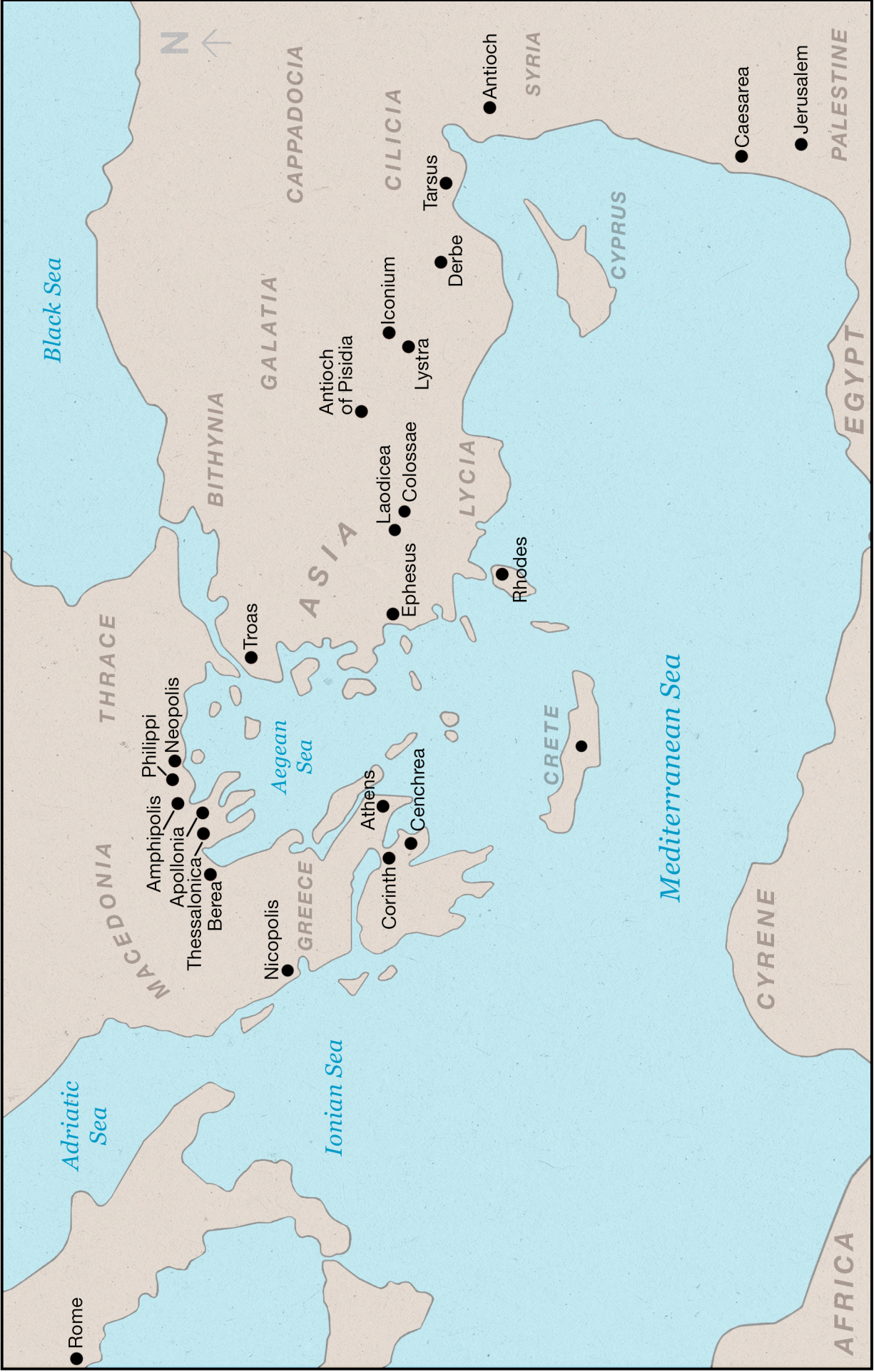


Worthy of the Gospel: Colossians, Philippians, Titus & Philemon



COLOSSIANS 1:1-8

January 9, 2025



1. Some are new to your groups, but we have been on break since mid-November. Spend time around your table briefly sharing about what's been going on in your life lately.
2. Read Colossians 1:1-2. Who is writing this epistle?

Who are the recipients of this letter?

3. Read Colossians 1:3-8. In these verses, Paul expresses his love and thanksgiving for the Colossians. Who are people in your life you find yourself thanking God for when you think of or pray for them?

The saints, or Christians, in Colossians have loved one another in such a way that Paul has heard of and been encouraged by it. Is there someone in your life whose love for Jesus and love for you has deeply impacted your life? Please share.

4. In verses 5 and 6, Paul describes how the gospel has come to the Colossians and is bearing fruit and growing all over the world. What does this tell you about the power of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ?
5. In your own life, how have you seen the gospel change you, or someone you love, and bear fruit?
6. With your remaining time, share a brief prayer request with your group.

COLOSSIANS 1:9-23

January 16, 2025



1. Read Colossians 1:9-23. What repeated ideas or themes do you notice?
2. Consider Colossians 1:9-14. For what did Paul ask in verse 9?

According to verse 10a, what does Paul want believers to do with the wisdom and understanding they receive?

3. Paul prays for believers to live worthy of the gospel. In your own words, rephrase what a life pleasing to God looks like from Colossians 1:10-12.

“Bearing fruit in every good work”

“Increasing in the knowledge of God”

“Being strengthened with all power...for all endurance and patience”

“Giving thanks to the Father”

4. Summarize Colossians 1:12b-14.
5. Look again at Paul’s prayer in Colossians 1:9-14. In one sentence, describe what Paul desires.

Consider what you have recently prayed for Christians in your life. How does Paul’s prayer encourage, convict, or instruct you as you pray for believers?

6. Read Colossians 1:15-17 and notice the repetition. What is the theme?

What do you learn about Jesus in regard to creation from these verses?

Colossians 1:15-17

John 1:1-4 (“the Word” refers to Jesus)

7. Read Colossians 1:17-19. Jesus is described as the “firstborn of all creation” in verse 15 and the “firstborn from the dead” in verse 18 because of His resurrection. “Firstborn” can reference actual birth order, or the honor and prominence given to the eldest son in ancient culture. Which option is correct in this passage? Explain your position based on evidence in Scripture.
8. Consider the similarities of Colossians 1:15a and 1:19. What does Paul want Christians to understand, and why is this idea important?
9. Reread Colossians 1:15-19. Why is Christ’s supremacy essential for Christians to understand and embrace?
10. Carefully read Colossians 1:20-22. What is true of people before they know Jesus?

What is true of people who believe in Jesus?

What did Jesus do to accomplish reconciliation?

11. Read Colossians 1:15-22 out loud. Choose one thing you learned about Jesus and explain why that truth leads you to worship Him.

12. Read Colossians 1:23 and Colossians 2:8. What is Paul's concern in Colossians 2:8, and what is his desire for the church in Colossians 1:23?

What have you heard or read recently that conflicts with the truths in this week's passage?

What helps you remain "stable and steadfast" in the gospel?

13. This week's passage has been noteworthy throughout church history for understanding the person of Jesus Christ, as well as His supremacy and beauty. What do you want to remember from this lesson as significant or worshipful about Jesus?

14. Write out a personal prayer request in one or two sentences to share with your small group.

COLOSSIANS 1:24-2:5

January 23, 2025



1. Read Colossians 1:24-29 which details Paul's ministry to the body of Christ and the church in Colossae and Laodicea. How would you describe Paul after reading these verses?

How would you describe the person or persons who helped you grow in Christ?

2. Paul was imprisoned in Rome when he wrote this letter. Read Colossians 1:24. What might have been some of the specific sufferings of Paul?

After Jesus' ascension, His enemies could no longer persecute Him, so they persecuted His followers. How does Paul describe this in 1:24?

What does Jesus teach us about the reasons His followers will suffer in John 15:18-19 and John 16:3?

3. Read Colossians 1:25-27. What is the purpose behind Paul's suffering as a steward of God according to 1:25-26?

What is this mystery according to 1:27? Also read Ephesians 3:6.

Jesus expounds on the mystery that is true for both Jews and Gentiles in John 14:23. What do we learn?

4. Read Colossians 1:28. The good news of the gospel is made known through the witness of those who follow Christ. How do we make Him known? What is our objective?

Explain what our mission involves and what more we can learn from the following references:

“Him we proclaim” (*1 Timothy 2:5-6*)

“Warning everyone” (*Hebrews 3:12-13*)

“Teaching everyone with all wisdom” (*1 Peter 3:15*)

“Present everyone mature in Christ” (*Ephesians 4:12-16*)

5. Read Colossians 1:29. How did Paul accomplish the mission God had given him?

Share a time God’s strength helped you represent Him to others in word or deed.

6. Read Colossians 2:1-5 and describe Paul's relationship with believers in Colossae and Laodicea.

7. Read Colossians 2:1-5 again and list Paul's desires for these churches.

8. False teachers at the time claimed to possess a secret and superior spiritual wisdom. What do we learn about true wisdom from Paul in Colossians 2:2-4 and in 1 Corinthians 1:30?

9. Read Colossians 2:5. How would you describe the church in Colossae and Laodicea in your own words?

10. What have you learned this week about specific responsibilities we have as members of the body of Christ? In what area would you like to grow?

11. Write out a personal prayer request in one or two sentences to share with your small group.

COLOSSIANS 2:6-23

January 30, 2025



1. Begin by reading Colossians 2:6-23. Because verse 6 begins with “therefore,” look back at Colossians 2:1-5 and explain what prompted Paul to write Colossians 2:6-7.

Carefully reread Colossians 2:6-7. What are the foundational truths of a Christian who is living a life worthy of the gospel?

2. Using the definition of the word “received,” explain what it means to receive Jesus. Look at John 1:12 and 1 Corinthians 15:1-4 for insight.

If you have received Jesus, describe how He has changed your daily life.

3. Paul states that if we have received Jesus, we are to walk in Him, meaning we are rooted and built up in Jesus. What do the following portions of Scripture say about being “rooted and built up” in Jesus?
John 15:4-5

Ephesians 2:18-22

Using what we learn from these verses, explain how being “rooted and built up” in Jesus leads to a deeper, more established faith.

According to Paul, the natural response of one who is “rooted and built up in him” and “established in the faith” is to abound in thanksgiving. What are some ways this gratitude is evident in your life?

4. Continue by reading Colossians 2:8-10. What warning does Paul give to the Colossians in verse 8?

According to verses 9-10, why should believers trust in the sufficiency of Christ for all spiritual authority?

5. The phrase “takes you captive” is from a word which means to “carry off as spoils of war.” Explain how being deceived by false teachers is like “being carried off as spoils of war.”

How does being “rooted and built up in him and established in the faith” help us discern and avoid false teaching? Look at Psalm 119:103-105 for insight.

6. Read Colossians 2:11-15. Using these verses, list everything that happens for a believer in Christ.

Picture yourself talking with someone who isn't a Christian. How would you explain what Christ accomplished on your behalf and what that means for your identity in Him?

7. Continue by reading Colossians 2:16-19. List the errors that are occurring in the Colossian church in these verses.

Using verse 17, explain the danger of these false teachings in the church.

“Therefore” at the beginning of verse 16 requires us to look back at the truths recorded in verses 9-15. As followers of Christ, we are free from the bondage of false teaching and legalism because of the person and work of Christ. What do the following verses tell us about the person and work of Christ?

Colossians 2:9

Colossians 2:14

Colossians 2:15

8. Finish by reading Colossians 2:20-23. According to verse 23, how did these forms of false teaching fall short of the gospel?

As followers of Christ, we are called to walk faithfully and resist the temptation to indulge in the flesh. Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 and 2 Corinthians 5:17-18, and describe why Jesus is better and offers something better than the “appearance of wisdom,” “self-made religion,” and other false teachings?

9. Read Colossians 2:6-23 again. How have you been encouraged by these verses? How have you been challenged?

10. Write out a personal prayer request in one or two sentences to share with your small group.

COLOSSIANS 3:1-17

February 6, 2025



1. Read Colossians 3:1-4. In verses 1 and 3, describe what has happened in the life of a Christian.

What will occur in the future?

What two commands indicate the responsibility of a Christian now?

2. Read Colossians 3:1-4 again. What do you think it means that Christ is your life in verse 4?

In your personal experience, how is Christ your life?

3. Read Colossians 3:5-17, specifically noting the commands in verses 5 and 12. Read also Ephesians 4:22-24. Summarize what these verses teach about sanctification, which is the process of growing in Christlikeness.

4. As we learned in Colossians 3:1-4, Christians have a new identity: dead to sin and alive to righteousness. Empowered by the Spirit, believers must fight sin to live consistently with their identity. Read Colossians 3:5-9. How can you tell that God takes sin that lingers in believers' lives seriously?

What specific truths and practices help you “put to death” sin in your life?

Consider one sin in these five verses with which you struggle. What is going on in your heart that fuels this sin?

5. What do you learn about the “new self” according to Colossians 3:10?

Meditate on the word “knowledge” in Colossians 3:10. How does growing in the knowledge of God’s character and ways renew and strengthen you as you pursue sanctification?

6. According to Colossians 3:11, what is true about the body of Christ?

How does the phrase “Christ is all, and in all” inform your understanding of the body of Christ?

7. Colossians 3:12-17 describes the life the Christian is to “put on.” What are specific truths and practices that help you “put on” the holy life believers are called to live?

Reflect on Colossians 3:12-13. Choose one characteristic and write a definition for it.

8. List the specific sins and characteristics Paul mentions, and reflect on the two categories.

Sins in Colossians 3:5-9

Characteristics in Colossians 3:12-17

Imagine your life being marked the characteristics and distinctives of verses 12-17. How is that more preferable and beautiful than a life marked by the sins of verses 5-9?

9. Slowly read Colossians 4:14-16. Choose one verse and describe how that idea has been important in your sanctification.

10. Rewrite Colossians 3:17 in your own words.

11. Being justified, or saved from sin, is based on faith in Christ and not good works, but sanctification does require work. From your perspective, why do you sometimes choose not to do the necessary work? What is making sanctification most challenging for you right now?

Based on what you've learned so far in Colossians, list some things that motivate you and give you hope as you strive to grow in Christlikeness.

12. What is one idea you want to remember from this week's study?

What is a sin you want to "put off" and a characteristic you want to "put on" this week? Write at least three specific steps you can take to put off and put on the things you selected.

13. Write out a personal prayer request in one or two sentences to share with your small group.

COLOSSIANS 3:18-4:6

February 13, 2025



1. Read Colossians 1:1-3:17. Every passage in Scripture should be read with consideration given to the context, so we will review what we have studied so far before looking at this week's passage, Colossians 3:18-4:6. For each of the verses below, summarize the truths you learned.

Colossians 1:15-23

Colossians 1:28

Colossians 2:8

Colossians 3:8-10, 12-14

Summarize what the Colossians would have heard and learned about Jesus and the Christian life up to this point in the text.

2. Read Colossians 3:18-4:6. Then compare Colossians 3:17 and 3:23. In what ways do these verses encapsulate the Christian life?
3. Read Colossians 3:18-4:1 again. Then look at 3:18-19. What do you think "fitting in the Lord" means?

Why do you think Paul gives husbands an extra directive about how they treat their wives?

4. Look at Colossians 3:20-21. Why does Paul instruct children to "obey" their parents in verse 20? See Exodus 20:12 for insight.

5. Paul instructs fathers in Colossians 3:21 to not provoke their children. Look up the word “provoke” in a dictionary and write the definition that best fits the use in verse 21.

Why might Paul care that children are not discouraged?

6. In Colossians 3:22-4:1, Paul gives instructions to slaves and masters. Although Paul does not speak directly to the abolition of slavery in these verses, it is clear that the Lord sees and cares for slaves and offers them hope in their circumstances. In your own words, describe how a slave should work.

What does the Lord promise to slaves?

Summarize how Christian masters should treat their slaves. How do you imagine this would set them apart from the rest of the world?

7. Look over Colossians 3:18-22 again and consider them in light of Colossians 3:1-17. Why would it be necessary to “put off sin” and “put on Christ” in order to live out the wisdom given in the household codes?
8. Read Colossians 3:23-25. For what or whom does Paul imply Colossians are tempted to work?

Based on these verses, what should motivate believers’ work and obedience unto the Lord?

What wrong motives regarding work most often take root in your heart and life? Be specific.

What steps can you take to replace those motives with motives that are submitted to the Lord?

9. Read Colossians 4:2-6. List every imperative, or command, Paul gives the Colossians.

Look over the list above. Based what you know about the cultural context in which these Christians lived, what about this list would make them look different than unbelievers?

In verse 5, Paul tells believers to act wisely toward outsiders. Why do you think wisdom would be important as they engage with unbelievers?

Take time to prayerfully examine your own life. Which of the distinctives from Colossians 4:2-6 are you most tempted to downplay or neglect, and why?

10. Read Colossians 3:18-4:6 again. Summarize it in 10 words or less.

11. Take time to read Colossians 1:1-4:6. Consider the arc of Paul's letter and how Colossians 3:18-4:6 fits with the whole letter. Based on what you have learned from Colossians, what is important to God about how Christians live and worship?

Which one of these is the Lord inviting you to repent of, correct, continue in, or change?

12. Write out a personal prayer request in one or two sentences to share with your small group.

COLOSSIANS 4:7-18

February 20, 2025



1. Read Colossians 4:7-18. Paul closes this chapter with descriptions of his friends and ministry partners. What repeated words or phrases does Paul use to describe them?

2. Read Acts 8:1-3 and Acts 9:1-2. Contrast Paul's (formerly Saul) feelings towards the church and Christians before and after knowing the Lord.

3. In Colossians 4:7-9, who are Paul's two companions and how does he describe them?

Read Ephesians 6:21 and Titus 3:12. How does Tychicus' life demonstrate faithfulness?

In what ways did Tychicus and Onesimus encourage the Colossians?

4. Read Colossians 4:10-11. Who are the three men Paul mentions, and what do they have in common?

5. Read Acts 15:36-41. Summarize what happened between Paul, Barnabas, and Mark.

Read Paul's instructions in Colossians 3:12-15. How does Paul apply these instructions to his own life and his relationships with Mark and Barnabas?

Think of a time you experienced conflict with another believer. Describe what you did to pursue forgiveness and reconciliation.

6. Read Colossians 4:12-13. Paul introduces another partner in ministry. What is his name and how does he support believers in Colossae?

According to Colossians 1:3-8, what role did Epaphras play in the church in Colossae?

In your own words, explain what "stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God" means?

7. Paul sends greetings from two others. List their names and what you learn about each in Colossians 4:14.

8. Read Colossians 4:14-17. Where did Paul want his letters to be read?

What problem arose in the church in Laodicea? What was Paul's desire for the believers there?
Also see Colossians 2:1-4.

9. Read Paul's closing in Colossians 4:18 and visualize him writing his letter in chains from a prison cell. What stands out to you about Paul, his circumstances, and his faith?

10. How have you been encouraged and served by fellow sisters and brothers in Christ in the midst of difficult circumstances?

In what ways would you like to strengthen and encourage those God has placed in your life?
Please share.

11. Write out a personal prayer request in one or two sentences to share with your small group.