

Colossians

Inductive Bible Studies for Youth

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Colossians 1:1-2

- To whom is the book written and by whom?
- By what title does Paul describe himself?
- How do we know that Paul did not just confer this title on himself?
- Who was with Paul when he wrote to the Colossians?
- How did Paul describe the Colossian believers?
- Were these believers alive or were they dead, as some people think of saints?
- What does Paul wish to them from God?

Colossians 1:3-4

- To whom did Paul give thanks?
- Does the Bible ever give approval for seeking someone else in prayer? Why not?
- Whom was the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?
- We who believe in Jesus can also say God is our Father. So when Paul says God is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, does he mean it in the same way as us, or in a different way?
- If the people of Paul's day were thinking that Joseph who raised Jesus was His father, what might this phrase mean to them?
- What does Paul continuously do for them?
- For how many people do you pray continuously? For whom?
- Many of us pray regularly only for our families or close friends. Paul prayed for the Colossian believers whom he had never met. Why did he feel such a connection to them?
- Whom are some people you should be praying for even though you have never met them?
- When did Paul begin praying for the Colossian Christians?
- For what two good qualities were the Colossian believers known?
- For what good qualities is your local fellowship known?
- For what would you want it to be known?
- Is love for all other believers evident in your local fellowship?
- As much as it depends on you, how can you promote such love?

Colossians 1:5-8

- This faith and this love that the Colossian believers had was because of what?
- Why is the Gospel called the word of truth?
- What does the word “Gospel” mean? (Good news—it is translated that way in most common-language translations)
- Where was their hope laid up? Why not on earth?
- Many in the world had received the good news, but what made the Colossians different?
- In what ways is the good news bringing forth fruit in you? In your local fellowship?
- From what day did the good news bring forth fruit amongst the Colossians?
- Does this bringing forth of fruit appear to be a one-time or a continuous event?
- Who brought them the good news?
- How did Paul describe this man? Give two phrases.
- Paul was not the one to plant the Colossian church. Does it appear there was any jealousy on his part toward Epaphras?
- What had been Epaphras’ connection with the Apostle Paul?
- What words show that Paul considered Epaphras and himself to be laboring on the same team?
- How did Paul feel about Epaphras and his ministry?
- The Colossians loved one another “in the Spirit”. What does this mean?
- Can you give some examples of love in the Spirit in your local fellowship?

Colossians 1: 9-12

- What has Paul done for them since the day he first heard of their faith?
- What person or group of people have you heard about coming to faith in Christ, but you have never met them? Are you praying for them? If not, why not stop and do so right now? (Teacher, allow a time of prayer.)
- In the next couple of verses, what three-word phrase is repeated?
- This little phrase, “that you may” is followed by the requests that Paul was praying for them. What were these requests?
- Think about the concept of being filled with the knowledge of God’s will. How is this different than just knowing His will?
- If you were filled with the knowledge of God’s will, how would this affect your life?
- Would this be a good prayer to present to the Lord for your pastor, your teacher, and other Christian leaders? Why?

- Being filled with the knowledge of His will involves having an abundance of wisdom and spiritual understanding. How are these different? Why are both needed?
- The goal of having this wisdom is what? (Given after the second “that you may”)
- What is the ultimate goal of walking worthy of the Lord?
- Right now, what areas of your life does God bring to your mind that are not pleasing to Him?
- Paul prayed that the Colossians would be fruitful in what?
- In what good works are you fruitful? In what good works is your church fruitful?
- Paul prayed that the Colossians would increase in what?
- Looking back on your walk with the Lord in the past few years, do you feel you have been increasing, decreasing, or staying about the same in the knowledge of God?
- What does it mean to be “strengthened with all might”? What kind of strengthening and what kind of might is Paul talking about?
- According to whose power did Paul ask that they be strengthened?
- Do you consider God’s power glorious? In what ways? In what ways has He shown His power glorious in your life?
- For what did Paul want the Colossians to be strengthened?
- Why might they need these qualities?
- When and how do you need them?
- Longsuffering implies pain, suffering. How is longsuffering with joy possible? What does that look like?
- Do you know someone who has shown joy in the midst of suffering. Tell the class about it.
- To whom did Paul give thanks for doing these things?
- We are all sinners. How then are we qualified to partake with the saints in light?
- Does this verse imply an “us/them” mentality regarding the saints? Or are we rather regarded as “us”, that is all believers being saints?

Colossians 1:13-15

- To whom is the “who” in vs. 13 referring? Who has delivered us from the power of darkness?
- Does the “us” include us who are believers or all people? How do you know?
- What does this verse imply about believers before they came to Christ?
- What does it imply about those who are still outside of Christ?
- God is invisible. He cannot be seen. How then can Christ be said to be His image?
- Commentator Adam Clarke says the phrase “firstborn of all creation” was a Jewish term meaning the one who created or originated all things. The great commentator Matthew

Henry says the phrase is literally “begotten before all creation”, a scriptural term denoting “eternal”. Why do you think our modern English ears sometimes have trouble comprehending this phrase?

- The Jehovah’s Witnesses and some other cults say that this verse means Jesus was the first created being. From the context, how do you know that this interpretation cannot be correct?
- In whom do we have redemption?
- Who has this redemption?
- How do we get this redemption?
- Redemption is a noun. What is the verb form of this noun? (Redeem)
- What does the word “redeem” mean? (To buy back something that had come under the power of another)
- What does this redemption bring us?

Colossians 1:16-17

- Who is the “him” of verse 16, by whom all things were created? How do you know?
- Can you think of any other verses that also teach this?
- Think about this. What does this say about Jesus before He was born into our world?
- What does it say about Him before the creation of the universe?
- What two kinds of things did He create?
- What does this say about His relation to the spirit world?
- What does this say about His innate relation to the ruling powers both of the world and of the spirit world?
- What does “in Him all this consist” mean?
- What would these verses say to those who believe Jesus was a created being less than God?
- Knowing these things about Jesus Christ, what is an appropriate response to Him?
- Would you like to take a few minutes to worship Him right now? (Teacher, allow a time of individual or group prayer.)

Colossians 1:18-20

1:18

- Note that vs. 18 begins with the conjunction “and.” This shows that the verse is linked in thought to those that went before it. Look again at vs. 15-17 and find the first two “He is”s. Where are they & what do they tell that Christ is?
- What new thought is added in this verse that shows what else Christ is?
- Who is the head of the church?
- Some people think St. Peter was the head of the early church and that the Pope in Rome is the head of the church today? Why is this impossible according to vs. 18?
- What is the church also called?
- Whose body is it talking about?
- In what sense is Jesus the beginning?
- Can you think of any other related verses? (There could be many, but John 1:1-3 is one passage you might consider.)
- We again come to that Jewish phrase, “firstborn”. How is it used in this case?
- What does it mean that Jesus is the firstborn from the dead? (He rose first from the grave, and we will all later rise someday in the resurrection.)
- What is the goal of all this?
- What does it mean to have preeminence?
- In how many things is Jesus to have preeminence?
- Some people call the mother of Jesus titles that imply that she might have preeminence in heaven (Queen of Heaven, Mediatrix of all Graces, Queen of Angels, Mother of God, Mother of All Consolation, etc.) How do we know that she does not have preeminence but that Jesus does?
- What people or things do you give preeminence in your life?
- What do you need to change so that Christ has preeminence?
- What would the life of a person look like if Christ had preeminence?

1:19

- What pleased the Father?
- In whom is all fullness to dwell?
- How does all fullness dwell in Christ?

1:20

- Who will reconcile all things to God?

- What does it mean to be reconciled? (For peace & friendship to be restored, a good relationship to be restored after it was broken)
- Notice one little two-word prepositional phrase is repeated twice just in this one verse. God must want to emphasize this point. What is that phrase?
- Can anyone be reconciled to God in any way other than through Christ? How do you know?
- Some of those Christ has reconciled are on earth and some are where?
- Some Bible scholars think that by “things in heaven”, Paul was referring to those who died in Old Testament times in faith looking forward to the Savior who would come. One thing is sure. No matter where a believer is or when he lived, if he was reconciled to God it was through what?
- What did Christ use to make our peace with God?

Colossians 1:21-23

1:21

- Before we came to Christ, what was our past condition before God?
- Note that our former enmity to God was both inner and outer. What words show the inner enmity and what shows the outward enmity?
- Do you think most people who have not yet come to Christ realize that they are enemies of God? Why or why not?
- What noun can you see in the verb alienated? What does the word “alien” mean? (One who does not belong, an outsider)
- Why might someone think they belong to God, when without Christ, God considers them as an outsider, one who does not belong to His family & His kingdom?
- What does it mean that God has reconciled us to Himself in Christ?

1:22

- How did Jesus do this?
- How will Jesus present us to God?
- What three verbs are used to describe how we will be when Jesus presents us to God? Are they different, or are the synonyms used to reinforce one another and emphasize the meaning?
- Could you ever present yourself to God by yourself in this way?

1:23

- What is the only thing you need to do for Christ to present you in this way to God?

- How does Paul describe someone who continues in the faith?
- Again Paul uses three verbs to describe this—two positive and one negative. What are these verbs? To what extent do they describe you and your faith?
- What do we know about the Gospel from this verse? Name three things.
- In what sense was the Gospel preached in that time to every creature under heaven?
- Do what degree can we say that the Gospel has been proclaimed to every creature in our own generation?
- What groups do you know of who have had the least opportunity to hear the Gospel?
- What can we do to enable them to hear?
- Of what has Paul become a servant?
- Of what are you a servant? How happy are you about that servanthood? Would you prefer to be a servant of something else? If so, what? What hinders you from the servanthood you desire?

Colossians 1:24-27

1:24

- For whom was Paul suffering?
- How was he suffering for them since he had never met them?
- How did he feel about these sufferings?
- What does Paul mean by “completing in my flesh whatever remains of Christ’s sufferings”? We know Christ’s suffering was complete and perfect (see Hebrews 10:10, for example), so what can this mean?
- For whose sake did Paul endure suffering?
- What suffering are you willing to endure for the sake of the church?

1:25

- For whom had Paul received a stewardship from God?
- Paul was not the pastor nor the founder of the Colossian church, so what did his stewardship for them involve?
- What did Paul want to fulfill?

1:26

- What had been hidden for ages & generations?
- To whom was this mystery revealed at that time?

1:27

- “To them” refers to whom?
- Whom does the great mystery involve? (the Gentiles)
- What two magnificent words does Paul use to describe this mystery?
- What is our hope of glory?
- What does it mean that Christ is in us?

Colossians 1:28-29

1:28

- Whom was it that the Apostle Paul and his associates proclaimed?
- What were the Apostle Paul’s two ministries toward everyone he knew?
- With what did Paul teach Christ? How did he get this wisdom?
- Why did he have need of wisdom as he taught Christ?
- What was Paul’s goal in his ministry?

1:29

- How difficult was this ministry? How does Paul’s description of his ministry help you to understand this?
- What shows you that Paul was not depending on his own power to accomplish this?
- How does Paul’s intensity in pursuing his ministry compare to your attitude toward the ministries God has given you?

Colossians Chapter 1 Review

- What are some of the main themes we have seen in chapter 1?
- What have we learned about Jesus Christ?
- What new thoughts has God given to you?
- How will you respond to what God is teaching you in this chapter?

Looking forward to Colossians Chapter 2

A good reader from the group should read the entire chapter out loud as group members follow along. The reader should give each verse number to help any who might lose their places along the way.

Then, considering the passage as a whole, consider:

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- Note which verses start with connecting words, showing they are connected in thought to preceding ideas. What connecting words are used?
- Note where the sentences begin and end. Look for the periods and then work backward to find the beginning of each sentence.
- Which sentences are imperative (commands)? What commands are given?
- How does chapter 2 continue the ideas you first saw in chapter 1?

Now let's explore Colossians 2 verse by verse.

Colossians 2:1-3

2:1

- "For" is a connective word, linking these thoughts to those that preceded at the end of chapter one. How are the thoughts of 2:1 logically related to those at the end of chapter one?
- What word is used to describe Paul's labor and concern for the believers in Colosse as well as those in Laodicea?
- Had Paul yet met these believers? Why did he feel such a concern for them and such a connection with them?

2:2

- What did Paul wish for them?
- How does Paul describe the knowledge of God?
- Whom is specifically mentioned as being God?

2:3

- In whom do we find all treasures of wisdom and knowledge?

2:4

- What did Paul fear?

- What teachings today use persuasive words but give wrong teachings?
- How does this verse show that believers can be deceived by persuasive sounding teachings that are not in line with God's Word?

2:5

- Was Paul there with the Colossian believers? How do you know?
- What does it mean that Paul was with them in spirit?
- What about these believers brought joy to Paul?
- How do you think you can tell if someone's faith is steadfast? Is yours steadfast? What would be the opposite of a steadfast faith?

2:6

- What had these believers already done? Do you know for sure that you have received Christ personally? When and how did that happen for you?
- What do you think it means to walk in Christ?
- Think about the motion of walking. It is active, demanding effort on our part, yet slow and continuous. How does this describe the Christian life?

2:7

- This verse describes the manner in which we walk in Christ. It is kind of like the background. What images does the word "rooted" bring to your mind.
- How are we rooted in Christ?
- Just as roots go down deep into the soil, something is also seen above ground. What words describe this?
- In what or in whom is your personal faith rooted? Is that where you want it to be rooted?

- Think about the verbs “built up” and “established.” Do you think they mean the same thing or do they have different meanings?
- How do these verbs apply to faith in Christ?
- To what extent do they describe you and your faith?
- How did the Colossian believers get this faith?
- “Abounding” is a verb that means to be full to overflowing. To what extent does that describe your faith?
- How do you think the phrase “with thanksgiving” relates to the thought of this verse?

2:8

- What should the believers beware of?
- What kind of philosophy is being referred to? What clues does the text give?
- What kinds of philosophies today could we mention that seem to be similar in spirit?
- When we think of being cheated, we often think of losing money or goods. If we allow ourselves to be cheated by these philosophies, what would we be losing?
- Think about the phrase “empty deceit”. What do these words imply to you?
- When Paul writes about “the basic principles of the world”, he cannot be talking about the physical principles of the universe, as in science, for God instituted those principles at creation. What, then, do you think he means?
- Does the phrase “and not according to Christ” give you any clue about what Paul is warning against? How does this phrase help?

2:9

- Look at the phrase “in Him.” The pronoun “Him” refers back to whom? (in vs. 8)

- Look at the verb “dwells.” Is this describing a one-time action or a continuous action? How is that significant?
- What does it mean that “all the fullness of the Godhead” is dwelling in Jesus?
- What does it mean that this fullness is dwelling there bodily?

2:10

- In whom are believers complete?
- What does it mean to be complete?
- How is the teaching that we are complete in Christ different from popular teaching that we are complete on our own?
- Christ is the head of all what?
- Headship implies legitimate authority. What does this imply about Christ’s relationship with the spirit world?
- What two words are used here to describe the spirit world of both good angels and bad?
- What do these words bring to your mind? How do you understand them?
- What significance could it have for our lives that Jesus is the head of all principality and power?

2:11

- The “circumcision of Christ” refers back to the practice God gave the Jews of cutting off the foreskin of the penis of male babies on the eighth day after birth. This was considered a sign that they belong to God’s people. Think about what is different about the kind of “circumcision” that is described here.
 - Here it is not flesh, but what that is cut off?
 - Here the cutting is not by hands, but how?

- Here the “circumcised” belong not to the Jewish people, but to what group?
- In whom were believers circumcised?

2:12

- Just as circumcision was a sign that marked Jewish males, what sign marks believers in Jesus?
- How is baptism described and why do you think that term is chosen? What does it describe?
- In baptism we are buried with Christ and also are.....?
- How is this work accomplished?
- We know that the power that works in us believers is very great because what did it already do?

2:13

- What was our spiritual condition before we came to Christ?
- What caused our spiritual death? What is it associated with according to this verse?
- From vs. 13, can you name two positive changes that come with faith in Christ?
- What synonym for sin is used in this vs.? (A word that has about the same meaning)
- How many of our sins were forgiven when we came to Christ?

2:14

- What did Jesus take away and nail to the cross?
- This verse speaks of a “handwriting of requirements which was against us”. What is this more commonly called? (Answer: God’s Law, which contains His just requirements)
- God’s rules are always for our good when we keep them. How, then can God’s Law be against us? (Answer: Nobody keeps it, and this condemns us.)

2:15

- Whom has Jesus disarmed?
- If a robber is armed, will you be afraid? What if he is disarmed and you have a strong guard?
- Since Jesus has disarmed the ruling spirits, what need is there for believers to fear them?

- If we need not fear even the ruling spirits because Jesus has defeated them, what about the lesser demons?
- How did He make a spectacle of them? (Answer: He cast them out of individuals by His power, and then, when they had done the worst they could do to Him by causing Him to be crucified, He rose again from the dead, showing to all the world that they had no power over Him.)

2:16

- In what matters should Christians avoid judging one another?
- The connecting word “so” shows that this command is a result of something that has just been said. What is it a result of?

2:17

- How are matters like special days and festivals described? With what are they compared? What does this mean?
- What does it mean that Christ is the substance? The substance of what?
- This verse gives the answer to why many or most Christians no longer observe the feasts and special days of the Old Testament. If someone asked you why most of us do not observe these feasts which were given by God, using this verse as a base for your thoughts, what would you say?

2:18

- What is the believer admonished to do?
- What reward is the author Paul talking about?
- How could someone cheat a believer of his reward according to this verse?
- What is humility? What is false humility?
- This verse might seem to imply that everything that is called humility is not really so. Why?

- This verse mentions taking delight in worship of angels. According to God's law, is worship of angels ever permitted? (See Exodus 20:1-2)
- Why is it not permitted?
- So, if someone is worshiping angels, what kind of angels would he be worshiping? (Good or Bad, Fallen or Unfallen)
- The verb "intruding" implies forcing one's way into someplace he should not be, someplace where it is unlawful for him to be, as a robber intrudes into a home. Into what were some intruding?
- Can you give an example of this kind of thing today? (Those who seek secret or occult knowledge, going to shrines or fetish priests or diviners to get hidden information)
- What is wrong with seeking this kind of secret information from angels?
- What is the end result of seeking this kind of occult knowledge?

2:19

- If someone calls on angels for knowledge, what is he not holding fast to?
- Who is the Head of the church? (See Ephesians 4:15.)
- From the Head, what grows?
- How are believers described in their place in the body?
- What is the purpose of joints and ligaments in the human body?
- What does this imply about our usefulness in the body of Christ?
- What action is the body involved in?
- Who ultimately is causing this growth?

- God ultimately is causing the growth, but he gives all of us important parts in it. How do you feel about this partnership between you and God?

2:20

- We are looking at a single sentence that covers more than one verse. The sentence begins in verse 20. Can you find where it ends? (Let the students try. It ends at the end of verse 22, so it is three verses long.)
- What kind of a sentence is it? (Interrogative—it is a question. Note the question mark at the end of verse 22.)
- Can you find the word that introduces the question in verse 20? (Why?)
- The basic idea of the question can be found here in verse 20. What is it?
- This is a very complicated sentence. Although the question itself begins with the word “why,” there is another phrase before the question that is also a part of the sentence. It begins with a joining word. Can you find the joining word? (Therefore.) What does this word mean or what does it do in the sentence? (It joins the question that follows with the thought that just preceded.)
- The verse begins with “Therefore, if...” The word “if” in Greek often does not imply uncertainty. It can mean “if this is true, and it is..., then...” What other word might the translator have used that would have captured this meaning? (Since)
- With whom had the believers died in a sense?
- From what had they died?
- This phrase, “from the basic principles of the world” is much like another phrase we saw earlier in the chapter. Can you find it?
- What are these basic principles of the world?
- *The* phrase “as though living in the world” is inserted into the question. What does this phrase have to do with the question?

- What kind of regulations should the believer not subject himself to? (Look ahead at verse 21.)
- What is wrong with subjecting oneself to regulations of this type?

2:21

- What three actions characterized the regulations of which Paul was speaking?
- Had God given some regulations like that in the Old Testament? (Yes.)
- What similar regulations are found in your culture today?

2:22

- What were two other characteristics of these regulations?

2:23

- These kind of regulations have what kind of appearance?
- Think about the term “self-imposed religion.” What is wrong with religion that is self-imposed? How does it differ with true godly religion?
- What is humility? Is it a positive trait or a negative one?
- What is false humility? What is it always negative?
- Paul says that these regulations also involved “neglect of the body”. Why would someone neglect the body? How could you neglect your body? What would be wrong with this?
- Some groups in Paul’s time had the idea that only the spirit was good, but the body was evil. What is wrong with this thinking? Who made our bodies? What did God say about our bodies after He made them?
- Against what are these kind of regulations no value?

- What do you see as some of the most valuable teachings of chapter 2? Why are these teachings valuable?
- What questions have arisen in your mind as you have read chapters 1 & 2?

3:1

- What command is given in this verse?
- What condition is given in this verse?
- Can you give an example of seeking those things which are above?
- Compare this verse with Jesus' own teaching in Matthew 6:19-21 and 6:31-33. What similar points are made?
- What does this verse teach us about Jesus' position after His resurrection?
- Sculptors of some Christian traditions have imagined Mary as the Queen of heaven, sometimes with the baby Jesus on her lap ruling with her. There is no scriptural support for such an idea, of course. What does this verse seem to say about the idea of Mary ruling as Queen of heaven?
- What does sitting at the right hand of God symbolize? (Authority, God's approval)
- Think about the verb "seek". How much activity does this word imply? What other words might have been used that would give about the same meaning (synonyms)?
- What other things do people commonly seek besides God's kingdom?
- What are you seeking in your life?

3:2

- On what are we instructed to set our minds?
- Is this a statement, a question, or a command?

- Since it is a command, doesn't this imply that our minds are something over which we have the ability to exercise control? Why?
- How would you advise someone who seriously wanted to set his mind on things above? Is there any practice he should take up? Anything he should be sure to do or to stay away from?

3:3

- Where have you previously seen the concept that the believer died in Christ? (2:20)
- Where is the believer's life hidden? What does this mean to you?

3:4

- Who is our Life as believers?
- We have already seen how we were identified with Christ in His death. In what other wonderful way will we be identified with him in the future?
- What does it mean that we will appear with Him in glory?

3:5

- What are we to do with our "members on the earth"?
- These members are defined as evil practices that are common amongst those who do not know Christ. What five practices are mentioned?
- What does it mean that we should put to death these practices?
- What is another name for covetousness? How is this true?
- Most or all of these practices are sexual practices, attitudes and desires in one way or another. Have you asked Jesus to rule over this area of your life?
- What is fornication? (Engaging in any sexual practice before marriage)

- What is uncleanness in regard to sexual practices? (Any disgusting sexual practice—for example, sex with animals, anal sex, or group sex)
- What is passion? (Allowing sexual desire to fill and control you so that you become inclined to obey it rather than God)
- What is evil desire? (Desiring any practice which God does not approve)
- What is covetousness? (Setting your heart on something God has not given to you.)
- People may covet anything, of course, but look at the sexual part of the commandment in the Ten Commandments. Compare Exodus 20:17. What do you notice?

3:6

- How are those called who do not know Christ? How is this an appropriate title?
- What is coming on the sons of disobedience?
- Is this coming a possibility or is it a sure fact?
- Compare this terrible fact with the reality expressed in Romans 5:9, I Thessalonians 1:10 and 5:9. What is true about the wrath of God for the believer in Jesus?

3:7

- Were believers any better than others before coming to Christ?
- What was our lifestyle like and what were our desires like before coming to Christ?

3:8

- What five traits or practices is the believer commanded to put off?
- What is implied by the phrase “you yourself”? (It implies that believers already have the power in them to do it, because the power of Christ lives in them. They don’t need to pray that God will do it for them, but they themselves need to exercise the power they have in Christ to do it.)

- Anger, wrath and malice are related or similar words. How is each slightly different from the others?
- Think about the fact that the list begins with three practices related to anger. What does this suggest?
- The last two terms—blasphemy and filthy language—are also related. How are they alike? How are they different?
- Which of these are or have been the biggest problem for you?
- Which of these has God already removed from your life? How did that happen?

3:9

- What one very common sin is singled out in this verse?
- What is lying? Can you give an example from home? From school? From church? Amongst friends?
- What is the opposite of lying?
- Why is it sometimes hard to say the truth? Why is lying such a big temptation?
- Notice that lying is not mentioned in a list, but all by itself? Why do you think the author set it off by itself?
- Why should Christians avoid lying to one another?

3:10

- What is the new man?
- What does it mean that as believers we are renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created us?

3:11

- In Christ many barriers are broken down. What are some of these barriers?
- The first two groups mentioned—Greek & Jew, circumcised & uncircumcised, seem to be the same or at least very similar ways of saying basically the same thing. Why might the author have repeated this particular barrier twice? What do you think?
- The division between Jews & non-Jews (Gentiles) was a God-given distinction (see Genesis 12:3). Why do you think it is significant that even this distinction was broken down in Christ?
- If this barrier is broken down in Christ, what does this mean in the church?
- Barbarian & Scythian had to do with national and cultural barriers. How do we see these broken down in the church?
- Slave or free had to do with economic barriers and barriers related to a person's position in society. In the Roman world of Bible times, slavery was very common and thus a huge percentage of the population lived as slaves. Yet what unusual thing happened in the church?
- When Paul says "but Christ is all and in all", he is contrasting life in Christ with life outside Christ where all these various barriers divide people and rule their lives. Can you describe this contrast? Have you seen groups included in Christian fellowship that would naturally be at odds with each other on the outside?
- What barriers between people is Christ breaking down in your church?

3:12

- In what three ways does Paul describe believers?
- "Elect" means "chosen". See _____. How do you feel knowing that God has chosen you as His own?
- "Holy" means "set apart for God." Would someone looking at your life know that you have been set apart for God? How would he know?

- What other word do you see in the word “beloved”? How does it help you to know that you are loved by God?
- What five positive qualities are we to put on as believers?
- “Tender mercy” carries the idea of showing compassion because we care. When might a believer use this quality?
- What do we show a person who shows kindness? (Kind) This is a quality we can use in our everyday relations with everyone we meet. Can you give an example?
- What do we show a person who shows humility? (Humble) Humility is showing a true and not an exaggerated opinion of oneself. Can you give an example?
- When a person shows meekness we say he is what? (Meek) Meekness is accepting one’s position in life and using it wisely without anger. Can you give an example?
- What two other words do you see in the word “longsuffering”? The idea is that one can endure much hardship or mistreatment without becoming angry and responding inappropriately. How could this trait be of value in a person’s life?

3:13

- With what three letters does the first verb end in verse 13? (ing) This means it is a present participle, showing that one action is going on at the same time another is. While we are showing the traits we just discussed, we will be also be doing what?
- What circumstances in life can happen where we may have a need to bear with one another?
- What verb gives the second present participle of the sentence (forgiving). While we are doing all that preceded, we are also forgiving one another, and while we are forgiving one another, we are also showing all the qualities we have been discussing. It is all like part of one big package that cannot be separated.
- When does the verse say we should forgive one another?

- What are some common complaints youth your age have against others that they need to forgive?
- Why are we asked to forgive one another?

3:14

- What else are we to put on above all?
- How is love described? Why do you think it is described as such?

3:15

- What two instructions or admonitions are found in verse 15?
- How can the peace of God rule in our hearts?
- How does this verse show that it is not enough to change our outer behavior only?
- How can being thankful help the peace of God to rule in my heart?
- What does it mean when it says that we are called in one body?

3:16

- What is the believer admonished to allow (let) in his life?
- How do we hear the Word of Christ?
- What does it mean that we not only hear the Word, but that it dwells (lives) in us?
- To what degree is this to happen?
- How does the phrase “in all wisdom” mean?
- Who is to teach and admonish whom?
- Notice the ing construction at the end of the verb teaching. Do you remember what this means?

- What is the manner in which we teach and admonish one another? What do we use to do this?
- Three different kinds of songs are mentioned. What are they?
- Psalms simply means “songs,” but here it refers to singing the psalms of the Bible. Do you know songs that are really words of Scripture? What ones?
- Hymns are Christian songs composed by human beings. Today both the old hymns of the hymnal (song book), and the more modern recent worship songs fall into this category. Can you think of some hymns that are really good for teaching and admonishing?
- It is not absolutely clear how spiritual songs are different from the other two groups. This may be just a synonym Paul used to make sure they got the idea. Some people think this refers to a spontaneous kind of group singing in which the Holy Spirit guides individuals in a group so that they sing together different tunes that fit together in a beautiful whole. Have you ever experienced this kind of singing? It is also possible that it refers to some other kind of music common amongst the early Christians that is not known to us. Spiritual songs may also be a summary phrase including all kinds of God-honoring music of all genres.
- When we sing, besides teaching and admonishing one another, to whom are we really singing?
- What would be an example of singing with grace in our hearts as opposed to not singing with grace in our hearts?

3:17

- How is the believer admonished to conduct his daily life?
- Is it only religious activities that are to be done in the name of the Lord? How much of our daily activities are to be done in His name?
- Through whom are we to give thanks?

- Notice the ing construction on giving. Do you remember what this means?

3:18

- Who is addressed in this verse and what are they commanded to do?
- Wives are not commanded to submit to every man, but only to whom?
- Even if a husband is very kind, listens to and considers his wife's ideas, can you think of a time when she may need to submit to him?

3:19

- How are husbands commanded to relate to their wives?
- What are some ways a husband might show love in a marriage?
- What are some ways you have seen in which husbands fail to show love?
- What emotion are they to avoid toward their wives?
- Why might a husband become bitter towards his wife?

3:20

- What are children commanded to do in relation to their parents?
- In how many things are they to do this?
- How does God view this?

3:21

- What are fathers to avoid?
- How might a father provoke his children?
- What is the result when children are often provoked?

3:22

- Bondservants refers to slaves. Slavery was very common in the Roman world. Note that Paul addresses bondservants “according to the flesh”. What does this imply?
- What was to be the response of servants to their masters?
- They were obey, but not merely with “eyeservice”. What two words do you see in this one word? What does it mean?
- Can you give an example of obeying with eyeservice?
- They were to obey, but not as men-pleasers. Again, note that two words are joined to make a new one. What does it mean to be a “men-pleaser”?
- In contrast to doing eyeservice as men-pleasers, how were believing servants to fulfill their responsibilities?
- Can you give an example of this kind of service?

3:23

- How is the Christian servant to serve?
- Whom is he really serving?

3:24

- Who will ultimately reward the believer?
- Whom are we really serving?

3:25

- What if someone does wrong?
- Will God ever show partiality in His punishment or discipline?
- Do you think these verses approve slavery, or do they merely give instructions to those caught up in that system? (Remember, Christians were a minority in the Roman world and

had no political power. They lived under the repressive regime and absolute rule of Caesar, the Roman ruler.)

- What has been of most interest to you and what has helped you most in chapter 3?

4:1

- Not only slaves, but also whom are given instructions for their relationships?
- The master was the boss, so to speak, but what restrictions were placed on him?
- What does this say about the Bible's view of the human dignity of different social classes?
- What might be "just and fair" in regard to a servant?
- What must the master keep in mind as he decides what is just and fair?
- The master also has a Master in heaven. What principle do you think this teaches us?

4:2

- What command is given to all believers in verse 2?
- When Paul urges them to continue earnestly in prayer, what does this imply?
- What does the adverb "earnestly" add to the command?
- We are commanded to be vigilant or watchful in it, that is, in prayer. How can we do this?
- As we pray, what is also to be included?

4:3

- What personal prayer request did Paul make?
- Who else was included in the pronoun "us"?
- What did Paul want to speak?

- Why was Paul in chains?
- What does this tell you about when and where he wrote the book?
- If you were chained in jail, what would be your first prayer requests? How would you be using your time?

4:4

- What did Paul want to make manifest (open and visible to all)?
- Why “ought” Paul to speak of the mystery of Christ?
- What ought you to speak about?

4:5

- What command is given to believers in verse 5?
- Who are “those who are outside”? Outside of what?
- Does “walk” imply a one-time action or a continuous action? Why is this important?
- How can we walk in wisdom toward outsiders as Paul commanded?
- How can we redeem the time in regard to them?
- How wisely are you using your time and opportunities to share the good news with the lost? What is one area where you could improve? Will you ask God’s help now for that specific area?

4:6

- What part of the life of the believer is addressed next in verse six?
- What is speech like that is with grace, seasoned with salt?
- What is speech like that is without grace and not seasoned?

- What is the result of this speech?
- Paul speaks of “answering”. What does this imply?
- What parts of your speech need grace and seasoning? Will you ask God’s help with these now?
- How are you at answering questions about the faith? Can you think of two or three ways you could grow stronger in this?

4:7

- Who was Paul sending to deliver personal messages to the Colossian believers?
- What qualified him to take these messages to the believers for Paul?
- Do you think your local church leaders would describe you as “faithful”? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Paul chose not to write this personal news in his letter?

4:8

- For what other two purposes was Paul sending Tychicus?
- How would you try to comfort the heart of another believer?

4:9

- Who else was Tychichus bringing with him?
- What do we know about Onesimus?
- Why do you think Paul sent out workers in pairs?

4:10

- What other Christian was also imprisoned with Paul?
- Who else sent greetings to the Colossians?

- How did Paul ask them to receive Mark?

4:11

- Who was another one who sent greetings?
- What was unique about these people?
- What had they done for the Apostle Paul?

4:12

- What does Paul mean when he says that Epaphras is one of you?
- How is Epaphras described in relation to Christ? (Explain: A bondservant is one who, out of love willingly chooses to remain with and serve his master, even though he could be freed.) How is this a fitting description of our relationship to Christ?
- Epaphras was not physically present with the believers at Colosse. Yet how did he labor on their behalf?
- How earnestly do you labor in prayer on behalf of your local fellowship?
- What was the object of Epaphras' prayers for the believers?

4:13

- Of what did Paul bear witness concerning Epaphras?
- What other groups of believers were of special concern to Epaphras?
- For whom do you have a great zeal? Why? How is this zeal shown?

4:14

- Who else greets them?
- What do we know about these people?

4:15

- What two groups does Paul ask them to greet?
- Where was one of the churches meeting?
- Is it always necessary to have a church building?
- What do you think the Apostle Paul would say to a believer who refused to meet with other believers because the church was meeting in a house rather than in a building of its own?

4:16

- What did Paul ask the Colossian believers to do with this epistle after it had been read amongst them?
- Why do you think he asked them to do this?
- How does this show wise stewardship of the spiritual resources they had?
- How could you make wider use of the spiritual resources you have?

4:17

- What message did Paul ask them to convey to Archippus?
- How is this message along the same line as that given in verse 16?
- What ministry have you received in the Lord? What are you doing to fulfill it?

4:18

- Paul often dictated his letters to a secretary called an amanuensis. However, what personal touch did he add at the end of this letter?
- How could they remember his chains?

- What is Paul's final wish for them?
 - What themes and ideas from chapter 4 have been most meaningful or most helpful to you?
 - What especially challenges you from the book of Colossians?
 - What would you like to learn more about?
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