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A STUDY THROUGH THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

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Is This Study for You?

Colossians is a letter, written thousands of years ago, to a group of people who lived in a time and place that is very foreign to us. You might think that because it is so far removed from our experiences today that it would have no connection or relevance to your life. However, this could not be further from the truth. Consider these reasons why studying this letter at this time could be perfect for you.

***Colossians* speaks to our deepest longings and questions.**

Every one of us longs to know what is true and truly significant. We want to have our life count for something that matters. We live in a day and age where it is very difficult to know who is speaking the truth, and we all wonder whether we are making a difference in this world. Those longings and questions are inherent to the way that God created us. This study through *Colossians* will speak profoundly to these deep longings and questions, and in the process, it will help you find what is true and how you can fulfill the purpose and meaning that God designed for your life.

***Colossians* was written to real people just like us.**

Although *Colossians* addresses some of the bigger questions of life, it was not written for philosophers and theologians. Instead, it was written for real people, like us, and contains real practical answers to how we should live our daily lives. Throughout this study, we will be introduced to practical instructions and examples on how to live the life God intended for us to live. Along the way, we will relate to the shortcomings, fears, and familiar humanness of the people Paul was writing to.

Paul wrote to people with remarkably similar questions and struggles.

With all that we have experienced these recent months, we all long to have our lives tethered to unchanging truths, and this study through *Colossians* contains these exact truths we long for. But it's not just about information on a page, it's about how our relationship with the God of these pages changes everything. This study will impact you and I right where we are so we can start each day with a new perspective. It will help us replace those empty, confused feelings with the knowledge that we've got all we need in Jesus—to do everything He wants us to do and to be everything He designed us to be.

Whether this is your first time reading a book of the Bible or you have studied *Colossians* numerous times in the past, we believe that God is going to meet you in a very special way as we dive into this study together.

Gregg Svalstad

Pastor of Discipleship and Groups
Purpose Church

Getting the Most Out of this Study

There are three essential elements for this study. In order to get the most out of it we encourage you to engage in all three.

DAILY PERSONAL STUDY

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

Studying the Bible involves more than just gaining information. The Bible is alive and our lives are transformed when we spend time hearing from God and responding to Him through reading and studying His Word. This study guide is very simple, and we have provided space for you to record what God shows you as you read each day.

We are using the SOAP method for this study. Each day, read a passage from *Colossians* and ask the Holy Spirit to highlight one Scripture verse for you. Then record your Observations, Applications and Prayer for that verse. See the intro page at the start of each week for a detailed description of these four aspects of the SOAP method. If this is your first time using the SOAP method, go to purposechurch.com/soap for a video introduction and additional information on reading the Bible and the SOAP method.

We have divided the book of *Colossians* into eight weekly sections. These weekly readings range from 7-17 verses per week. For each section, there are five SOAP study subsections, so you won't need to cover a lot of verses each day. Some days you may want to focus on just one verse or even focus on re-reading a section. You can divide the weekly reading into five parts in advance or read until you come to the Scripture verse you are led to focus on each day. We encourage you to set a regular time five days a week to spend reading and journaling what God is showing you.

WEEKLY LIFE GROUP TIME

We are better together! You will get much more out of this study if you join a Life Group. You and your group members will bring what you learn from your daily personal study and weekly Purpose Church sermons to discuss how to live out these truths. If you would like to join a group for this study, go to purposechurch.com/groups or contact us at Groups@PurposeChurch.com.

WEEKLY SERMONS

Each Sunday, there will be a sermon from the book of *Colossians*. Whether online or on campus, join us for each of these sermons to deepen your understanding and application of this study. If you miss any of the messages, you can watch or listen to them online at PurposeChurch.com/sermons.

INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS

Author, Date, and Recipients

The apostle Paul wrote this letter to Christians living in the small city of Colosse (also spelled Colossae). It was probably written around 60-62 A.D, while Paul was in prison in Rome (Acts 27-28). This was about the same time he wrote his letters to the Ephesians and Philemon.

Colosse: The City and Its People

The city of Colosse (discovered by archeologists in 1835) stood along the easiest and most popular route from modern day Greece and Italy to Syria and Mesopotamia. Originally known for its wool industry and spoken of as “a great city of Phrygia,” by Paul’s time Colosse had declined considerably in importance. It had been surpassed by Laodicea, 10 miles to the west, and Hierapolis, 12 miles to the northwest (Colossians 2:1; 4:13 & 15-16)

The church at Colosse, composed mostly of Gentiles, was not planted by Paul himself, but most likely by Epaphras, who became a Christ follower when Paul was in Ephesus (Acts 19:10). Although Paul had not been to the church, he had heard of their faith (Colossians 1:4).

Colossians and *Philemon* are related because both were written at about the same time, and then were sent to the same town by the same messenger. Colossians is a letter to a church, dealing with large issues of faith; Philemon is a private note to a person in the church at Colosse, dealing with an important interpersonal matter.

Purpose, Occasion, and Background

A dangerous teaching was threatening the church at Colosse, one that lessened Christ’s role and undermined the new identity of believers “in Christ” (Colossians 1:2, 28). The people that Paul was writing to were confronted with teaching that tempted them to engage in futile efforts to find meaning by blending together ideas from various religions with the secular philosophies of the day. Paul writes to point them to the truth they can build their lives upon: Jesus is > anything they face in their everyday lives. 2000 year later, this powerful message of hope and encouragement is just as relevant today.

Key Themes

The overarching theme of *Colossians* is that Jesus is >, and has authority over, everything and everyone in all creation—including the invisible realm (Colossians 1:15-20; 2:9-10; 3:1). Through Jesus, God has redeemed and reconciled all who put their trust in him, enabling them to participate in his death and resurrection. Christ followers can live lives that are rooted in hope and strengthened and filled to overflowing, no matter what they face in this life! (Colossians 2:7-10; 4:6)

COLOSSIANS

WEEK ONE

COLOSSIANS 1:1-14



SCRIPTURE

Read a section of this week's passage each day and ask the Holy Spirit to highlight one or two verses that He wants to use to speak to you. Which verse do you feel prompted to focus on? Write it down.



OBSERVATION

As you look at the verse you wrote down, make some observations: What's going on in this passage? Who is speaking? What comes before and after this verse? To whom is the verse directed? What is the background or setting for this verse? What is it saying? Write down these observations and then paraphrase this verse in your own words.



APPLICATION

What is the Spirit, through God's Word, saying to you in this verse? How does it apply to your life right now? Where is it challenging you? How does it encourage you? How will your life be different as you live out this verse? Write down these applications as specifically as you can.



PRAYER

Your prayer should be simple. You are asking Jesus, "What would you have me do, confess, or give thanks for?" Write down your prayer.

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WEEK TWO

COLOSSIANS 1:15-23



SCRIPTURE

Read a section of this week's passage each day and ask the Holy Spirit to highlight one or two verses that He wants to use to speak to you. Which verse do you feel prompted to focus on? Write it down.



OBSERVATION

As you look at the verse you wrote down, make some observations: What's going on in this passage? Who is speaking? What comes before and after this verse? To whom is the verse directed? What is the background or setting for this verse? What is it saying? Write down these observations and then paraphrase this verse in your own words.



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WEEK THREE

COLOSSIANS 1:24-2:5



SCRIPTURE

Read a section of this week's passage each day and ask the Holy Spirit to highlight one or two verses that He wants to use to speak to you. Which verse do you feel prompted to focus on? Write it down.



OBSERVATION

As you look at the verse you wrote down, make some observations: What's going on in this passage? Who is speaking? What comes before and after this verse? To whom is the verse directed? What is the background or setting for this verse? What is it saying? Write down these observations and then paraphrase this verse in your own words.



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WEEK FOUR

COLOSSIANS 2:6-15



SCRIPTURE

Read a section of this week's passage each day and ask the Holy Spirit to highlight one or two verses that He wants to use to speak to you. Which verse do you feel prompted to focus on? Write it down.



OBSERVATION

As you look at the verse you wrote down, make some observations: What's going on in this passage? Who is speaking? What comes before and after this verse? To whom is the verse directed? What is the background or setting for this verse? What is it saying? Write down these observations and then paraphrase this verse in your own words.



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COLOSSIANS

WEEK FIVE

COLOSSIANS 2:16-23



SCRIPTURE

Read a section of this week's passage each day and ask the Holy Spirit to highlight one or two verses that He wants to use to speak to you. Which verse do you feel prompted to focus on? Write it down.



OBSERVATION

As you look at the verse you wrote down, make some observations: What's going on in this passage? Who is speaking? What comes before and after this verse? To whom is the verse directed? What is the background or setting for this verse? What is it saying? Write down these observations and then paraphrase this verse in your own words.



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COLOSSIANS

WEEK SIX

COLOSSIANS 3:1-17



SCRIPTURE

Read a section of this week's passage each day and ask the Holy Spirit to highlight one or two verses that He wants to use to speak to you. Which verse do you feel prompted to focus on? Write it down.



OBSERVATION

As you look at the verse you wrote down, make some observations: What's going on in this passage? Who is speaking? What comes before and after this verse? To whom is the verse directed? What is the background or setting for this verse? What is it saying? Write down these observations and then paraphrase this verse in your own words.



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WEEK SEVEN

COLOSSIANS 3:18-4:6



SCRIPTURE

Read a section of this week's passage each day and ask the Holy Spirit to highlight one or two verses that He wants to use to speak to you. Which verse do you feel prompted to focus on? Write it down.



OBSERVATION

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COLOSSIANS

WEEK EIGHT

COLOSSIANS 4:7-18



SCRIPTURE

Read a section of this week's passage each day and ask the Holy Spirit to highlight one or two verses that He wants to use to speak to you. Which verse do you feel prompted to focus on? Write it down.



OBSERVATION

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