

discover

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

Selections from Colossians

STUDY GUIDE

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Selections from Colossians



CoffeeBreak



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Selected passages from Colossians

New Life in Christ

Getting Started

The purpose of this lesson is to emphasize the gospel (“good news”) message and to make clear that the gospel is for everyone. Now that you have studied the book of Colossians, consider what you have learned about Jesus Christ and his message of salvation. This lesson is designed to focus on the main teachings in Colossians about Christ and the new life he offers, and this can help to prepare you to share this vital information with others—especially if they do not yet know Christ. To begin, consider the following excerpt from Eugene Peterson’s introduction to Colossians in *The Message*:

Hardly anyone who hears the full story of Jesus and learns the true facts of his life and teaching, crucifixion and resurrection, walks away with a shrug of the shoulders, dismissing him as unimportant. People ignorant of the story or misinformed about it, of course, regularly dismiss him. But with few exceptions, the others know instinctively that they are dealing with a most remarkable greatness.

But it is quite common for those who consider him truly important to include others who seem to be equally important in his company—Buddha, Moses, Socrates, and Muhammad for a historical start, along with some personal favorites. For these people, Jesus is important, but not central; his prestige is considerable, but he is not preeminent.

The Christians in the town of Colossae, or at least some of them, seem to have been taking this line. . . . Paul writes to them in an attempt to restore Jesus, the Messiah, to the center of their lives.

What Does It Say?

1. Colossians 1:15-18

Recall that when Paul uses the term “first-born,” he is using it in the sense that it was understood by the people who first received his letter. In that culture the firstborn son held the place of supreme honor among his siblings and inherited the lordship over the household or family estate. Though Jesus became human and was born as a human infant, he had already existed as the second person of the Trinity in eternity with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, so he did not have a beginning.

- a. How do these verses describe the Son and what he has done?

- b. How would the people living in Paul’s day react to these words?

Note: The Roman Empire controlled a huge part of the known world at that time, including the people of Colossae.

- c. What do these claims mean to us today?

For discussion ...

2. Colossians 1:19-23

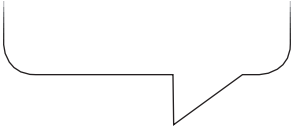
- a. When Paul says we were alienated from God, what does he mean?

- b. What is reconciliation, and how was it accomplished by God?

- c. What does reconciliation mean to you?

- d. What signs do you see of God’s reconciling spirit in yourself or in others?

My thoughts about ...



3. Colossians 3:5-11

- a. How does our “earthly nature” harm us and our relationship with God and others?

b. What does the phrase “being renewed in knowledge in the image of [the] Creator” imply?

c. What is the result of “being renewed in knowledge in the image of [our] Creator”?

Let’s talk about . . .

4. Colossians 3:12-15

a. What does it mean to be chosen, holy, and dearly loved?

b. Describe what we are encouraged to be clothed with. Why are we to do this?

c. How would our communities be different if people lived this way?

d. How can Christ’s forgiveness help us to forgive?

For conversation . . .

5. Colossians 1:3-5

a. When you think of “the hope stored up for you in heaven,” what comes to mind?

b. How does the existence of heaven affect our life right now?

Taking It Home

a. How do we receive a new life in Christ?

b. What have you heard God saying to you through this lesson?

c. In what ways has this lesson helped to clarify the gospel message for you?

For Further Study

John 1:1, 14, 18

Romans 3:23

Isaiah 53:4-6

Romans 5:1-2

John 14:27

Matthew 25:41-45

Ephesians 1:4

Philippians 4:13

John 11:25-26

Revelation 19:9; 21:3-5; 21:18-21; 22:1-5

Isaiah 25:6-8

John 14:1-3

An Invitation

Listen now to what God is saying to you.

You may be aware of things in your life that keep you from coming near to God. You may have thought of God as someone who is unsympathetic, angry, and punishing. You may feel as if you don't know how to pray or how to come near to God.

“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved” (Eph. 2:4-5). Jesus, God's Son, died on the cross to save us from our sins. It doesn't matter where you come from, what you've done in the past, or what your heritage is. God has been watching over you and caring for you, drawing you closer. “You also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation” (Eph. 1:13).

Do you want to receive Jesus as your Savior and Lord? It's as simple as A-B-C:

- **Admit** that you have sinned and that you need God's forgiveness.
- **Believe** that God loves you and that Jesus has already paid the price for your sins.
- **Commit** your life to God in prayer, asking the Lord to forgive your sins, nurture you as his child, and fill you with the Holy Spirit.

Prayer of Commitment

Here is a prayer of commitment recognizing Jesus Christ as Savior. If you long to be in a loving relationship with Jesus, pray this prayer. If you have already committed your life to Jesus, use this prayer for renewal and praise.

Dear God, I come to you simply and honestly to confess that I have sinned, that sin is a part of who I am. And yet I know that you listen to sinners who are truthful before you. So I come with empty hands and heart, asking for forgiveness.

I confess that only through faith in Jesus Christ can I come to you. I confess my need for a Savior, and I thank you, Jesus, for dying on the cross to pay the price for my sins. Father, I ask

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that you forgive my sins and count me as righteous for Jesus' sake. Remove the guilt that accompanies my sin, and bring me into your presence.

Holy Spirit of God, help me to pray, and teach me to live by your Word. Faithful God, help me to serve you faithfully. Make me more like Jesus each day, and help me to share with others the good news of your great salvation. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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Evaluation Questionnaire

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As you complete this study, please fill out this questionnaire to help us evaluate the effectiveness of our materials. Please be candid. Thank you.

Was this a home group ___ or a church-based ___ program?

What church? _____

1. Was the study used for

___ a community evangelism group?

___ a community faith-nurture group?

___ a church Bible study group?

2. How would you rate the materials?

Study Guide: excellent very good good fair poor

Leader Guide: excellent very good good fair poor

3. What were the strengths?

4. What were the weaknesses?

5. What would you suggest to improve the material?

6. In general, what was the experience of your group?

Your name (optional) _____

Address _____