

## The Salutation of Paul's Letter to the Church at Colossae Colossians 1:1-2

### Background

### Doctrinal Points

1. All Christians are “saints” and “brethren.”

### Practical Application

1. Let's remember our two spheres of life.

### Questions

1. Who authored the book of Colossians, and why was he called an apostle?
2. Who was this person prior to his apostleship? How did he change?
3. Name the four prison epistles. Why are they called prison epistles?
4. Where did the Colossian church meet?
5. Who reported to Paul about the state of the church at Colossae?
6. What was the good news? What was the bad news?
7. What was the primary purpose of the letter to the Colossians?

## Answers

1. Paul; he was made an apostle by the sovereign will of God.
2. He was Saul, a persecutor of Christians, a prominent Pharisee. He became Paul, a willing bond-slave of Jesus Christ. See Acts 9.1-6.
3. Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. They were written during Paul's first Roman imprisonment.
4. In Philemon's house.
5. Epaphras
6. The good news: the church was growing in numbers, in faith and in love. The bad news: there was false teaching about Christ in Colossae.
7. To keep the Colossians believers from being taken in by false teaching. To help the church mature and be steadfast in the faith.

## Discuss / Consider

1. What is a saint? Search the Scriptures for definitions and examples. What does it mean to be a faithful brother?

2. Name the two spheres of the brethren. What happens when one sphere is emphasized disproportionately? If the physical sphere is overemphasized, there is a tendency to become worldly; if the spiritual sphere is overemphasized, there is a tendency to be unaware or uncaring of earthly responsibilities.

## Challenge

1. Consider your claim to sainthood, both in position and in practice. Consider also the balance of spheres in your life, listing examples in each sphere.

**Section of Thanksgiving**  
**Colossians 1:3-8**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

- 1. The gospel is good news.**
  - a. Because it is hope**
  
  - b. Because it is true**
  
  - c. Because it is universal**
  
  - d. Because it is productive**
  
  - e. Because it is the grace of God**

**Practical Application**

- 1. We should have busy prayer lives.**
  
- 2. We should love all the saints.**

**Questions**

1. Name three things for which Paul was thankful, according to this letter.
  
2. List five reasons the gospel is good news.
  
3. The gospel is limited. True or False? Explain.
  
4. When is it appropriate to pray?
  
5. How are you to love certain unlovable, irritable Christians?

**Answers**

1. a. The Colossian believers  
b. The gospel  
c. Epaphras, a dear, beloved, faithful servant
2. Because it is a. hope b. true c. universal d. productive e. the grace of God.
3. False. It is universal, available to all who will believe.
4. Anytime, anywhere.
5. Love with agape love, God's love.

**Discuss / Consider**

1. When we become busy in the Lord's work, we can be excused from praying (God understands our time and work pressures). T/F? Discuss.

2. Discuss examples of the gospel bearing fruit.

**Challenge**

1. Pray earnestly this week for a Christian who you do not naturally like. Pray for yourself as to how you can relate to him/her.

**Pray for Spiritual Growth**  
**Colossians 1:9-10**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

- 1. God wants His children to be spiritually sensitive.**
  
- 2. God wants His children to have a worthy walk.**

**Practical Application**

- 1. Let's pray like Paul would pray for our family and friends.**
  
- 2. Let's walk as if we're being watched.**

**Questions**

1. What news did Epaphras bring to Paul about the city and the church in Colossae?
2. According to this letter, what does God want from His children?
3. What does it mean to be spiritually sensitive?
4. What does it mean to have a worthy walk?
5. How can a person know God?
6. How did Paul pray for his friends?

## Answers

1. There was false teaching in Colossae, but it had not yet penetrated the church. The church was growing in numbers, in faith and in love.
2. To be spiritually sensitive and to have a worthy walk.
3. It is a knowledge of God's will (what God wants) and spiritual insight (why God wants it).
4. It is a way of life, both in direction and progress, based on spiritual sensitivity.
5. By learning about Him through His word, and by obedience to the word.
6. He prayed for their salvation, spiritual sensitivity and a worthy walk (Colossians 1.9-14)

## Discuss / Consider

1. Review David's prayer for his son, Solomon, in 1 Chronicles 29:19.  
A good test of a walk that pleases God is how a person spends his time when he is alone. How are you guarding your walk, both when you are alone and before others? Guard your thoughts, recalling 2 Corinthians 10:5.

2. Do you believe that God watches all that you do? Do you believe that God knows all your thoughts? How does your belief affect your life?

## Challenge

1. Following the two prayer examples, Paul's and David's, pray diligently for your family and friends. Think through some of the requests you could make on their behalf. You might want to jot them down on a piece

**Paul Prays for Continued Growth of the Colossian Believers**  
**Colossians 1:11-14**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. God wants His children to be strengthened with promised power.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. God wants His children to have a thankful temperament.

**Practical Application**

1. Let's take advantage of what's available to us.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Let's take stock of what we've got.

**Questions**

1. What two things did Paul do to keep the Colossian believers from being vulnerable to false teaching?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What were Paul's two primary requests for them?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. To whom is God's power available?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. What are the results of this power?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. How is it possible for God's children to have a thankful temperament? List five reasons.





**The Exaltation of Jesus Christ**  
**Colossians 1:15-17**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

- 1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the firstborn over everything.**
- 2. The Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of everything**
- 3. The Lord Jesus Christ is the sustainer of everything.**

**Practical Application**

- 1. Are we fulfilling the purpose for which we were created?**

**Questions**

1. What was the theme of Paul's letter to the Colossians?
2. What were the Gnostics teaching about the person and work of Christ?
3. If God created all things, how could Jesus Christ have created all things?
4. Were some angels created evil?
5. How is the universe held together?
6. For what purpose were we created? To whom are we responsible (accountable)?



**Jesus Christ, the Head and Beginning of the Church**  
**Colossians 1:18-19**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

- 1. The Lord Jesus Christ is head of the Church.**
- 2. The Lord Jesus Christ is the beginning of the Church.**
- 3. The Lord Jesus Christ is the firstborn from the dead.**
- 4. The Lord Jesus Christ is fully God.**

**Practical Application**

- 1. Does Christ have pre-eminence in all my things?**

**Questions**

1. What is the great theme of Colossians?
2. To what false teaching were the first century Colossian believers exposed?
3. Who is the head of the Church? What does this mean practically
4. Is our Lord in His resurrected body today? When will believers have new bodies?
5. Which two verses in Colossians declare that Jesus is fully God?



**The Work of Reconciliation Accomplished on the Cross**  
**Colossians 1:20-23**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

- 1. The Lord Jesus Christ has reconciled all things to Himself.**
- 2. Not all people are reconciled.**
- 3. People are alienated with bad attitudes and bad actions.**
- 4. The reconciliation of people has already taken place.**
- 5. Our reconciliation was one way.**
- 6. The ultimate purpose of our reconciliation is perfection.**

**Practical Application**

- 1. Let's make sure we are reconciled.**

**Questions**

1. What is set forth in Colossians 1:15-2?
2. Define the word, "reconcile."
3. What is the basis of Christ's reconciliatory work – His life or His death?
4. Were all the problems of sin settled on the cross?
5. Are all things reconciled by the cross? Are all people reconciled? What's the ultimate purpose of reconciliation?
6. Are people reconciled now, or only in the future?



**Three Aspects of Paul's Service to Christ**  
**Colossians 1:24-29**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

- 1. There are two categories to the sufferings of Christ.**
- 2. The Church as the body of Christ is a glorious mystery.**
- 3. The aim of Christian service is Christian maturity.**

**Practical Application**

- 1. Let's realize that Christ is at work in us.**
- 2. Let's try to rejoice in our sufferings for Christ.**

**Questions**

1. List the three aspects of Paul's service to Christ.
2. How does Paul's service relate to the theme of Colossians?
3. What is a mystery in the Bible?
4. How are the words "every" and "all" significant in Colossians 1:28?
5. Do we always see Christ at work in us?
6. What should our response to suffering for Christ be?

## Answers

1. His sufferings on behalf of Christ, his stewardship of the mystery of Christ, and his striving to present every person complete in Christ.
2. He is showing the great theme of Colossians being worked out in his own life.
3. A mystery is a truth concealed in the Old Testament and revealed in the New Testament.
4. The Gnostics taught that only a select elite could know certain secret truth. On the contrary, Paul is teaching that every Christian can become complete, perfect, and mature in Christ.
5. Not necessarily. Sometimes we see the outward signs of inward working. The important thing to remember is that Christ is at work in us, as He promised.
6. We can rejoice because we know that suffering for Christ is in the line of duty when we serve the Lord. Let's not cry about how hard it is to be a Christian, but let's count it for joy. It is a privilege to serve Christ.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Review the mystery, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." The Church as the body of Christ was not known in the Old Testament. Jews and Gentiles brought together as one body with Christ as the head was a new concept hidden before. Aren't you thankful that Christ assigned Paul to make this mystery known?

2. Review the three aspects of Paul's service to Christ. Measure your service in these terms.

## Challenge

1. Do you recognize that Christ is at work in you mightily? Do not be discouraged in your Christian service. Christ will not only give you direction in your ministry, He will give you the strength to do it. Picture a sign declaring "Christ at Work"!



## **The Importance that Paul Placed on Prayer Colossians 2:1-3**

### **Background**

### **Doctrinal Points**

- 1. The nature of prayer is more than serene repose.**
- 2. The scope of prayer is more than self-interest.**
- 3. The content of prayer is more than secular concerns.**

### **Practical Application**

- 1. All that you ever need is found in Christ.**
- 2. Tell people that you're praying for them.**

### **Questions**

1. What did Paul mean when he wrote about the great conflict he was in for the believers?
2. Which cities were in the tri-city area for which Paul was praying? Had he met all of these believers personally?
3. List the three aspects of prayer that can be gleaned from this portion of Scripture.
4. Describe the conflict in prayer concerning a. the flesh b. the spiritual battle with the forces of evil
5. Paul prayed about the spiritual needs of the churches. What were these needs, specifically?



**Paul Warns and Instructs Against False Teaching**  
**Colossians 2:4-7**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. False teaching can be very persuasive.
2. There is protection against false teaching.

**Practical Application**

1. Let's write letters of encouragement to students away at college.
2. Let's practice the Lordship of Christ.

**Questions**

1. What was the false teaching in the Colossae area in the first century?
2. Describe what is meant by the dualistic concept. According to this teaching, how could a person be saved?
3. Describe another Gnostic teaching, one that resulted in self-indulgence.
4. State two means of protection against false teaching.
5. How does being thankful help us to be less vulnerable to false teaching?

## Answers

1. A mixture of Judaism and what later became known as Gnosticism. The deity of Christ was denied.
2. The spirit was good and matter was evil. Salvation (deliverance from the material world) was accomplished by moving up the “emanation” ladder. A person had to become a part of the elite esoteric knowledge of the Gnostic.
3. Some Gnostics said that since the body is evil, you can indulge it and do whatever you want, because it’s only the spirit that counts.
4. Encouragement and establishment in the faith
5. When we are discouraged, we are particularly vulnerable; therefore, being thankful helps us realize what we have in Christ.

## Discuss / Consider

1. How could you help a young person away from home to be steadfast in the faith?
  - a. “There is no hell, a good God would not send people to hell.”
  - b. “There are many roads to God, especially if you are sincere.”
  - c. “Christians should be wealthy in this world’s goods. After all, we are children of the King.”
2. How would you refute these false teachings?
  - a. “There is no hell, a good God would not send people to hell.”
  - b. “There are many roads to God, especially if you are sincere.”
  - c. “Christians should be wealthy in this world’s goods. After all, we are children of the King.”

## Challenge

1. Pause often to thank God for salvation and the true teachings of the faith. Never take salvation or biblical teachings lightly.

**Paul Warns Against World Views**  
**Colossians 2:8-10**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. Christ is supreme and all-sufficient.
  
2. Worldviews that are not Christ-centered are false.
  - a. Because they are empty
  
  - b. Because they are man-made
  
  - c. Because they are deceptive
  
  - d. Because they are basic

**Practical Application**

1. Don't be kidnapped by philosophies which are not Christ-centered.

**Questions**

1. What was the chief error in the false teaching in the first century in Colossae?
  
2. What verses that clearly show the supremacy of Christ and all-sufficiency of Christ. What needs to be added?
  
3. Define "philosophy."
  
4. How do our pre-suppositions and basic philosophies affect the way that we think and the way that we live?
  
5. Give illustrations of the empty, deceptive, man-made, and basic world-views that are not Christ-centered.



**Paul Warns Against the Dangers of Religious Legalism**  
**Colossians 2:11-17**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. Legalism is a distortion of biblical Christianity.
  - a. Legalism forgets our position in Christ.
  
  - b. Legalism forgets that the Law ended in Christ.
  
  - c. Legalism forgets that the enemy was conquered in Christ.

**Practical Application**

1. Let's not get hung up with legalism.

**Questions**

1. Judaism put an emphasis on OT laws. What happens when this emphasis is mixed with Christianity?
2. Why does legalism look so good?
3. What is the worst form of legalism?
4. How does Paul argue against legalism?
5. What happens when we keep a list of "don'ts"?
6. What does Romans 14 tell us about legalistic judgment of others?





**Paul Warns Against Mysticism and Asceticism**  
**Colossians 2:18-23**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

**1. Mysticism is not Christ-centered, but self-centered.**

**2. Asceticism is not taught in the Bible.**

**Practical Application**

**1. Let's be careful about spiritual experiences.**

**2. Don't think that you can become more spiritual through asceticism.**

**Questions**

1. What was Paul's concern for the Colossian Christians? Is this a concern today?

2. Define "mysticism." How did the Gnostics set forth this belief?

3. Should Christians be devoid of spiritual experiences? What are the dangers of spiritual experiences?

4. Who is the Head of the body (the church)?

5. Explain Colossians 2:21.

6. Define "asceticism." What is the inherent danger in asceticism? What is the biblical response to asceticism?

## Answers

1. He was concerned that the elements of false teaching would make their way into the truth, and the Colossians would end up with a distorted faith. Yes, it is for concern today.
2. Mysticism is the belief that direct knowledge of God, spiritual truth, and/or reality can be obtained through subjective experiences. The Gnostics encouraged the worship of angels.
3. No, experience has its place in Christianity. The danger is to want these feelings all of the time, so you begin to focus on spiritual experiences like visions and the dramatic spiritual gifts. As such, you depend less on the word of God and more on feelings.
4. Jesus Christ. He is the head; believers are the body (the church).
5. Jesus Christ. He is the head; believers are the body (the church).
6. Asceticism is the belief that salvation and/or sanctification comes through severe treatment of the body. It is a wrong idea of sanctification or becoming more spiritual. The biblical answer is to discipline oneself, but not according to asceticism. We do not keep our body under control by our own will power.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Review the definitions and recount the dangers of mysticism and asceticism. Discuss where these philosophies are around today in different forms.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Discuss the biblical principles for keeping fleshly indulgences in check. Remember that the purpose of keeping your body under control is not to merit salvation. So why is it important?

## Challenge

1. Maintain a close relationship with Christ to ward off false beliefs. Do you have a regularly scheduled time for serious Bible study?

**Victory Over Sin**  
**Colossians 3:1-5 Part One**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

**1. The biblical method of victory over sin is the RAM method.**

**R – Realize your position in Christ**

**A – Aspire to the things of heaven**

**M – Mortify your members on earth**

**Practical Application**

**1. Memorize and practice Romans 6:11 every day.**

**Questions**

1. Briefly outline the structure of the Book of Colossians.
2. What is the RAM method of victory over sin?
3. What is our spiritual position in Christ? Support with Scripture
4. Do Christians sin? Support your answer with Scripture.
5. Can we overcome sin by our own will power?



**Victory Over Sin: Priorities and Goals**  
**Colossians 3:1-5 Part Two**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

**1. The biblical method of victory over sin is the RAM method.**

**R – Realize your position in Christ**

**A – Aspire to the things of heaven**

**M – Mortify your members on earth**

**Practical Application**

**1. Get more involved in Christian service.**

**Questions**

1. Gnosticism: “You can do what you want with your body; only two things matter.” What were these two things?
2. List sins of the body to be overcome.
3. The biblical method of victory over sin is the RAM method. List the three steps.
4. Can mere humans have divine life?
5. What does it mean to aspire to something?
6. How do you die to self?

## Answers

1. The soul and the spirit
2. Colossians 3:5: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.
3. R – realize your position in Christ A – aspire to the things of heaven M – mortify your members on earth
4. Yes, by recalling your position in Christ – believers are forgiven sinners. Realize that your debt has been paid. See 2 Peter 1:3-4.
5. To seek something high and great; it has to do with the priorities in life, aligning them with your position in Christ. We are to think, as well as to be what we are.
6. By ruthlessly rejecting all habits and practices which are known to be wrong. See Matthew 5:29-30. This should affect all that we do.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Refer to 2 Corinthians 10:5. How can you bring your thoughts into obedience to Christ?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Are you still trying to overcome sin in your life by your own will power? Does it work? Consciously seek things above. What are things above?

## Challenge

1. Review your priorities and goals in life. Align them with your position in Christ. How involved are you in Christian service? Is this sufficient to keep you from sin?

**The Christ Life: Put Off the Old and Put on the New**  
**Colossians 3:5-10**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. We are to put off the old man and put on the new man.

**Practical Application**

1. Let's take off the old man hand-me-down clothes.

**Questions**

1. Which verses in this passage describe the Colossian Christians before they came to Christ?
2. Why is covetousness called idolatry?
3. What is meant by the old man? What is meant by the new man?
4. What is the old nature? What is the new nature?
5. What do Romans 8:4 and Galatians 5:16 tell us about the way we should walk?
6. What is malice?

## Answers

1. Colossians 3:5-7
2. Because something other than God has first place in your life.
3. The old man is all that we were apart from Christ before we were saved, when we were under the wrath of God. The new man is all that we have become in Christ – the change, a new life, empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit. We have been forgiven.
4. They tell us about the responsibility we have to walk after the spirit and not the flesh.
5. They tell us about the responsibility we have to walk after the spirit and not the flesh.
6. The attitude of wanting to harm another person (even through gossip).

## Discuss / Consider

1. Are you still hanging on to some of your old man and old nature ways? How can you rid yourself of the old man hand-me-down clothes?

2. The concepts of old/new man and old/new nature frequently appear in God's Word. Read Romans 8:4 and Galatians 5:16. Put your name into these verses. Check out Ephesians 4:20-24. Also put your name in Colossians 3:10.

## Challenge

1. Be sure that Christ is supreme, number one in your life. Is there anything that verges on idolatry in your life, taking Christ's place? If so, do something about it.



**Relating to Fellow Believers in Unity**  
**Colossians 3:9-11**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. We must relate to fellow believers.

**Practical Application**

1. This coming year reach out across the barriers we've mentioned to establish some new relationships in the Lord.

**Questions**

1. Relative to the Graeco-Roman culture, who were the barbarians and the Scythians?
2. What is the theme of Colossians?
3. How are we to relate to fellow believers? Describe, or diagram using concentric circles.
4. What kind of barrier does each of the following represent?
  - a. Greek / Jew
  - b. Circumcised / uncircumcised
  - c. Barbarian / Scythian
  - d. Bond / free

## Answers

1. Both were foreign to the Graeco-Roman culture; they were uncultured, and different from the Graeco-Roman economic-social bracket. The worst of the barbarians were wild, nomadic, and savage. Now some were becoming Christians, and a part of the church at Colossae, so they were to be accepted as brothers and sisters.
2. The supremacy and all-sufficiency of Christ.
3. We must relate with unity to overcome the barriers. a. Outside circle: relating to non-believers b. Middle circle: relating to fellow believers c. Inner circle: victory over sin in our personal lives
4. a. Racial barrier  
b. Religious background barrier  
c. Cultural differences  
d. Socio-economic status barrier

## Discuss / Consider

1. When we find it hard to get along with certain believers, should we isolate ourselves from them, and just keep on serving Christ in our own way?

2. Think of specific people in each of the barriers within your Christian sphere. How could you relate or reach out to each these people?

## Challenge

1. Are you ready to step outside your comfort zone to reach out to those who represent different barriers? Start in the circle nearest you.

**Relating to Fellow Believers in Grace and Love**  
**Colossians 3:12-17**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. We must relate to fellow believers.

**Practical Application**

1. Grade yourself on a Relating-to-fellow-believers report card.

**Questions**

1. What is the Greek origin of “bowels of mercy?”
2. What does it mean to translate Scripture literally and culturally?
3. Explain each of the following words in terms of relating to fellow-believers:
  - a. Christian graces, including forbearance (Colossians 3:12-13)
  - b. Love (Colossians 3:14)
  - c. Peace of God (Colossians 3:15)
  - d. Teaching (and admonishing and singing) (Colossians 3:16)
  - e. Thankfulness (Colossians 3:15, 17)
4. What is the key to good relationships?



**Family Relationships (Submission)**  
**Colossians 3:18-4:1**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. We must relate to God's authority structures.

**Practical Application**

1. Remember the model of our Lord Jesus as a teenager.

**Questions**

1. According to this passage, which categories of people were in the first century Colossian church?
2. What age were the "children" (Colossians 3:20)?
3. List the four authority structures through which God has chosen to channel His authority.
4. Define the word, "submit." Why do we have negative reactions to this word?
5. Does the phrase, "as is fitting in the Lord," excuse us from being subject to one another?
6. What is the best argument for children to obey their parents?
7. As authority figures, how should parents relate to their children?

## Answers

1. Wives, husbands, children, fathers, servants, and masters
2. Youth, pre-teens and teenagers
3. Family, church, state, and labor
4. To yield to governance or authority. We think of it as a “put-down,” or making us of lesser value. Such is not the case with God’s authority structure, for submission is not inferiority.
5. Not necessarily, but sometimes there is a higher authority. An example would be when a non-Christian husband gives a non-biblical command to his wife. She can refer to other lines of authority to which she is subject, such as the elders of the church.
6. Because it pleases the Lord.
7. They should not provoke their children, exasperate them, or nag them. Parents should be flexible, so as not to discourage their children, or make them lose their love for them, or become spiritless.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Re-read the portions of this passage that relate specifically to your role, and determine how you can fulfill that role biblically.

2. Do you find it difficult to submit to God’s authority structures? If so, why?

## Challenge

1. Determine to fulfill your role biblically, and to submit graciously to God’s authority structures.

**Relationships Between Slaves and Masters**  
**Colossians 3:22-4:1**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. We must submit to God's authority structures.

**Practical Application**

1. Let's not play favorites.

**Questions**

1. Review the five New Testament approaches to slavery as a part of the first century Roman Empire.
2. What is the underlying New Testament approach to the problem of slavery?
3. What is the source of all authority?
4. In the slave-master or employee-employer line of authority, review and discuss the meaning of:
  - a. "according to the flesh" (Colossians 3:22)
  - b. "not with eye service, as men pleasers" (Colossians 3:22)
  - c. "inheritance" (Colossians 3:24)
  - d. "just and fair" (Colossians 4:1)
5. Discuss the meaning of Colossians 3:25.

## Answers

1. New Testament approaches to slavery in the first century: a. slavery is neither prohibited nor promoted b. Christian slaves were not to revolt, but Christian masters were not prevented from releasing their slaves c. while the institution of slavery is not condemned in the New Testament, the abuses of it are strongly condemned id. f Christian masters followed New Testament directions concerning slaves, the employer-employee relationship would be good e. it was the outworking of New Testament Christian principles that finally led to the abolition of slavery, both in the Roman Empire and eventually in our own country.
2. Not revolution, but the gradual outworking of Christian principles, starting in the home.
3. All authority finds itself in God. There are times when authority is misused and abused, and even directed against God Himself, but only because God has allowed it. Even Satan's temporary authority derives from God.
4. a. In this line of authority, the area of labor. A Christian slave in the Colossian church could have been an elder or church leader, where the master could have been subordinate to the slave in the church.  
b. This means not just when the master is watching. The slave is serving Christ, even if the master is not a Christian. It means doing the right thing, even if a job is on the line. Submission is required as long as it does not counter God's principles  
c. Slaves would not get any earthly inheritance, but by submitting to the authority structures that God has designed, they will receive an inheritance and a reward.  
d. Masters (the boss in the labor force) are the authority figure. He is to be just and fair in payment, in work load, and in privileges.
5. Because there is not to be partiality, the authority figure will be repaid for doing wrong, as well as for doing right. This is true in all lines of authority.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Review your job (school, home) relationships. Do you submit to the authority structure? How pleasantly or how grudgingly do you submit?
2. Is your service to the Lord or to men? Are you more concerned with how the Lord views your work, or how man views what you do?
3. If you were asked by your supervisor (teacher, husband) to do something against God's principles, how would you respond? Cite some specific examples.

## Challenge

1. Are you just and fair in all of your relationships? Are you in line with what God expects from you? If not, determine to set things right.



**Redeeming the Time: Open Doors of Opportunity**  
**Colossians 4:2-6**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. We should be concerned about outsiders.

**Practical Application**

1. Let's put some moral bite into our talk with outsiders.

**Questions**

1. Describe the conditions of Paul's first imprisonment in Rome.
2. Interpret Colossians 4:6, "...let your speech...be seasoned with salt."
3. Recall the structure of this practical section of Colossians. Draw and label each of the concentric circles.
4. How are we to pray for outsiders (unbelievers)? See Colossians 4:2-4.
5. How are we to witness to unbelievers? See Colossians 4:5-6.
6. How are we to redeem the time? See Colossians 4:5.





## Answers

1. The book of Philemon
2. They are standards a product must meet before a company will release it to the public.
3. a) a beloved brother, b) a faithful minister, c) a fellow bond-servant
4. We are taught that salvation does not relieve us of our social obligations.
5. Make them right in the eyes of the Lord and with the person offended.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Review God's quality-control standards. Are they true in your life? Are you easy to be with? Are you helpful and dependable? Are you a true bond-slave of Jesus Christ? It is never too late to develop these qualities!

## Challenge

1. Are there sins in your life that you committed before you became a Christian that need to be dealt with? If so, deal with them according to biblical principles.

**The Conclusion of Paul's Letter to the Colossians**  
**Colossians 4:10-11**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. Failure is not final.

**Practical Application**

1. Your failure is not final.

**Questions**

1. What do we know about Aristarchus?
2. What do we know about Mark?
3. Who was Justus?
4. How was each of these brothers helpful to Paul?
5. Does failure have to be final?
6. How did Mark overcome failure?

## Answers

1. He was a fellow-prisoner with Paul. He likely voluntarily made himself a prisoner to help Paul by assisting him in his ministry.
2. Mark as a cousin of Barnabas. He wrote the gospel of Mark. On his first missionary journey with Paul, he quit and returned to Jerusalem (Acts 13:13).
3. He is mentioned only in Colossians 4:11. He changed his name to Justus, perhaps not to lower the name of Jesus. He was “of the circumcision,” a Jewish fellow worker.
4. They were a comfort and help to Paul as he labored in the gospel.
5. No. God can pick up the pieces and make something beautiful out of a life, any life.
6. Paul had refused to take Mark after he quit, and he was useless for a time. Then Mark proved himself, and was approved by Paul and by God Himself (2 Timothy 4:11). He was chosen to write, by inspiration of God, the gospel of Mark. The theme of Mark’s gospel, incidentally, is a servant.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Failure does not have to be final. Review how Mark overcame failure. Recall some area in your life where you have failed. By God’s strength you can overcome these failures.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Do you believe that God can make something beautiful of your life? Believe it! Discuss how God can take all things and work them together for God. The ultimate good is being conformed to the image of Christ. Praise God that He can do this with you.

## Challenge

1. Are you willing to submit yourself to help someone else in the ministry of the gospel of Christ? Think of specific ways in which you could do this (and with whom).

**Wrestling in Prayer**  
**Colossians 4:12-14**

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. Wrestling in prayer brings results.

**Practical Application**

1. Let's be people pray-ers like Epaphras.

**Questions**

1. What was the outstanding service of Epaphras?
2. Who was Luke?
3. Who was Demas? Would he be a model to follow? Explain.
4. For what did Epaphras pray specifically? What were the results?
5. What does it mean to labor earnestly in prayer?
6. Is it wrong to pray for programs, church buildings, finances, health, job situations, and the like?

## Answers

1. He labored fervently in prayer for the Colossian believers.
2. Paul's beloved physician, a Gentile. He joined Paul on his second missionary journey (see Acts 16:10). He was a faithful and productive Christian, writing much of the New Testament (Luke and Acts). He had a change of career, from doctor to missionary.
3. There was no commendation for him (perhaps a foreshadowing of his desertion). He would not be a model to follow because he was a deserter.
4. He labored in prayer for the church at Colossae. The Colossian believers did not capitulate to the false teaching around them, and they continued to grow spiritually.
6. No. But following the example of Paul and Epaphras, being people pray-ers rather than program pray-ers, would seem to bring more lasting results.

## Discuss / Consider

1. Have you ever labored earnestly in prayer? This is a wonderful habit to develop. How can you wrestle for a fellow believer's spiritual growth?

2. What does it mean to be a righteous person? See James 5:16. Should you expect your prayers to be effective?

## Challenge

1. Pray like Epaphras prayed. As you pray this week, keep track of your prayers. Then keep a record of when and how your prayers are answered.



**Paul's Signature and Benediction**  
Colossians 4:15-18

**Background**

**Doctrinal Points**

1. Every Christian is given a ministry to fulfill.

**Practical Application**

1. Fulfill your ministry.

**Questions**

1. Who was Nymphas?
2. Where did the churches meet during the first three centuries?
3. Where else was this letter to be read besides in Colossae?
4. What happened to the church at Laodicea?
5. Who was Archippus? What was he told to do?
6. What is the theme of the letter to the Colossians?

**Answers**

1. A godly person, probably living in Laodicea or Hierapolis.
2. In homes of the Christians.
3. In the Laodicean church.
4. They became lukewarm. Refer to Revelation 2:1-7.
5. Probably he was a son of Philemon. He was told to fulfill his ministry.
6. The supremacy and all-sufficiency of Christ.

**Discuss / Consider**

1. Is every Christian given a ministry to fulfill? If so, what is it?

2. Does everyone have a gift? Support your answer with Scripture. What is to be done with the gift? Consider your gifts. How are you using them for the Lord?

3. Recall the great theme of the epistle to the Colossians. What is the most influential thing you have learned from the book?

**Challenge**

1. Would you be willing to open your home on a regular basis for the Lord's work? Are you doing this now?