1Co 11:25), it brought us close to God (Eph 2:13), and it provided peace (Col 1:20). The blood of Jesus purges our consciences (Heb 9:14), gives us boldness to enter into the holy place (Heb 10:19), and cleanses us of all sin (1Jo 1:7 and Re 1:5). It enables us to overcome the devil (Re 12:11) and provides propitiation (Ro 3:25), justification (Ro 5:9), remission (Heb 9:22), sanctification (Heb 13:12), and eternal redemption (Eph 1:7, this verse, and Heb 9:12).

Note 35 at Col 1:14: The forgiveness of sins is one of the great themes of the Bible. There is so much that Scripture says about it

that it would take volumes of books to adequately deal with the subject. Suffice it to say that the blood of Jesus is what provided us with the forgiveness of sins. That sacrifice was so great that it outweighed all our sins. It covered all the sins of the world--past, present, and future (see note 11 at Ro 4:8).

The forgiveness of our sins is not the ultimate goal of our salvation; it is just a necessary step. The real goal of salvation is relationship with the Father (see note 94 at Joh 17:3), and sin is a barrier to that relationship. Sin had to be dealt with, and it was, through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. But those who stop with the forgiveness of sins and don't go on into eternal life are missing the heart of salvation. Our sins have been forgiven so that we may enter into intimacy with the Lord.

## **COLOSSIANS 1:15**

***Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:***

Note 1 at Col 1:15: The Greek noun for "image" used here is "EIKON." EIKON was used twenty-three times in twenty verses in the New Testament: Mt 22:20 [once]; Mr 12:16 [once]; Lu 20:24 [once]; Ro 1:23 [once], 8:29 [once]; 1Co 11:7 [once], 15:49 [twice]; 2Co 3:18 [once], 4:4 [once]; Col 1:15 [once], 3:10 [once]; Heb 10:1 [once]; Re 13:14-15 [four times], 14:9 [once], 11 [once], 15:2 [once], 16:2 [once], 19:20 [once], and 20:4 [once]. This Greek word means "a likeness, i.e. (literally) statue, profile, or (figuratively) representation, resemblance" (Strong's Concordance).

It was not in the physical realm that Jesus was the image of God. Jesus' physical body was plain. Isaiah said that there was no beauty in Jesus that we should desire Him (Isa 53:2). Paul said in Php 2:7 that Jesus' physical body was "made in the likeness of men." Jesus totally represented the Father in actions, nature, and character. Jesus said, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (Joh 14:9). Jesus gave us an exact image (Heb 1:3) of the Father's heart.

We are predestined "to be conformed to the image of his Son" (Ro 8:29). As surely "as we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1Co 15:49), and we don't have to wait for eternity for this to happen. As we now behold the glory of the Lord, we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory" (2Co 3:18).

Note 2 at Col 1:15: God the Father is invisible to our natural senses, but He has and will be seen (see note 5 at Joh 4:24).

Note 3 at Col 1:15: Some people have tried to use this term "firstborn" to argue that Jesus was a created being and not the Creator. That is not true. "Firstborn" is used here in the sense of first in importance (see note 3 at Ro 8:29). This is verified by the context of this verse (see Col 1:18) where Paul said Jesus was to have the preeminence in all things.

The Greek term for "first created" is "PROTOKTISIS," whereas the Greek word for "firstborn," used here, is "PROTOTOKOS." These are two entirely different words. It is significant that in this verse, the Apostle Paul deliberately avoided using the Greek term for "first created" and instead chose the Greek word for "firstborn." Jesus "is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col 1:17).

In Bible days, the Jews understood the term "firstborn" to refer to position and rank. In other words, the firstborn (according to Jewish custom) was his father's heir. All that his father possessed was his. This term signifies that the Son is the "appointed heir of all things" (Heb 1:2). Taken in context, this passage clearly reveals that all things in heaven and earth were created by the Son and for the Son (Col 1:16-17). By virtue of this fact, the Son stands as Ruler, Creator, and Firstborn.

Note 4 at Col 1:15: The Today's English Version translated this verse in the following manner: "Christ is the visible likeness of the invisible God. He is the first-born Son, superior to all created things." The German Common Language Version translated this verse as "In the Son the invisible God became visible for us."

## COLOSSIANS 1:16

***For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether [they be] thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:***

Note 5 at Col 1:16: The reason that Jesus is preeminent (Col 1:18) over all creation is that He is the Creator. This includes things in heaven and things on earth, whether visible or invisible. Christ created the material universe as well as thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers. These refer to the various ranks of angels. Instead of Jesus being an angel, as some cults teach, Jesus is the Creator of angels, and as such, angels are commanded to worship Him (Heb 1:6).

If Jesus is only an angel, as the Jehovah's Witness cult teaches, then angels are guilty of committing a most serious sacrilegious act by worshiping Him (Heb 1:6). Furthermore, if Jesus was a created creature as some cults teach, then angels are guilty of creature worship. Ne 9:6 states that angels worship Jehovah. This again is proof of the deity of Christ.

Note 6 at Col 1:16: Jesus created all things, whether visible or invisible. This is referring to all things whether physical or spiritual.

Note 7 at Col 1:16: These four levels of authority (thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers) include physical and spiritual kingdoms. Of course, all physical kingdoms are inferior to Christ, but so are all spiritual forces, whether angelic or demonic. Principalities and powers were specifically mentioned in Eph 6:12 as different levels of authority in Satan's kingdom (see note 6 at that verse).

Note 8 at Col 1:16: Everything was not only created by Jesus but for Jesus. Re 4:11 says it this way: "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."

Even spirits that are now demonic were originally created for God's pleasure. This reveals that God did not create these spirits the way we now see them. There has been a rebellion among spirit beings that has produced their depraved natures and actions. God did not create them that way.

## COLOSSIANS 1:17

*And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*

Note 9 at Col 1:17: Christ is the One through whom all things were made (Joh 1:3, 1Co 8:6, Eph 3:9, and Heb 1:1-2). He is also the One by whom all things continue to exist (Ac 17:28 and Heb 1:3).

In the New World Translation, the Bible used by the Jehovah's Witnesses, this verse is translated as: "he is before all [other] things and by means of him all [other] things were made to exist." This is an attempt to prove that Jesus was Himself created and then used as an agent to bring forth the remaining creation. The word "other" is deliberately inserted twice in the New World Translation, and this totally changes the meaning of the whole text. Scholars have exposed this dishonest rendering, as any Greek text will show that no such word as "other" appears in the Greek.

This is an attempt by man to put Christ on the level of created things. What the scripture is really saying is that Jesus Christ (the Word, Joh 1:1) was before creation and that through Him, all creation was brought forth and now exists.

## COLOSSIANS 1:18

*And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all [things] he might have the preeminence.*

Note 10 at Col 1:18: Christ is not only the Creator, but He is also the head of the church. Scripture describes the church as a family (Eph 3:15), a vineyard (Mt 20:1-16), a kingdom (Mt 5:20, Lu 17:20-21, and Col 1:13), a building (1Co 3:9 and Eph 2:21), a flock (Joh 10:1-16, Ac 20:28, and 1Pe 5:2-3), and a bride (Re 21:2, 9; and 22:17). The description of Christ's church as His body has no Old Testament equivalent. The church is a living organism, and as such, it has life, with its head being Christ Jesus. As head, He is Chief, Supreme, and Lord of His Church.

Note 11 at Col 1:18: This is another passage that those who do not believe in the deity of Christ try to use to "dethrone" Christ (see note 5 at Col 1:16 and note 9 at Col 1:17). This is not speaking of Jesus as having a beginning like other creatures; this is speaking of Christ's resurrection. He was the beginning of a whole new species of beings that had never existed before. These are the new creations that Paul spoke of in 2Co 5:17. Jesus Christ was the first person ever begotten from the dead and raised in newness of life (Ro 6:4, see note 12 at Col 1:18).

It is also correct to speak of Jesus as "the beginning" if we are defining "beginning" as "a source; an origin" (American Heritage Dictionary). This is the way "beginning" is used in a number of scriptures referring to Jesus.

Note 12 at Col 1:18: Jesus was not the first person to be raised from the dead. Elijah raised the widow's son from the dead (1Ki 17:22). Elisha raised the Shunammite woman's son from the dead (2Ki 4:35). One man came back to life when his body was tossed in the tomb of Elisha and touched Elisha's dead bones (2Ki 13:21). Jesus raised three people from the dead (Lu 7:15, Mt 9:25, and Joh 11:44) prior to His own resurrection.

However, no one had been resurrected as Jesus was. Jesus didn't

just come back to life to have to die again; He was resurrected with a spiritual body (see note 13 at 1Co 15:44) that can never die (Ro 6:9). Jesus was also the first "born-again" person. He not only had a glorified body, but He also had a spirit that had been raised in newness of life (Ro 6:4).

1Co 15:20 refers to Jesus as the first fruits from the dead. That means He was the first, but there are more to come. That is referring to all believers who have been "born-again" (see note 2 at Joh 3:3). All Christians have new, born-again spirits, and they will receive glorified bodies at the second coming of Christ.

Note 13 at Col 1:18: The word "preeminence" was translated from the Greek word "PROTEUO," and this Greek word means "to be first (in rank or influence)" (Strong's Concordance). The American Heritage Dictionary defines "preeminent" as "superior to...all others; outstanding." This was what Paul was stressing-- Jesus is Lord of all.

## **COLOSSIANS 1:19**

***For it pleased [the Father] that in him should all fulness dwell;***

Note 14 at Col 1:19: "Fulness" ("PLEROMA") is used twice in Colossians in referring to the deity of Jesus Christ (this verse and Col 2:9). The verb "KATOIKEO" ("dwell") that was used in conjunction with "fulness" here "speaks of the fact that all the divine fulness is at home permanently in the Lord Jesus, at home in the sense that this divine fulness was not something added to His Being that was not natural to Him, but that it was part of His



essential Being as part of His very constitution, and that permanently" (Wuest's Word Studies of the Greek New Testament, Volume 1, p. 187).

This is a very clear reference to the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

## **COLOSSIANS 1:20**

***And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, [I say], whether [they be] things in earth, or things in heaven.***

Note 15 at Col 1:20: The peace that Paul was speaking of here is peace between God and man (see note 2 at Ro 5:1). It was purchased with the awful price of Jesus' blood. The price paid was greater than the sum total of all of mankind's sins. Therefore, total and complete peace is now ours.

Note 16 at Col 1:20: It is important not to interpret this passage in a way that would contradict the clear teaching of other scriptures. Therefore, unrepentant people and fallen angels must be excluded from the things that will be reconciled to God. Satan's kingdom is spoken of as being under the earth (Php 2:10) and in the lower parts of the earth (Eph 4:9). So, all those damned to hell will not be ultimately reconciled to God. This verse is speaking of all things in heaven and on earth coming back into harmony with God.

The things on earth that will be reconciled to God include those

individuals who have put saving faith in Christ. The animal creation (Ro 8:19-21), as well as this physical world, will be renovated and reconciled to God (Re 21:1). What are the things in heaven that will be reconciled to God, if demonic powers are excluded?

Apparently sin affected not only people and this world, but the whole universe and heaven itself. It is possible that the deterioration that we see evident in this world extends throughout the heavens. The Scriptures speak of war in heaven where Satan and his angels were cast out and down to the earth, and their place was found no more (Re 12:7-9). This war may have caused scars on the universe that will be purged. Whatever place Satan occupied must be vile and therefore must be cleansed. Certainly, the demonic presence of Satan before the throne of God (Job 1:6 and 2:1) brought some defilement to the glory of heaven. Jesus will bring all of the creation in heaven and on earth back into the glorious harmony that was originally intended.

## **COLOSSIANS 1:21**

*And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in [your] mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled*

Note 17 at Col 1:21: Notice that this alienation and enmity between us and God is in our minds. It is not God who rejected us. We rejected God by exalting our own wisdom above the wisdom of God. Therefore, since our minds led us away from God, the renewing of our minds must be part of the process of restoring us back to God (see note 15 at Ro 8:6 and notes 7-9 at

Ro 12:2).

At salvation, it is our spirits that are born again (see note 9 at 2Co 5:17). Our minds are not instantly changed. In fact, we have to make our thinking change by believing the truths of God's Word. Since the alienation was in our minds, we will continue to experience alienation even after we are born again, until our thinking changes.

Note 18 at Col 1:21: This reconciliation was accomplished through the death of our Lord Jesus (Col 1:22). The awful price that was paid indicates the greatness of the debt. This harmony wasn't cheap and should not be taken lightly.

## **COLOSSIANS 1:22**

***In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight:***

Note 19 at Col 1:22: We are holy, blameless, and unreprouable in His sight. God is a Spirit and sees us through our new, born-again spirits. Therefore, these three qualities are in our spirits, not our flesh. If we are only looking for these things in the physical realm, we will be disappointed and may even doubt that the Lord has really effected these changes in us.

Our born-again spirits are already righteous and truly holy (see notes 17-18 at Eph 4:24). This should be reflected in our physical lives, but as long as we are in this world, it will never manifest itself to the degree that it already has in our spirits. Praise the

Lord that He sees us in Christ; i.e., in the spirit.

## COLOSSIANS 1:23

*If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and [be] not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, [and] which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;*

Note 20 at Col 1:23: The word "if" used here makes our being holy, blameless, and unreprieveable conditional upon us continuing in the faith. This has led some to believe that we may have been saved by God's grace, but our actions keep us saved. That's not so.

It's our faith in what Jesus did for us that saved us, and our faith must continue to be in Christ, not in ourselves, to maintain salvation. Our holiness, righteousness, and justification are gifts that we receive in our spirits through Jesus. These things are not irrevocable. We can't lose our salvation through not being good enough, but we can reject it. We weren't forced to be saved, and the Lord won't force us to stay saved. We have to hold on to faith in Christ as our only hope of salvation (see note 4 at 1Co 15:2, note 4 at Ga 4:11, and my note at Heb 6:4).

Note 21 at Col 1:23: The Greek word that was translated "grounded" here, "THEMELIOO," literally means "to lay a basis for" (Strong's Concordance). It was translated "founded" in Mt 7:25 and Lu 6:48 in Jesus' parable of the man who built his house upon the rock. The house withstood the flood because it was

"founded" upon a rock.

This same Greek word was translated "has laid the foundation" in Heb 1:10, speaking of Jesus laying the "foundation" of the earth. It was translated as "settle" in 1Pe 5:10 and "grounded" in Eph 3:17.

Paul was describing someone who has a good foundation in and is well established in the faith.

Note 22 at Col 1:23: The English word "settle" was translated from the Greek word "HEDRAIOS," and this Greek word means "sedentary, i.e. (by implication) immovable" (Strong's Concordance). This is not describing people who are just acquainted with faith, but those who are so well established that they can't be moved from their faith in Christ.

Note 23 at Col 1:23: Paul's statement that the Gospel "was preached to every creature which is under heaven" is not to be taken literally. This is not the case, because the Lord Jesus said in Mt 24:14, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." The Gospel reaching every person is one of the occurrences that will usher in the second coming of the Lord, and that hasn't happened yet. Paul himself said he tried to preach the Gospel where Christ was not named (Ro 15:20); that means people who had not been reached yet.

This statement is to be taken as a hyperbole; that is, an intentional exaggeration for the purpose of emphasis. This is the same way children speak when they say, "But Mom, everyone is doing it!" They don't mean every single person is doing it, but they are clearly exaggerating to make their point. They would not defend that statement literally.

This is the same way Paul spoke earlier in this chapter in Col 1:6. He was not claiming that every single individual in the world during his time had heard the Gospel. But the Gospel was spreading so fast and so far that even the Pharisees of Jesus' day said, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him" (Joh 12:19). They certainly had not "gone after" Jesus, so this is understood to be a hyperbole; i.e., an exaggeration to emphasize a point.

## COLOSSIANS 1:24

***Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:***

Note 1 at Col 1:24: "THLIPSIS" is the Greek word that was translated as "afflictions" in this verse. It literally means "pressure" (Strong's Concordance). Afflictions, therefore, can be any pressures that come against us because of our stand for Christ.

Note 2 at Col 1:24: All of Christ's sufferings did not end when He finished His earthly ministry. He still takes the persecution of His people personally, as can be seen by His statement to Saul on the road to Damascus: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Ac 9:4). He didn't ask Paul why he was persecuting His people. He said, "Why are you persecuting Me?" When we are persecuted for righteousness' sake, it is actually Christ who is being persecuted (see note 4 at Ac 9:4).

Therefore, Christ is still suffering persecution today when His people are persecuted and will continue to do so until the establishment of His physical kingdom. The persecutions that are still taking place today and will take place in the future are the afflictions that are yet to come that Paul was speaking of here.

## **COLOSSIANS 1:26**

*[Even] the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:*

Note 3 at Col 1:26: The specific mystery to which Paul was referring is explained in the next verse (see note 5 at Col 1:27). When he said the mystery had "been hid from ages and from generations," he was speaking about the generations of people under the Old Testament era. They didn't understand the New Covenant mysteries that were prophesied in the Old Covenant, because these mysteries could not be understood apart from divine revelation (see note 4 at 1Co 2:9, note 5 at 1Co 2:10, and note 3 at 1Co 2:14).

In contrast, the New Testament believer has now had these mysteries made "manifest." The English word "manifest" was translated from the Greek word "PHANEROO," and this Greek word means "to render apparent" (Strong's Concordance). That which was hidden is now made apparent to those who receive the ministry of the Holy Spirit (see note 35 at Joh 14:26).

## COLOSSIANS 1:27

*To whom God would make known what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*

Note 4 at Col 1:27: The previous verse stated that this mystery (see note 5 at this verse) was made manifest (see note 3 at Col 1:26) to the saints. Here, Paul was stating that God not only wants us to know this mystery but also "the riches of the glory of this mystery." This is emphasizing that there is more than just a surface understanding of this truth. We need to seek the fullness of this revelation.

Note 5 at Col 1:27: What God desires for His New Testament saints to know that the Old Testament saints could not know is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." The coming of the Messiah was predicted in the Old Testament, but the idea that He would actually indwell us was beyond anyone's imagination. However, the New Testament is clear that Christ, by the Holy Spirit, takes up permanent residence in all believers (Ro 8:9, 1Co 6:19-20, and Eph 2:22; see note 7 at 2Co 5:17).

This is a wonderful truth that some fail to fully appreciate. Solomon said at the dedication of the temple, "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?" (1Ki 8:27). We could say, "How much less this physical body?" This is truly amazing!

The Lord's commitment to indwell us and never leave us or forsake us (Heb 13:5) must be taken as an indication of His great



love for us. If we continually thought upon this with all its implications, how could we ever be lonely or discouraged? We couldn't! Depression and self-pity would cease! What would it matter what others think of us if we truly understand how much Jesus thinks of us?

Our attitudes and fears reveal that this revelation of "Christ in us" is not a well-established fact in most Christians. However, this verse makes it clear that our Father wants to make "the riches of the glory of this mystery" known unto us. We should all be seeking a greater revelation of this truth.

Note 6 at Col 1:27: The Amplified Bible's translation of this verse reads, "To whom God was pleased to make known how great for the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ within and among you, the Hope of [realizing the] glory."

"Hope" was translated from the Greek word "ELPIS," and ELPIS comes from the word meaning "to anticipate, usually with pleasure" (Strong's Concordance). On other occasions, Paul said the Holy Spirit was the earnest, or down payment, of our inheritance (2Co 1:22, 5:5; and Eph 1:14). Paul was saying that Christ in us is a taste and guarantee of what is to come.

## **COLOSSIANS 1:28**

***Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:***

Note 7 at Col 1:28: Paul's preaching took on two forms: that of

warning and that of teaching. "Warning" carries the idea of cautioning, making aware of potential danger, notifying to stay away, or admonishing as to action. "Teaching" is instructing, training, and imparting knowledge and spiritual truth. It is the responsibility of every believer to carry out the great commission of Jesus Christ (Mt 28:20). It is also necessary to ensure freedom from the forces of darkness (Joh 8:31-32).

"Warning" and "teaching" were to be done in all "wisdom." In other words, this was probably the manner in which Paul sought to "warn" and "teach." His words and actions were as wise as possible in every circumstance. The end result was to bring people into maturity (perfection) in Christ Jesus (Eph 4:13, 2Ti 3:17, Heb 6:1, and 1Pe 5:10).

Note 8 at Col 1:28: Some groups have taken statements like the one Paul made here, and also in Col 1:6, and have taught that Jesus actually appeared to the American Indians after His resurrection. How else could every person be reached? This is not what these verses are saying.

It is to be understood that Paul was warning and teaching every person he possibly could; he was not claiming that every person had been reached any more than he was claiming that every person will be perfect in Christ Jesus. This was his goal, but it was not meant to be taken literally.

This is a figure of speech called a hyperbole, which is an intentional exaggeration used for emphasis. The Pharisees did this same thing when they said, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him" (Joh 12:19). Not every person in the world had gone after Jesus; the Pharisees certainly hadn't. They were overstating the situation for emphasis. This was what Paul did.

## COLOSSIANS 1:29

*Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*

Note 9 at Col 1:29: Serving Jesus Christ includes hard work. Paul used the Greek word "KOPIAO" to describe his "labour." KOPIAO actually means "to labour with wearisome effort" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). In the Greek, this is in the present tense, which signifies a continuous and habitual action. Paul himself stated, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1Co 15:10, emphasis mine).

The word "striving" is also in the present tense in the Greek. This word carries the idea of competing in the gymnastic games and striving to obtain (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). Paul made it clear that Jesus Christ and His grace were the source of his strength and ministry. Grace understood correctly is not a passive theological concept but a life-giving power that manifests through mankind's weaknesses as they depend upon (exercise faith in) the living Christ (2Co 12:9).

Note 10 at Col 1:29: There is effort in the Christian life (see note 9 at this verse), but this verse makes it clear that our source of power is the Lord. The Amplified Bible puts it this way: "For this I labor [unto weariness], striving with all the superhuman energy which He so mightily enkindles and works within me."

# COLOSSIANS CHAPTER 2

## COLOSSIANS 2:1

*For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and [for] them at Laodicea, and [for] as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;*

Note 11 at Col 2:1: Paul wanted the Colossians to know the conflict he was experiencing over them (see note 12 at this verse). Paul didn't hide or mask his love. He was a passionate man who believed in communicating his true feelings. Not all feelings are bad. The positive emotions that God gives need to be expressed.

Note 12 at Col 2:1: The conflict that Paul was having was not physical or external. He was speaking of interceding for these Colossians and Laodiceans in the same way that he described in Ga 4:19 - "I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." Paul so earnestly desired the maturity of these new believers that he was continually praying for them (Col 1:3 and 9-17).

Note 13 at Col 2:1: Paul had not personally led the Colossians to

faith in Christ (see note 5 at Col 1:4). That was what he was referring to when he said that they had "not seen my face in the flesh." They had never met face to face. As with anything that is received secondhand, there was the possibility of some detail being left out or changed. For this cause, Paul wrote this letter to make sure that they were grounded in the fundamentals of the faith.

## COLOSSIANS 2:2

*That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;*

Note 14 at Col 2:2: As explained in note 13 at Col 2:1, Paul wanted to see the Colossians personally so he could make sure they were grounded in the fundamentals of the Christian faith. This verse describes the things Paul wanted to make sure they knew and experienced, and it gives us insight to the things Paul's ministry accomplished in the people he ministered to.

Paul longed for the Colossians to be comforted. This attitude is noticeably different than that of some ministers today. Many preachers delight in afflicting the body of Christ. This has happened so often that many Christians have been conditioned to it. They don't feel that they have really been to church unless they have had "their toes stepped on." The true ministry of the Holy Spirit is a ministry of comfort.

Paul's ministry produced love among the brethren. That, too, is noticeably different than many ministers today. Paul also gave the believers a revelation of Christ in them. What a difference! This was a powerful ministry of love and encouragement. Maybe that is one of the big reasons Paul had different results than many ministers today.

Note 15 at Col 2:2: The Greek word "SUMBIBAZO," which was translated "knit together" here, is the same Greek word that was translated "compacted" in Eph 4:16 (see note 31 at that verse). It means "to drive together, i.e. unite" (Strong's Concordance). The picture is that through the love of God, each believer becomes intertwined with and inseparable from other believers. The end result of this kind of love is that revelation knowledge (see note 9 at Eph 3:17 and note 10 at Eph 3:18) of "Christ in us" abounds (see note 5 at Col 1:27).

Note 16 at Col 2:2: The mystery that Paul was desiring the

Colossians receive revelation of was "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27, see note 5 at that verse). Notice the six words Paul used building up the word "mystery."

He spoke of "acknowledgment" of this mystery. The word "acknowledgment" means "1. The act of admitting or owning to something. 2. Recognition of another's existence, validity, authority, or right" (American Heritage Dictionary). You can't acknowledge or admit something that is not already true. Paul was not instructing them to seek to get Christ in them but to admit what was already true. It is already a reality that every believer is indwelt by the Spirit of Christ (see note 7 at 1Co 3:16). So many Christians today aren't trying to release Christ within them; they are praying that Christ would come to them. That's already happened if they are born again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3).

Paul said we not only need to acknowledge this mystery, but we also need to "understand" the mystery. Some have acknowledged Christ in them, but they don't really appreciate what that means. This is what Paul was speaking of. We need not only the information but also a revelation of what this truth means to us. The word "understand" means "1. To perceive and comprehend the nature and significance of; grasp. 2. To know thoroughly by...long experience with" (AHD). It's through faith that we understand (Heb 11:3).

Beyond that, we not only need understanding of this mystery, but we need the assurance of understanding. The word "assure" means "to make certain; ensure...to set the mind at rest" (AHD). In other words, we must pursue this understanding until it is so firmly established in us that we are at perfect rest and peace. Those who are fearful or depressed are not really assured that Christ is in them. Paul also mentioned "full assurance." There is a difference between being assured and being fully assured. In practice, that difference is often the difference between victory and defeat.

Paul also spoke of the "riches" of this full assurance and, ultimately, "all riches" of this full assurance. All these descriptive words are emphasizing that there are different levels of understanding. We need to keep pressing toward the mark (Php 3:14) until we receive the highest level of acknowledgment, understanding, and assurance possible.

Note 17 at Col 2:2: Paul was not speaking of three different mysteries; i.e., the mystery of God, the mystery of the Father, and the mystery of Christ. This is all the one mystery he spoke of in Col 1:27 - "which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."



## COLOSSIANS 2:3

*In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

Note 18 at Col 2:3: The "whom" that is referred to here is Christ. In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Since we are in Him (2Co 5:17) and He is in us (Ro 8:9 and 1Jo 4:15), all the "wisdom and knowledge" of God is in us. It's in our born-again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3) spirits. It doesn't have to just stay there. We can draw it out (see note 5 at 1Co 14:2).

Note 19 at Col 2:3: Notice that Paul didn't just say that wisdom and knowledge are in Christ, but he intentionally said "treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (emphasis mine). The wisdom and knowledge of Christ are infinite. He created the universe through His wisdom and knowledge, and He continues to keep it intact with the same. God's wisdom is so complete that He is never at a loss as to what to do or how to fix any problem. We can draw on that wisdom as we abide in Christ.

## COLOSSIANS 2:4

*And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.*

Note 20 at Col 2:4: Here, Paul was at the heart of the reason he wrote this epistle. He wanted the Colossians to be so grounded in the truth that no one could move them from their faith in Christ. He did this not so much by attacking all the potential errors but by expounding on the truth--specifically the truth of "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27).

Once we get the revelation that Christ is in us in His fullness and that we are complete in Him, how can we ever move away from this truth? To what can it compare? Those who have left their faith in Christ for something else never fully appreciated what they had. As David said, "O taste and see that the Lord is good" (Ps 34:8). Once people have truly "tasted" the goodness of the Lord, nothing else will satisfy.

Note 21 at Col 2:4: The word "beguile" means "to deceive...cheat...divert" (American Heritage Dictionary). Satan's strongest attack is not a frontal assault against the truths of the Gospel; rather, he uses subtle deception. Perversion of the truth has captured more people than an outright denial of truth (see note 8 at Ga 1:7).

Note 22 at Col 2:4: Notice that Paul was warning against the enticing words that the Enemy was using to turn their hearts away from the Truth. Satan didn't use the biggest, most powerful animal to approach Eve and tempt her; he used the most cunning (Ge 3:1). That's because he had no power or authority to force Adam and Eve to do anything. He had to deceive them and get them to destroy themselves. That's the way it is with us.

Satan can't force any one of us away from the Truth. He has to deceive us, and he uses words to accomplish that. We need to be aware of this and protect ourselves by diligently guarding our hearts against any words that oppose the truth of God's Word. We can't do that if we are not thoroughly acquainted with God's Truth. Therefore, as Paul was arguing here, we need to be grounded in the foundational principles of the Gospel (see note 20 at this verse).

## **COLOSSIANS 2:6**

*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, [so] walk ye in him:*

Note 23 at Col 2:6: This is a simple principle that would stop a lot

of error in the body of Christ if it were observed. We received Christ totally by putting faith in God's grace (see notes 17-18 at Eph 2:8). We didn't offer the Lord any holiness on our part, but came "just as I am, without one plea" ("Just as I Am" by Charlotte Elliott). We hadn't been fasting, paying our tithes, reading the Word, or praying an hour each day, yet we received the greatest miracle of all--the new birth (see note 2 at Joh 3:3).

But amazingly, after receiving Christ by faith, many fall back into the trap of thinking that after salvation, they have to earn God's blessings by works. That is not walking in the same way that they received Christ. If they started by grace, they should continue by grace. This is the point that Paul was making in Ga 3:1-3 (see note 5 at Ga 3:2).

## **COLOSSIANS 2:7**

***Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.***

Note 24 at Col 2:7: Paul was likening growth in the Lord to a tree. The seed being planted is just the first step. Much growth has to take place before the tree is firmly established and able to

withstand the elements. Likewise, Christians who just believe and don't grow are in a vulnerable position. That's the way Paul felt about these Colossians, and he was writing to help them grow to the point that their faith would be sure.

Note 25 at Col 2:7: What you abound in when you operate in thanksgiving is faith. Faith is never complete until there is thanksgiving. If you believed for a million dollars and you received your answer, what would your response be? It would be some form of thanksgiving. It is impossible to see the answer to your prayers without some praise to God coming out. That's because thanksgiving is a vital part of faith, and faith isn't complete without it.

Therefore, faith without praise is incomplete. Those who try to believe God and are void of praise and thanksgiving prior to the time they see what they have believed for are operating in an inferior faith. As we thank the Lord in advance by faith, our faith abounds and reaches its highest level.

## **COLOSSIANS 2:8**

*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain*

***deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.***

Note 1 at Col 2:8: The word "beware" means "to be on guard (against); be cautious (of)" (American Heritage Dictionary). This English word comes from the Middle English words "ben war," which obviously is referring to war. It communicates the idea of a soldier on guard duty being on the alert because of the enemy.

This is stressing the point that we are in a spiritual battle. We Christians are in constant conflict with the kingdom of Satan and all his forces. We cannot go to sleep, go on leave, go AWOL, or get a discharge from this battle. There has to be a continual vigil.

Note 2 at Col 2:8: This word "spoil" was translated from the Greek word "SULAGOGEO," and this Greek word means "'to carry off booty'...to carry one off as a captive (and slave)...to lead away from the truth and subject to one's sway" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). If we don't maintain a constant vigil against the devil, he can take us captive and spoil us of the great riches we have in Christ. We need to be on guard against the "philosophy" or mindset of this world (see notes 3-4 at this verse).

Note 3 at Col 2:8: The Greek word "DIA," translated as "through" here, means "the channel of an act" (Strong's

Concordance). Paul was saying that the way Satan tries to spoil (see note 2 at this verse) us is through philosophy (see note 4 at this verse), vain deceit (see note 5 at this verse), the tradition of men (see note 6 at this verse), and the rudiments of this world (see note 7 at this verse). All of these things deal with words and thoughts.

Many people think Satan is endowed with supernatural power that he uses to overpower us and force us into obeying his desires. This is not true. Satan's only power is deception, and that's what Paul was warning the Colossians against here.

In Ge 3:1, the devil didn't choose the most powerful animal to come against Eve. He chose the subtlest (see note 22 at Col 2:4). Because he had no power or authority to force Adam and Eve to do anything, he first had to deceive them into believing his lie, and then they destroyed themselves. Satan uses the same tactics on us (see note 6 at 2Co 11:3). We must constantly be on guard against the deceit of the devil.

Note 4 at Col 2:8: The definition of the Greek word "PHILOSOPHIA," which was translated "philosophy" here, is "Jewish sophistry" (Strong's Concordance). The word "sophistry" means "plausible but faulty or misleading argumentation" (American Heritage Dictionary). This is describing systems of thought rather than just individual thoughts. In this specific

instance, Paul was warning against the "Law mentality" of the Old Testament versus the New Testament mentality of grace.

This is the only time PHILOSOPHIA was used in the N.T. However, a similar word, "PHILOSOPHOS," was translated "philosophers" in Ac 17:18 - "Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection." The philosophies of the Epicureans and the Stoics (see notes 3-4 at Ac 17:18) were entire ways or systems of thinking.

What Paul was warning against here is not just individual thoughts that are wrong but philosophies such as evolution, humanism, materialism, and anything else that violates Christian philosophy. Everyone has a philosophy. Pessimism and optimism are philosophies. Every culture has a certain outlook or philosophy, and these philosophies dictate people's responses. Philosophies program people to respond in predictable ways. If people want to change their responses, they must change their philosophies.

Many modern philosophies are in opposition to the Scriptures. The rise of psychology in our modern society has produced a philosophy that is opposed to true Christianity. Generally,



psychology places the blame for one's individual actions on others instead of on oneself. At first, this seems comforting, because it rids us of personal guilt and responsibility for our actions, but it also robs us of our God-given authority. If others are our problem, we are doomed to be victims for the rest of our lives, because we can change neither the past nor others. The truth of God's Word reveals that we always have the choice of whether to become bitter or better. God gave us that choice (De 30:19). Satan cannot violate it, and God will not violate it.

Who hasn't heard of people claiming that their "dysfunctional" families were what caused them to commit terrible crimes? If it is true that we are simply products of our environment, then people who have similar backgrounds would all have similar reactions, but it's not true. Siblings raised in identical situations may have completely opposite reactions because of their personal choices. Believing anything less than this puts mankind on the level with animals, which have no choice but to simply respond to their environment. We are not animals! We were made in the image of God Almighty, and we have the privilege and responsibility of choosing right from wrong.

This type of "philosophy" is the root of much error in the body of Christ today. The Bible reveals God's system of thinking, or philosophy. It is timeless and remains the proper philosophy, regardless of the latest "politically correct" thinking. We must dominate our thoughts with God's way of thinking. Then, and

only then, will we see the results that God's Word promises (see note 15 at Ro 8:6 and note 9 at Ro 12:2).

Note 5 at Col 2:8: The Phillips New Testament Bible renders the phrase "vain deceit" as "high-sounding nonsense." The Greek words literally mean "empty delusion" (Strong's Concordance). The wisdom (or philosophy - see note 4 at this verse) of this world is foolishness compared to God's wisdom (see note 11 at 1Co 3:19). Often, Christians feel intimidated by intellectuals who proclaim ideas such as evolution. They sound so brilliant with all their big words. But a day is coming when we will all stand before God, and all their arguments will be shown to be "high-sounding nonsense."

Note 6 at Col 2:8: It is amazing the effect that tradition has on us. Tradition can have a stabilizing effect that keeps us from having to rediscover everything anew with each generation, but it can also impede progress by making us unreceptive to new ideas. Many people do what they do just because it has been done that way for centuries before them. When it comes to religion, tradition nearly always hinders the Word of God (see note 8 at Mr 7:13 and note 4 at Ga 1:14).

Note 7 at Col 2:8: The word "rudiment" means "a fundamental element, principle, or skill" (American Heritage Dictionary). The New International Version translates the phrase "rudiments of the

world" as "the basic principles of this world." Paul used these words to further describe the "philosophy" he had just mentioned. The philosophy he was speaking against was a system of thought (see note 4 at this verse) based on worldly principles instead of godly principles (see note 6 at 1Co 1:21).

## **COLOSSIANS 2:9**

*For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*

Note 8 at Col 2:9: This is one more direct reference to the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ (see notes at John 1:1; Luke 1:43; 2:11; 5:19-23; 22:69; Mark 12:29; 14:62; John 8:58; 10:30; 20:28). Jesus wasn't just God-like in the sense that all mankind was made in the image of God. Jesus had the fullness of God's nature in Him. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh (1Ti 3:16).

The French Common Language Translation translates this verse "For everything that God is has become embodied in Christ, to be completely present in him."

The word "Godhead" is found three times in the New Testament

(Ac 17:29, Ro 1:20, and this verse). The false, pantheistic concept of Paul's day was that divinity is in all things, in nature as well as every man. But Paul used the Greek word "THEOTES," and this Greek word literally means "'deity' i.e. the state of being God" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon).

Dake's Annotated Reference Bible, p. 280, states, "The word God is used either as a singular or plural word, like sheep. Everything that could be spoken of God collectively applies equally to each member of the Godhead as an individual, but there are some things that are said of each person of the Deity as to position, office, and work that could not be spoken as of the other members of the Godhead. The Father is the head of Christ (1Co 11:3); the Son is the only begotten of the Father (2Jo 3), and the Holy Ghost proceeds from both the Father and the Son (Joh 14:16, 26; 15:26; and 16:7-15)" (emphasis mine).

The plural name for God in the Old Testament is "ELOHIM," and it was used over 2,600 times. The plural pronouns used by God Himself are found in Ge 1:26 - "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness" (emphasis mine); Ge 11:7 - "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language" (emphasis mine); Isa 6:8 - "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (emphasis mine); and Ge 3:22 - "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us" (emphasis mine).

## COLOSSIANS 2:10

*And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:*

Note 9 at Col 2:10: Remember that Paul said in Col 2:4 that he was saying these things to keep the Colossians from being deceived. Recognition of our completeness in Christ is a tremendous safeguard against deception. Prior to salvation, we are incomplete, and there is a constant striving in all of us to satisfy that hunger. Through the new birth, however, we are complete in Christ, and our hunger should only be for more revelation of what we already have in Christ. Total satisfaction with Christ disarms Satan's lies. A big part of all temptation is dissatisfaction.

Adam and Eve would not have eaten of the forbidden fruit if they hadn't been made dissatisfied with what they had. Through Satan's lie, they were led to believe that they didn't have it all (Ge 3:5) when the truth was they did. They were more like God before they ate of the fruit than after eating it. Their dissatisfaction was a preliminary step to their action of sin.

Satan tempts us in the same way he came against Adam and Eve (2Co 11:3). Therefore, a full revelation of our completeness in Christ will keep us from chasing after all the things the devil has to offer. If anyone tells us that Christ isn't enough, that we need something more, then that's the devil trying to turn us away from our completeness in Christ.

Note 10 at Col 2:10: Paul was making a comparison. In the same way that he had said Jesus had the fullness of God in Him (Col 2:9), we have the fullness of Christ in us. That makes us complete (perfect) in Him, in our spirits (see note 9 at 2Co 5:17). In righteousness, authority, and power, our born-again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3) spirits are identical to Christ's spirit, because our born-again spirits are the Spirit of Christ (Ro 8:9), which has been sent into our hearts crying "Abba, Father" (Ga 4:6).

## **COLOSSIANS 2:11**

*In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made*

***without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:***

Note 11 at Col 2:11: Circumcision was practiced to some extent by other nations, but it had a special significance to the nation of Israel through both the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants (Ge 17:11; Le 12:1, and 3; see note 2 at Ac 15:1). The very nature of the act makes it clear that this is not something to be flaunted (see note 8 at Ga 2:4). It was a very private matter between God and the individual.

Biblically speaking, the uncircumcised were identified with that which was unholy and unclean (Isa 52:1; Eze 44:7, and 9). In both the Old and New Testaments, "uncircumcision" illustrated a need for the cleansing of the heart (De 10:16, 30:6; Jer 4:4, 9:26; Ac 7:51; and Ro 2:29). For Paul to include Gentiles among the circumcised was to include them in the family of God.

This circumcision was made without hands. That means it was not done by man, and it was not done in the physical. Paul was referring to spiritual circumcision of the heart. This verse goes on to explain that this circumcision was the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh. The sins of our hearts were cut away and discarded through the sacrifice of Christ in a similar way to how the foreskin is removed from a male. The physical act of circumcision was a picture of this spiritual circumcision that is

now a reality in every born-again believer (see note 2 at Joh 3:3).

## **COLOSSIANS 2:12**

*Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with [him] through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*

Note 12 at Col 2:12: This "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh" occurs at the moment of salvation, when one is buried with Christ in baptism (1Co 12:13) and raised with Him through faith in God's power. The point that Paul was making is that the completeness (see note 10 at Col 2:10) and spiritual circumcision (see note 11 at Col 2:11) he had just spoken of was already an accomplished fact in the born-again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3) spirit. These things are already realities in our spirits (Ga 5:24) that only have to be appropriated in our flesh.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines the word "appropriate" as "to take possession of" and says it comes from a Latin word that literally means "to make one's own." Christ has



already provided everything for us and placed it in our born-again spirits, but we have to take possession of it. We must draw these new-creation realities out of our spirits (see note 9 at 2Co 5:17) through the renewing of our minds (see note 9 at Ro 12:2) and manifest them in our flesh.

## **COLOSSIANS 2:13**

*And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;*

Note 13 at Col 2:13: The death spoken of here is spiritual death resulting from sin. People without Christ may be physically alive, yet they walk around in the state of spiritual death (see note 3 at Eph 2:1). Scripture describes this condition as being alienated from the life of God, controlled by the old nature, having no hope, being by nature the children of wrath, and controlled by the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:1-6, 12, 4:18; and Ga 5:19-21).

Being quickened, or made alive, with Christ reverses the effects of spiritual death. All that had once alienated us from God is gone, and we are now seated with Christ Jesus in the very presence of God (Col 3:1).

Note 14 at Col 2:13: Notice that the wonderful benefits of our salvation, which Paul was describing in these verses (Col 2:11-13), all happened through Christ and took place as Christ Jesus experienced them for us. His experience became our experience. The theological term for this is "the vicarious sufferings of Christ." The word "vicarious" means "endured or done by one person substituting for another" (American Heritage Dictionary).

We don't personally overcome sin. Jesus has already overcome sin for us, and we just let Him live through us (see note 14 at Ga 2:20) and manifest that victory. Jesus has already conquered death, and we have His resurrection power living in us (see note 16 at Eph 1:19).

Note 15 at Col 2:13: The "all" that Paul was making reference to not only includes all the sins in the past, but present and even future sins have already been forgiven for those who are in Christ Jesus (see note 11 at Ro 4:8).

## COLOSSIANS 2:14

*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;*

Note 16 at Col 2:14: In Paul's day, paper and ink were used when writing. The paper was different, and the ink did not contain acids allowing it to soak into the paper, like it does today. Therefore, the ink could be blotted away so that the writing was illegible or even totally removed. This is what Paul was referring to.

The Old Testament Law has been blotted out. Notice that it is not just our transgressions of the Law that were removed but the ordinances themselves. Jesus took the Law as a document and nailed it to His cross, in effect writing across the bill "Paid in Full." The New Testament believer is no longer under the Law (see note 10 at 1Co 9:21, note 1 at 1Co 10:23, and notes 3-4 at Ro 3:19).

Note 17 at Col 2:14: Notice that Paul was speaking of the Law as being against us and contrary to us. This is radically different than what many Christians think. They embrace the Old

Testament Law as something that God gave us for our benefit, to help direct us toward right standing with God. That's not the case.

The O.T. Law was given to show us our sin (see note 4 at Ro 3:19), not our Savior. The Law was condemning (see note 1 at 2Co 3:7), and it empowered sin in our lives (see note 26 at 1Co 15:56, note 5 at Ro 7:11, note 6 at Ro 7:13, and note 7 at Ro 7:14).

Note 18 at Col 2:14: Notice in Paul's analogy that the Law was not totally destroyed; it was just taken out of the way. It is only out of the way of those who are believers in Christ. Those who have not put their faith in Christ are still under the Law (see note 4 at Joh 3:36) with its wrath and negative effects.

## **COLOSSIANS 2:15**

*[And] having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*

Note 19 at Col 2:15: The word "spoiled," used here, is the Greek verb "APEKDUOMAI," and this Greek word means "to divest

wholly oneself, or (for oneself) despoil" (Strong's Concordance). One of the words that made up this compound Greek word means to strip. What Paul was saying was that Jesus totally despoiled or stripped Satan and all his powers. Satan is now naked and powerless. Praise the Lord!

This was a term used for the disarming of a defeated foe. "The picture is that of the triumph of a Roman general. When a Roman general had won a really notable victory, he was allowed to march his victorious armies through the streets of Rome, and behind him followed the kings and the leaders and the peoples he had defeated. They were openly branded as his spoils. Paul thinks of Jesus as a conqueror enjoying a kind of cosmic triumph, and in his triumphal procession are the powers of evil, beaten forever, for everyone to see" ("Daily Study Bible Series: The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians" by William Barclay).

Satan's only weapon against us is deception (see note 4 at Eph 6:11, note 23 at 2Co 11:14, note 32 at Col 1:13, and note 1 at Mt 24:4).

Note 20 at Col 2:15: The word "shew" means "to exhibit" (Strong's Talking Greek & Hebrew Dictionary). Satan and his forces are forever on display as a conquered foe. Those who know and believe this enjoy the show. Those who are not yet

convinced of Satan's defeat are still subject to bondage because of their fear (Heb 2:15).

The Phillips New Testament Bible renders this phrase as "he exposed them, shattered, empty and defeated, in his final glorious triumphant act!"

Note 21 at Col 2:15: What is the "it" that Jesus triumphed in over Satan? The answer is that "it" was the Law ("the handwriting of ordinances that was against us" - see note 17 at Col 2:14). The devil had used our failure to fulfill the Law as a club to beat us up and convince us that God would never accept us. In that sense, the Law was one of Satan's greatest tools for separating us from God.

What Satan used to minister condemnation to us, Jesus used to condemn Satan. Jesus perfectly fulfilled the Law and used it to satisfy all God's demands for justice by bearing man's sins. The just died for the unjust and thereby liberated the unjust from the jurisdiction of the Law.

## COLOSSIANS 2:16

*Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath [days]:*

Note 22 at Col 2:16: If Col 2:14-16 were not true, then we should all be Seventh Day Adventists. Only God can "blot out" what He has written (Le 11 and De 14). God told Israel to make a distinction between clean and unclean food so that He might make a distinction between Jews and Gentiles (De 14:2 and 21). Under the New Covenant, however, the wall of partition that separated Jews from Gentiles has been broken down so that all may have equal access to God (Eph 2:14-15 and 18). God hears and answers prayers whether or not we've eaten pork or worshiped on a certain day.

Note 23 at Col 2:16: This is in reference to the Old Testament laws concerning meats that could and could not be eaten. The definitive chapters concerning this in the O.T. are Le 11 and De 14:3-21. Rabbits, camels, pigs, and other animals were forbidden among beasts of the field. Among the animals in the water, lobsters, shrimp, oysters, and anything else that didn't have scales or fins was considered unclean. In the bird kingdom, all birds that were scavengers were forbidden. Any animal that had paws was unclean, and all creeping things such as snakes, snails, and turtles were unclean.

Although these dietary laws were strictly enforced in the O.T., Paul revealed in the New Testament that it was a doctrine of devils to command anyone to "abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving" (1Ti 4:3-4). Peter was shown in a vision that God had cleansed things that were considered unclean in the O.T. (Ac 10:10-16 and 28, see note 5 at Ac 10:16). All these things were symbolic (see note 28 at Col 2:17).

Therefore, anyone who uses the O.T. dietary laws for anything other than symbolism that finds its complete fulfillment in Christ, is in error. Those who preach that the dietary laws were for health reasons are missing the point that Paul was making in these verses.

Note 24 at Col 2:16: The "drink" that Paul was referring to here is a little ambiguous. There were drink offerings required in the Old Testament (Ex 29:40-41; Le 23:13, 18, 37; Nu 28:7-15, 24, and 31), but these were nearly always referred to as "drink offerings." The only other restrictions on what could be drunk are total abstinence of any drink made from grapes for those who took a Nazarite vow (Nu 6:2-3) and a total ban on blood (Le 17:10-14).



Just as the other things listed in this verse, abstinence from certain drinks was symbolic and finds its New Testament fulfillment in Christ. The O.T. abstinence pictured the separation described by Paul in 1Co 10:31.

Note 25 at Col 2:16: In Le 23, there were seven feasts listed that the Jews had to observe:

- 1) the Passover (Le 23:4-5, see note 1 at Joh 2:13)
- 2) the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Le 23:6-8), which immediately followed the Passover and became part of the Passover feast
- 3) the feast of Firstfruits (Le 23:9-14)
- 4) the feast of Pentecost (Le 23:15-21), which was also called the Feast of Weeks (De 16:9-12)
- 5) the feast of Trumpets (Le 23:23-25 and Nu 29:1-6)
- 6) the Day of Atonement (Le 23:26-32, 16:29-34; and Nu 29:7-11)
- 7) the Feast of Tabernacles (Le 23:33-43, Nu 29:12-40, and De 16:13-15; see note 1 at Joh 7:2), which was also called the feast of Booths (Le 23:39-43)

It was mandatory for all males to come to Jerusalem to observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread (which probably included the

Passover), the feast of Firstfruits, and the Feast of Ingathering, which was also called the feast of Tabernacles, or Booths. See Ex 23:14-17.

The Jews later came to commemorate the feast of Purim (Es 9:24-32), which celebrated Esther's victory over Haman, and the feast of the dedication (see note 1 at Joh 10:22), which celebrated the re-purification of the temple under the Maccabees.

Paul made it clear that the observance of holy days was an individual decision not to be imposed on others or forbidden to others (see note 3 at Ga 4:10, note 8 at Ro 14:5, and note 9 at Ro 14:6).

Note 26 at Col 2:16: Burnt offerings were to be made every new moon (1Ch 23:31). Some believe that Ps 81:3 links the feast of Trumpets (see note 25 at this verse) to the Seventh New Moon offering, making that feast a new moon feast (New Unger's Bible Dictionary).

Note 27 at Col 2:16: Each of the five things listed in this verse was a shadow of Christ (see note 28 at Col 2:17). The dietary laws, feast days, new moon offerings, and the Sabbath all represented Christ and what He would accomplish (Heb 4). Now that we have the person of Christ, each one of these things has

now served its purpose and is no longer necessary to observe.

Most agree with this regarding the first four things listed in this verse, but many Christians still proclaim the Sabbath is a day that must be observed. However, this is not so. The Sabbath was a picture of a relationship with God that Jesus has now opened to all who believe. The Sabbath was only a picture and is now fulfilled in Christ (see note 12 at Ro 14:14).

## COLOSSIANS 2:17

***Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [is] of Christ.***

Note 28 at Col 2:17: The word "shadow" means "a faint indication" (American Heritage Dictionary). When used as a verb, it means "to represent vaguely, mysteriously, or prophetically" (AHD). Each of the things listed in Col 2:16 served to represent something that the Messiah would accomplish. Now that Jesus the Messiah has come, the representation isn't necessary. The New International Version translates this verse as "These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ."

A shadow is never as important as the person who casts it. Those who cling to the Old Testament shadow are missing the New Testament reality found in Jesus (see note 12 at Ro 14:14).

Note 29 at Col 2:17: Jesus Christ is the body that cast all the Old Testament shadows. Now that we have Jesus Himself, why would anyone still cling to the shadow?

## **COLOSSIANS 2:18**

*Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,*

Note 30 at Col 2:18: The wording of this verse has led some people to think that Paul was advocating this "voluntary humility and worshipping of angels," but he was not. It could be said it this way: "Don't let any person deceive you into thinking that you are going to lose a reward if you don't practice self-denial or worship angels."

In Scripture, angels always refused worship and told people to worship God alone (Re 19:10 and 22:8-9). Therefore, worshiping angels is forbidden in the Bible. Although humility is a godly thing, Col 2:23 further expands on what Paul was speaking against, showing this to be a false humility that is nothing more than just asceticism, or extreme self-denial (see note 35 at Col 2:23).

Note 31 at Col 2:18: The people Paul was speaking against were saying things that were not revealed in God's Word. The same thing happens today, and many people fall prey to that type of thinking because "There isn't anything in Scripture that says it's wrong." It would be impossible for the Scripture to mention every possible perversion that the devil could think up. We should limit our beliefs to what Scripture reveals and let the other things go. They are not essential. Those who do otherwise are "intruding into those things which [they] hath not seen" (brackets mine), and only people who are "puffed up" in their own opinion would do that.

## COLOSSIANS 2:19

*And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.*

Note 32 at Col 2:19: The thrust of Paul's criticism here was against those who did not give Jesus the place He deserved. In the previous verses, Paul spoke about exalting Jesus above all the Old Testament rituals that shadowed His coming. Now he spoke out against people who put the emphasis on worshiping angels and self-denial, but they didn't place Jesus as the Head.

The head is above every other part of the body in position and importance. Those who emphasize observing days such as the Sabbath, observing feasts and dietary laws, worshiping angels, and those who promote asceticism (see note 35 at Col 2:23) are all taking away from the Headship of Jesus. Christianity is a relationship with Jesus, not the observance of rituals. Rituals are the heart of religion, but true Christianity rejects rituals for relationship.

Note 33 at Col 2:19: Jesus is the Head of the body of Christ (see note 3 at 1Co 12:14 and note 14 at 1Co 12:27), but the head doesn't do all the work. The head directs, but the body must function also. Likewise, for the body of Christ to increase, every

part of the body has to contribute and function under the direction of the Head (see note 32 at Eph 4:16).

In the body of Christ, there is nothing wrong with our Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. There is something wrong with the body, though. In a sense, many parts of the body are paralyzed, causing the body overall not to have the effect that the Head desires.

## **COLOSSIANS 2:22**

*Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?*

Note 34 at Col 2:22: This is a radical statement that comes as a complete shock to most of us Christians. All our rules and regulations about what we can and cannot do are the doctrines and commandments of mankind. Jesus gave us the commands to love God and love others (Mt 22:36-39 and 1Jo 3:23). That sums up our obligation to God and man.

This is not to say that we are not to pray and study the Word, but loving God will cause us to do those things. Likewise, being in fellowship with God will cause us to treat our fellow man properly. Those of us who are trying to regulate our actions by rules are missing the blessing of a loving relationship with the Lord. There is really only one thing that we must focus on, and that is loving the Lord and abiding in that love. Once this is done, it is not us living but Christ living through us, and His holy life will be manifest in our actions.

## **COLOSSIANS 2:23**

*Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.*

Note 35 at Col 2:23: The self-denial that Paul was speaking against in these verses is embraced by much of "Christianity" today. Historically, self-denial, or asceticism, has always been a big part of false religion. Most religions of the world teach an abasement of self, but they do it as penitence in order to obtain salvation. This is not the denying of self that the Bible advocates.



True self-denial as the Scriptures promote is not self-hatred (see note 13 at Ga 2:20) or masochism, but rather an enthroning of Christ above self. We have a new identity in Christ that replaces the "old self" (see note 12 at 1Co 1:28). This isn't done in order to obtain salvation but as a response of love to what Christ has already done for us. He gave His all for us, and we willingly give our all back to Him.

Self-denial as an attempt to earn salvation is always motivated by guilt and characterized by rigid rules, as Paul described here. True Christianity, on the other hand, is not the observance of rituals but a relationship that produces holiness as a fruit, not a root, of salvation. Holiness doesn't come from the outside and work its way inside; when we are born again, we become righteous, and we work that holiness out into our physical lives (see note 2 at Php 2:12).

Trying to destroy the power of self through harsh laws actually arouses and strengthens the power of sin (see note 26 at 1Co 15:56). Christians must not let life become a set of rules; rather, it should be a response to a loving relationship with Jesus Christ.

The Living Bible paraphrases Col 2:20-23 as "Since you died, as it were, with Christ and this has set you free from following the world's ideas of how to be saved--by doing good and obeying

various rules--why do you keep right on following them anyway, still bound by such rules as not eating, tasting, or even touching certain foods? Such rules are mere human teachings, for food was made to be eaten and used up. These rules may seem good, for rules of this kind require strong devotion and are humiliating and hard on the body, but they have no effect when it comes to conquering a person's evil thoughts and desires. They only make him proud."

# COLOSSIANS CHAPTER 3

## COLOSSIANS 3:1

*If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

Note 1 at Col 3:1: This is not a question even though the sentence starts with the word "if." All born-again believers are risen with Christ. It's an accomplished fact in our spirits. The New International Version translates this verse as "Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God."

Note 2 at Col 3:1: It is important to understand the context of this verse in order to get the full picture of what Paul was saying. In Col 2:4, Paul said he was saying these things so no one could beguile the Colossians into turning away from Christ (see note 20 at that verse). He wanted them to know the total completeness of their new life in Jesus so that they would never be drawn away (see note 10 at Col 2:10). He went on to explain that we are dead to all the laws dealing with externals (Col 2:20-23).

Therefore, since we are dead to this world and risen with Christ (Ro 6:5), our focus should be on heavenly things, not earthly things. The Law, with its emphasis on actions, is one of those earthly things that should no longer occupy us. If we focus on who we are in Christ and what He has given us, holiness will follow. Preoccupation with our earthly position (i.e., our actions of holiness) is a sure sign that we are not focused on our heavenly position (see note 34 at Col 2:22).

Note 3 at Col 3:1: It could be asked, "If we are risen with Christ, why then do we have to seek things that are above? Why don't we just automatically experience resurrection life?" The answer is that we are not just spirit beings; we also have fleshly bodies (see note 3 at Ro 7:18) that must be subjected to the Holy Spirit in order to experience the resurrection victory that is present in our spirits.

To seek eternal realities by thinking, meditating, reasoning, and inquiring into them should be the norm of all New Testament believers. To be occupied with Christ and His purposes will release the resurrection power of Jesus into our physical lives.

Note 4 at Col 3:1: Paul didn't specify in these verses the "things which are above" he was speaking of, but there are many heavenly things that we are admonished to think on in Scripture.

Jesus instructed His disciples to think about their mansions in the Father's house as an antidote to discouragement (see note 5 at Joh 14:2). We are to think of everything in the perspective of eternity (see notes 20-21 at 2Co 4:18). We are to meditate in the Word of God day and night (Jos 1:8). Certainly, part of the heavenly things we are to think on is our position in Christ and all that entails.

We can summarize what we are to think on by following the instruction of Paul in Php 4:8 - "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Note 5 at Col 3:1: The terminology "where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" is significant. This was used to denote the supreme position of authority (see note 6 at Mr 10:37).

## COLOSSIANS 3:2

*Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*

Note 6 at Col 3:2: The word "set" can mean "to become fixed; harden" (American Heritage Dictionary). This is the way it is used in this verse. This is speaking of a permanent focus on things above.

David fixed his heart on praising the Lord to such a degree that even in the midst of terrible adversity, he remained steadfast (Ps 57:7). Those who do not fix their hearts on the things of God in advance of problems will succumb to the temptation (2Ch 12:14).

The Lord made the heart the driving force behind people's actions. People cannot consistently act contrary to their hearts (Pr 4:23). And the heart doesn't change quickly. Jesus said the people's hearts had "waxed gross" (Mt 13:15). This is talking about a process of change that takes place over a period of time (see note 3 at Mt 13:15).

This process can either be positive or negative. Positively speaking, our hearts can be so set on things above that it would

be difficult to immediately change and follow the devil. It takes a period of time to move away from what our affections are set on. In the negative, if our hearts are not set on the things above, then it would be difficult to go contrary to what we have been focusing on and follow God. It takes a process to turn our hearts toward God.

It takes time to set our affections on things above, just like it takes time for concrete to set. But once concrete sets, it is not easily altered. Likewise, our hearts cannot be easily altered from a set state. Therefore, it is imperative that we set our affections on things above.

Note 7 at Col 3:2: The Greek word "PHRONEO" occurs thirty-seven times in the New Testament. In this verse, it was translated as the English phrase "set your affection." Paul used this word thirty-four times in his writings. This is the same word that Paul used in Php 2:5 when he said, "Let this mind be in you." This is definitely speaking of an exercising of the mind.

PHRONEO literally means "to exercise the mind, i.e. entertain or have a sentiment or opinion; by implication, to be (mentally) disposed (more or less earnestly in a certain direction); intensively, to interest oneself in (with concern or obedience)" (Strong's Concordance). In this verse, PHRONEO means "to direct one's mind to a thing, to seek or strive for" (Thayer's

Greek-English Lexicon).

Paul stated in Ro 8:5 that where people set their minds will determine whether they walk "after the flesh" or "after the Spirit" - "For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit" (New Revised Standard Version). This passage makes it clear that the way people think is related to the way they live (see note 11 at Ro 8:5). The overall direction of their lives cannot be isolated from their thoughts (Pr 23:7).

"This close inter-relationship between life and thought is echoed by the wide range of meanings attaching to PHRONEO. It expresses not merely an activity of the intellect, but also a movement of the will; it is both interest and decision at the same time. Hence the meaning can actually extend to the idea of 'taking sides' with someone or something. There is just a hint of this in Ro 8:5, while the idea is uppermost in Mr 8:33" (Dictionary of New Testament Theology, Volume 2, pp. 617-618).

Mr 8:33 says, "But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, 'Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men'" (New King James Version, emphasis mine). Peter's thinking had taken sides with the devil, not God. It was God's will that Jesus



die for man's sins. Regardless of how offensive that might have seemed to Peter, setting his affections on the things of God would have been to embrace the crucifixion of Jesus. Likewise, we need to be seated in heavenly places with Christ (Eph 2:6) and look at everything we face here on earth from that perspective.

Where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also (Mt 6:21). If we place a higher value on what we have in Christ than what we have on earth, our hearts will follow. Thinking on the riches we have in Christ will turn our hearts toward heavenly things.

Other scriptures that speak of setting the mind upon spiritual things are Jos 1:8; Ps 1:2, 4:4, 19:14, 57:7, 63:6, 77:12, 104:34, 119:15, 99, 148, 143:5; Pr 4:23, 23:7; Lu 6:45; Ro 8:6; 1Co 2:16; Php 2:5; 1Ti 4:15; and 1Pe 4:1.

Note 8 at Col 3:2: As already explained in note 7 at this verse, Paul was speaking of exercising our minds toward the things of God. This is more than just mere thought, as can be seen by the instruction of the last part of this verse. We are told not to set our affections on the things of this earth. If that meant only our thought life, then Paul would be saying we could not think about anything that is earthly. That's not possible.

We have to give some thought to natural things, because we live

in a natural world. The Lord gave us our minds, and He wants us to use them. It takes thought to plan our lives and make decisions. But Paul was speaking about more than just thought, and that's the reason the word "affection" was used in this verse. This is denoting thought with desire or interest.

We have to give thought to things of this life, but they do not have to hold our interest. Our hearts' desires should be "on things above, not on things on the earth." This is the same message that Jesus taught in Mt 6:19-33 (see note 43 at Mt 6:25).

## **COLOSSIANS 3:3**

*For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

Note 9 at Col 3:3: Paul stated that as Christians, we are "dead." The dead can't be tempted. The dead don't respond and can't respond. Yet each of us can attest to the pull of sin against our own lives (Ro 7:23 and Jas 1:15). One man stated it this way: "Christians claim to be dead, but I think they've only fainted."

So, in what sense have we died?

Biblically, death means separation, not annihilation. Adam and Eve didn't cease to exist when they ate of the forbidden fruit, but they did die, or become separated from God. At physical death, people don't cease to exist, but their spirits and souls separate from their bodies. Likewise, our death to sin is a separation from sin and its penalties.

The wages of sin is death (Ro 6:23). We were guilty of sin, and the death sentence was imposed on us. But Jesus died for us, paying our debt. The Scriptures teach that we were crucified with Christ (Ga 2:20). Now we are dead to, or separated from, sin and its penalty, which was death, or separation from God. Sin can never condemn us again. We are no longer liable for our sins in the sight of God. This is the good news of the Gospel.

Note 10 at Col 3:3: The word "hid" is used here metaphorically as something that is concealed and safe. We as Christians have not yet been glorified and perfected in our flesh, but we are now justified, secure, and safe in Christ Jesus (Ro 8:31-39).

## COLOSSIANS 3:4

*When Christ, [who is] our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

Note 11 at Col 3:4: Paul stated that Christ Himself is our life. He doesn't just give life; He is our life (Joh 14:6). In 2Co 4:10, Paul stated that it is the life of Jesus that is manifested in our mortal bodies. Christianity is not us living for God but rather Christ living through us. Therefore, we should die to ourselves and let Christ live through us without hindrance.

Note 12 at Col 3:4: Although the truth of who Christians are is somewhat hidden to the world, when Christ returns, we shall appear with Him and be glorified with Him (Ro 8:19-21). 1Jo 3:2 describes it this way: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (emphasis mine).

## COLOSSIANS 3:5

*Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:*

Note 13 at Col 3:5: The word "mortify," as used here, means "to discipline (one's body and appetites) by self-denial" (American Heritage Dictionary). The Greek word "NEKROO," from which "mortify" was translated, means "to deaden, i.e. (figuratively) to subdue" (Strong's Concordance).

The Lord is giving us a command to bring our bodies and souls under control. He would be unjust to command such a thing if we were incapable of doing it. We can do it. In fact, we must do it if we want to experience the victory that Jesus provided for us--not because God will not answer our prayers unless we are holy, but because our un-holiness is an open invitation to the devil to steal, kill, and destroy us (see note 5 at Ga 5:15). Those who indulge themselves in the things that Paul was speaking against here will not prosper.

Note 14 at Col 3:5: The word "therefore" is giving us the reason or motivation for this mortification of our flesh. It is because of the glory that we are going to share with Jesus at His second coming (Col 3:4). Knowing that our future is so glorious will

keep us from living like those who have no hope.

Note 15 at Col 3:5: The word "members" was translated from the Greek word "MELOS," and this Greek word means "a limb or part of the body" (Strong's Concordance). Paul was simply saying that we are to control our actions.

Note 16 at Col 3:5: In Paul's epistles, he always linked doctrinal truth with practical expression. He just stated that as believers, Christ is our life, and one day we will manifest His magnificent glory. In light of that statement, Paul spoke of putting to death (mortifying) sins that are associated with our earthly members. Although the penalty of sin has been paid on our behalf and we are new creations (Ro 6:23; 2Co 5:17, and 21), it is equally true that sin still attacks our unredeemed humanity. Therefore, we must continually yield and trust ourselves to the Holy Spirit and His power (Zec 4:6; Eph 5:18, and 6:17).

Note 17 at Col 3:5: Here, the English word "fornication" was translated from the Greek word "PORNEIA," and it alludes to any illicit sexual intercourse including adultery, homosexuality, and intercourse with a close relative or with animals (Le 18). Our English word "pornography" is derived from PORNEIA plus the Greek word "GRAPHE," which "primarily denotes 'a drawing, painting;' then 'a writing'" (Vine's Expository Dictionary). Pornography is wrong because it is looking or lusting after

someone else's nakedness. The Scripture states that one's own wife or husband is called one's own nakedness (Le 18:8 and Ge 2:25).

Note 18 at Col 3:5: "Uncleanness" was translated from the Greek word "AKATHARSIA" here as well as nine other times in the New Testament (Mt 23:27; Ro 1:24, 6:19; 2Co 12:21; Ga 5:19; Eph 4:19, 5:3; 1Th 2:3, and 4:7). The word means "impurity (the quality), physically or morally" (Strong's Concordance).

In the Old Testament, much emphasis was placed on ceremonial cleanness, which concerned mainly the physical realm. Jesus came and dealt with issues of the heart (Mt 23:24-28). No doubt this is speaking of moral uncleanness.

The Biblical antonym of uncleanness is holiness (1Th 4:7).

Note 19 at Col 3:5: "Inordinate affection" is the Greek word "PATHOS," and it refers to sexual passion that is "exceeding reasonable limits; immoderate...not regulated; disorderly" (American Heritage Dictionary definition of "inordinate"). The two other occurrences of this word are found in Ro 1:26 and 1Th 4:5, as vile "affections" and the "lust" of concupiscence, respectively.

In Ro 1:26, this Greek word is clearly referring to homosexuality. So, it includes that but is probably not limited to it. It could also apply to the sexual relationship within marriage.

There can be improper sexual conduct even with one's lawful mate. Many "weird" or "wild" sexual actions could be considered "inordinate." Certainly, any act that is not appreciated by one of the partners would be inordinate, and so also would any person using his or her mate as one would a prostitute and justifying it on the grounds that they are married.

Note 20 at Col 3:5: "Concupiscence" was translated from the Greek word "EPITHUMIA." EPITHUMIA was used thirty-eight times in the New Testament, translated as "lusts" twenty-two times, "lust" nine times, "concupiscence" three times, "desire" three times, and "lusted after" one time. The definition for this Greek word is "craving, longing...desire for what is forbidden" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). The word "concupiscence" has come to mean "sexual desire" (American Heritage Dictionary), but as can be seen by the Greek definition, it is not limited solely to sexual desire. Concupiscence can be any strong or overpowering desire.

Notice that this "concupiscence" was described as "evil." It is not wrong to be passionate if we are passionate about the right things. In context, Paul was saying we should be passionate about things



above, not earthly things.

Note 21 at Col 3:5: "Covetousness" is really the root of all sin, because it is a selfish desire. The English word "covetousness" in this verse was translated from the Greek word "PLEONEXIA." PLEONEXIA comes from "PLEONEKTES," and PLEONEKTES is derived from "ECHO" ("to hold") and "PLEION" ("more in quantity, number, or quality") (Strong's Concordance).

The original sin of Adam and Eve involved covetousness. They craved for themselves what God had not given them. They were not content with the perfection that God had given, and they felt they had to have more to be content. The same discontentment infects the human race today.

"The Greeks themselves defined covetousness as insatiate desire and said that you might as easily satisfy it as you might fill with water a bowl with a hole in it. They defined it as the sinful desire for what belongs to others. It has been described as ruthless self-seeking. Its basic idea is the desire for that which a man had no right to have. It is, therefore, a sin with a very wide range. If it is prestige, it leads to evil ambition. If it is the desire for power, it leads to sadistic tyranny. If it is the desire for a person, it leads to sexual sin. C.F.D. Moule well describes it as 'the opposite of the desire to give'" (Daily Study Bible Series: The Letters to the

Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians, pp. 151-152).

Note 22 at Col 3:5: Covetousness is idolatry. What a strong statement! Many of us would never bow down to a statue, but we worship money and what it can buy. If anything we seek takes priority over seeking God, then that is covetousness and idolatry.

## **COLOSSIANS 3:6**

*For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:*

Note 23 at Col 3:6: The "children of disobedience" Paul was referring to are not believers. Every person, whether saved or lost, is God's child. Paul was specifying the unsaved children of God as the ones who would suffer His punishment (see note 12 at Eph 5:6 and note 13 at Eph 5:7). This is further confirmed in the next verses by Paul speaking of the believers as being separated from the children of disobedience.

## COLOSSIANS 3:7

*In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.*

Note 24 at Col 3:7: The phrase "when ye lived" is in the imperfect tense in the Greek. This Greek tense is used to convey repeated, habitual, and customary action. This is hard to express in English, but Paul was stressing that the Colossian believers used to habitually commit the acts of immorality mentioned in Col 3:5.

## COLOSSIANS 3:8

*But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.*

Note 25 at Col 3:8: Paul was stating that there are certain things Christians must put off or lay aside. The Greek verb used for "put off" is "APOTITHEMI," and it was used for the putting off of clothes (Ac 7:58). In Paul's analogy, he was using it for the putting off of one kind of life and the putting on of another. This

verse emphasizes the putting off of the old, and Col 3:10 and 12 emphasize the putting on of the new.

With Christians, there must be the putting off of anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, and filthy communication. Anger is the feeling of hostility, indignation, rage, or wrath. Wrath is an action motivated by anger. Malice is the desire to harm others or to see others suffer. Blasphemy is injurious, slanderous, and irreverent speech. Filthy communication is foul speaking and obscene speech. All of these sins have to do somewhat with one's talk and speech.

## **COLOSSIANS 3:9**

***Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;***

Note 26 at Col 3:9: The phrase "lie not one to another" begins a long sentence that ends in Col 3:11. Again the expressions of "putting off" and "putting on" emphasize two different kinds of life. The "old man" refers to the old nature one had before

accepting Christ. The "new man" is the new nature that is created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph 4:24). As a result of the new creation, there is no longer any racial distinction; rather, Christ is all and in all. This may be a way of stating that in the new creation, Christ is all that really matters. "In all" refers to Christ's indwelling all believers who belong to this new creation.

Note 27 at Col 3:9: Our "old man" is dead and gone through the work of salvation (see note 8 at Ro 6:6 and note 21 at Ga 5:24). However, the vestments of the "old man" (attitudes and actions) hang around until we decide to put them off (see note 17 at Eph 4:24). These Colossians had put off the deeds of the "old man" and had put on the deeds of their new born-again selves (Col 3:10).

Note 28 at Col 3:9: As has already been pointed out in the Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Ephesians, there are many similarities between Paul's letter to the Ephesians and his letter to the Colossians. Col 3:8-13 is very much like Eph 4:22-32.

## COLOSSIANS 3:10

*And have put on the new [man], which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:*

Note 1 at Col 3:10: Col 3:9 is not a complete sentence by itself, nor is it an independent thought. Col 3:10-11 are part of the same sentence. Therefore, putting on the "new man" is just as important as putting off the "old man." One can't be done without the other.

Often the emphasis of preaching is on denying the flesh (see note 3 at Ro 7:18), which is described in Col 3:5 and 8. We can't conquer our flesh in our own strength; we need the supernatural ability of God for that to be accomplished. That is what Paul was referring to when he spoke of putting on the "new man."

This is speaking of letting the attributes of our born-again selves begin to dominate our thoughts and actions. We don't have to conquer the "old man" before the new can be revealed (see note 8 at Ga 5:16). Instead, we receive the "new man" while we are still dead in our trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1) as a gift of God's grace. Then as our "new man" begins to manifest, the effects of our "old man" are diminished (see note 8 at Ro 6:6).

Note 2 at Col 3:10: There are many attributes of the new, born-again spirit (see note 9 at 2Co 5:17 and note 16 at Eph 4:24). Here, Paul was singling out one amazing attribute--the spiritual mind.

All Christians have two minds--the physical mind and the mind of the born-again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3) spirit. Any believers who have not subjugated their physical minds to the control of their spiritual minds are "double-minded" and cannot receive from the Lord (Jas 1:5-8). Believers should bring their physical minds into complete agreement with their spiritual minds so that they function as one, with the mind of the spirit in control. This is done through studying the Word of God and yielding to the revelation knowledge (see note 1 at Lu 2:26) of the Holy Spirit.

The mind of the born-again spirit is just like that of Christ, because it is the Spirit of Christ that enters the believer at salvation (see note 23 at Ro 8:10). 1Co 2:16 says, "We have the mind of Christ." That is a reality in the born-again spirit (see note 6 at 1Co 2:16). The perfect knowledge of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (see note 18 at Col 2:3), is present in the spirit and can be drawn out and utilized by the believers' physical minds (see note 5 at 1Co 14:2).

## COLOSSIANS 3:11

*Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond [nor] free: but Christ [is] all, and in all.*

Note 3 at Col 3:11: Everything that divides man is done away with in Christ. The external things don't matter anymore. The only thing that is important is being a new creature in Christ (2Co 5:17). God sees believers that way, and that's the way they need to see each other (see note 6 at 2Co 5:16).

Note 4 at Col 3:11: Christ is not in every person. This is speaking of the fact that Christ is in every person who has the "new man" spoken of in Col 3:10. To Christians, Christ is all that matters, and He's in every believer (Ro 8:9).

## COLOSSIANS 3:12

*Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness,*



## *longsuffering;*

Note 5 at Col 3:12: In Col 3:5-9, Paul listed the actions that the Colossian believers were to "put off" (see notes 17-22 at Col 3:5). Beginning with this verse, he stated the things that they must "put on."

Note 6 at Col 3:12: "Put on" was translated from the Greek verb "ENDUO" meaning, "to sink into (clothing)" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, see note 15 at Eph 4:24).

Note 7 at Col 3:12: The word "therefore" is linking Paul's instruction about these things that we are to "put on" to his previous statements. In Col 3:11, he explained that all the things that divide us, such as race and religion, have been done away with in Christ. Therefore, or for that reason, we should walk in mercy, kindness, and so forth toward our fellow believers.

Note 8 at Col 3:12: Paul pointed out that we are elect, holy, and beloved. His purpose in doing this was to remind us that we certainly aren't any of those things through our own goodness. They are all gifts of God's grace. Therefore, we should treat others with the same grace that we've been given.

Note 9 at Col 3:12: In this verse, Paul mentioned the new identity every believer has in Christ. That new identity should result in the fruit of the Spirit expressed through godly behavior. This is not perfection but rather a new heart that leads to a new way of life.

As Christians, we are the elect of God, holy and beloved. God's "election" (see note 4 at Ro 9:11) was not because of our own good works but according to His own purpose (plan) and grace (2Ti 1:9). Through "election," believers are "holy" (set apart) and "beloved" (the object of God's love).

Note 10 at Col 3:12: The qualities with which we are to clothe (see notes 6 and 9 at this verse) the "new man" are the following:

1) We are to put on the "bowels of mercies." The Hebrews considered the "bowels" as the seat of tender affections, especially kindness, benevolence, and compassion (see note 25 at 2Co 6:12). "Mercy" is the "compassionate treatment" of an enemy, the "disposition to be kind and forgiving" (American Heritage Dictionary). The first characteristic of the "new man" in Christ is compassion.

2) "Kindness" is closely related to "bowels of mercies." It is showing sympathy, concern, and understanding, and it is characterized by concern for others (see note 9 at 1Co 13:4).

3) "Humbleness of mind" is the antidote for pride, which is the source of all our grief. This humbleness was one of the dominant characteristics of Jesus (Mt 11:29), and it is the most cherished Christian virtue (Eph 4:2, Php 2:3, and 1Pe 5:5).

4) "Meekness" is not weakness (see note 6 at Mt 5:5) but rather gentleness. It is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and should be manifest in our lives (Ga 5:22-23).

5) "Longsuffering" was translated from the Greek noun "MAKROTHUMIA," and this Greek word means "patience, endurance, constancy, steadfastness, perseverance" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon) (see note 8 at 1Co 13:4 and notes 27-28 at Col 1:11).

6) "Forbearing" (Col 3:13) was translated from the Greek verb "ANECHOMAI," and ANECHOMAI means "to hold up...sustain...bear with, endure" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon).

7) "Forgiving one another" (Col 3:13) should be the mark of all Christians. Its foundation is Christ's forgiveness of us.

Note 11 at Col 3:12: This is the same point that Paul made in his letter to the Ephesians when he said in Eph 4:1-3, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

## COLOSSIANS 3:13

*Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also [do] ye.*

Note 12 at Col 3:13: Forgiving others as Christ forgave mankind is a command that many consider to be beyond the reach of mere mortals, even if they are Christians. It's true that operating in the perfect forgiveness that Jesus demonstrated on the cross is beyond man's ability, but the Lord wouldn't have given this command if people couldn't fulfill it. Believers can fulfill God's command to forgive as they have been forgiven when they draw on God's ability that now indwells them (see note 28 at Eph 4:32).

Note 13 at Col 3:13: Paul's letters to the Ephesians and the Colossians are very similar (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Colossians). Compare this list of Christian virtues with the list Paul gave to the Ephesians in Eph 4:2 (see note 4 at that verse).

## COLOSSIANS 3:14

*And above all these things [put on] charity, which is the bond of perfectness.*

Note 14 at Col 3:14: The English word "above" was translated from the Greek word "EPI," and EPI means "over, upon" (Strong's Concordance). Paul was continuing his analogy of putting on Christian virtues as one would put on clothes (see notes 6 and 9 at Col 3:12). Here, he exhorted the Colossian saints to put on, over all these (see notes 10-11 at Col 3:12), love as the overcoat that conspicuously covers everything else. This states that every one of these virtues has to be done in God's divine love. Without the God-kind of love, they are nothing (see note 3 at 1Co 13:1).

Note 15 at Col 3:14: The old English word "charity" denotes what we would call "God's kind of love" today (see note 2 at 1Co 13:1).

Note 16 at Col 3:14: Love, or "charity" (Greek - "AGAPE"), is

the "bond of perfectness." Just as individual bricks must be bound together with mortar, likewise, love is the mortar that pulls all Christian virtues together. Walking in love will cause believers to be kind, long-suffering, and so forth.

The word "bond" was translated from the Greek word "SUNDESMOS," and this Greek word means "that which binds together" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). It is used in Col 2:19 of ligaments ("bands") by which the members of the human body are united. Therefore, God's kind of love is like the ligaments of the body, joining different bones together and making them function as one. There are many qualities that Christians must manifest to be effective, but love is the key ingredient that initiates and motivates all the rest.

## **COLOSSIANS 3:15**

*And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

Note 17 at Col 3:15: The understood subject of this sentence is "you." You must let the peace of God act as umpire (see note 18 at this verse) in your heart. The word "let" means "to give

permission or opportunity to; allow" (American Heritage Dictionary). As a believer, God's peace is always present in your heart to give you the direction you may so desperately need, but you might not always give it your permission.

Note 18 at Col 3:15: The Greek word from which the word "rule" was translated is "BRABEUO," and it means "to arbitrate, i.e. (genitive case) to govern" (Strong's Concordance). This Greek word is a variation of the Greek word "BRABEION," and Strong's Concordance says this about BRABEION: "from brabeus (an umpire of uncertain derivation); an award (of arbitration), i.e. (specially) a prize in the public games." This was a sports term that paints a powerful word picture.

The Wuest translation of this phrase says, "Let the peace of God act as umpire in your heart." The Amplified Bible's translation of this verse says, "And let the peace (soul harmony which comes) from Christ rule (act as umpire continually) in your hearts [deciding and settling with finality all questions that arise in your minds, in that peaceful state] to which as [members of Christ's] one body you were also called [to live]. And be thankful (appreciative), [giving praise to God always]."

Just as every sport has disputes that must be settled by the officials, the peace of God is the umpire that settles all disputes as to what the will of God is for our lives. We must learn to listen to

and heed the peace of God in our hearts.

God's peace is something that every one of us born-again (see note 2 at Joh 3:3) believers has. It's a fruit of the Spirit (see note 18 at Ga 5:22). That peace is always umpiring; we just don't always pay attention. How many times have we acted contrary to the peace in our hearts, and after we experience disaster, we say, "I never did feel good about that." That was the peace of God umpiring, but we played by our own rules.

There are some things we can do to facilitate the peace of God umpiring in our hearts. First, we should consider all the options. Many wrong decisions have been made because not all the options were considered. We can't let fear rule out God's possibilities.

Next, we should use our imaginations to explore what will happen with each choice. We should be able to discern a greater peace as we consider the option the Lord would have us take. That is not to say that there will be total peace with any of the choices. In our spirits, there will be total peace over the right choice, but we aren't always totally in the Spirit; it is not unusual for there to be some turmoil. Just as an umpire has to make a call, we need to be bold enough to follow the direction that gives the most peace.



The rudder on a ship can't give any direction until the ship is moving. The ship doesn't have to be going full steam ahead for the rudder to work, but it does have to be moving. Likewise, we have to act before the peace of God will give us perfect direction. Even if we make a mistake, we will have made it in faith, trying to follow the peace of God in our hearts. The Lord can bless a wrong decision made in faith from a pure heart more than He can bless indecision (Ro 14:23).

## **COLOSSIANS 3:16**

***Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.***

Note 19 at Col 3:16: This is more than instruction to memorize Scripture. God's Word has to be in us "richly in all wisdom." This only happens as the Holy Spirit directs and inspires our understanding and application of God's Word. One of the major ways the Holy Spirit does this is through "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" that we sing in our hearts (see note 20 at this verse).

Note 20 at Col 3:16: Notice that "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" are some of the ways we teach and admonish. Many people view the praise-and-worship service at a church gathering as just part of the preliminaries. This is not so. Anointed praise and worship is just as much a part of the ministry of God's Word as anointed teaching and preaching. To receive that benefit, we need to change our attitude toward praise and worship by opening our hearts with expectancy to receive fresh revelation from God's Word as we worship God from our hearts.

Note 21 at Col 3:16: The early church was a singing church, and that tradition has persisted throughout history to the present day. Certainly, the Holy Spirit has been instrumental in keeping that practice alive. In fact, every great move of God has produced a proliferation of new praise-and-worship songs. The music has not just been a result of God's grace but an integral part of the move of God.

Before the New Testament scriptures were put into written form, psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs were a primary source of Christian education. It is still one of the church's most effective ways of communication. Music helps us recall and meditate on scriptural truth. Many people respond to music who would never listen to a sermon.

"Philo tells us that often they (1st century Christians) would spend the whole night in hymns and songs. One of the earliest descriptions of a Church service we possess is that of Pliny, the Roman governor of Bithynia, who sent a report of the activities of the Christians to Trajan, the Roman Emperor, in which he said, 'They meet at dawn to sing a hymn to Christ as God'" (Daily Study Bible Series: The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and the Thessalonians, p. 159).

## **COLOSSIANS 3:17**

***And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, [do] all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.***

Note 22 at Col 3:17: To God, there is no division of the secular and the sacred. "Whatsoever ye do" encompasses all, including the words we speak and the lives we live. In the Greek, "whatsoever ye do" is in the present tense and conveys a continuous or habitual action. Therefore, all things are to be done for God's glory, in Jesus' name, with thankfulness (see note 23 at this verse).

Parallel scriptures to this verse are 1Co 10:31 and Col 3:23.

Note 23 at Col 3:17: This is the second time thanksgiving is mentioned in three verses. The peace of God mentioned in Col 3:15 cannot be separated from thankfulness. Peace comes as a result of where our attention is fixed (Isa 26:3 and Ro 8:6), and thankfulness is acknowledging God's goodness.

We cannot truly glorify God in all our words and deeds if we are not thankful. Thanksgiving makes us abound in faith (see note 25 at Col 2:7). All mature Christians are thankful, and all immature Christians are not thankful. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God" (Ps 50:23).

## **COLOSSIANS 3:18**

*Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.*

Note 1 at Col 3:18: Paul's letter to the Colossians and his letter to the Ephesians are very similar. They cover some of the same

points and therefore can be compared to gain a clearer understanding of what Paul was saying (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Ephesians). In Eph 5:21, Paul began his instruction about submission in marriage by saying, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Submission in marriage is not one-sided (see note 36 at Eph 5:21).

The truth and benefits found in the Bible on godly submission have been so distorted and perverted in our "Christianity" today, it has resulted in many people being hurt, and those people are now closed to any type of submission. That's an overreaction. This is just one scripture that commands submission. There are others.

This verse places limitations on submission in marriage, and these, if understood, will stop the extreme abuses that have caused some to throw out the truth with the error.

First, Paul said women are to submit to their own husbands. Paul was specifically speaking of a wife submitting to her own husband (see note 2 at 1Co 11:3). He was not saying that women in general are to submit to men in general (see notes 2-3 at Eph 5:22, note 22 at 1Co 14:34, note 23 at 1Co 14:35, and note 24 at 1Co 14:36). This has been one of the misinterpretations of scripture on submission that has caused many problems.

Second, this verse says that the wife is to submit only "as it is fit in the Lord" (see note 37 at Eph 5:21 and note 4 at Eph 5:22). This limits the submission of the wife to her husband (there is a difference between submission and obedience - see note 7 at Ac 5:29), and this submission is in the physical realm only (see note 7 at Eph 5:24). Paul was not instructing the woman to commit sin if her husband wants her to. That is a gross misunderstanding of what true submission is, and that extreme view has damaged many people.

## **COLOSSIANS 3:19**

*Husbands, love [your] wives, and be not bitter against them.*

Note 2 at Col 3:19: A parallel scripture to this verse is found in Eph 5:25 - "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church." The Greek word for "love" used in both this verse and Eph 5:25 is the verb "AGAPAO," and it is the same kind of love that God showed toward us when we were still sinners (Ro 5:8). Obviously, we still fail, yet Christ continues to love us and never becomes bitter against us. It is this kind of love--best

understood as seeking the welfare and benefit of another--that "AGAPE" and AGAPAO describe (see note 4 at Joh 13:35 and note 3 at Ro 12:10). It is the love of choice, empowered through the Holy Spirit, that is described here and not the love of emotion or passion.

## **COLOSSIANS 3:20**

***Children, obey [your] parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.***

Note 3 at Col 3:20: One thing that pleases the Lord is children who honor and obey their parents (Pr 1:8, 6:20, 7:1, 23:22; and Eph 6:1). A special promise is attached to this command, and that promise ensures long life and prosperous days (Eph 6:3).

Some examples of such godly children are Isaac (Ge 22:6-10), Samuel (1Sa 2:18), David (1Sa 17:20 and Ps 71:5), Josiah (2Ch 34:3), Esther (Es 2:20), John the Baptist (Lu 1:76-80), Jesus (Lu 2:49), and Timothy (2Ti 3:15).

Other exhortations to children include hearkening unto their parents' instruction (Pr 1:8, 6:20, and 23:22), remembering the

Creator in the days of their youth (Ec 12:1), caring for and repaying their parents (1Ti 5:4), respecting their fathers and mothers (Le 19:3), learning the Scriptures (2Ti 3:15), fearing the Lord (Ps 34:11), and hearkening unto wisdom (Pr 13:1).

Obedience to parents as stated in this verse is to be in "all things." The only exception is when parents demand something contrary to God's ways and decrees (Ac 5:29).

## **COLOSSIANS 3:21**

*Fathers, provoke not your children [to anger], lest they be discouraged.*

Note 4 at Col 3:21: Here, Paul turned to the responsibility of the parents, especially that of the fathers. Parents are not to provoke their children. "Provoke" carries the idea of inciting them to anger or resentment, making them bitter, or disturbing or troubling their minds. This leads to discouragement.

"Discouraged" was translated from the Greek word "ATHUMEO," and ATHUMEO means "to be disheartened, dispirited, and broken in spirit" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon).



Other parental responsibilities include teaching (De 6:7 and 20-22), training (Pr 22:6 and Isa 38:19), nurturing (Eph 6:4), controlling (1Ti 3:4), chastening (De 21:18), providing for (2Co 12:14), and loving (Tit 2:4).

Note 5 at Col 3:21: This is the same instruction that Paul gave the Ephesians in Eph 6:4. However, in this letter to the Colossians, Paul added the phrase "lest they be discouraged." This gives clarity and explanation as to why it is so important for fathers not to provoke their children (see notes 6-7 at Eph 6:4).

## **COLOSSIANS 3:22**

*Servants, obey in all things [your] masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:*

Note 6 at Col 3:22: The phrase "according to the flesh" clarifies the limit to which a master could exercise authority over a slave (or an employer over an employee - see note 1 at Eph 6:5). The mastery Paul was speaking of here was only in the physical

realm. No one has spiritual authority over us believers but Christ. He is our head (1Co 11:3).

## **COLOSSIANS 3:23**

*And whatsoever ye do, do [it] heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;*

Note 7 at Col 3:23: "Heartily" denotes from the heart. The reason Christians can perform their tasks from their hearts, even when serving ungodly people, is because the service is performed for their heavenly Master, Christ, and not just their human masters.

Note 8 at Col 3:23: The New International Readers Version translates this verse as "Work at everything you do with all your heart. Work as if you were working for the Lord, not for human masters."

## COLOSSIANS 3:25

*But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.*

Note 9 at Col 3:25: Some have interpreted Col 3:24-25 as saying that people get exactly what they deserve or earn, according to their actions. That's not exactly what Paul was saying.

Many passages of Scripture show that salvation is a gift that is offered to the least deserving (Ro 4:5). If our actions were required to earn salvation, no one would be saved (Ro 3:23). So, those who receive the gift of salvation by putting faith in Christ (Eph 2:8) "receive the reward of the inheritance" (Col 3:24), which is Christ's inheritance. Although we don't deserve it, we receive all the provisions of Christ's inheritance, because we have become joint-heirs with Him.

However, this verse is speaking of those who do not receive the free gift of salvation. They will be held accountable for their actions, and there will be no mercy shown (see note 10 at this verse).

Note 10 at Col 3:25: Without Christ's redemptive work in people's lives, they will have to stand and give an account for all the wrong that they have done. Those who have not received salvation by faith will not be shown favoritism or partiality in the Day of Judgment--"the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done" (this verse, Revised Standard Version).

The Apostle Paul's discourse before Felix rendered a similar statement - "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance [self-control], and judgment to come, Felix trembled [he was afraid], and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee" (Ac 24:25, brackets mine).

Although God's salvation is "free," it must be received (Joh 1:12). Those who do not receive God's free gift will be punished eternally (Ro 6:23).

# COLOSSIANS CHAPTER 4

## COLOSSIANS 4:1

*Masters, give unto [your] servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.*

Note 11 at Col 4:1: In Col 3:22-25, slaves are told to serve their masters heartily as unto the Lord. That would translate into telling employees to have a good work ethic toward their employers.

In this verse, masters (employers) are instructed to be just and fair, knowing that the real Master of every person is in heaven, and He exists above all and judges the affairs of man.

Paul was establishing a relationship between the way we treat those who are serving under us and the way we are treated by our Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. This same thing is said in other scriptures. Lu 6:38 says, "For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Ga 6:7 says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that

shall he also reap."

Although we often fail to make the connection, there is a definite link between the way we are treated and the way we treat others. That should cause us to be more merciful.

## **COLOSSIANS 4:2**

*Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;*

Note 1 at Col 4:2: Prayer is simply communication with God and should be foundational in a Christian's life. In the Greek, the word "PROSKARTEREO," which was translated "continue" in this verse, means "to be earnest towards, i.e. (to a thing) to persevere, be constantly diligent" (Strong's Concordance). Prayer needs to be a discipline in the Christian life.

Note 2 at Col 4:2: "Watch in the same" is an expression meaning that we should be alert, listening and looking for direction from the Lord, as we pray. In other words, prayer should not be a monologue. We should be expecting to hear from the Lord when we talk to Him.

The old CB radio transmitters do not send and receive at the same time. When one party finishes speaking, he or she must say "over," and then wait for the other party to speak. Likewise, there are times when we need to say "over" in our prayer time with the Lord, and then listen for what He wants to say. The way some people pray, the Lord can't get a word in edgewise.

Note 3 at Col 4:2: There are other places where we are instructed to make sure thanksgiving is a part of our prayers (Php 4:6 and Col 2:7). Ps 100:4 tells us, "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name." The Lord's Prayer begins and ends with thankfulness and giving glory.

There are many reasons for making thanksgiving a part of our prayers, but one of the major reasons is that thanksgiving in our prayers keeps us from turning prayer into griping and complaining. If we would use the "sandwich technique," where we only voice hurts or needs in between thanksgiving, then our prayers would remain positive and full of faith (see note 2 at Eph 1:16).

## COLOSSIANS 4:3

*Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:*

Note 4 at Col 4:3: "Withal" is a word meaning "in addition; besides" (American Heritage Dictionary). Paul was requesting prayer that God would open "a door of utterance" in order that he might preach the Gospel.

It is amazing that Paul was requesting more opportunity for speaking the Gospel. He was in prison for that very thing at the time of this writing, yet he remained undeterred. His whole life centered around doing God's will, regardless of the consequences.

This is similar to the apostles' prayer after having just been imprisoned: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Ac 4:29-31, emphasis



mine).

## **COLOSSIANS 4:4**

*That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.*

Note 5 at Col 4:4: Paul's intent was to make the Gospel manifest; i.e., to make it clearly apparent to everyone's understanding. In Jesus' parable of the sower sowing the Word (Mt 13:1-23, Mr 4:3-25, and Lu 8:5-18), it is only those who understand the Gospel of the kingdom that go on to bring forth fruit (Mt 13:19 and 23). Therefore, it constrains us to be as clear in our presentation of the Gospel as possible. Paul said that's the way it ought to be.

Note 6 at Col 4:4: Paul's intent was to make the Gospel known. Yet, Paul was in prison. One of the great mistakes of the modern church is to think that evangelism is something done within the four walls of the church building.

Ac 8:1-4 makes it apparent that evangelism was not done by the

pastor or clergy, but by believers who went everywhere preaching the Word. Eph 4:11-12 makes it plain that the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher are to prepare the saints to do the work of the ministry.

Several methods of evangelism are mentioned in Scripture:

1) House-to-house evangelism - "And in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ" (Ac 5:42).

2) Personal one-on-one evangelism - Philip ministered to the Ethiopian eunuch (Ac 8:26-38); Paul to Sergius Paulus (Ac 13:7); Jesus to Mary Magdalene, Nicodemus, the woman at the well, the thief on the cross, and others. There are around thirty-five such instances recorded in the Gospels alone.

3) Evangelism to large crowds - Peter ministered to the crowds in Jerusalem at Pentecost (Ac 2:14-36) and Paul at Lystra (Ac 14:8-18).

4) Evangelism to entire cities - "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them" (Ac 8:5).

5) Public debate and preaching - Paul disputed in synagogues and marketplaces (Ac 17:17); Peter and John preached in the temple (Ac 3:11-26); and Paul declared, "And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ac 20:20-21, emphasis mine).

6) Tract evangelism - The first tract evangelism with ink and pen is the Gospels. John stated in his Gospel, "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (Joh 20:31).

## **COLOSSIANS 4:5**

*Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.*

Note 7 at Col 4:5: The phrase "redeeming the time" is speaking about our Christian witness; i.e., making the Gospel manifest the way we should. We have to take advantage of every chance we have to share the good news. The New International Version translates this verse as "Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity."

## COLOSSIANS 4:6

*Let your speech [be] always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*

Note 8 at Col 4:6: Paul was still speaking of the Christian witness. We Christians are to be wise in the way we act and speak to unbelievers. We are to make the most of every opportunity (see note 7 at Col 4:5). Our speech should be gracious with answers that meet the needs of each person we encounter.

"Throughout His earthly ministry Jesus demonstrated lifestyle evangelism. Lifestyle evangelism is evangelism that is done naturally in the daily activities of life. Jesus spoke to people He met as He traveled through Palestine. He did not wait to witness until Thursday night visitation. He met blind Bartimaeus on the roadside (Mr 10:46-52) and the Gadarene demoniac on the sea shore. He witnessed to Zacchaeus at lunch and to Matthew's friends at supper (Mr 2:15-17). Jesus was opportunistic. He seized every opportunity to share the good news" ("New Testament Evangelism" by Herschel H. Hobbs, p. 70).

## COLOSSIANS 4:7

*All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, [who is] a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord:*

Note 1 at Col 4:7: Tychicus was a leader in the church, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and servant with the Apostle Paul. Obviously, according to Col 4:8-9, he and Onesimus carried this letter to the Colossians (see note 2 at Col 4:9). This is supported by the subscript at the end of this chapter (which appears in some Bibles). His purpose in going to the Colossian church was to make them aware of Paul's circumstances and also to encourage them (Col 4:8).

The International Inductive Study New Testament states, "Tychicus, a native of Corinth, joined Paul there on his last missionary journey (Ac 20:4-5), and remained with the Apostle and served him for many years (Eph 6:21, 2Ti 4:12, and Tit 3:12)."

"Legend has it that Tychicus became bishop of Chalcedon in Asia Minor, and died a martyr" ("Everyone in the Bible" by William Barker, p. 346). See note 6 at Ac 20:4 and note 1 at Eph 6:21 for more information on Tychicus.

## COLOSSIANS 4:9

*With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is [one] of you. They shall make known unto you all things which [are done] here.*

Note 2 at Col 4:9: Onesimus was the converted runaway slave mentioned in the book of Philemon. He became a faithful and beloved Christian brother of the Apostle Paul. He was a Colossian and accompanied Tychicus in the reporting of Paul's affairs and the delivery of this letter (see note 1 at Col 4:7).

The name Onesimus means "profitable, helpful" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon). Paul, in a letter to Philemon, seemed to play on these words when he said, "Who once was unprofitable to you, but now is profitable to you and to me" (Phm 11, New King James Version).

Note 3 at Col 4:9: One of Paul's purposes in writing this letter was to let the Colossians know how he and his companions were doing. Remember, Paul had never met these people (see note 5 at

Col 1:4 and note 13 at Col 2:1), but he had a relationship with them through the messengers who had heard the Gospel from him and relayed it to the Colossians. Paul wanted to continue to strengthen this relationship, so through Onesimus, he kept them informed of what was happening in his life.

This illustrates the truth that communication is important to relationships. Paul was communicating with great difficulty in comparison to the modern means of communication we have today, but he made the effort, because he knew it was important. "A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly" (Pr 18:24).

## **COLOSSIANS 4:10**

*Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)*

Note 4 at Col 4:10: Aristarchus was from Thessalonica (Ac 27:2) and was with Paul on his third missionary journey (Ac 19:29 and 20:4). Aristarchus and Gaius (see note 4 at Ac 19:29) were seized by the mob in Ephesus because they had been seen with the Apostle Paul. He apparently survived this ordeal, since he was a

constant companion in the latter part of Paul's life. Being a fellow prisoner with Paul may have meant that he was incarcerated with Paul for preaching the Gospel.

Tradition says that Aristarchus died as a martyr during Nero's persecution of the Christians.

Note 5 at Col 4:10: Marcus, or John Mark (Ac 12:12 and 25), was a nephew to Barnabas and accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Ac 12:25). Most scholars think Mark may have been an associate to the Apostle Peter and was with him in Rome at the time of Peter's death. Tradition states that Mark was the first bishop of Alexandria and also died a martyr's death.

## **COLOSSIANS 4:11**

***And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only [are my] fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.***

Note 6 at Col 4:11: Paul's statement here is not to be interpreted



so narrowly as to imply that these people were the only associates Paul ever had who had been a comfort to him. Timothy wasn't included in this list, yet Paul said of him, "For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state" (Php 2:20). Certainly, Timothy was a comfort to the Apostle Paul.

Paul was specifically speaking of the people who had been with him during his imprisonment in Rome. Of those men, Tychicus (Col 4:7), Onesimus (Col 4:9), Aristarchus and Marcus (Col 4:10), and Justus (this verse) were the only ones who had comforted Paul. Paul went on to commend Epaphras in Col 4:12, so even though Epaphras didn't comfort Paul, Paul certainly thought well of him. Paul also mentioned Luke and Demas in Col 4:14 as being with him, yet they weren't listed among those who comforted him. Apparently, this comfort of which Paul spoke was some special ministry that Paul appreciated, but he wasn't chiding those who didn't render this service.

## **COLOSSIANS 4:12**

*Epaphras, who is [one] of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*

Note 7 at Col 4:12: Epaphras was a Colossian who was also a servant of Jesus Christ (see note 10 at Col 1:7). He faithfully labored in prayer on behalf of the Colossians. The phrase "labouring fervently" comes from the Greek word "AGONIZOMAI." AGONIZOMAI comes from the Greek word "AGON," and AGON is the root word for our English word "agony." It was translated "strive" three times, "fight" three times, and "labour fervently" one time in the King James Version. AGONIZOMAI carries the idea of "contend[ing] with adversaries [and] endeavor[ing] with strenuous zeal" (Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon, brackets mine). Epaphras' prayers were that the Colossians would mature, fully develop, and carry into effect the will of God for their lives.

## **COLOSSIANS 4:13**

*For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them [that are] in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.*

Note 8 at Col 4:13: Epaphras had a great zeal for the spiritual welfare of the Colossians as well as those from Laodicea and Hierapolis (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to

Colossians, Background). Laodicea and Hierapolis were cities in Phrygia near Colosse. Laodicea was northwest of Colosse and south of the Lycus River. Hierapolis was about six miles north-northeast of Laodicea.

## **COLOSSIANS 4:14**

*Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.*

Note 9 at Col 4:14: Luke was the author of the Gospel of Luke and also the book of Acts. According to tradition, Luke was one of the seventy whom the Lord commissioned to go out and preach the Gospel of the kingdom (Lu 10:1). Since Paul mentioned Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus as being Jews, Luke was probably a Gentile.

Note 10 at Col 4:14: Some have taken this mention of Luke as "the beloved physician" to indicate that Luke was still practicing medicine. It has even been said that Luke ministered right alongside the Apostle Paul. Paul would pray for God to heal them supernaturally, and if that didn't work, then Luke would treat them medically. There is no evidence, scriptural or otherwise, that indicates this ever happened. On the contrary, since Luke wrote

the book of Acts (see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Acts, Authorship), he would have been totally remiss not to include one single instance of him practicing medicine alongside Paul, if that was indeed what he was doing.

It is most probable that Paul was simply making reference to what Luke did previous to his conversion. This would be like referring to the disciple Matthew as "Matthew, the tax collector" or to Peter as "the beloved fisherman." It would not be inaccurate to refer to these men in that way, although they were not making a living by doing those things at that time.

Note 11 at Col 4:14: Demas is later mentioned in 2Ti 4:10 as one who forsook Paul, "having loved this present world."

## **COLOSSIANS 4:15**

*Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.*

Note 12 at Col 4:15: This is the only mention of Nymphas in Scripture. The name means "nymph-given (i.e. -born)" (Strong's

Concordance). The use of the word "his" in this same sentence reveals that this was a male name. One of the church groups met in his house.

Note 13 at Col 4:15: For the first 300 years of church history, Christians met and worshiped in homes (Ro 16:5, 1Co 16:19, and Phm 2). When Constantine founded the city of Constantinople in A.D. 323, he commissioned a building to be built for Christians to meet in. This was similar to the pagan temples of that day. This ushered in a massive church-building program all over the Roman Empire. Constantine ordered these buildings to be named after one of the Christians in the New Testament. This changed Christianity from the way it had previously been known; many unbelievers began worshiping with the Christians. The house-church meetings were soon to become only a memory.

It will have to be conceded that the Lord has used the church building to bring millions of people to Himself, but it is less clear that this was ever the intent of the Lord, to meet in this manner.

## **COLOSSIANS 4:16**

*And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read*

***also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the [epistle] from Laodicea.***

Note 14 at Col 4:16: Paul's instruction to the Colossians to have the Laodiceans read this letter and that they, in turn, were to read the letter Paul had written to the Laodiceans illustrates that the truths contained in this epistle are not limited to just the Colossians. Any believer can benefit from these truths. This letter is to all Christians of all times.

Note 15 at Col 4:16: F.C. Syngé in his commentary on Colossians states, "There is in existence a letter to the Laodiceans, surviving only in Latin, but evidently originally written in Greek. It is found in many copies of the Latin Bible from the sixth century to the fifteenth. But in all that time no scholar accepted it as genuine, and no one accepts it now.

"The reference here may be to a lost letter; or, as had been conjectured, the letter may be the letter we know as Ephesians, for this might be a circular letter [see Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Ephesians]. It contains no personal greetings and, moreover, many of the best MSS. omit the words 'at Ephesus' in the opening verse" (Philippians and Colossians: Introduction and Commentary, p. 98; brackets mine).

## **COLOSSIANS 4:17**

*And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.*

Note 16 at Col 4:17: Archippus is thought by some to be the son of Philemon (Phm 2). Archippus was admonished by Paul to fulfill the ministry that he had received of the Lord. It is unclear whether this was a warning to Archippus or just an exhortation not to grow weary in what he was already doing. Archippus is only mentioned twice by name in Scripture (this verse and Phm 2). The name means "horse-ruler" (Strong's Concordance).

## **COLOSSIANS 4:18**

*The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace [be] with you. Amen.*

Note 17 at Col 4:18: Paul usually wrote his letters with the aid of a secretary. For instance, in Romans, his secretary was Tertius (Ro 16:22). After each letter, Paul would personally sign the letter as he did here. This signature authenticated the letter and made it harder for forgeries to be passed in Paul's name.

Note 18 at Col 4:18: As mentioned in the Life for Today Study Bible Notes, Introduction to Philippians, Paul was not complaining about his imprisonment. He rejoiced more in his prison epistles than in his other writings. He wasn't complaining here either. However, we can see from this three-word sentence, "Remember my bonds," that there were difficulties associated with imprisonment, and Paul requested prayer.