

Colossians
and
Philemon
Leader Guide
(NASB and ESV)

GAINING A
TRUE KNOWLEDGE
OF CHRIST
SO NO ONE
DELUDES YOU!

Colossians Leader Guide (NASB and ESV)

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USING LEADER GUIDES

Leader Guides are intended for you, the leader, to guide your Precept Upon Precept® and In & Out® discussions. They are designed to help you reason through the content of the lessons and to ensure you have understood what your group should have learned from their study. The guides offer effective plans for leading discussions.

The Holy Spirit is your guide as you prepare. He is the one who knows what your group needs to apply to their lives. Pray for them as they study and for yourself as you prepare to lead the discussion.

These guides can be used for either the NASB or the ESV edition of the courses. ESV words follow the NASB after a slash / or are set off with parentheses.

Leader Guides include the following:

- Lesson emphasis
- A logical order for the discussion
- Discussion questions
- Suggested visual aid(s)

Practical tips for using the Leader Guide:

- **Don't simply "do" the lesson.**
Stay with the lesson until you have a good understanding of it. This will give you a better grasp of how the Leader Guide takes you through the lesson.
- **You don't have to ask every question in the guide.**
Often one question will be covered while discussing another question so there is no reason to ask it. Your goal is not to ask every question, but to ask enough questions to make sure your group understood the lesson and to help them apply the truths to their lives.

Using the Leader Guide with In & Out


When your entire group uses In & Out

Compare an In & Out lesson with the Leader Guide. Use what relates to the In & Out lesson as a guide for the discussion. Don't teach what's not in In & Out lessons. Remember your goal in the discussion is for your group to discuss what they've learned, not for you to lecture on what you learned.

For groups studying both Precept Upon Precept and In & Out

Use the Leader Guides as designed for PUP, knowing that the In & Out assignments will be covered in the discussion. Make a note in the Leader Guide of what is not in the In & Out.

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**COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 1**

Lesson emphasis

- Colossians Overview

To begin this discussion you might ask your group if there was a part of Colossians which ministered in a special way to them as they studied this lesson. Let some share what it was.

It might be an encouragement, a warning, an instruction, or some teaching.

Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart as a visual aid for this discussion.

HISTORICAL SETTING

Ask who wrote Colossians, to whom, why, and when. Tell your group to also look at the map and the chart “Sequence of Events in Paul’s Life after His Conversion.”

The apostle Paul wrote this letter to the Colossians when he was in prison in Rome for speaking the gospel.

Paul included Timothy with himself in verse 1, but the majority of the references used by the author are “I,” “me,” and “my.” 1:23 and 4:18 say, “I, Paul.”

The Colossians heard the gospel from Epaphras who told Paul about their faith. Paul then wrote this letter to them, and sent it from Rome to Colossae by Tychicus and Onesimus.

In this letter he encouraged, taught, and warned the recipients.

The believers at Laodicea were also to read this letter.

What was the city of Colossae like at that time?

Colossae was a small city in the Lycus Valley in Asia, about 100 miles from Ephesus, but close to Hierapolis and Laodicea.

These cities were on a trade route (from Ephesus). Therefore, various religions and philosophies mixed in the area.

At any point in your discussion, give time for your group to discuss application or how what they are discussing relates to them as believers now.

COLOSSIANS 1

Ask your group what they noted on their At a Glance chart as a possible theme for this chapter.

Maybe they had something similar to:

Paul heard of Colossians' faith; the Son; complete / mature in Christ

Ask your group what they learned from this chapter.

Tell them to look at their lists about the author, recipients, and Christ as visual aids.

Verses 1-2 describe the author and the recipients.

Paul, Jesus Christ's apostle by God's will, and Timothy our brother

Saints and faithful brethren / brothers in Christ at Colossae

Verses 3-8 tell how Paul and Timothy heard about the Colossians and how the saints at Colossae heard the gospel.

Epaphras, a Colossian, informed Paul that he told the gospel to the Colossians and they received it by faith in Christ.

The Colossians had faith in Christ Jesus, love for all saints, and hope in heaven.

Verses 9-14 are Paul and Timothy's prayer for the saints.

Since they had heard and understood the gospel, Paul prayed for them to be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Relate this to what was going on in the city and the warnings of chapter 2.

At the end of his prayer, he began to teach about Christ Jesus, verses 15-20.

NOTE: Don't discuss every detail about Him. More will be studied in later lessons.

Verses 21-23 describe the Colossians before and after believing in Christ. Paul said he was a minister of the gospel. Formerly alienated as Gentiles, they were reconciled by Christ's blood.

Chapter 1 ends with Paul's ministry and purpose, preaching the Word, making the mystery known among the Gentiles.

Verse 28 seems to summarize what this letter is about

Proclaiming Christ

Admonishing / warning and teaching with wisdom

To present every man complete / mature in Christ

You might ask what your group learned from this chapter for life now.

COLOSSIANS 2

Ask about a possible theme for this chapter. What did they put on their At a Glance chart?

No one delude you, all / whole fullness in Christ; you're complete / filled in Him

How does Paul's thought continue from 1:29?

His labor / toil, struggle for those who had never seen him is described. It was for the purpose of presenting them complete / mature in Christ. He had never seen them before, but rejoiced in their faith in Christ.

He wanted to encourage them.

He wanted them to have full assurance of understanding and knowledge.
In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

As a church they had good discipline / order and stability / firmness of faith and were being built up and established in Him. They were growing spiritually, and Paul encouraged them to continue.

Paul then warned the Colossian saints and all who read this letter.

He continued to teach about Jesus as he warned in this chapter.

What were the warnings about?

Verse 4 indicates that the letter was written so no one delude them with persuasive / plausible argument.

Then in verse 8 he warned against being taken captive by philosophy and empty deception / deceit. These things are from men's traditions—the elementary principles / spirits of the world.

Verses 16-23 are warnings also.

Being judged regarding food, drink, festival, new moon, Sabbath day
Christ is the substance of all those shadows.

Defrauding / disqualifying the Christians
delighting in self-abasement (ESV—insisting on asceticism)
angel worship and visions
inflated / puffed up

Submitting to decrees / regulations which forbid handling, tasting, and touching

Give time for your group to discuss how these warnings apply to believers now. You might also ask if they think it strange that a growing and stable church received these warnings. What can they learn from this?

COLOSSIANS 3

What is a possible theme?

Set your mind on things above—where Christ is

What is this chapter about, and how does it differ from the first two?

This chapter begins a list of instructions. The instructions are based on the truth about Christ presented in chapters 1 and 2. There is also more teaching about Him in this chapter—He is seated at God’s right hand.

NOTE: You don’t need to discuss all the instructions, but only the ones your group mentions.

Draw attention to verse 16 to remind them that they are obeying this when they study God’s Word.

In verse 18, specific instructions to wives, husbands, children, etc., begin and flow into chapter 4.

COLOSSIANS 4

Ask what they noted on their At a Glance chart as a theme for this chapter.

Maybe something similar to: Pray; conduct with / walk in wisdom; greetings

How does this chapter continue from 3?

Instructions begin this chapter, and Paul asked for prayer.

Conduct with / walk in wisdom. Relate that to the prayer in chapter 1.

Epaphras’ prayer in verse 12 relates to the main points of this letter.

The end of the letter is the greeting Paul wrote with his own hand. He told of two men from Colossae who were or had been with him, Epaphras and Onesimus.

He sent Tychicus and Onesimus to Colossae to inform the Colossians about his circumstances. That was to give the Colossians encouragement.

To end your discussion, ask your group if they think this letter still relates to the Christian life today. Ask what lessons for life they learned.

A possible theme for the letter—Don’t be deluded; you’re complete / mature in Christ

**COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 2**

Lesson emphasis

- Colossians 1:1-14

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, you might ask your group what they remember about Colossians as a whole—who wrote it, to whom, why, and what is it about.

The apostle Paul wrote this letter to the saints, faithful brethren / brothers at Colossae, people who had never seen him. They heard the gospel from one of their own, Epaphras, who informed Paul of their faith and love. Evidently he also told Paul about the various forms of false teaching facing the church.

Paul wrote the letter from prison in Rome to the Colossian believers to tell them they were complete / mature in Christ—they didn't need anything else.

He warned them not to be deluded or taken captive by false teaching.

Then he wrote them instructions about how to live as believers in Christ.

Colossians 1:28 seems to summarize the whole letter.

COLOSSIANS 1

NOTE: You can ask your group what they learned from their study of this chapter, and if they discuss the main points of the lesson, you don't need to ask further questions. But if they don't, this guide gives you some specific questions to ask about this lesson.

Verses 1-8

How does this chapter begin?

These verses are the introduction to the letter, briefly describing
Paul and Timothy
The Colossian saints

Verses 3-8 are about the Colossian church, a description of the believers there.

“Faith” and “faithful” are used three times in the first seven verses to describe the Colossians as a whole and Epaphras.

Thankfulness and love for all the saints

Paul and Timothy thanked God for the Colossian believers, people whom they had never met.

The Colossians in some way had demonstrated to Epaphras that they loved all the saints.

They understood God's grace when they learned the truth from Epaphras.
Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ Jesus.

Ask your group if this description of the Colossians also describes them. Do they want to be described this way?

Verses 9-12

What are these verses about?

This is Paul's prayer for the saints at Colossae.
He began by saying, "For this reason / And so." Verses 4-8 give the reason.

Paul and Timothy didn't just pray for them a few times, but on a regular basis.

Paul asked that they be filled with the knowledge of God's will.

Knowledge, *epignosis*,

- is "full knowledge."¹
- "expresses a more thorough participation in the acquiring of knowledge on the part of the learner."²

Wisdom, *sophia*, is

- "insight, intelligence"³
- "the capacity to understand, and hence act wisely"⁴

Understanding, *sunesis*, is

- "a mental *putting together*"⁵
- "to comprehend, reason out...the ability to understand concepts and see relationships between them"⁶

¹ H.G. Liddell, *A Lexicon: Abridged from Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996), p. 289.

² Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), G1922.

³ Barclay M. Newman, Jr. *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament* (Stuttgart, Germany: United Bible Societies, 1971), p. 165.

⁴ J. Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.) (HGK2876). (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997).

⁵ J. Strong, *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). G4907.

He asked that the Colossians have a full knowledge of His will in all spiritual insight and ability to reason.

Ask your group where they get spiritual insight and reasoning.

Spiritual insight is based on God's Spirit and His Word, not on man's wisdom. This doesn't mean a believer never seeks the counsel of another believer, but knowing the Word of God enables one to recognize when man's counsel goes against God's wisdom.

What is the result of Paul's prayer request?

The result is walking—living—in a manner worthy of the Lord.
Walking in a manner worthy is to please Him in all respects, not to please self.

How does Romans 12:1-2 relate to Paul's prayer?

Believers present their bodies as living sacrifices, their minds are renewed, and they're transformed. God's Spirit and Word renew one's mind—full knowledge, wisdom, understanding—to walk worthy of the Lord, according to the knowledge of His will.

Now ask what they learned about fruit. Discuss the cross-references.

God's wisdom and insight lead believers to bear fruit in every good work.
Pleasing Him in what we do

Matthew 3:2, 7-10; 7:15-21; 21:43

John told the Pharisees and Sadducees to bear fruit in keeping with repentance—a change of mind. The one who repents will bear fruit indicative of that change in thinking.

False prophets will come in, but they can be recognized by their fruit. A bad / diseased tree bears bad fruit. Good fruit in this context is doing the will of the Father, 7:21.

Because those Jews didn't produce the fruit of God's kingdom, the kingdom would be taken from them and given to a people, the church, producing the fruit of it.

Luke 8:11-15

This parable speaks of fruit when God's Word is given to people.
Those who believe it produce fruit. If no there's no fruit, there is no true life.
Only one soil produced fruit. The others are not saved.
Fruit here is with perseverance / patience.

John 15:1-16

The one who abides in Jesus bears much fruit, proves to be His disciple and glorifies the Father. The fruit from abiding in Him remains / abides.

⁶ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary, New Testament* (electronic ed.) (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 1992), G4907.

NOTE: Do not get into a discussion of what your group thinks about the branches broken off. Keep to the easily understood facts.

Romans 7:4-6

Believers are joined to Christ to bear fruit for God, serving Him in newness of the Spirit. Before salvation people, even religious people, bear fruit for death.

Galatians 5:16-25

Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control is fruit produced by the Spirit. In this context fruit is character.

Abiding in Jesus Christ, living by His Spirit, produces fruit in believers' lives.

Ephesians 5:5-13

The fruit of light is good, right, and true. Walk as children of light to learn what pleases the Lord.

Philippians 1:9-11 and Hebrews 12:11

Believers are filled with the fruit of righteousness through Jesus Christ. Discipline brings about the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

James 3:17-18

Wisdom from above, God's wisdom, is full of good fruits.

Hebrews 13:15

A sacrifice of praise is the fruit of lips that give thanks to God's name.

Lead your discussion back to Paul's prayer for the Colossians.
What else is part of walking in a manner worthy of Him?

Increasing in the knowledge (*epignosis*) of God

Growth takes place as one's mind is renewed with God's Word.

Believers get to know God more and more through His Word and by His Spirit.

Strengthened with His power, *dunamis*

- from *dunamai*... "to be able"⁷
- "inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature"⁸

The power is God's might working within a believer.

Compare Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:15-23.

His power surpasses greatness. It's the power which raised Jesus from the dead, and that power is toward believers.

⁷ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000). G1411.

⁸ James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001). G1411.

Attain steadfastness (ESV—for all endurance) and patience

There's joy in the process to be steadfast / endure and to be patient.

or

Believers joyously give thanks to the Father for what He has done for them.

Ask what your group learned about the saints, including the word study and cross-references.

Colossians 1:2 and 12 both use the term “saints” to refer to the faithful brothers at Colossae, the church. The Father qualified them to share the inheritance of saints in light.

saints, *hagios*—means “set apart, sanctified”⁹

Romans 1:6-7

Paul also addressed this letter to the beloved of God, called as saints.

1 Corinthians 1:2, 26-31

This is another of Paul's letters indicating that all believers are sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints by calling. They are chosen and sanctified by Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Believers are sanctified, washed—no longer fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, etc.

Saints, in the context of Paul's prayer in Colossians 1, are those set apart by God, sharing in the inheritance, no longer in the domain of darkness but in Christ's kingdom.

How did the Father qualify believers?

He rescued / delivered believers from the domain of darkness, and transferred them to the kingdom of His beloved Son.

Acts 26:18

The transfer is:

from darkness to light

from the dominion / power of Satan to God

It also speaks of forgiveness and the inheritance for those sanctified by faith.

Ephesians 2:1-7

A description of living in the darkness:

walk according to the world and the prince of the power of the air

lived in the lusts / passions of the flesh

by nature children of wrath

dead in trespasses, sins, and transgressions

⁹ Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000). G40.

But God made alive, raised up, and seated believers with Christ in heavenly places.

Believers are saved by grace through faith.

The saints have redemption in God's Son, the forgiveness of sins.

Now ask what your group learned about the inheritance of the saints from the cross-references.

Matthew 19:27-29; 25:34

Those who follow Jesus, His disciples, will inherit eternal life.

When King Jesus returns, He will tell those blessed of the Father to inherit the kingdom, His kingdom. These references speak of those who are saints.

Acts 26:15-18

The Lord appointed Paul on the Damascus Road. His ministry was to open eyes and turn people from darkness to light, from Satan to God, giving them an inheritance / place—sanctified by faith in Him.

Romans 8:16-17 and Ephesians 1:13-14

The Spirit testifies / bears witness to God's children, His heirs, fellow heirs with Christ, that they are His. God's children are saints.

The Holy Spirit is the pledge / guarantee of believers' inheritance.

Hebrews 1:1-2

The Son is heir of all things. These verses are similar to Colossians 1 in what they say about God's Son Jesus.

1 Peter 1:3-5

Those who are born again obtain an inheritance reserved / kept in heaven. This inheritance is the result of salvation.

The chart "The Lord Jesus Christ as Portrayed in Colossians" is a good visual aid for this part of the discussion.

What do verses 13-20 teach about Jesus?

He's God's beloved Son
The One in whom is redemption and forgiveness

He is God.

Firstborn of all creation
Firstborn from the dead

NOTE: Encourage your group that they'll study more about these statements in the next lesson.

He is creator.

He is timeless—before all things.

He holds all things together.
He is the essence of all existence.

All fullness is in Him.
Relate this to the whole message of Colossians—to present every man complete /
mature in Christ because in Him all fullness dwells.

He reconciled all things to the Father through the cross.

This chapter presents Jesus as God and also as a man with a flesh and blood body.

Verses 21-23

Who and what are these verses about?

This tells what Jesus did for the Colossians, for all believers, especially Gentiles.

Formerly / once
alienated
hostile in mind
engaged in / doing evil deeds

Now
reconciled to God
to be holy
blameless
beyond / above reproach

What is the condition presented in verse 23?

“if indeed you continue in the faith”

firmly established / stable and steadfast

not moved away / shifting from the hope, verses 5 and 27

Verses 23-29

Who are these last verses about?

This tells about Paul’s ministry or stewardship from God.

A minister of the gospel and of the church

A preacher to fully carry out the word of God, the mystery revealed to him
(ESV—to make the word of God fully known)

His message

Christ in you, the hope of glory

Every man complete / mature in Christ

He carried out his ministry by God's power

He labored / toiled

to fulfill his ministry from God

for others

Ask your group what they learned from Paul's example.

Help them to evaluate if they "know" Jesus Christ as He is presented in Colossians 1.

**COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 3**

Lesson emphasis

- Colossians 1:15-29

REVIEW

To begin this discussion, ask your group what Colossians is about and why Paul wrote it to the believers at Colossae.

This is a letter to faithful believers who were facing false teachings such as philosophies, legalism, and mysticism.

Paul wrote it so they would not be deluded with persuasive / plausible arguments.

The main point in what he wrote is that Christ is all and in all and believers are complete / mature in Him. There is nothing else to add. He is all.

How did Paul begin this letter in verses 1-8?

He introduced himself and Timothy to the saints at Colossae.
These verses include encouragement about the brethren / brothers there.
Paul and Timothy thanked the Lord for their faith and love.
Epaphras, who had given the gospel to them, also told Paul and Timothy about them.

What is next in the letter, verses 9-14?

He wrote the prayer that Timothy and he prayed for the Colossian believers.
He asked that they be filled with the knowledge of God's will
in spiritual wisdom and understanding
to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord

Pleasing God in all respects (ESV—fully pleasing to him)
Bearing fruit in every good work
Increasing in the knowledge of God
Strengthened with all power of His might
for steadfastness / endurance and patience
Giving thanks joyously to the Father

The Father qualified believers to share in the saints' inheritance.
He rescued / delivered believers from the domain of darkness.
He transferred believers to His Son's kingdom.
Believers have redemption, forgiveness, in the Son.

At any point in your discussion, give your group time to discuss relevant application.

COLOSSIANS 1:15-29

Verses 15-17

Ask your group what they learned about the Son. Discuss relevant cross-references.
Tell them to look at “The Lord Jesus Christ as Portrayed in Colossians” as a visual aid.

He is the image of the invisible God.

Hebrews 1:1-3, 8

The Son is the exact representation / imprint of God’s nature. The Son is God.
God made the world through the Son, and He upholds all things.
He made purification of sins.

Compare these statements with Colossians 1:15-17.

John 1:18

Jesus is the only begotten God from the Father. (ESV—only God at Father’s side)
He explained / made known the Father—the exact representation, the image of the invisible.

John 12:45 and 14:7-11

Jesus told the disciples that they had seen the Father because they had seen Him.

John 8:58, 24; Exodus 3:14; and John 10:30-33

Jesus said that He is God, I AM, as the Father is God.

Philippians 2:5-11

He is God, but came in the form of a fleshly body as a man.

Jesus is equal with God from the beginning.
For a while He was made in the likeness of men.
He temporarily emptied Himself of His glory with the Father in heaven.

He took the form of a servant and was obedient to the Father even to the point of death, the cross.

He is the firstborn of all creation.

The Son of God has preeminence over all creation because He created all things.
The immediate context of Colossians 1:15-18 interprets, gives understanding of, the meaning here in this text. He is Creator, not a created being.

The Son created all things.
He existed before all things.
He holds all things together.
He has first place in everything.

What is Jesus' relationship to creation?

John 1:1-14, 17

All things came into being through Him.
The world was made through Him.
He was in the beginning with God.
He was always God.

Then He became flesh and lived among men.
Men saw the glory of the Son, but have not yet seen His full glory as God.

NOTE: Encourage your group to use Colossians 1 and John 1 as tools for witnessing when others tell them that Jesus is only "a" Son of God, the first one born. They can present Him as Creator God from these passages.

Genesis 1:1, 26

"In the beginning"—the same words begin John 1.
God created the heavens and the earth through His Son.

Let "Us" make man in "Our" image.

Hebrews 1:8-12

The Son is God.
"In the beginning" He laid the foundation of the earth.
The heavens are the work of the Son's hands in creation.

Lead your discussion back to Colossians 1:18-27. What is next in the list about the Son?

He is the head of the body, the church.
All fullness is in Him and He reconciled all things to Himself.
He made peace by His blood on the cross.

He reconciled believers to present them holy, blameless, and beyond / above reproach.
Verse 23 begins with "if." Those who continue are true believers. They are the ones who have been reconciled to God and no longer alienated and hostile toward Him.

Hebrews 3:1-6, 14

Christ the Son is over God's house, His church. Those who hold fast until the end are part of His house, the true partakers of Christ.

Philippians 1:6

God will complete the good work of salvation He begins in believers.
True believers will continue.

Relate the steadfastness in verse 23 to what Paul prayed for the Colossians in verse 11.
Give your group time to discuss what this teaches about true salvation.

Verses 24-26 are also about His body, the church. The afflictions are those of believers, not Jesus' human body. There was nothing lacking in what He suffered on earth.

Paul, a minister of the church, suffered for it as will all true believers. His ministry was to preach the Word of God, revealing the hidden mystery among Gentiles—Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Paul was not the only one to suffer as part of Christ's body, the church.

Philippians 1:29

It has been granted to all believers to suffer for His sake.

2 Corinthians 1:5

His sufferings are ours in abundance, but so is the comfort through Him.

Ask what your group learned from the cross-references and word study about the church. As a visual aid you can draw a church.

Colossians 4:15-16

Paul mentioned other local churches in the area of the Colossian church.

ekklesia—"a calling out"¹

It's used of a gathering, meeting, or assembly.

Ephesians 1:22-23 and 5:22-33

This also says Jesus Christ the Son is the head over all things to the church, His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. This seems to be about the universal church, not just the church at Ephesus.

His headship is like the husband to the wife in marriage. The church is subject / submissive to its head—Christ. He loved the church to the degree that He gave Himself for her—the universal church, all believers.

His desire is for the church to be holy and blameless / without blemish.

Compare this with Colossians 1:22.

Matthew 16:13-20 and 1 Peter 2:4-8

Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God built His church, His body.

Peter, who Jesus addressed in Matthew 16, later wrote about believers being living stones being built up as a spiritual house. Jesus is the cornerstone.

Add a cornerstone to your drawing and mark it with a cross.

NOTE: Don't let your group debate whether the reference to rock in Matthew 16 refers to Peter or to his statement about Jesus being the Christ.

¹ James Strong, *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1996). G1577.

Hebrews 12:22-24

The assembly, the church of the firstborn refers to those who are enrolled in heaven.

1 Corinthians 12:12-13

Paul also wrote this letter. All the members of the body are one in Christ. We are made one by His Spirit; all believers share the same Spirit.

Draw the Spirit in the church.

1 Timothy 3:15

Paul defined the church as God's household, the pillar and support / buttress of the truth.

Acts 2:46-47

The Lord saves, adding to His church. The first church, the beginning, was of one mind (not in ESV). So should the church be now.

Ask your group how these truths about the church relate to them, as individuals, as members of a local church, and as part of the universal church.

Lead the discussion back to Colossians 1:26-27, and ask what they learned about the mystery.

Hidden from past ages and generations

Now manifested / revealed to His saints

God made known the riches of the glory of the mystery
among Gentiles

Christ in you—Gentiles, the hope of glory

Gentiles, specifically those formerly alienated and hostile to God, were part of the body of Christ. They had hope.

Colossians 2:1-3

Christ is the mystery revealed by Paul to the Gentiles.

Ephesians 3:1-12

Paul also wrote about the mystery to the church at Ephesus, about 100 miles from Colossae. His ministry was to Gentiles, explaining the mystery to them. If they believed in Christ Jesus, then they were part of His body with the Jewish believers. It was no longer hidden.

The Spirit was the revealer of the mystery to Paul and other apostles and prophets. They then spoke the mystery to whomever He led them.

Gentiles were fellow heirs, fellow members of the body, and fellow partakers of the promise.

The unfathomable / unsearchable riches of Christ preached to the Gentiles—those who had been alienated and hostile to God.

Romans 16:25-27

Paul wrote to the church at Rome also that the mystery which had been hidden was manifested / disclosed. It's for all nations and leads to obedience of faith—Jews and Gentiles in one body, the church.

To end your discussion, ask about Colossians 1:28-29. How do these verses relate to the rest of chapter 1?

Paul's purpose, his ministry and apostleship, was to present Christ to every man.
Christ's power worked within him to admonish / warn and teach with wisdom.
The end was for all to be complete / mature in Him, as Paul was.

Ask your group how understanding these truths in Colossians 1 can help them be complete / mature in Christ.

**COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 4**

Lesson emphasis

- Colossians 2:1-10

REVIEW

What is Colossians about? Who wrote it and to whom? Why?

NOTE: Ask your group to do this from memory, without looking at notes or text. If you do this exercise in several discussions, it will help them remember the whole of Colossians when they finish this course.

While in prison, Paul wrote to the saints at Colossae when he heard from Epaphras about their faith and love.

He wrote about Christ being all and in all to the Colossians. He told them that they were complete / mature in Him.

He also wrote to warn them of certain heresies which had potential to lead some astray.

Ask your group what they remember about the flow of thought in Colossians 1.

This letter began with the introduction of Paul, Timothy, and the Colossians.

He encouraged the Colossians in his description of them and how they understood and believed the gospel presented to them by Epaphras.

Then he wrote his prayer for them.

It was prayer for those faithful brethren / brothers to continue in understanding the knowledge of God's will to walk in a worthy manner.

The end of the prayer leads into a list about the Son, Jesus Christ the Lord. His preeminence over all is emphasized.

He brought about redemption, forgiveness, and reconciliation for believers.

Then Paul wrote about his ministry for the church, and the Colossians were part of the church. He labored to present every man complete / mature in Christ by proclaiming Him, admonishing / warning and teaching with wisdom.

COLOSSIANS 2

At the end of this lessons' guide is a visual aid you might use. Add the points as your group discusses.

Was Paul inserting a new thought in verse 1? Or was he continuing his statement from 1:28? What is the flow of thought? Tell your group to look at their lists on “The Lord Jesus Christ as Portrayed in Colossians” and “Those Who Belong to Christ.”

Paul proclaimed Christ, admonishing / warning and teaching, to present every man complete / mature in Christ. He labored / toiled, striving to do that.

He labored / toiled to do that for the Colossians, the Laodiceans, and all whom he had never seen. He had a great struggle for them.

At this point, you might ask your group what they think the struggle was about according to Colossians 2:1-5.

Paul had never seen them and could not go to Colossae or that area since he was in prison at the time he heard about them from Epaphras.

He wrote to encourage them

 Their hearts knit together as the body of Christ

 Full assurance of understanding, knowledge—God’s mystery is Christ

He also warned them

 That they not be deluded with persuasive / plausible argument

This first warning seems to summarize the more specific warnings in this chapter.

That was the main part of his struggle and the main area of concern in chapter 2.

At any point in this discussion, give time for your group to discuss relevant application. What keeps faithful Christians from being deluded now?

The full understanding, based on the knowledge of God’s Word, that Jesus Christ makes believers in Him complete. There is nothing to add to Him.

What had the Colossians understood?

They understood God’s grace when they heard the gospel.

Paul and Timothy prayed for them to know God’s will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

Then he encouraged them by telling them that they could have full assurance of understanding the mystery. It’s a mystery no longer.

 All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Christ.

Understanding what one has in Him is having access to all wisdom and knowledge.

Paul rejoiced to hear of the Colossians' good discipline / order and stability / firmness of faith, but he still warned them about being deluded.

Are faithful and growing believers exempt from being tempted to believe false teaching?
Give your group time to discuss how this applies to them.

Verses 6-7

What did Paul tell the faithful brethren / brothers to do? How did he describe them in these verses?

This is the first instruction in the letter—walk “in Him.”

As they'd received Him . . . walk
They had received Him by faith.

Relate this instruction to the prayer in Colossians 1.
Paul and Timothy prayed for them to be filled with the knowledge of God's will so that they would walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.

From all that this letter says about the saints at Colossae, they were walking in faith. Paul encouraged them to continue.

Epaphras evidently had instructed them well.
They were firmly rooted.
They were being built up and established in faith.
They were overflowing with gratitude / abounding in thanksgiving.

Verses 8-15

What's the warning in these verses? Discuss the word study and cross-references also.

The Colossians were to see to it; it was their responsibility. Paul warned them about being taken captive, indicating more than merely an interest in something.

philosophy, *philosophia*—“the love and pursuit of wisdom”¹

Tell your group to look at the chart on wisdom at the end of the lesson.

1 Corinthians 1:17–2:16; 3:18–23

Paul contrasted the world's wisdom and God's.

A person can't come to know God through the world's wisdom.
Its result is not true knowledge; it's useless.

¹W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). 2:470.

People come to know God by the gospel. Christ is the power and wisdom of God, and His wisdom is revealed by His Spirit who knows His thoughts. The things of the Spirit are not understood by the natural man, because they are spiritually discerned.

Believers have God's Spirit, and can know the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden in Christ. They have the mind of Christ, and the Spirit gives understanding of the Word.

Acts 17:16-34

In Athens some spent their time telling and listening to new things, philosophies.

Paul spoke to them about their altar to an unknown God, telling of God who created the world, the One in whom we live, move, and exist / have being. God had overlooked their ignorance, but was now calling them to repent, because He will judge the world by a Man raised from the dead.

Ignorance is the opposite of knowledge—not knowing. So while they loved wisdom, they didn't have knowledge.

Paul reasoned with them in in the synagogue and market. Delusion is false reasoning.

Some sneered at / mocked his message and some wanted to hear more. Some believed—the Spirit of God gave them understanding of God's wisdom.

Lead your discussion back to Colossians 2:8. How does the warning continue?

Empty deception / deceit might describe the philosophies of men.

NOTE: Some might read in commentaries that the Greek sentence construction indicates that empty deception is a description of philosophy. This was a love and pursuit of man's worldly wisdom.

These deceptions / deceits are empty of value because they are based on traditions and the world's elementary principles / spirits.

Ask what else they learned about the elementary principles / spirits of the world from this chapter.

If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles, why submit to them?

Decrees / regulations such as: Don't handle, taste, touch

Self-made religion, self-abasement / asceticism and severe treatment of the body (ESV—severity to the body)

The text says that those things have an appearance of wisdom.

But only in Christ are all the treasures of wisdom.

Even having an appearance of wisdom, those things have no value against fleshly indulgence.

Believers died with Christ—knowing and understanding that fact is of value against fleshly indulgence.

These elementary principles are ideas men come up with. Some might sound spiritual, but are not according to Christ. There are a lot of these deceptive philosophies creeping into the church now.

It's the individual believer's responsibility to see to it that he or she is not taken captive by these teachings. Don't be deluded by persuasive / plausible arguments—things that sound good.

1 Corinthians 2:4

Paul said his message and preaching were not in persuasive / plausible words of wisdom but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. He spoke the wisdom of God.

What other warnings did Jesus, Peter and Paul give? Discuss cross-references.

Mark 7:5-9

Some Pharisees and scribes, part of the religious leaders of Israel at Jesus' time, held to the traditions of the elders. They asked why His disciples didn't keep those traditions.

Jesus replied that they were hypocrites because they kept men's traditions but their hearts were far away from God.

They taught men's precepts / commandments as doctrine and neglected God's commandments. They set them aside / rejected them.

2 Peter 2:1-3; 3:14-18

Peter was one of Jesus' twelve apostles who heard Him admonish the Pharisees and scribes.

He later wrote that false teachers will be among you, the church. They will secretly introduce / bring in destructive heresies and malign / blaspheme the way of truth.

The untaught / ignorant and unstable distort / twist the Scriptures.

Be on guard / take care so you're not carried away by their error and fall / lose your stability. Grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ.

Relate his statements to Colossians 2.

1 Timothy 1:3-11

Paul wrote Timothy to instruct / charge men not to teach strange / different doctrines or pay attention / devote themselves to myths and genealogies. These seem to refer to the Judaizers. Some men turned aside to fruitless / vain discussions not understanding what they say or make confident assertions about. This is the world's wisdom and persuasive / plausible arguments.

2 Timothy 2:16-18

Avoid worldly and empty chatter / irreverent babble about the truth because it leads to more ungodliness, spreading like gangrene. Men who've gone astray / swerved from the truth upset the faith of some. False teaching spreads.

What prevents a faithful Christian from being deluded or taken captive?

It's understanding that the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are only found in Christ. Verse 9 begins with "For" indicating explanation of what precedes it.

"in Him" is all the / whole fullness of Deity in bodily form
"in Him" you are complete / filled

How does verse 10 describe Christ? Ask what else your group learned about rulers and authorities.

He is head over all rule and authority.
Colossians 1:16 says He created visible—human
and invisible—spiritual
thrones, dominions, rulers, authorities

Colossians 2:15 says God disarmed, made a public display of (ESV—put them to open shame), and triumphed over the rulers and authorities through Christ.

Hebrews 2:9, 14-18

Jesus became for a little while lower than the angels—He took on a flesh and blood body. And through His death He rendered the devil powerless (ESV—destroy).

1 John 4:4

The Spirit of Christ in believers is greater than he, the spirit, who is in the world.

Jesus is over all rule and authority, human and spiritual.
And believers are in Him.

Ask your group what else verses 11-15 say about being in Him.

"in Him"—circumcision without hands, removal / putting off the body of flesh
buried and raised, made alive, "with Him"
forgiven of all transgressions / trespasses

The deception is empty, but Christians are complete / filled because all fullness is in Christ.

Verses 16-23

What are the warnings in these verses? How might one be deluded?

Let no one act as your judge / pass judgment . . . matters of the law, legalism
The prevention is knowing that those things are mere shadows.
Christ is the substance—and believers are complete / filled in Him.

Let no one keep defrauding / disqualify you . . .
Self-abasement / asceticism, worship of angels
Taking a stand on visions he has seen (ESV—going on in detail about visions),
being inflated / puffed up in mind

Holding fast to Him as the head brings the growth of the body.

Give time for your group to discuss if or how these are still relevant warnings.

If you've used the provided visual aid, you could close by asking your group the following:

What contrasts do you see between the warnings and the truths about Christ?

How do the warnings and truths about Christ relate to why Paul wrote Colossians?

Don't be deluded

by persuasive / plausible arguments
taken captive
philosophy, empty deception / deceit
men's tradition
world's elementary principles/spirits

In Christ

all treasures of wisdom and knowledge
all the fullness of Deity in bodily form
you're complete in Him
Head over all rule and authority

**COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 5**

Lesson emphasis

- Colossians 2:11-23
- “in Him”

REVIEW

Ask your group why Paul wrote, and who he wrote to, and what it’s about.

Paul wrote to the primarily Gentile believers in Colossae, believers whom he had never seen.

He heard from Epaphras that false teaching was threatening this church of faithful Christians. So he wrote to encourage, but mainly warn and teach them.

Colossians 1:28 seems to summarize Paul’s message in Colossians.

What is “in Him,” from 2:1-10, and how does that relate to being complete / filled “in Him”?

All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Him.

Therefore, if a person wants to be wise, He is all that person needs.

Believers are to be firmly rooted and built up in Him.

That comes from spending time in His Word, communicating with Him through Bible study and prayer.

These are reasons to complete this study—Bible study reveals the wisdom and knowledge that belong to all children of God. None of the world’s wisdom is needed for completion / maturity.

All fullness of Deity in bodily form

He is God, and Christians need nothing else to be complete / filled.

COLOSSIANS 2:11-23

Verses 11-15

What are these verses about? What do believers have “in Him”? Discuss cross-references and the word study. See a possible visual aid at the end of this lesson’s guide.

Circumcised without hands to remove / put off the body of the flesh
That circumcision took place at salvation.

Genesis 17

Circumcision is the sign of the everlasting covenant God made with Abraham and his descendants. God promised to make them a great nation and give them the land as their everlasting possession.

Every male was to be circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin—the part of the flesh from which came the seed of descendants.

Leviticus 12 says the 8th day after birth is when the baby boy is to be circumcised.

This covenant was passed to Isaac and his descendants, not Ishmael.

But verse 20 is the promise regarding Ishmael and his descendants.

If any man refused to be circumcised, he had broken the covenant with God and was cut off from his people.

Deuteronomy 30:1-6 and Romans 2:28-29

This speaks of circumcising the heart which the sign of outward circumcision of the flesh represented for Israel. God wanted them to love Him.

Philippians 3:2-3

This circumcision of the heart is by God's Spirit.

Relate this to Colossians 2:11, made without hands.

Lead the discussion back to Colossians 2:11-12. What is the next thing believers have in Him?

The circumcision of Christ for believers took place when they were buried with Him in baptism and raised by faith, at salvation.

baptismos—"a washing, purification effected by means of water"¹; "ceremonial washing"²

Romans 6:1-11

Baptism is associated with death and resurrection—Christ Jesus' and the believer's.

Verse 4 says that this baptism into death and being raised is for a reason. Relate this to being circumcised in Him from Colossians. It's to walk in newness of life. It's a cleansing for new life.

Believers are immersed in or united with Jesus in the likeness of His death and resurrection. The body of sin is done away with / brought to nothing; Colossians says that it's the removal of / putting off the body of the flesh.

¹ James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995). G909.

² Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000). G909.

Ask your group what this circumcision and baptism has to do with their lives every day. Give time for discussing application.

What does Colossians 2:13-14 say about this death and resurrection?

Those who believed in Him at Colossae, as well as believers now, were made alive with Him and forgiven of their transgressions. Before salvation, people are dead in their transgressions / trespasses and the uncircumcision of their flesh.

transgressions / trespasses—*paraptoma*, means “a side-slip”³; “*para*—‘aside,’ *pipto*—‘to fall’”⁴; “a deviation from living according to what has been revealed as the right way to live”⁵

Colossians 1:14 says redemption in Christ brings forgiveness of sins.

sin—*hamartia*, literally, “a missing of the mark”⁶

James 4:17 and 1 John 5:17

Knowing the right thing to do and not doing it
Unrighteousness / wrongdoing

Romans 14:23

Whatever is not from faith

1 John 3:4

Lawlessness—not keeping the Law

Ephesians 2:1-10

This text explains that formerly believers were dead in trespasses, sins and transgressions. They lived in the lusts / passions of the flesh and indulged it.

Then God made them alive with Christ—saved them by grace; by grace saved through faith. He also prepared good works for them to walk in after salvation.

Salvation is when the death and resurrection of baptism takes place in a believer’s life. That is when he is circumcised by the Spirit. That is when he dies to sin to walk in newness of life.

³James Strong, *The New Strong’s Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). G3900.

⁴W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). 2:223.

⁵Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker’s Greek New Testament library (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000). 298.

⁶W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). 2:576.

Romans 6

The old self was crucified so the body of sin was done away with / brought to nothing.
Believers in Christ are freed from sin, no longer slaves to it.
Sin and death are no longer master / have dominion.

How did forgiveness come about?

By Jesus' death

2 Corinthians 5:21

He made Him sin on our behalf so that we might become righteous.

Ask your group what the text says about the certificate / record of debt.

The certificate / record seems like a list of what believers owed God.
It consists of decrees / legal demands against us (ESV—stood against us).
This might refer to the Law and believers' sins against it.
God took it away (ESV—set aside) by nailing it to the cross.

How does verse 15 relate to verses 11-14?

At the cross God, through the Lord Jesus Christ, triumphed over and disarmed rulers and authorities. Colossians 2:10 says that Christ is head over all rule and authority. That's because of His death and resurrection. They hold no power over any who have died and been raised with Him.

John 12:27-33 and Hebrews 2:14-15

Jesus says the ruler of this world, the devil or Satan, will be cast out.
He rendered the devil powerless (ESV—destroyed) by His death because it paid for sins.

Ephesians 1:19-23

Christ is seated in the heavenly places far above all rule and authority...
All those raised up with Him are also seated in the heavenly places.

Verses 16-19

What relationship does the "therefore" in verse 16 have to the previous verses?

Christ Jesus is fullness of Deity, and He is head over all rule and authority.

He disarmed rulers and authorities.

Therefore, no one is to act as a believer's judge / pass judgment.

What things do verses 16-17 list? Discuss cross-references also.

Food or drink

Festival, new moon, Sabbath day

Things which shadow what is to come
Christ is the substance of those things

Leviticus 11:46-47 and Mark 7:18-19

Leviticus 11 details what the Law said was clean and unclean for Israel to eat or not eat. Jesus declared all foods clean.

Exodus 20:8-11 and Mark 2:23-28

In the Law, there were strict guidelines for what Israel could and could not do on the Sabbath. It was the day blessed by God when He created all things.

Jesus, through whom God created all things, said that He is Lord, or ruler, of even the Sabbath. The Sabbath was made for man to rest, not man for the Sabbath to be its slave to legalism.

1 Chronicles 23

This passage mentions new moons and festivals, as well as the Sabbath. These were the times appointed by God for Israel to specifically focus on worship. They were times of praise, thanksgiving, and offerings to God. They were holy times, times set apart.

Festivals were yearly.
New moon was monthly.
Sabbath was weekly.

Galatians 4:8-11

Believers are cautioned not to turn back to weak and worthless elemental things which can enslave men. The observance of days, months, seasons, and years are some of those things.

1 Timothy 4:1-8

The Spirit told about some falling away / departing in later times. These pay attention (ESV—devote themselves) to deceitful spirits and doctrines / teachings of demons, some of which are about marriage and food.

Hebrews 8 and 10

This is similar to Colossians 2:17.

The things of the Law shadowed Christ and heavenly things.

The Law was the old covenant, the first. Jesus Christ brought in the new covenant which is not based on law. One's heart is the key to being part of this new covenant. Jesus made the law obsolete because He fulfilled it.

The Law cannot make anyone perfect; the same Greek word as “complete” in Colossians 1:28. Only Christ can make perfect or complete / mature.

Why was the Law given?

Galatians 3:19

This tells why—it defined sin, not keeping God’s requirements as stated in His law.

Give time for your group to discuss if any of them are held captive by legalism that sounds good. If so, what do they need to understand from Colossians?

Ask what they learned from their study of Colossians 2:18-19.

Let no one keep defrauding / disqualify you of your prize by delighting in certain things.

defrauding—*“to give judgment against.”*⁷; *“to decide as an umpire against someone”*⁸

Those who participated in self-abasement and worship of angels and had visions were evidently deeming the Colossians unworthy or less spiritual, because they did not participate in these things.

Self-abasement / asceticism, which means “humility.”⁹

The one who has false humility takes delight in it.

That’s not true humility.

Worship of angels

Galatians 3:19 and Hebrews 2:1-3; Hebrews 1:1-7, 13-14

The Jews knew angels were involved with God sending the Law. Jesus is greater than all angels, and God told them to worship Him.

Galatians 1:6-8

An angel who preaches a different gospel is to be accursed.

Romans 8:38-39

No angelic being can separate believers from the love of God in Christ.

Therefore, those who delight in the worship of angels are deceived.

Taking a stand on / going on in detail about visions

NOTE: The word “visions” is not in the original text.

Inflated without cause by his fleshly mind

(ESV--puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind)

⁷ Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998), G2603.

⁸ James Strong, *Enhanced Strong’s Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001), G2603.

⁹ Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981). G5012a.

Arrogance based on something one has seen
Standing on that instead of holding fast to the head—Christ

Deuteronomy 13

False prophets / dreamers were to be stoned to death.

Joel 2 and Acts 2

Some visions and dreams are from the Lord, even in New Testament times.

The way to know if it is false or true is to know where it leads.
If it does not lead to the head, Christ, but leads away from him, then it's false.

2 Corinthians 12

Paul had visions, but didn't boast in the visions he had.
God kept him from exalting himself.

Verse 19 tells the result of the church holding fast to the head—Christ.
It's growth from God. This seems to be what was going on with the saints at Colossae.
They were faithful, but Paul warned them about the false teachings surrounding them.

The entire body is supplied / nourished and held / knit together in Him.

Ephesians 4:11-16

This is a parallel passage about growth of the body, the church.
The Colossians were not children, but faithful.
But there was a danger of false doctrines and deceit.

Verses 20-23

How does this chapter end? Discuss cross-references also.

The end of chapter 2 is reasoning about being dead with Christ.
Believers have died and been raised with Christ.

How can one who is dead to the elementary principles / spirits of the world submit to decrees of the world? It's impossible.

There are some things which have an appearance of wisdom, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence. Only dying with Christ takes care of that. It's part of being complete / mature in Him.

To end your discussion, ask what lessons for life your group learned this week.
Give time for them to share.

In Christ

Circumcised

Baptized

Made alive

Forgiven

COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 6

Lesson emphasis

- Colossians 3:1-4

REVIEW

To begin your discussion, ask your group about the flow of thought in Colossians 1–3. Tell them to look at their At a Glance chart as a visual aid.

Colossians	1:1	Paul and Timothy
	2-8	To Colossians, faithful brethren / brothers
	9-12	Paul's prayer for them
	13-23	Son reconciled them
	24–2:5	Paul's ministry, purpose, labor / toil, and struggle Present every man complete / mature in Christ Let no one delude you with persuasive / plausible argument
	2:6-19	Warnings and "in Christ"
	20-23	Died with Him

What point did Paul make about believers in 2:20-23?

If dead to elementary principles / spirits of the world

don't live by decrees / regulations,
commandments and teachings of men
(ESV—human precepts and teachings)

COLOSSIANS 3Verse 1

What is the second point continued in chapter 3?

If raised with Christ

keep seeking the things above

According to verse 1, where is Christ and what does this have to do with seeking things above?

Since believers are raised with Christ and He is seated at God's right hand, then a Christian's focus for life should be where Christ is.

Romans 8:34

He's making intercession for believers as He is at the Father's right hand.

John 14:2-3

He is preparing a place for believers in His Father's house. He will return to take Christians to be with Him.

Ephesians 2:4-6

Christians are not only raised with Him, but also seated with Him in the heavenly places. Because of God's mercy and love, He made believers alive and raised them up with Christ. Saved by His grace.

You might draw a stick figure diagram of Christ and believers seated in the heavenlies, but believers' bodies still on earth.

Give your group time to discuss how these truths about Christ apply to them now.

How is chapter 3 different from chapters 1 and 2?

It contains a list of instructions or commands.

Verse 2

What are we told to do? How does this compare with seeking things above?

Set your mind on the things above

This is how to keep seeking the things above

Daily Bible study and prayer help set a person's mind on things above.

Ask if knowing the things in Colossians 1:12-23 and 2:9-15 help set the mind on the things above and keep seeking them?

How can doing what Colossians 3:1-2 says help control the flesh? Discuss the cross-references.

Although believers are spiritually seated in the heavenlies with Christ, they still live on earth in bodies of flesh.

Galatians 5:16-25

This gives a list of the deeds of the flesh and says that the one who practices them is not saved. Those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Believers control their flesh by walking in the Spirit.

Romans 13:14

Make no provision for the flesh.

Give your group time to discuss how to apply or practice this.

1 Corinthians 6:18

Flee immorality and don't sin against your own body.

Fleeing from temptation makes no provision for the flesh.

Matthew 26:41 and 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22

Keep watching, examine everything—be alert to what is happening.

Keep praying—talking with God, listening to His Spirit

Hold fast to what's good.

Abstain from evil.

These are things believers are to do when evil temptation is before them.

You can add to the stick figure visual aid temptations surrounding a believer on earth, but his head, or mind, looking above. If you can, add the Spirit within him and a Bible in his hand.

Verses 3-4

How do these verses relate to verses 1-2?

Christ is our life.

Philippians 1:20-21 says the same as Colossians 3:3-4.

Believers are raised with Him. Life is hidden with Him in God.

Therefore, if He is above, then thoughts should be centered on things above and lived out on earth to glorify Him.

Romans 8:1, 9-13, 29-30

On earth believers are led by Christ's Spirit within them.

By the Spirit, Christians put to death the deeds of the flesh / body on a daily basis.

Christians are people who are being conformed into the image of the Son.

That is the only way one can live with Him in heaven.

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

Believers are new creatures in Christ.

Philippians 3:8-11 and Galatians 2:20; 5:24; 6:14

Believers live by faith. Paul's goal was to know Christ more and more. That is spiritual growth. It's what to focus on daily. God's power and righteousness are to be worked out in life.

Christians can know the truths of this life from studying God's Word. His Spirit within directs believers how to put into practice the truths they know. It's a life of faith.

Give time for your group to discuss how they are to practice this.

Those who can't practice these things need to do as 2 Corinthians 13:5 says and test themselves.

Lead your discussion back to Colossians 3:4.

Ask what your group learned about the future time when He is revealed.

When He is revealed / appears, believers will be revealed / appear with Him in glory.

glory, *doxa*—“judgment, view. . . estimate. . . splendour, brightness”¹

Philippians 3:20-21; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 and 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

At some time in the future, believer's bodies will be changed. It's when Jesus returns to take His church to be with Him, as He said in John 14.

Although now the flesh has been crucified, believers still live in bodies of flesh.
But a time will come when they won't.

1 John 3:2-3

When Jesus appears, believers will be like Him.

Revelation 5:9-10

Believers will be a kingdom and priests to God who will reign on earth with Christ.

To end your discussion, ask what your group learned about the future glory in Revelation 4 and 21 and how this might encourage them to live now by setting their minds on things above and continuing to seek those things.

¹ James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001). G1391.

**COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 7**

Lesson emphasis

- Colossians 3:5-17

REVIEW

You might begin this discussion with a general review by asking some or all of the following questions.

Who wrote this letter and what were his/their circumstances when he wrote it?

Who was it written to, and what do you remember about them?

What was Paul's purpose in writing to them? What were his concerns?

What solution did he present to them?

What is a believer's relationship with Christ?

At this point, you might begin a stick figure drawing as a visual aid. Add to it as your discussion progresses. See the last page of this guide for a suggestion.

COLOSSIANS 3:5-17

Verses 5-11

What are these verses about? Ask what your group learned from their study.

This verse begins with "therefore."

Because of being dead in Christ and raised with Him

Consider...as dead (ESV—put to death)—literally, this means "put to death."¹ It is to "stop completely."²

Because of being dead in Christ, believers put to death their earthly body to these sins.

NOTE: There is no need to ask about the definitions of these words or the ones in verse 8. They are here as a help for you if someone in your group brings them up.

¹ New American Standard Bible: 1995 update, marginal note (Col. 3:5) (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

²James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). GJK3739.

immorality—“sexual sin”³

impurity—“uncleanness or filth in a natural or physical sense”⁴

passion—“a strong emotion of desire or craving. . .”⁵

evil desire—a desire (“strong desire . . . lust”⁶) which is “wicked, vicious, bad in heart, conduct, and character”⁷

greed / covetousness—“literally, a desire to have more”⁸

idolatry

NOTE: Many Bible scholars connect idolatry only with greed, not all of the sins, because the Greek construction is singular.

Because of these things God’s wrath will come. When Jesus returns, believers will be with Him in glory, but others will receive His wrath.

Verses 7 and 8 contrast the former walk of unbelievers and their present walk after becoming believers. The sons of disobedience, the unsaved, walk in these sins, and they will face God’s wrath. But believers once walked in them, but no more as a habit of life.

Romans 6:11-13

Paul wrote something similar here. Believers have power over sin.

Relate this to your group. If they are truly saved, have died and been raised with Christ, they are not to let sin reign in their lives.

Ask about the passages in Day Three. What about those who claim to be saved, but still practice evil?

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and Ephesians 5:3-10

Again Paul wrote of the contrast in lifestyle between the saved and unsaved.

Believers lived in sin before salvation, but they are washed, sanctified, and justified.

The unrighteous will not inherit God’s kingdom.

³Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993). G4202.

⁴Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993). G167.

⁵Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker’s Greek New Testament Library (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000). 291.

⁶Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993). G1939.

⁷Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993). G2556.

⁸W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, *Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). 2:136.

Galatians 5:19-21

This is a list of the deeds of the flesh. It's very similar to the list in Colossians 3:5-8. Those who practice these things will not inherit God's kingdom.

1 John 3:4-10

John also wrote about this contrast in lifestyle between believers and unbelievers.

The children of God are obvious / evident—they practice righteousness.

The children of the devil are also obvious / evident—they don't, nor do they love.

Paul and John both wrote that believers should not be deceived about this, 1 Corinthians 6:9; Ephesians 5:6; 1 John 3:7.

Give your group time to discuss how understanding what God says about this helps them.

What is the second command Paul wrote in Colossians 3:5-10?

Put aside / away

anger—"wrath, anger as a state of mind"⁹; "a more settled or abiding condition of mind, frequently with a view to taking revenge"¹⁰

wrath—"an outburst of *orge*, anger"¹¹

malice—"hostility and strong dislike . . . desiring to do harm"¹²

slander—blasphemy¹³; "speech injurious"¹⁴; "evil speaking, railing"¹⁵

abusive speech / obscene talk—"dirty talk, filthy or obscene language or speech"¹⁶; "shameful words"¹⁷

The third command is not to lie. The sins in verses 8 and 9 seem like they are directed toward others and some have to do with the mouth.

⁹Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993). G3709.

¹⁰W.E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). 2:26.

¹¹Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993). G2372.

¹²Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996, c1989). 1:763.

¹³James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). GGK1060.

¹⁴James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001). G988.

¹⁵James Strong, *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). G988.

¹⁶Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker's Greek New Testament library (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000). 38.

¹⁷Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993). G148.

From where do these things come, according to Colossians 3:9?

The old self

Ask your group what they learned about Colossians 3:9-11.

Paul said believers put aside / away the sins of the flesh because they laid aside / put off the old self with its practices. Relate to 1 John 3, “practices.”

“Laid aside / put off” means “to strip or put off clothes.”¹⁸

Christians have laid aside / put off the old self—that person they were before salvation, that person who practiced evil as his constant walk in life.

“Old” can mean “opposite. . .new” and / or “obsolete.”¹⁹

Romans 6:5-10 and Ephesians 4:17-32

Again, the contexts of these passages are the contrast between the new life in Christ and the old life of sin. Believers put off the old and put on the new self as they are renewed in mind.

Paul wrote to the Romans that the old self was crucified with Christ. Compare with Colossians 2:12, 20 and 3:3. The result is that one is no longer a slave to sin.

Put on

This means “to sink, go in or under, to put on. To enter”²⁰

Relate this definition to Christians being “in Christ.”

Believers have put on the new (“pertaining to that which is new or recent and hence superior to that which is old”²¹) self.

1 John 3 and Ephesians 4:24

That new self is created in God in righteousness and holiness of the truth.

Colossians 3:10 describes the new self as being renewed to a true knowledge (ESV—in knowledge) according to the image of the One who created him / its creator.

¹⁸Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993). G554.

¹⁹Timothy Friberg, Barbara Friberg and Neva F. Miller, *Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament*, Baker’s Greek New Testament library (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000). 292.

²⁰Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993). G1746.

²¹Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996, c1989). 1:593.

This renewal to Christ's image begins at salvation and continues throughout the Christian life.

renewed—"to be renewed completely"²²;
"change into something new and different"²³

Romans 8:28 says we're conformed to the image of God's Son.

Ask your group what they think about their old and new self. Help them relate this truth to the commands for their lives in Colossians 3:5-17. How can they act like that? Why can they do the commands?

How does Colossians 3:11 relate to this?

All believers, whether Jews or Greeks, barbarian, slave or free, are being renewed into this image of Christ. He is all and in all believers.

One's past does not matter when it comes to being a new creature in Christ.

Paul himself had a past of persecuting believers.

The Colossians were Gentiles, most of whom had been pagan idolaters.

Verses 12-17

How does verse 12 describe believers?

Chosen of God / God's chosen ones
"chosen" means to "*select*"²⁴ ; "picked out"²⁵

Holy and beloved
"holy," means "*set apart to or by God. . . consecrated*"²⁶

1 Corinthians 1:26-31

God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. This relates to Colossians 2 and the warnings. He chose the weak, base / low and despised to shame and nullify / bring to nothing. Christ is the wisdom to boast in.

²²Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993). G341.

²³James Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages With Semantic Domains: Greek (New Testament)*, electronic ed. (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). GGK363.

²⁴Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998, 1981). G1588.

²⁵ James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2001). G1588.

²⁶ Barclay M. Newman Jr., *A Concise Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament*. (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; United Bible Societies, 1993), 2.

Acts 9:15-16

The Lord chose Saul, or Paul, as His instrument to bear / carry His name to Gentiles and Israel.

2 Thessalonians 2:13

God chooses for salvation.

2 Timothy 2:10

Paul referred to those who are chosen / elect, but not yet saved. God knows who they are; people don't—until they're saved.

Titus 1:1-3

Paul was an apostle for the faith of those who were chosen / elect. He proclaimed / preached Christ so others would be saved.

1 Peter 1:1-2; 2:9-10

Peter, one of Jesus' chosen apostles, wrote to the chosen / elect, referring to Christians.

Revelation 17:12-14

The chosen will be with Jesus, the Lord of lords and King of kings, when He returns to earth.

These are wonderful truths for believers to know and hold to.

Ask your group if knowing they are chosen by God makes them thankful to Him?

What are the commands in Colossians 3:12-17?

Put on a heart of . . .

Compassion
Kindness
Humility
Gentleness / meekness
Patience

Bearing with one another

Forgiving one another

Matthew 6:9-15; 18:21-35

If we forgive others, God forgives us. But if not, then we're not forgiven.
Keep forgiving from the heart.

Luke 23:34

Forgive like Jesus forgave.

Ephesians 4:32

The main point is "just as God in Christ forgave you."

Beyond all put on love

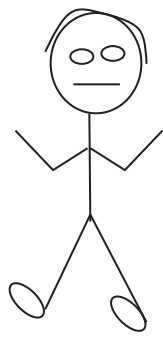
Let the peace of Christ rule (“umpire”²⁷; “control”²⁸) in your heart.
Let His word richly dwell within you.

Whatever you do, do all in His name.

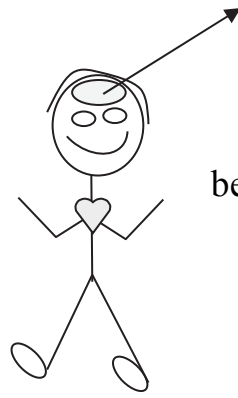
Do these things apply to believers now? How? Give your group time for sharing to end this discussion.

²⁷Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993). G1018.

²⁸Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996, c1989). 1:473.



Old Self



being renewed

New Self

**COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 8**

Lesson emphasis

- Colossians 3:18–4:1
- Philemon

REVIEW

Ask for a brief review of the main segments in Colossians, the flow of thought and the purpose.

Paul wrote to the Colossians that they were complete / mature in Christ.
He wrote to warn them of false philosophies and deceptions.

In chapters 1–2, he emphasized what they have in Christ.

Then, in chapters 3–4, he called them to be obedient to general and specific commands because of being complete / mature in Him.

That is all relevant to believers now.

COLOSSIANS 3:18–4:1

Ask how the flow of commands changes between verses 3:17 and 18.

It changes to specific close household relationships. In each of the relationships, the commands are first to the one who is to submit or obey, then to the one who leads in the relationship.

Verses 18-19

Ask what your group learned about wives and husbands.

At this point, you can begin to note the main points of this lesson on a visual aid. See the last page of this guide for a suggestion.

Wives are to be subject / submit to their husbands. It's fitting in the Lord.

Be subject / submit—“*to place or rank under*,”¹ “*to place under in an orderly fashion*.”²

¹ Robert L. Thomas, *New American Standard Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Dictionaries: Updated Edition* (Anaheim: Foundation Publications, Inc., 1998). G5293.

² Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000). G5293.

Genesis 2:18, 22-25

God said it wasn't good for man to be alone.
He created a helper suitable / fit for him, from his flesh and bones.

Ephesians 5:22-33

The wife is also to respect her husband.

1 Peter 2:21–3:12

Christ left the example of submission in suffering. Peter wrote that wives are to follow His example. They are to submit to an unsaved, disobedient to the word, husband—but in doing what is right / good, not in sinning.

The wife's submission is fitting in the Lord and creates the proper order in the home.

The second commands are to husbands.

Love your wives.

agapao, "Love had its perfect expression among men in the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Christian love. . . is not an impulse from the feelings."³ Christ's love was unconditional and self-sacrificing.

Ephesians says "as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her."

Don't be embittered / harsh against them.

"irritate,"⁴ "exasperate,"⁵ "be bitterly hateful toward"⁶

Peter wrote that husbands are also to live with their wives in an understanding way, honoring her as a weaker vessel.

Give a short time for your group to discuss how a marriage will look if these commands to wives and husbands are obeyed.

Verses 20-21

Ask what they learned about children and fathers (parents) from God's Word.

Children, obey your parents.

hear to heed, "conform to a command or authority"⁷

³ W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White Jr., *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville, TN: T. Nelson, 1996), 381–382.

⁴ W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger and William White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). 2:68.

⁵ James Strong, *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon* (Woodside Bible Fellowship, 1995). G4087.

⁶ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996, c1989). 1:763.

⁷ James Strong, *The New Strong's Dictionary of Hebrew and Greek Words*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1996). G5219.

Ephesians 6:1-4

Paul quoted the command from the Old Testament that children are also to honor their parents.

A child is not born automatically complying with these commands.
Therefore, parents have to train their children to obey and honor them.

Proverbs

Solomon wrote about parents and children. Children are to listen and do what their parents teach and command them.

The foolish despise their mothers. A wise son obeys.

What are instructions for fathers or parents?

Colossians 3:21

Don't exasperate / provoke your children so they don't lose heart / discouraged.

Ephesians 6:4

Don't provoke your children to anger.
Raise them in the Lord's discipline and instruction.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Psalm 78:1-4

Parents are to teach God's Word to their children by talking about it all the time, but also by living it all the time.

Ask your group how they can do this if they're parents or how they can help others to do this.
Give time for discussion.

Verses 3:22-4:1

Ask what they learned about slaves and masters.

Master and slave / bondservant was a common relationship when Paul wrote his letters.

Slaves / bondservants were commanded to obey their masters in all things because of fearing the Lord. Obedience was to be from the heart, not just pleasing men.

Their work was to be for the Lord because He was the One they served.
He gives the reward for true service and consequences for wrong doing.

Ephesians 6:5-8

Paul wrote almost the same instructions to slaves / bondservants.

1 Timothy 6:1-2

Slaves / bondservants are not to be disrespectful to their masters regardless of
The master being a Christian brother
Or how they are treated

Titus 2:9-14

Slaves / bondservants are not to be argumentative, but live godly. The Lord and Savior has brought salvation and redemption to all men—including slaves.

1 Peter 2:18-25

As wives are to respect their husbands, so slaves / servants are to respect their masters. Not just the good ones, but the unreasonable / unjust, too.

Christ is the example of suffering unjustly in doing what is right / good.

Lead your discussion to Colossians 4:1. What is the command to masters? Why?

Masters are to treat their slaves / bondservants with justice and fairness of the Lord.
They also have a Master—the Lord in heaven.

Ephesians 6:9

Masters are to be good to their slaves and not threaten them.
There is no partiality with the Master in heaven.
Both slaves / servants and masters receive back from Him.

If there is no slavery in your society, then ask about the employee / employer relationship. How do the principles of slaves and masters apply?

PHILEMON

How does this letter relate to what Paul wrote the Colossians about slaves / bondservants and masters? Tell your group to look at their Philemon at a Glance chart as a visual aid.

Onesimus, a run-away slave / bondservant probably from Colossae, ended up hearing the gospel from Paul who was in prison in Rome. Onesimus was saved.

Another prisoner with Paul was Epaphras, who had given the gospel to the Colossians and informed Paul about their salvation.

Paul knew the situation, and wrote the slave's owner Philemon who was a believer. He was a man who Paul referred to twice in this letter as one who refreshed the saints. He was one of the faithful brothers.

Paul sent Onesimus back to Philemon, but asked for mercy and grace for him.
He asked that whatever Onesimus owed Philemon be put on Paul's own account.

The letter was Paul's appeal for Philemon to do what is proper / required in the situation, but he was confident Philemon would do more.

Although Onesimus had not been the kind of slave he should have been before he was saved, Paul still asked Philemon to be the master he should be.

In verse 22, Paul indicates that his time in prison was coming to an end.

To end this discussion, you might ask what lessons for life your group learned from Philemon. Give them time to share.

Relationships
Wives—be subject / submit to husbands
Husbands—love wives and don't be embittered / harsh
Children—obey parents
Fathers—don't exasperate / provoke children
Slaves / bondservants—obey masters
Masters—justice and fairness

**COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON
LEADER GUIDE
Lesson 9**

Lesson emphasis

- Colossians 4:2-18

REVIEW

Ask for a brief review of the main segments in Colossians, the flow of thought, and the purpose.

Paul wrote to the Colossians that they were complete / mature in Christ.
He wrote to warn them of false philosophies and deceptions.

In chapters 1–2, he emphasized what they have in Christ.

Then, in chapters 3–4, he called them to be obedient to general and specific commands because of being complete / mature in Him.

That is all relevant to believers now.

COLOSSIANS 4

Ask your group what they learned about prayer from verses 2-4 and 12 and word studies.
At the end of this guide, there is a short list you can use as a possible visual aid for this part of your discussion.

Be devoted / continue steadfastly to prayer

Devoted / continue—“to tarry, remain. . . to continue steadfastly”¹

“To continue to do something with intense effort, with the possible implication of despite difficulty”²

Keeping alert / watchful in it

With an attitude of thanksgiving

Praying that God will open a door for the Word, clear speech

1 Corinthians 16:9; 2 Corinthians 2:12 and Revelation 3:8

These refer to an open door for the gospel.

¹Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, electronic ed. (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2000, c1992, c1993). G4342.

²Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996, c1989). 1:662.

Laboring earnestly / struggling, 4:12

“To strive to do something with great intensity and effort.”³

Epaphras’s request was similar to Paul’s in chapter 1. Epaphras prayed for the Colossians to stand perfect / mature and fully assured in God’s will.

Ask your group what benefit it will be for them to pray the prayers in Colossians for each other.

What do the cross-references add about prayer?

John 15:7, 16; 1 John 5:14-15

Jesus said to pray in His name—according to what He wants, His will.

Abiding in His word gives understanding of His will.

Prayer has to be based on God’s Word / promises—His will.

Paul and Epaphras prayed for the believers to know God’s will.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 and Philippians 4:6

The attitude of thanksgiving is associated with prayer again in this letter.

Rejoice and pray about everything all the time. Don’t stop praying.

Ephesians 6:18

Praying at all times in the Spirit. Prayers according to God’s will are initiated and led by His Spirit.

Matthew 26:41

Believers should be alert to pray when they face temptation.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

Instead of complaining about situations, believers can and should pray about them.

Pray on behalf of all men and authorities so there will be peace and tranquility to live the Christian life and proclaim the gospel.

Ask how these truths relate to the prayer lives of those in your group. How do believers practice these things, regularly? Any changes that need to be made to one’s prayer life?

Lead your discussion back to Colossians 4. What are verses 5-6 about?

Paul told the Colossians saints how to live toward unbelievers.

NOTE: “Conduct” (NASB) literally is the word “walk”⁴ in Colossians 4:5. It’s the same word as in Colossians 1:10; 2:6; and 3:7.

³Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic ed. of the 2nd edition. (New York: United Bible societies, 1996, c1989). 1:662.

⁴*New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*, marginal note (Col 4:5) (LaHabra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995).

Believers are commanded to live wisely among unbelievers.

Make the most of the opportunity / making the best use of the time

Speech seasoned with grace—people need to hear gracious responses.

Know how to answer people.

Now ask your group how these statements relate to how they live with the unbelievers God brings into their lives. What should they learn from these verses?

Verses 7-18

Who are these verses about? Tell your group to look at the chart in the lesson as a visual aid to discuss what they learned about these men.

Tychicus

He was a faithful servant of the Lord whom Paul sent to the Colossians and Ephesians to inform them of certain things.

Onesimus

He was Philemon's former slave and a Colossian. Paul gave him the gospel, and he was saved. Paul wrote his master appealing for him to forgive Onesimus's debt and accept him as a brother. Onesimus was sent with Tychicus by Paul.

Aristarchus

He was a Thessalonian and also a fellow prisoner with Paul. He had traveled with Paul to Ephesus and then to Rome.

Mark

Barnabas's cousin John, who was also called Mark, accompanied Barnabas and Paul on their first missionary journey, but deserted them part of the way through it. He was the cause of their splitting for the second missionary journeys; Barnabas took Mark with him.

At the end of Paul's ministry he asked for Mark and said that he was useful in service—the end of Barnabas's discipling him. Paul commended him in Colossians. Many think this is the man who wrote the Gospel of Mark. Peter called Mark his son.

Jesus / Justus

There are no other New Testament references to him. He was a Jewish believer with Paul when he wrote Colossians.

Epaphras

He is the one who gave the gospel to the Colossians and prayed for them. He's also the one who told Paul about the Colossians' salvation, etc. He was in prison with Paul when he wrote Philemon and Colossians.

Luke

A gospel writer, he was a physician who accompanied Paul on many of his travels. Luke also wrote Acts.

Demas

For a time he worked alongside Paul and others, but then deserted them because he loved the present world.

Archippus

Based on Colossians and Philemon, it seems he also was a Colossian believer. He was a fellow soldier whom Paul exhorted to fulfill his ministry.

Timothy

Evidently he accompanied Paul for years of ministry. He was with Paul when he wrote several letters, and some think Timothy was the scribe for those letters.

To end this discussion, you can ask your group what they learned from this Colossians and Philemon study that they are to practice in their lives on a daily basis.

Prayer

Devote yourselves to prayer

Keep alert in it

Attitude of thanksgiving

Pray for an open door and to speak clearly

Pray for the church