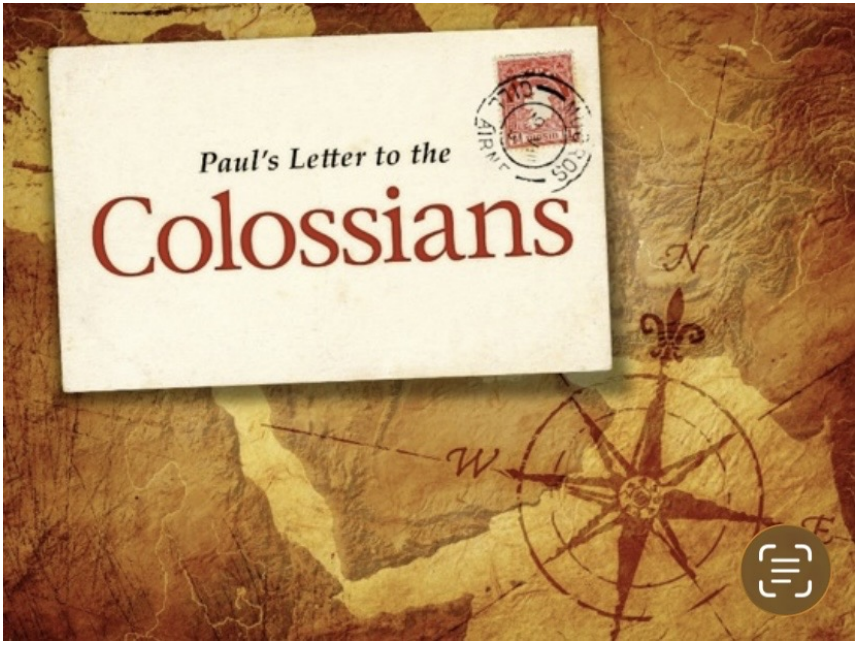
A Guided Inductive Study of The Book of Colossians



"Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
2 Timothy 2:15

A practical study of Paul's Letter to Colossians

by Pastor Richard W. LaFountain

How To Study

Read the Scripture:
Reading the Scripture is important. Read every word. Don't skip. Don't just read your favorite verses. Read it all. Think about what you are reading. Is there any word or statement you do not understand? Is there anything that confuses you or seems inconsistent with other Scriptures? Is there anything you would like to research? Use at least two translations.

Translations:
I suggest New King James, if you like the old wording. The New International Version is helpful. And the English Standard Version is also refreshing. For this study I am using the NKJV because I grew up with KJV and its rhythms are familiar to me. You can use other translations.

Chapter by Chapter:
We are going to study the Book of Romans chapter by chapter. Some chapters are longer and have much to think about. Those chapters we have divided into segments so you cover Romans 8 in four weeks instead of one week. We assume you will use one chapter each week. If you are using this for daily readings then you might find it too difficult to answer the questions. That's okay. My hope, however, is that you use is in a weekly Bible study. Anyone can lead it.

Highlighted Verses:
I have chosen to highlight what I feel are key verses. You may think others are more important. That is okay. Write that in your personal journal or if you are studying in a group write down other verses you feel are important. Oh, and every chapter has one key verse.

Discussion Questions:
We have not attempted to add commentary because we believe the Scriptures speak for themselves and the Holy Spirit can teach us as much as another person's commentary. I have added suggested questions to answer and discuss. This is especially helpful when studying with a group. You are not limited to my questions. Ask your own. In an individual study it will be harder to consider your answers to the questions. In a group, however, one

question might stimulate other questions. You do not have to answer every question. Use what is helpful and useful and leave the rest.

Personal Edification:
I have often taught my students to look for certain things in ever chapter of the Bible. You will not find all five in every chapter, but you should be able to find two or three. Write them down in a journal or share it with a group. It is called the PEPSI acronym.

Search for Treasure: (P.E.P.S.I.)

- Is there a **P**-romise to claim?
- Is there an **E**-xample to follow?
- Is there a **P**-rayer concern?
- Is there a **S**-in to avoid?
- +Is there an **I**-nstruction to obey?

Personal Questions:

- What Verse Challenged you?
- What Verse Encouraged you?
- What Verse Convicted you?
- What Verse Confused you?
- What Verse Startled you?
- What Verse Frightened you?

Group Questions:

1. What verse stands out to you in this chapter? Why?
2. What verse causes you to struggle with its demand? Why?
3. What verse encourages your faith the most? Why?
4. Is there a command you find most difficult to obey? Why?
5. Is there a promise here you want to claim? What?
6. Is there something here you need to pray about? Why?
7. Is there a word/topic you need to explore more deeply?

Outline of Colossians

Colossians 1 - Preeminence of Christ

Colossians 2 - No More Legalism!

Colossians 3 - Christian Duties

Colossians 4 - Redeem the time

Colossians 1- Preeminence of Christ

Key verses to think about.

1:9-12 Paul's Prayer
For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him,* being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

1:13-14 He Transported Us
He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed (translated or transferred) *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

1:15-19 He Is the Image of God
He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence. All fullness dwells in him for it pleased *the Father that in* Him all the fullness should dwell,

1:28 Presenting Every Man Perfect
Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.

Main Truth:

Jesus is the image of God the Father.

Questions:

1 Can you memorize 1:15-19?

2 Can you ask God to do what Paul prayed for you? Bullet his prayer.

- Be filled with knowledge of his will
- Be filled with wisdom
- Be filled with spiritual understanding
- Walk worthy of the Lord
- Be fruitful in every good work
- Increasing in knowledge of God
- Strengthened with all might
- Have patience and endurance

2 Can you list Jesus' characteristics as God from v 15-19?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6

Colossians 2 - No More Legalism!

Key verses to think about.

2:2-3 Paul's Prayer for Us
That your hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and *attaining* to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

2:6 So Walk by Faith in Him
As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,

2:7 Be Rooted and Built Up
(Be) rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

2:9-10 He Is the Fulness of God
For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

2:13-14 Jesus Erased the Rules
You, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us.

2:14b-15 He Nailed It to the Cross
He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

2:16-17 Don't Be Judged by Legalistic Rules.
So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

Main Truth:

Jesus set us free from man-made rules. Rules don't make you holy, Jesus does!

Questions:

What four things did Paul desire and pray for us?. List them;

- Be encouraged
- Be knit together in love
- Attain full knowledge & assurance
- Know the mystery of God in Christ

2 What did Jesus nail to the cross? Be specific. What does that mean?

3 What are some man-made legalistic rules that have been imposed on you in your life? List some of them.

4 What denominations or churches try to make you feel guilty? What do they accuse you of?

I've stumped several Seventh Day Adventist who tried to guilt me for not worshiping on Saturday. Read verse 16-17 to them. They'll be shocked. They never read it before.

Colossians 3 - Christian Duties

Key verses to think about.

3:1-2 Seek Things Above
If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

3:5-6 Put to Death Old Nature
Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,

3:12-13 Forgiving as Christ Forgave You
Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do.*

3:15 Let the Peace of God Rule
Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

3:16 Let the Word Dwell in YOu
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.

3:17 Do Everything for God's Glory
Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

3:23-24 Do It Mightily
Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; forfn you serve the Lord Christ.

Main Truth:

Whatever you do, do it as unto the Lord.

Questions:

1 Of all these commands, which speaks to your heart?

2 Which do you find hardest to obey?

3 What do you need to pray about today?

Colossians 4 - Redeem the time

Key verses to think about.

4:1 Your Master in Heaven
Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

4:2 Earnest in Prayer
Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;

4:3-4 An Open Door
(Pray) that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

4:5 Walk in Wisdom
Walk in wisdom toward those *who are* outside, redeeming the time.

4:6 Speak with Grace
Let your speech always *be* with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

Main Truth:

Pray and look for open doors to speak on behalf of Christ. Be ready to witness to every person you meet.

Questions:

1 What does it mean to be vigilant in prayer? And are you? Explain how you are vigilant in prayer.

2 What does Paul mean by redeem the time? Do you redeem your time?

3 What does it mean to season your speech with salt?