

BUILDING FOUNDATIONS
COLOSSIANS



COLOSSIANS

for growing believers

**Bible Study
Guide**

Acknowledgments

The lesson outlines and notes in this booklet are based on New Tribes Mission's method of chronologically teaching scripture and were prepared by Tim McManigle and Scott McManigle, of FBC Missions. Special thanks to Lisa Grams for editing.

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02/19/16
Revision 3

Progression Toward Maturity

- Phase 1 – Relationship with God – (Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 1:9) – Call of God is first to Himself - “Creation to Christ” - (Foundation for salvation)
- Phase 2 – Position with Christ (1 Cor. 1:30a) New Creation (2 Cor. 5:17) – “Positioned in Christ” and “New Birth Explained” – (Foundation for Sanctification)
- Phase 3 – Dependence upon the Spirit – (2 Cor. 3:17-18) – (Holy Spirit is the Spirit-of-Truth – John 16:13-14) – Introduction of the Church - (Church is the Pillar and foundation of Truth – 1 Tim. 3:15) - “Acts for Growing Believers”
- Phase 4 – Practical sanctification - Identification with Christ/Co-crucified with Christ/ Conformed to image of Christ – (Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20; Rom. 8:28-29) – Romans to Revelation for Growing Believers, “Principles of Spiritual Growth”, God’s Masterpiece the Cross,” and “Looking unto Jesus” lessons
- Conclusion – Recommended order of study

Detailed Explanation of Each Phase

Phase 1 – Foundation for Salvation - (“Creation to Christ”)

The Christian life is a relationship; therefore our desire is to lead our readers into a deep and intimate relationship with God. In order to grow into that level of relationship with God, there are foundational truths that must be clearly taught and understood. These foundational truths include the following;

- The attributes of God - His love, power, grace, omniscience, omnipotence, justice, immutability, hatred of sin, faithfulness.
- The sinfulness of man, his helplessness to save himself, and his need for a Savior.
- Only God can provide a way of salvation
- The Gospel.

Phase 2 – Foundation for Sanctification - (“Positioned in Christ” and “The New Birth Explained”)

The moment someone is born again, there is an immediate change of position that takes place in his or her life. At that very moment, one becomes a child of God, and is taken out of Adam and placed into Christ. All that Christ is, and all that Christ has, becomes ours. Therefore, before service to God is considered, one must be grounded in an understanding of who we are in Christ. Some important foundational truths that should be emphasized in phase 2 teaching, includes the following;

- Placed into Christ
- Justified (declared righteous) and accepted in Christ.
- Child of God
- Restored to oneness with God
- Eternally secure in Christ
- His Divine power has given to us all things pertaining to life and godliness through His finished work on the cross.
- Our part is to believe.

Phase 3 – Dependence upon the Spirit and introduction of the church – (“Acts for Growing Believers”)

The position change that takes place in every believer's life at salvation, is immediate and complete. The daily "living out" of that position, on the other hand, is a growth process. It is the progression of growth that the Holy Spirit is working all believers through in His process of conforming us to the image of Christ.

In order for believers to move on to maturity, we must learn to walk and depend upon the Holy Spirit. Therefore, our purpose in phase 3 teaching is to reveal the Holy Spirit's ministry, and His faithfulness to lead, guide, feed, and protect God's children, as well as to introduce the church. Some of the important foundational truths that should be emphasized include the following.

- The Holy Spirit's ministry to lead, guide, feed, protect, and establish us in truth.
- To emphasize the FAITHFULNESS of the Spirit to fulfill all that Jesus promised.
- To reveal the early church's dependence upon the Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit is as faithful in our lives today, as He was to the early church in the book of Acts.
- Introduction of the church and her role.

Phase 4 – Practical sanctification; Identification with Christ; Conformed to the image of Christ – (“Romans to Revelation for Growing Believers,” Principles of Spiritual Growth, God’s Masterpiece the Cross of Christ,” and “Looking Unto Jesus” lessons.)

The Holy Spirit is teaching us to walk less in the flesh and more in the Spirit, with Christ becoming more and more the object of our hearts.

In phase 4, we will study through the epistles with the purpose of learning to rest in our identification with Christ and His finished work. As we, by faith, begin to appropriate identification truths, our co-crucifixion with Christ, our lives will become more and more conformed to the image of Christ, manifesting the fruit of the Spirit.

Some of the important truths that will be emphasized in Phase 4 includes the following.

- The believer's identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. (Crucified with Him, and raised to newness of life)

- Sanctification is the process of walking less and less in the flesh and more and more in the Spirit.
- Our part in the process is faith in the finished work of Christ, and our identification with it.
- What it means to truly walk in the Spirit
- Putting off the old and putting on the new.
- Manifesting the life of Christ/ fruit of the Spirit.

Conclusion: Recommended Order of Study:

Being that there truly is a progression of growth that the Holy Spirit is taking all believers through, therefore our Bible lessons have been developed and arranged to line up with that work of the Spirit in our lives. Each set of lessons contain the foundational truths that must be in place in a person's heart in order to facilitate their growth unto the next stage of spiritual growth. Therefore, we believe that it is important to teach the lessons in the following order:

1. Creation to Christ
2. Positioned in Christ
3. Acts for growing believers
4. Romans for growing believers
5. Ephesians for growing believers
6. 1 Corinthians for growing believers
7. 1 Timothy for growing believers
8. Titus for growing believers
9. 1 & 2 Thessalonians for growing believers
10. Revelation for growing believers
11. Galatians for growing believers
12. Colossians for growing believers

13. 2 Corinthians for growing believers
14. Philippians for growing believers
15. Philemon for growing believers
16. 2 Timothy for growing believers
17. 1 & 2 Peter for growing believers
18. 1, 2 & 3 John for growing believers
19. Hebrews for growing believers
20. James for growing believers
21. Jude for growing believers
22. The Old Testament for mature believers
23. Acts through Revelation, verse by verse for mature believers

COLOSSIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 1

A. Introduction

- This letter was written to the church at Colossae, which was approximately six years old and struggling with heresy.

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother, 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”. Colossians 1:1-2

- From these verses, it's clear who authored this letter and to whom it was written.
- The writer was Paul, who was accompanied by Timothy, and sent to the believers who were in Colossae.
- In those days, there were Jewish antagonists who were continually trying to disrupt Paul's ministry by spreading lies and rumors about Paul.
- Paul mentions that he is one of Christ's apostles, and that it was God who chose him to be so.
- Just knowing that it was God who chose Paul to be an apostle, gave credibility to his message of grace, which also was from God.
- Paul specifies that he is writing to the faithful brethren in Christ.
- He is not referring to their faithfulness or obedience, but rather that they were walking by faith in what Christ had done on their behalf.

B. A Letter Written From Prison

- Paul wrote this letter during his first imprisonment in Rome.
- While he was in prison, a man named Epaphras came to visit him; it was Epaphras who planted this church in Colossae.
- Epaphras reported to Paul that the Colossian believers were extending love toward one another.
- But he also mentioned that false teachers had come into the church and were teaching heresy. The heresy that was being taught in Colossae, was a Jewish, Hellenistic religious syncretism which later became Gnosticism (de-valuing Christ).
- Therefore, Paul wrote the book of Colossians to lift up Christ and to encourage the Colossian believers to continue depending solely upon His finished work for sanctification (2 Peter 1:3).
- Today, there are few who teach a pure message of sanctification by grace through faith.

“We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; 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: As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant,

who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit". Colossians 1:3-8

- Paul was deeply concerned about the spiritual condition of the believers in Colossae, and mentions here that he had been praying for them continually since he had heard of their faith and love in Christ.
- The more that we grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ and walk in the Spirit, the more we will be concerned about others and lift them up before God, as well.
- In verse 5, Paul writes that it was because of the Colossians' hope which is laid up in heaven, that they had been encouraged to walk by faith, manifesting love to others.
- He went on to say that it was the Colossians' understanding of the gospel of grace that was producing fruit in their lives.
- As we learn of all that Christ has accomplished on our behalf; believing and appropriating it by faith, we will be enabled to walk in the Spirit and live fruitful lives also.
- Paul refers to Epaphras as a "dear fellow servant," and "faithful minister of Christ."
- By God's grace, Epaphras was a faithful minister; he was a man who walked by faith in the finished work of Christ and was modeling and teaching that message to the Colossians.
- Paul wanted to remind the Colossians of what they had in Epaphras; they had a man who was sound in truth and whose great desire was to pass it on to them.
- Epaphras had mentioned to Paul that the Colossians loved one another in the Spirit.
- It's interesting to consider that in spite of the heresy that had crept into the church, there were those who were still manifesting the fruit of the Spirit in their lives.
- To the degree that we walk in the Spirit we will function as a unified body and show forth love toward one another.

- However, if we are walking in the flesh, envy, strife, jealousy, anger and divisions will characterize our lives because our care and concern will be only for ourselves.

C. Praying For the Colossians

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

Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” Colossians 1:9-14

- Paul wrote that when he had heard the Colossians were walking in the Spirit, he began praying that they would be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.
- Imagine how wonderful it would be to “be filled with the knowledge of His will;” always, always knowing His will in every situation. Every dollar we spend, we know it is what God wants; every word we speak, we know it is His will; every time we reach out in love, we know this is God’s desire.

- “In all wisdom and spiritual understanding,” would indicate that not only do we know His will, but we are looking at the situation from God’s point of view, and we understand why He wants it this way.
- As we have seen from Paul’s other epistles, his great concern for believers was not for their health, money, or possessions, but that they would know and walk in truth.
- He continued on in verse 10 by writing that the Colossians were to walk worthy of the Lord. The question is, can anyone walk worthy of the Lord? The answer; yes, if the Holy Spirit is reproducing the life of Christ in us, and it is no longer I, but Christ, then our lives are worthy.
- In **Hebrews 11:6** we read, “*Without faith it is impossible to please Him.*” As we walk more in the Spirit and less in the flesh, our life of faith will be pleasing to God and lived out as Paul prayed.
- We will manifest the fruit of the Spirit in all that we do.
- We will increase in our knowledge of God.
- We will be increasingly more patient, longsuffering, joyful, and loving, regardless of our circumstances.
- Our hearts will be thankful for all that God has done in making us fit to be called His children.

COLOSSIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 2

A. Jesus is God

- When Jesus came to earth, the majority of the Jews rejected Him, for they did not believe that He was the Son of God, the promised Deliverer.
- During Paul's time, it was still the consensus among the Jews that Jesus was not the promised one.
- As mentioned before, the heresy in Colossae was de-valuing Christ, therefore, Paul's focus now changes and the spotlight is centered on Christ. Paul actually makes reference to Jesus 70 times in this letter to the Colossians.
- Our lesson begins with verse 15, however, let's re-read verses 12-14, as well.

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature” Colossians 1:12-15

- Paul now begins painting a verbal picture of Jesus.
- Jesus is the One in whose kingdom we have been placed.
- Through His blood we have been redeemed.
- Through Him we have received the forgiveness of sins.
- He is the image of the invisible God (**Hebrews 1:3**).
- **Hebrews 1:3** tells us that Jesus is the Radiance of God's Glory and the Exact Image of His Person; He is exactly like God. If we want to know what God is like, look at Jesus (**John 10:30; 14:7**).
- It's interesting to note that Jesus took on a human body, not because He needed to have a body, but so that He could pay the death penalty for our sins.

- In every other way; holiness, righteousness, grace, mercy, love, power, and immutability, He is exactly like God, the Father.
- The compassion that Jesus had for the lost in the gospels, is the same compassion that the Father has for the lost.
- His hatred for sin is the same hatred that the Father has toward sin.
- He is the firstborn of every creature, which refers to the fact that Jesus existed before all creation, for He is God.

B. Jesus, the Creator

“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: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” Colossians 1:1-17

- Paul writes that the Lord Jesus is the Creator of all things in heaven and on earth, including all things that are invisible.
- It’s interesting to note Paul clearly states that all these things, thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, were created by Him and for Him, **Revelation 4:11** tells us that it was all created for His pleasure.
- In **I John 4:8** we read, “God is love.” He does not merely teach us how to love, or show forth His love; He is love.
- God’s great plan in all that He has created is to reveal Himself and His grace, mercy, and love to man.
- He created angels and He knew some would turn against Him. He created a human race that He knew would all sin and fall short of the glory of God (**Romans 3:23**).
- This was His plan from the very beginning, for no other situation could reveal His love, grace and mercy more clearly than when He sent His Son to die for those who were unworthy.

- Therefore, all creation was created for Christ. It was orchestrated in such a way so that He could come and reveal the love and grace of the Father.
- He is before all things. He is the centerpiece of creation and existed before all of creation. By Him all things exist/ are held together; (if He lets go it all flies apart).
- Through Christ, all things that have life continue to receive their life (He is the source of both physical and spiritual life). For all that we need in this world in order to be kept alive physically; warmth, oxygen, light, food, water, etc., is provided by Christ. Likewise, all that we need to be kept alive spiritually (salvation, grace, Holy Spirit, cross, etc.,) is provided by Christ.
- It is His power that enables the sun, moon, stars, and planets to be kept in their places and orbit the universe.
- It is all for His pleasure and the purpose of revealing the grace, mercy, and love of our gracious, merciful, loving Heavenly Father.

C. Jesus, the Head

“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. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.” Colossians 1:18-19

- Christ is the head of the Church.
- Just as it is our head (intellect) that instruct and control the rest of our body, so the instruction and guidance for the Church comes from Jesus, our Head, through the Spirit-taught Word of God.
- Paul writes that Jesus was “the first-born from the dead.”
- He was the first one who ever died and was resurrected, never to die again.
- As we have been positionally placed into Christ at salvation, the same is also true of us. We were spiritually dead, but through Him we have been made a new creation,

never to become separated from the Father again (**2 Corinthians 5:17**).

- In Him dwells all the fullness of God.
- All that God is dwells in Christ, His Son, for He is God. When Lucifer tried to become God (**Isaiah 14:14**), God did not permit this; however, in Christ dwells all the fullness of God (He is totally and completely God).

“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.” Colossians 1:20

- When Adam and Eve sinned, mankind was cursed, as well as all creation.
- From that time, until Christ came and died on the cross, man lived in spiritual separation from God (**Isaiah 59:2**), and creation groans to be set free (**Romans 8:22**).
- But Christ’s death on the cross has removed the spiritual separation between God and man (**Romans 5:1**).
- We have now been reconciled to God and made His children.

D. Jesus, Our Savior

“And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight: 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;” Colossians 1:21-23

- This is the way in which the grace of God was manifested to all: man was created perfect; rebelled and sinned against

God, thereby becoming alienated and enemies of God (**Romans 5:10**).

- But, now, man has become reconciled to God through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, who paid the required death penalty for all of mankind, so that those who were aliens and enemies could now be presented as holy, blameless and approved in His sight (**Ephesians 1:4**).
- The moment we trusted Christ as our own personal Savior, we moved from our old standing of enemies of God, to holy and blameless children of God.
- This is the way that God now sees us in Christ.
- Paul goes on to say, “If you continue in the faith,” or as other Bible translators have put it: “Assuming you continue in the faith.” We must understand what Paul is not saying here. He is not saying that a true born again believer is in danger of losing his salvation; however, Paul is saying that our position before God is sure because of our faith that is grounded and settled in Christ (**Colossians 2:7**).
- Keep in mind that our daily lives and actions aren’t always fitting with our new position, therefore, as we continue to walk by faith and not move away from depending upon the finished work of Christ, then all that happened to us positionally will become experiential in our daily lives.
- This is what **Romans 8:29** reveals when Paul speaks of becoming conformed to the image of Christ.
- The less we walk in the flesh and the more we walk in the Spirit, the more the Spirit will produce the life of Christ in our daily lives; conforming us more to His image.

“Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 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: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in

Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.” Colossians 1:25-29

- In these verses, Paul reveals a mystery that has been hidden from all ages; and this is the mystery; that God’s ultimate purpose in all believers’ lives is to reproduce the life of Christ in each one, which is our only hope of glory. Therefore, not only are we positioned in Christ, but now the Holy Spirit continually works to quietly and mysteriously reproduce Christ in us.
- Paul goes on to say, “We preach, warning and teaching every man in all wisdom so that we might present every man perfect or complete in Christ.”
- It’s interesting in verse 29 that Paul senses the need to let the church in Colossae know who was really doing the work by saying all of this is “according to His working, which works in me.”

COLOSSIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 3

A. Do Not Be Deceived

- Even though Paul had never met the believers in Colossae, he was deeply burdened for them; he had heard that false teachers were deceiving the believers.
- As we walk in the Spirit, we will have the same heart of compassion and concern for people. It will grieve us as it did Paul, to see God's children led astray.
- However, in the flesh, we will be judgmental and condemning toward those who are being led astray.
- Paul desired that their hearts be comforted with truth regarding the riches of a full understanding of the mystery that has always surrounded God and Christ.
- Christ's death accomplished everything for us. It not only paid for our sin, freed us from sin's power, and made us a new creation, but it also has given to us everything pertaining to life and godliness (**2 Peter 1:3**).

“And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.” Colossians 2:4-5

- Paul states that he is writing these words to alert the Colossians so they would not be deceived by false teachers.
- He went on to say that even though he was not present with them physically, spiritually he was with them; he was encouraged by their continued dependent-rest in Christ's finished work for their daily lives.

B. True Spiritual Growth

“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as

ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”
Colossians 2:6-7

- Paul writes that the same way one receives Christ, he is to live. Christ’s death has accomplished everything; our salvation, as well as our sanctification.
- We were saved by faith in Christ’s substitutionary death for us.
- We are sanctified by faith in our identification with Christ.
- Our spiritual roots must go down deeper and deeper into Christ, and thereby we will be built up in Him (not I, but Christ, **Galatians 2:20**); our faith will be established and strengthened because it is anchored in Christ.
- Paul is saying that true spiritual growth takes place as we come to know and understand Christ and His work on our behalf. As we grow in the knowledge of Him, we will trust in His work for us, which will produce thankfulness in our hearts for the grace of God that has accomplished all this on our behalf.

“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.” **Colossians 2:8**

- Paul gives a strong warning here; watch out lest you be taken captive through “philosophy” (the highest form of intellect) or through “vain deceit” (empty nonsense), or through “the traditions of men” (that is always the way we have done it), or through the “rudiments of this world” (anything that we place ahead of Christ), and not taken captive by, or captivated with Christ.
- In John 16, Jesus told His disciples that when the Holy Spirit comes, He would lead them into truth. In John 14:6, we read that Jesus is truth. Thus, we conclude that the Spirit will cause our hearts to focus on Christ. The Spirit’s role is to draw our attention to Christ (**John 16:13-14**).

C. Do Not Turn Away From Christ

“For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:” Colossians 2:9-10

- Paul is giving reasons why we are to be captivated with Christ and be turned away from the things of this world.
- He begins by writing, “for in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;” or we could say, “because Jesus Christ is totally and completely God.” All that God is, Christ is; this is why we are to be captivated by Him.
- An interesting thought to ponder; any time we turn from Christ and depend upon any other person or thing, we are actually turning away from God Himself.
- And now Paul clearly states that we, who are in Christ, are also complete as He is complete.
- As was mentioned before, all that God is, Christ is, and in Him we are positionally complete as He is complete.
- Paul’s final reason for being captivated with Christ is because Jesus is the head of all principality and power. If Jesus truly is God and the Head of all principality and power, then we would be fools to set our affection on anything other than Him.

“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: 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.” Colossians 2:11-12

- The Jewish false teachers gloried in physical circumcision, however Paul said that as believers, we have received a circumcision that is not by man, and is the cutting off of the “body of sins” (**Romans 6:6**).

- Through our co-crucifixion with Christ, we have been set free from the reign and power of the flesh and now we are free to walk in the Spirit.
- The moment a person is born again, the Holy Spirit positionally places him or her into Christ (**I Corinthians 1:30a**); out of Adam into Christ.
- Therefore, whatever has happened to Christ has happened to us.
- He was crucified and buried; we, too, were positionally crucified with Him; He was raised to new life, and we, also have been made a new creation in Him.
- Water baptism is a physical picture of our identification with Christ (buried in the likeness of His death; raised in the likeness of His resurrection, **Romans 6:5**).

“And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; 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; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.” Colossians 2:13-15

- Paul continues giving more reasons as to why we should never be turned away from depending upon Christ.
- We were separated From God because of our sins and lived under the constant control of the flesh.
- But through Christ we have been made alive, received the forgiveness of our sins, and set free from sin’s power.
- Not only has Christ paid for all of our sins and freed us from the control of the flesh, but He has also freed us from the condemnation of the law. For all things which the law could condemn, He has already paid.
- Paul goes on to say that it was also Christ who has overcome all principalities and powers.

- These are the reasons why we should never be turned away from Christ; He has provided everything we have ever needed.
- He is fully God and in Him we have been made perfectly complete.
- Through Him, we have received freedom from the flesh and a new nature.
- Through Him, we have been forgiven of all our sin.
- Through Him, we have been set free from the law.
- Through Him, we have been delivered from Satan's domain; the kingdom of darkness.
- To depend upon anything or anyone other than Jesus is futile, for Christ is the only provision for all of man's spiritual needs.

COLOSSIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 4

A. Our Identification With Christ

- Thinking back to what has already been taught regarding our identification with Christ, Paul now begins to share how our identification with Christ should be affecting our daily lives.

“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” Colossians 3:1-3

- Paul states that positionally, our old man has been crucified with Christ and we have been raised in Him to sit with Him on the right hand of God.
- As we by faith rest in this positional truth, it should also affect our daily living (actions, attitudes, our overall condition).
- If we were to take a beggar from the streets and make him king, would this change the way he lives his life?
- In a similar way, faith in our position should affect our condition. The question now becomes, how does our position affect our daily condition?
- Now that Christ is in heaven, the struggles and difficulties of this life are not affecting Him. He abides above all the trials and difficulties of this life here on earth.
- In a similar way, the Word of God makes clear that we, who are children of God, are “hidden with Christ in God.”
- Oftentimes, the problem is ignorance or unbelief. We find very few Christians who understand their new position in Christ and all that it entails.
- Therefore, if people don’t know who they are in Christ, it’s impossible to look at life from that perspective.

- The result being that we look at life issue by issue, situation by situation, as they come into our lives, and we become controlled by the circumstances of life, rather than the steadiness of who we are in Christ.
- This is discipleship; grounding people in their position, and all that is theirs in Christ.

“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.” Colossians 3:4

- Even though the Word of God clearly tells us what our new position is in Christ, we are still physically present in this sin-cursed world.
- We walk in the flesh and then comes sin. Oftentimes it seems impossible to think that we could have such a position in Christ.
- But Paul is clearly stating that it is true and even though we don’t always feel like it’s our position, it is, and the day is coming when not only can we know it by faith, but we will actually experience it when Jesus Christ returns.

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

For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.” Colossians 3:5-7

- Since we have received a new position in which we are seated with Christ in the heavens, Paul is imploring us to by faith, appropriate our co-crucifixion and new position in Christ, thereby taking away sin’s power to control us.
- Those things mentioned in verse 5 are not appropriate behavior for those who are seated with Christ in the heavenlies.
- To mortify actually means to put to death; therefore, we could translate this verse in this way: “Consider the

members of your body as dead to immorality, impurity, passions, etc.”

B. Walk In the Spirit

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

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.” Colossians 3:8-11

- Paul wrote three similar verses in **Ephesians 4:22-24**, “Put off the old man, renew the mind and put on the new man.”
- The progression is as follows:
 1. “Put off the old man,” positionally that has been accomplished (**Romans 6:6**), but conditionally it is done as we rest in our co-crucifixion with Christ and the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives.
 2. “Renew the mind,” as we by faith believe in our co-crucifixion with Christ, the Spirit begins to gain influence and control over our mind, and the flesh loses influence and control (**Romans 7:23**); thus the mind is renewed.
 3. “Put on the new man,” again, positionally this has been done; however conditionally this gradually takes place and we become more and more occupied with Christ and the Spirit reproduces the life of Christ in us (**2 Corinthians 3:18**).
- Paul goes on to say in verse 10 that the “new man is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him.”
- As we appropriate our identification with Christ, we will begin to walk more in the Spirit; the more we walk in the Spirit, the more the fruit of the Spirit will be manifested in our lives; the more the fruit of the Spirit is manifested

through us, the more conformed to the image of Christ we are becoming.

- This is true spiritual growth; it all begins with knowing and understanding who we are in Christ and what we have received in Him.

COLOSSIANS FOR GROWING BELIEVERS

LESSON 5

A. The Image of Christ

- In this lesson we will learn more about life lived in the Spirit.

“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” Colossians 3:12-13

- This is not a command for Christians to try and be this kind of person, but rather this is life lived by one who is walking in the Spirit.
- In the flesh, it would be impossible for anyone to consistently live up to this type of conduct.
- In the flesh, we can only be self-centered and because we are self-centered, we are unmerciful, unkind, proud, impatient and unforgiving of others.
- It would be impossible in the flesh to forgive others as Christ forgave us.
- The more that we walk in the Spirit, the more the fruit of the Spirit will be manifested in and through us, and the more conformed to the image of Christ we’ll become, and the more these actions and attitudes will become a reality in our lives(**Galatians 5:16-23**).

“And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.” Colossians 3:14

- In **I John 4:16**, we read, “God is love.” Because God is love, all that he does is motivated by His love.

- Therefore, as we by faith abide in Christ, and Christ is formed in us, God's love will become that which motivates all that we do also.
- All that we do for others say to others, and think about others will be done in, and because of love.
- Again, this will only be possible in the Spirit. In the flesh, self will be our motivation, not the love of Christ being lived out through us.

B. The Peace of God

“And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.” Colossians 3:15

- Paul, in his epistles, speaks of three kinds of “peace.” “Peace with God” (**Romans 5:1**); “Peace from God” (**Romans 1:7**); and here Paul writes that it is the peace of God in our hearts that should be ruling in our heart (mind, will, emotions) and determining our actions.
- Peace is part of the fruit of the Spirit.
- Keep in mind when Paul begins this verse with, “let the peace of God rule,” he is not suggesting that this is to be done through man's effort or choice, but rather through faith in the finished work of the cross which he taught in verses 8 and 10.
- Because the old man is put off and the new man is put on, we now have Christ as the object of our hearts and the result is the “peace of God ruling” (**Isaiah 26:3**) which will produce unity in the body and sincere thankfulness toward God.

“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.” Colossians 3:16

- Again, the word “let” assumes we are appropriating the truth of verses 9 and 10; therefore, Paul boldly encourages all believers to, by faith, “let the Word of God dwell in you richly.”
- Keep in mind **John 1:1 & 14** which reads: “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God...and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”
- Here in **Colossians 3:16** when we read the words “Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly” this is a reference to the indwelling Christ which the Holy Spirit is reproducing in us.
- The more we are occupied with Him and thereby conformed into His image, the more filled with His life we become, the more His life will be that which is flowing out from us in all situations.
- A life of “Wisdom, teaching one another, and singing with grace in our heart to the Lord.”

***“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.”
Colossians 3:17***

- The phrase *in the name of the Lord* links it to the person of Jesus Christ. Keep in mind that when we ask or do something in someone’s name, we have their approval, and they are actually making the request of performing the deed through us.
- Today, there are many things that Christians do or pray in the name of Christ, but are actually just a result of their flesh asking for or determining what they think will please God.
- Keep in mind that our flesh is in opposition to Christ (**Romans 8:7-8**). That which is done in the flesh, cannot be said that it was done in the name of Christ.

C. Husbands and Wives

“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.” Colossians 3:18-19

- Paul now mentions some specific relationships, and begins with the husband-wife relationship.
- Basically, a wife’s submission and a husband’s power and desire to love his wife without bitterness involve an attitude of lovingly giving up his or her rights.
- In the flesh, women are self-centered and therefore want their own way. They cannot submit to their husbands as unto the Lord.
- In the flesh, men are self-centered and often get tired of meeting the needs of their wives. When this happens, little things begin to irritate them and bitterness grows, which often leads to divorce.
- As men and women walk in the Spirit, their lives will manifest the fruit of the Spirit, and true, Biblical love for spouses will be a natural outflow.

D. Children

“Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.” Colossians 3:20-21

- Next, Paul mentions the parent-child relationship; children are to obey their parents in all things, as this is *pleasing to the Lord*.
- Disobedience to parents is one of the last forms of lawlessness to occur on earth (**2 Timothy 3:1-2**).
- It’s interesting to know that obedience, which we saw from Romans 1:5, is actually a fruit of faith and therefore is pleasing to God (**Hebrews 11:6**).

- Paul also mentions the need for fathers to treat their children in such a way that it does not provoke them to anger.
- In the flesh, fathers become angry, impatient, and unreasonable with their children. The children may still obey, but they will be provoked to anger and possibly rebellion.
- Paul makes clear that fathers are not to use their parental authority to provoke and discourage a child, but rather to encourage and build up.

E. Employers and Employees

“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.” Colossians 3:22-25

- And now Paul mentions the relationship of employees to employers.
- In the flesh, our focus is on ourselves and we’ll either be seeking to please our employer in an effort to exalt ourselves, or we’ll work lazily, trying to get something for nothing.
- However, in the Spirit, Christ will be the object of our heart, and we will be thankful for that which He has given us to do, rather than complaining and seeking something more desirable.

“Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.” Colossians 4:1

- Paul now mentions employers and how they should treat their employees.

- The flesh will seek its own and will desire to get as much out of employees for as little as possible. But, in the Spirit, employers will lovingly concern themselves with the needs of the employee and desire to be fair and just.
- Paul reminds employers that they are accountable to our Heavenly Master.

F. Prayer

“Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; 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: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.”
Colossians 4:2-4

- Prayer is the outflow of a dependent relationship upon God. True, biblical prayer is acknowledging and depending on God.
- To the degree that we know God we will pray steadfastly without ceasing (**I Thessalonians 5:17; Ephesians 6:18; Romans 12:12; Acts 6:4**).
- Paul asks prayer for himself and his colleagues; that God would give them opportunities to share the gospel.
- It’s clear from Paul’s teachings that God had given to Paul a clear picture of His grace and the riches that he had received in Christ.
- This understanding continually manifested itself in a deep burden for the lost.
- The more that we understand and walk in the grace of God, the more we’ll desire that others experience it God’s grace also.
- Paul asked the church at Colossae to pray for God-given opportunities to preach the gospel and that he would be clear as he spoke.

- In the flesh, it's very easy to share the gospel in ways that we should not; with condemnation, in pride, with self-righteousness, or in a forceful way.
- But in the Spirit, our dependence will be upon the Spirit to lead us to prepared hearts; as He does, just the simple sharing of the truth of the message will be all that is needed.
- It won't require any of man's wisdom or eloquent speech to convict or convince; just the truth.
- Our part is to pray, speak the truth in love, and invites others to receive Christ. The Holy Spirit's role is to convict, convince, and convert.

***“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”
Colossians 4:5-6***

- Paul further requests that he would make the most of every opportunity, and respond to each person as he ought.
- If we walk in the flesh, living in sin, we are not living a life that would draw others to Christ. In that state, the life of Christ is not manifested through us, but only the life of the “old man” which is repulsive even to unbelievers.
- But, if we walk in the Spirit, He will manifest the sweet life of Jesus through us, which will be desired by some, and will be that which the Spirit uses to draw unbelievers unto God (**I Thessalonians 1:6-8**).
- In the Spirit, our speech will be manifested with the fruit of the spirit, thereby allowing it to include grace, making it appropriate for every situation.
- In the flesh, we will answer people with impatience, anger, pride, and self-centeredness, which will drive them further from the truth.



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