

A CHRIST-CENTRED LIFE

HOPE LIFE FAITH
PRAYER WORD BASED FAITH-IN-ACTION
HOLY SPIRIT-INSPIRED CHRIST-CENTERED

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

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Family of Churches

A Study of Colossians

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

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CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Our theme for 2020 is: *Christ our perfect vision.*

2020 is not like the previous years. We believe that this year God wants us to see Him clearly in our lives and in the lives of the people that we share this world with.

When someone has 20-20-vision, it means he or she has perfect vision. We know that the world and all its busyness, it's demand and temptations blur our vision of who God is. We struggle to see clearly where God is working and where He wants us to share with Him in His work. Therefore, we need to work on our vision of Him.

Jesus Christ is the way, and the truth and the life and no one can come to the Father but through Christ. One of the pillars of our church is the fact that we say we are ***Christ-centred.***

To become more Christ-centred we need to know Christ better. We pray that studying the letter of Paul to the church in Colossae will give us a clear vision of who Christ is and what He came to do for us and what it means to live a Christ-centred life.

Colossians was written by Paul to Christians in Colossae and was intended to be shared with their neighbouring church in Laodicea. Paul defended the Gospel and argues that God has revealed everything in Jesus Christ, and that Christ and Christ alone is the heart of the gospel message.

The letter contains incredible truths about who Jesus is and what God has done for us through Christ.

We pray that by studying this letter we will grow in our understanding of who Jesus is and that by this clearer picture of who He is, we will live more Christ-centred lives.

Deo Gloria – To God all the Glory!!

A CHRIST-CENTRED LIFE

Week **1**

Christ our Redeemer

Memory verse:

...He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:13-14 (NIV)



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Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 1

Before we study the book of Colossians, it is important to understand the background of the letter. Therefore it is a good idea to read through the whole of Colossians in one sitting.

Colossae is in the western part of Turkey, situated in a valley close to the towns of Hierapolis and Laodicea. By Paul's time the town had diminished in importance, but the valley in which it was situated was very important. There were hot springs in the surrounding mountains, which were made white by mineral deposits.

Colossae was on a major trade route from Ephesus to the Euphrates and had a very mixed population. Travellers from all over the world made their home there. This meant that the town had many different religions and there was no dominant faith.

Because of this religious culture, Paul is writing to the church in Colossae to support their faith. They are

confronted with false teachings and religious beliefs and Paul wants to confirm the supremacy of Christ.

Paul never explicitly describes the false teaching he opposes in his letter, but it can be deduced from the statements he made in opposition to the false teachers. The main elements of these false teachings were:

- Ceremonialism: It held to strict rules about the kinds of permissible foods and drink and religious festivals and circumcision.
- Ascetism: It asked for severe self-discipline and avoiding of all forms of indulgence. “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”
- Angel worship
- Deprecation of Christ
- Secret knowledge. The Gnostics boasted that they had secret knowledge.
- Reliance on human wisdom and tradition.

Like the church in Colossae, we are daily confronted with false teachings. What helps you to stay true to your faith?

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 2: Paul's prayer

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Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 1:3-14

Paul opened his epistles with an expression of thanksgiving for the church. Although he has never seen or met the congregation of Colossae, he thanks God for them.

Read Colossians 1:3-5

How often does Paul pray for the congregation? How often do you pray for your congregation? And for the church in the world?

Paul thanks Father for the congregation. What are the things that he is thankful for?

Read Colossians 1:5-8 and Titus 1:2

After thanking Father for the Colossian Christians' maturity in Christ, Paul gives the reason for their growth. What is the reason for their spiritual growth?

Hope provided the basis for Christian growth since the most basic elements of faith toward God and love toward others grew out of hope. Without hope there is no reason for faith or love, and everything is directed at us and our world.

Read Colossians 1:9-14

Paul prayed with a goal in mind. The purpose of the prayer is "that you may live a life worthy of the Lord." What are the characteristics of such a life?

You are not saved by wisdom and understanding, but maturing wisdom leads to a growing relationship with Father. That is why growth is so important.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Talk to Him about your life. Ask Him to make your life worthy of Him.

Day 3: Christ makes you acceptable for His Kingdom

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Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 1:12-14

There are three very important things that happened because Christ sacrificed Himself for us, namely:

- Christ makes us acceptable for His Kingdom;
- Christ sets us free, and
- Christ brings us into His Kingdom.

That gives us good reason to praise His Name and to thank Him.

Read Psalm 51:5 and Romans 3:23

What does these verses teach us about our sinful nature?

Every human being is born a sinner - even before they have done any deeds. This inheritance and acts of sin cling to every human being.

Read Ephesians 2:12-13

Who or what qualifies us and changes us to have a new status in the eyes of the Lord?

It is only the sacrifice of Jesus Christ that qualifies us and prepares us to be part of His light. We are now part of a spiritual people who came into being through our inheritance.

What does the following verses teach us about living a life in the light of God?

Acts 20:32	
2 Corinthians 4:6	
Isaiah 60:1-3	
Psalms 97:11-12	

Christ makes us acceptable for the Kingdom of God. Therefore we should be thankful and praise His Name.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

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Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 1:12-14 and Acts 26:17-18

God has ripped us out of Satan's power. Opposite to the Kingdom of light stands the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of the devil. It is the kingdom of sin, hatred, disobedience, falsehood, struggle, etc. God has set us free from the darkness, Satan has no power over us anymore.

Read Romans 3:22-24

What does our redemption mean in respect of our relationship with God, through Christ?

Read Ephesians 1:7

What does this verse teach us about forgiveness of sins?

When Paul speaks of God rescuing people from one kingdom and giving them another one, and of 'redemption' and 'forgiveness' as the central themes of that rescue operation, He has the *Exodus* from Egypt in mind. What God has done in Jesus, and is now doing for them, is the new Exodus, the great moment of setting the slaves free.

To become a Christian is to leave the 'Egypt' of sin and to travel gratefully towards the promised inheritance. We are now under the power of God and the rule of His Son.

The Bible is very clear on this: There is no other way that man can be saved, only through the Son, Jesus Christ.

We are freed slaves by being redeemed and forgiven all our sins. Our debt has been settled forever and our names are written in the book of life. So, we can say thank you! Only a life of thanksgiving, joy and worship of God remains for us.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.
Thank Him for saving you and for forgiving all your sins.
Re-dedicate your life to Father.**

Day 5: Christ brings you into His Kingdom

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Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 1:12-15

We are now placed under the rule of our Lord and King, Jesus Christ.

The background of Paul's image lies in the world of the Old Testament. When a people's land was conquered, they were often carried away and placed in another country. Likewise, our Heavenly Conqueror ripped His people out of the kingdom of darkness and placed us in His own kingdom of freedom under the rule of the Son.

Read John 10:28-30

What guarantee do we have that we will not fall back under Satan's rule?

The Son is the expression of God's love. We have been moved out of a state of lovelessness and transferred to a

situation in which God is pouring out His love upon us in a very special way.

What does the following verses teach us about Jesus being the manifestation of God's love?

John 1:17-18	
John 17:26	

What Paul most wants to see growing in the church, as a sign of healthy Christian life on the way to maturity, is gratitude to God for the extraordinary things He's done in Jesus, and the remarkable things He is continuing to do in the world and in our lives. Spontaneous gratitude is a sign that we are coming to know and love the true God, as opposed to an imaginary one. The gods that people invent can't compare with the one true God when it comes to overflowing generosity.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.
Thank God for His love and mercy, for saving you!**

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Prayer

Memory verse:

...He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:13-14 (NIV)

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week and what He has revealed to you through Scripture.

Scripture Reading:

Colossians 1:1-14

Discussion questions

Read Colossians 1:3. Why do you think Paul prayed for different congregations? Why do you think prayer for your confident is important? What do you pray for your congregation?

Read Colossians 1:4-11. In these verses we find 7 different topics to pray for the congregation. List and discuss them:

As a group, pray about each of these topics for your congregation.

Close in prayer

A CHRIST-CENTRED LIFE

Week 2

The Supremacy of Christ

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Memory verse:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

Colossians 1:15–16 (NIV)

Day 1: Jesus Christ is Supreme!

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 1:15-23

List the things this passage tells us about Christ.

Jesus Christ is the visible representation of the invisible God and as God He is eternal too. He has no beginning or end, He always existed. God created the entire universe—all matter, substance, and form, all time, thought, and essence, all by and through Christ. Christ is supreme. He is the absolute highest and transcendent Being. Consider that Christ made all things and enables us to trust and have faith in Him. He made literally everything in the universe, beyond dimensions and time—including what we see and do not see.

Describe your feelings and thoughts about Christ.

Read Colossians 1:15-17 again

What lessons do you clearly learn about Christ from these verses?

Jesus is described as ‘firstborn’ in verse 15a. Some people like the Jehovah Witnesses think this means that Jesus was created. How do you understand it?

For the Jew, the first-born son was very important – he was the “chief.” He had the authority of the family and received an extra share of the inheritance. This does not mean that Christ was created or was the first creation; rather, it is a Jewish term meaning the highest honour, first in rank and authority and importance. This refers to Christ’s position of authority. He is the chief; He has the highest authority.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 2: Christ the Head of the Church

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Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 1:15-20 and repeat verse 18

What does it mean that Jesus is the 'Head of the body', the church?

The church belongs to Christ and He is the head of the church. Christ is not only the supreme Leader of the church but also of the whole universe. All things originate from God and are sustained and controlled by Jesus in His Church. It is not about what we think it is or should be; it is what Christ wants it to be. He is Head over "our" church. The pastors or leaders or trends or ideas, whether they are good or bad are not the head of the church. He is the means of and reason for our existence. When this gets lost or forgotten, He is pushed aside, and false teachings and misrepresentations of God take place.

Why is Jesus called 'the firstborn from the dead'?

This title does not just mean that Jesus rose from the dead, but that He is the beginning of the resurrection from the dead for everyone else who believes in Him. He is the greatest of all who are raised from the dead. Christ's resurrection marked the inauguration of the covenant of grace.

Why is it important that Jesus have supremacy over all things, even death (Colossians 1:18)?

He has the power to save us from our sins and because Christ has authority over death, we can trust His promise that He will raise us from the dead. Through His death, Jesus Christ has restored peace between earth and heaven. It means that Jesus Christ has triumphed over everything bringing salvation to those who submit to Him and judgement to all those who oppose Him. In everything Jesus Christ now reigns Supreme. All this because of His triumphant death and resurrection. Peace is the outcome after the restoration of order.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 3: Reconciled with God through Christ

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

**Read Colossians 1:15-20 and repeat verse 19-20 and
Ephesians 1:7-10**

What did Jesus' death achieve according to verse 20?

What does this mean?

Jesus is Supreme in Creation because He created everything, and He holds it all together. He is also Supreme in the New Creation. Because of His death and resurrection, we the redeemed, are new creations and reconciled with God our Father.

Read verse 19-20 again. What do you learn about Christ?

God chose to dwell with His fullness in and through Christ - by His atonement on the cross, by His blood as the perfect sacrifice, He brought peace between God and man. There is nothing good in man that was able to pay the sacrifice, or even to seek Christ. But the good news is

that we are not permanently stained by sin. There is hope for us to be purified by the blood of Jesus. In Him we are new creations. And not only mankind, but even the universe will be recreated when Jesus returns.

How does Jesus' death on the cross reconcile the world and you to God?

The word reconciliation implies a breakdown in the relationship between two parties which is then dealt with so that the relationship is fully restored. Our sin causes the breakdown in our relationship with God. He reconciled us to Himself by dealing with our sin on the cross so that the cause of offense has been removed and peace now reigns between Him and us.

Because of the death and resurrection God forgave mankind their sins and enabled those who accepted His offer of peace, to be reconciled with Him. His forgiveness entails letting us go. He is not holding us liable for sins, as it is paid in full. There is complete peace between God and anyone who trusts in Jesus. Sins in the past, present and future are all completely forgiven.

**Praise God for His forgiveness and confess any
unconfessed sins.**

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Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 1:15-23 and Ephesians 2:11-13.

Read Colossians 1:21-22 again.

What does it mean to you personally to be alienated from God; to be an enemy of God?

We were alienated from God and were enemies of God, because of our sinful nature. God demands perfect obedience. To be willingly disobedient to God alienate us from God and make us His enemies again. Jesus explained the demands of God, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and love your neighbour as yourself."* God reconciled believers, through Christ, to have a loving relationship with Him.

What does the fact that Christ is our Supreme Redeemer (verses 15-20) mean to you?

The wonder of God is that although mankind was fallen and wicked and enemies of God, they, through the work of our Supreme Redeemer on the cross, are reconciled with God. There is more. If they accept His atonement on the cross, they become holy in God's eyes and without blemish and free from accusation! Spurgeon said, *"Creation and providence are but the whisper of His power, but redemption is its music, and praise is the echo which shall yet fill His temple."*

What does it mean to you to be holy and without blemish?

We are not called to make people happy. We are set apart by God for God (holy) to please God. As we work out our salvation in fear and trembling, not grumbling or disputing, we "prove ourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom we appear as lights in the world." Be that light!

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 1:20-23 (NIV)

How do you understand the word "if" in the beginning of verse 23?

Sometimes when the New Testament talks about your perfect position as holy and blameless before God, it states it without any conditions. Sometimes it is stated with an "if" condition based around maintaining our faith to the end. The Believers Bible Commentary explains it as follows: *"The Spirit of God has seen fit to put many of these so-called 'if' passages in the word of God in order to challenge all who profess the name of Christ as to the reality of their profession. We would not want to say anything that might dull the sharp edge of these passages, for as someone has said: 'These 'ifs' in Scripture look on professing Christians here in the world and come as healthy tests to the soul.'"*

Read Colossians 1:18 (NIV)

This verse ends with these words; “so that in everything He might have the supremacy.” We can say it in another way, “that He should have the first place in everything”. What does it mean to you? How do you plan to make Him supreme in your life and put Him in the first place, above everything, in your life?

We have seen clearly in this week’s study who Jesus is. He is the image of God, He created everything for Him. He is the head of the church, He conquered death, He reconciled believers with God and by reconciling them with God, He recreate them. They are not alienated from God anymore and not His enemies, but they become children of God. There is no one like Jesus! Therefore, it is a no-brainer to put Jesus first in everything and especially in your life!

We pray that this study will enable you to see Jesus clearly as you discover that He is our perfect vision of God’s grace and love and peace. Give Him His rightful place in your life as He will soon return and then every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord!

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Prayer

Memory verse:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

Colossians 1:15–16 (NIV)

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week and what He has revealed to you through Scripture.

Scripture Reading:

Colossians 1:15-23, John 1:1-3 and Hebrews 1:1-4

Discussion questions

Read Colossians 1:15-17, John 1:1-3, Hebrews 1:1-4. How is Christ the image of the invisible God? What are the practical implications that Christ is the exact likeness of God's whole being?

Why is it important that we realize that Christ is supreme, sufficient, and enough? How can this information stimulate your faith, help you put Christ first, and encourage you to spiritual maturity?

Read Colossians 1:18. What are the practical implications that Christ is the Head of the Church?

How is the Church strong when it is in Christ? Why do so many leaders then do not place Him first? How should we display Christ in our personal life? In our church?

Close in prayer

A CHRIST-CENTRED LIFE

Week **3**

Christ – the complete mystery

Memory verse:

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 1:27 (NIV)



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Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 1:24-29

Have you ever tried to explain to someone exactly who or what God is? If so, what did you say?

Have you ever tried to explain the concept of “the indwelling of the Holy Spirit”? if so, how did you explain it?

To people who have not experienced Christ as the centre of their lives, the whole idea is a tremendous mystery.

Paul was certainly the one person who seized the new future that awaits us all with all power. He was totally committed to his calling.

Read Ephesians 3:2-7

What commission did Paul receive from God?

Besides Jesus, Paul is the best example of servanthood.

Read Ephesians 1:18-19 and 1 Corinthians 3:5

What do these verses teach us about teaching?

Paul surrendered himself to the Lord and immersed himself in the interests of the church. He downgraded the importance of church leaders, because they are all just servants in the Kingdom of God. All are responsible to the Lord, because He teaches them the ins and outs of servanthood.

Are you willing to be a servant?

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 2: The ministry of suffering

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 1:24-29, 2 Corinthians 11:26-29 and Acts 9:15-16

In Colossians 1:24 Paul declares that he is happy about his suffering.

Read 2 Corinthians 11:26-29 again.

What kind of suffering did Paul experience?

Being able to endure so much hardship is possible only through the grace of the Lord.

What connection did Paul see between his own spiritual and physical stresses and the suffering of Christ? (Refer to Colossians 1:24)

When Paul says that he has a part in Christ's suffering, he does not want to imply that Christ's suffering was not enough to save us. All he says is that you will inevitably suffer if you want to live and preach the good news of Christ in the world.

For many people, suffering produces bitterness, sorrow and self-pity. What reasons can you think of for Paul's radically different response to suffering?

How can Paul's attitude and perspective during his trials help you make sense of some of the trials you are experiencing today?

Paul does not see his suffering as a curse, but a blessing, because he knows that God will carry him through. He understands that his suffering is a normal consequence of faithfully following the Lord Jesus.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 3: The mystery

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 1:26-27; 2:2 and 4:3

What does the word "mystery" mean to you?

In your own words, explain the *Mystery* that Paul introduces in verses 26-27.

Read Ephesians 3:1-6

List all the details you can find about the mystery Paul is referring to.

How was this mystery revealed? (Refer to Colossians 1:26-27)

Paul refers to God's plan for Salvation, announced by the prophets of the Old Testament for many centuries. The plan became clear when Jesus Christ was born. However, it became clear that the content of God's plan was far more than anyone could imagine – the salvation was for all, not only Jews.

We must be careful not to step into the same pitfall as the Colossians. You do not need to acquire any specialized knowledge or decipher complicated documents. The content of the message is Jesus Christ.

Read 1 Corinthians 2:2

What is the only message that we need to proclaim? What difference does this message make in your life?

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

**Ask Father to enable you to clearly proclaim His
message to the World.**

Day 4: God's "Desire" for the World

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 1:28-29

What was Paul's desire for all?

Paul wants everyone to be fully mature in Christ. Christ's message is for everyone! Therefore, Paul and Timothy preached it to all who wanted to listen. Being able to preach the Gospel effectively means that:

- your life must testify to your conviction;
- you must testify with your mouth;
- you should warn people;
- you must teach others, and
- to do it in the power that Christ gives.

This is not only Paul's desire, but God's desire for every human being.

Read Acts 20:21

What should happen for God's dream to come true?

Read Colossians 3:11

How is God's desire described in this verse?

Every Christian is a king and a priest to God, and it must become more and more visible in our lives. (Refer to 1 Peter 2:9 and Revelations 1:6)

Do you share God's goal for your own spiritual life and the spiritual lives of others? What "tools" do you need to proclaim Christ effectively?

Where did Paul get all his wisdom and energy from?

Spiritual maturity is meant for every believer, including you. Do not be spiritually lean and timid but grow towards maturity in Christ.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Philippians 1:18-24

Paul's central passion in life is that Christ will be honoured or exalted — that is, shown to be magnificent.

What does Paul declare about his life or his death? (Refer to verse 21)

Paul writes these words to encourage believers. He struggles with whether it would be better to die in custody or to be released and live. However, in either outcome, he knows that he is within God's will.

Read Philippians 1:21 and Galatians 2:20

What does it mean when Paul says, "to live is Christ"?

Paul's fruitful labour for which he is staying alive, is labour to increase the joy of the faith of the Philippians. If they have greater joy by embracing Jesus — that is, believing Jesus in faith — Jesus is made to look magnificent.

Paul states that he would be better off being dead. This is not a death wish of a hopeless person. Paul is still full of life and energy and quite ready to go back to work. But he is also a man who loves the Messiah and for him dying means to be with his Lord, Master and King.

Read 2 Corinthians 1:8-11

What does these verses teach us about Paul's faith?

Paul's faith never wavered, but his feelings came and went. Learning to distinguish between the two is part of Christian maturity.

Are you experiencing circumstances right now in which you need to maintain faith and hope in the midst of troubling feelings? Talk to Father about those feelings.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Prayer

Memory verse:

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 1:27 (NIV)

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week and what He has revealed to you through Scripture.

Scripture Reading:

Read Colossians 1:24-29 and 2 Corinthians 11:26-29

Discussion questions

What kinds of suffering did Paul experience? What connection did Paul see between his own suffering and the suffering of Christ's body?

What can you do to identify more deeply with the suffering and affliction in other parts of the church?

Explain and discuss the *Mystery* that Paul introduces in Colossians 1:26

What is the only message that we need to proclaim? What difference does this message make in your life?

Close in prayer

A CHRIST-CENTRED LIFE

Week **4**

Rooted and built up in Christ

PERFECT VISION

Memory verse:

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:6-7 (NIV)



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Day 1: Understand the riches we have in Christ

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 2:1-8

What is Paul struggling with?

Paul faced persecution and hostility in preaching the Gospel. For him it was a constant struggle to survive. But this doesn't discourage him. He wants to set an example of perseverance to the Christians in Colossae and Laodicea, and for us. Paul teaches that, for us as Christians, there will always be a struggle. It is part of being a Christian. As Christians we all have our struggles. Sometimes it's our own sins, sometimes it's against the enemy and the power of darkness, sometimes it's against the world and a worldly life. The Gospel pattern is suffering now and glory later. We were created to glorify God, doesn't matter what our circumstances are. If we understand this, we will not easily be discouraged.

Read verse 2 again

What does it mean to understand the full riches of Christ?
What is this mystery that Paulus is talking about?

To understand the full riches of Christ is to have full assurance that He is who He says He is, and to have full assurance of your own salvation through Christ.

To understand the full riches of Christ is to see clearly - through Christ, our perfect (20-20) vision, the glory of God - and who God is. To understand God is to see who God is. Faith is not an opinion of who people say God is, of who you believe He is, or He ought to be. Faith is not only believing in some being, it is to believe in Him! If you trust Him for eternity, trust Him then for this life also.

Without fully understanding the riches we have in Christ; believers cannot enjoy all the blessings there are for them in this life and the life hereafter. You can't look forward to all the blessings that are yours in heaven if you doubt whether you are going there!

The only way to understand the mystery of God's wisdom and truth is to enter into Christ through faith. All God's treasures are stored away in Him.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 2: Our hidden treasures in Christ

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 2:1-5 and Romans 11:33-36.

Read Colossians 2:1-3 again

What are the hidden treasures we have in Christ?

We can never exhaust the depths of Jesus Christ. There is always more to learn from Him and about Him. He is God, He is eternal.

If you have Christ, you need nothing more. All wisdom and truth are in Him and from Him. This world's wisdom is not trustworthy. True, everlasting wisdom is from Christ and Christ alone.

Read James 3:13-18

What is worldly truth and wisdom? What does the truth and wisdom of Christ look like?

All truth and wisdom are from God, He is the source of all truth and wisdom. So even worldly truth and wisdom that we find in science or philosophy or sociology or psychology flow from the glory of God. Worldly wisdom never could comprehend God's plan for salvation.

Godly wisdom is to live life according to God's will and in obedience to His Word. Godly wisdom is given by the Holy Spirit.

There is a difference between wisdom and knowledge. Wisdom is the insight into the true nature of things. Knowledge is the mental ability to understand things. Wisdom is the power of understanding what God's will is and to form the right decisions accordingly. Wisdom is the ability to judge correctly and to follow the best course of action, based on knowledge and understanding. Only Godly wisdom can make us successful, because it helps us to form the correct plan for our lives, and to enable us to form the correct moral decision. All truth and wisdom are ultimately understood properly through the truth concerning Christ.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 2:1-5, Romans 16:17-18 and 2 Timothy 4:1-5

Read Colossians 2:4-5 again.

What was Paul's concern for the church? How can you stand against the fine-sounding arguments of the world?

It is interesting that when we see Jesus "clearly," our hearts are encouraged, and we are experiencing His love. But the moment we take our eyes off Jesus and focus on the problems of life around us, we become discouraged at heart and we think God is not loving us enough. This makes us vulnerable to the deceit of the enemy. The enemy then comes with fine-sounding arguments to explain why our world is falling apart around us and often gives us worldly answers for our problems. The only way to stand against the deceit of the world is to stand firm in your faith.

What does it mean to be orderly and to be firm in your faith in Christ? In what manner do you (or do you not) act orderly and are you (or are you not) standing firm in your faith?

These two terms, “orderly” and “standing firm”, are military terms. To stand firm in your faith is to focus on Jesus (our perfect vision.) When we focus on Jesus, we will be able to see the schemes of people, the world and the evil one. When our vision is distorted, and we take our focus off Jesus, we become a target for the enemy, and we will be discouraged and there will be divisions and we will be susceptible to "fine-sounding worldly arguments." Examine your heart daily. Ask yourself often, “does the things the world and people teach or tell me, agree with God's Word and does it bring glory to God?” The ideas of humanity may sound interesting and they may draw the conclusions that you want to hear. But that does not mean that they are proclaiming the truth. Stand firm in your faith, and test fine-sounding arguments in the light of the Word and the teachings of Christ, our only perfect vision.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 4: Rooted and Built up in Christ

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 2:6-8

How did you receive Christ?

This is an important question. If you should die today and come to stand before God and He asks you: "Why should I let you into my heaven?" What would you say? How did you receive Christ Jesus? The only adequate response is: Jesus Christ died for my sins on the cross as my substitute and I have put my trust in Him alone for eternal life.

What does it mean for you to walk with Him?

To be a Christian is to have Christ. It is to be in fellowship with the living Lord. The solid foundation of our faith is in Jesus. Our Christian life is a continuous process, daily living in obedience to God and His Word. There can be no

spiritual growth without the study of His Word. If Christ is our perfect vision, we will allow Him to transform us into His image through the work of the Holy Spirit.

What does it mean to you that you are rooted and built up in Christ, and that you are strengthened in your faith? How can you pursue these things and continue to grow even more this year?

When Paul writes to the Colossians, he describes healthy believers who are as firmly rooted as a tree, built up as a building, increasingly stable in their faith, and constantly producing fruit of thankfulness. As a believer you are firmly rooted in Christ and you must continue to produce the evidence of that spiritual regeneration. A visible sign of the transformation through Christ is the believer's thankfulness. Paul described it as "overflowing with thankfulness". A characteristic of Christian maturity is to live a life full of gratitude towards God. You cannot grumble and be thankful. You cannot complain and be full of thankfulness. You cannot criticize and be overflowing with thankfulness.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 2:6-8 and Hebrews 12:1-3

Paul is warning the believers in Colossae and us too, to look out for false teachers and people who teach half-truths. Read verse 8 again and list the ways the enemy tries to deceive us. Where is he targeting you now?

Paul is not encouraging a critical spirit but a discerning spirit and there is a crucial difference between the two. By just being critical we can destroy God's good works, but to develop a discerning spirit we defend the truth. Keep your eyes on Jesus our perfect vision. Do not allow people to lure you away from the truth by worldly wisdom and deception, or human traditions.

What does it mean to take some captive? What does it mean to be spiritually "kidnapped?"

When someone is kidnapped, they are taken from living free to a state of being enslaved. This is the picture Paul is painting here. Worldly principles and the schemes of the enemy want to take complete control of a person by taking control of their mind. Spiritual warfare is not a struggle against power but is a struggle to maintain the truth. Our focus should be the resurrected, glorified Jesus Christ and His power in our lives.

What are the “principles of the world” and the “principles of Christ” that Paul is referring to?

The principles of the world are always focussed on the self and to better your own ego and comfort. Godly principles are to seek God’s Kingdom and His will first. Everything that you read, hear, think, believe or see on television, read in papers, see in movies or on the internet, needs to be looked at by answering this question: Is it according to the principles of Christ? Is it according to His teaching? Is it the way He would have reacted?

Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. He and He alone is the standard by which all doctrine is to be measured.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Prayer

Memory verse:

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:6-7 (NIV)

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week and what He has revealed to you through Scripture.

Scripture Reading:

Colossians 2:1-8 and Hebrews 12:1-3

Discussion questions

Read Colossians 2:1-3. What is the mystery of God that Paul referring to in these verses?

Read Colossians 2:4-5. What does it mean to be orderly and firm in your faith in Christ?

Read Colossians 2:6 and Hebrews 12:1-3. What does these verses say about how we should live in Christ after we have received Him? Give concrete examples from your own life.

Read Colossians 2:7. What does it mean to be 'rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith'? How can individual believers pursue these things and continue to grow in these things year by year?

Close in prayer

A CHRIST-CENTRED LIFE

Week **5**

Christ Alone PERFECT VISION

Memory verse:

*For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells
bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is
the head of all rule and authority.*

Colossians 2:9-10 (NIV)



Day 1: Beware of man-made religions

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 2:9-23

After explaining that Jesus is the King of the universe and the head of the church, Paul now warns the congregation against man-made religious ideas that deny it.

Read Colossians 2:8

How does Paul describe these man-made ideas that seduce believers?

Human theories or cleverness are a major danger for believers who are eager to learn more from the Bible and who consult any sources that appear Christian to them, without making sure the sources are reliable.

What is the problem with man-made theories and what is the danger inherent in these? (Refer to Colossians 2:23)

Read Colossians 2:9-10

Who is the only source of true knowledge and insight and specifically why?

What is the only way to share in Jesus' fullness?

Paul has now confirmed two basic points of departure for Christianity:

- The fullness of God resides in Christ; and
- We share in His fullness!

This truth forms the heart of the Bible message. But it seems that the Colossians did not understand the full meaning of this truth. Even today, Christians are caught up in religious practices, customs and rituals, rules and reasoning - in their search for “something special” - while it is all in Christ. It is only when you realize that you already have the fullness in Christ, that you truly become satisfied.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 2:9-12

Paul uses a well-known practical religious practice here as an example to explain what is meant by "being in union with Christ", namely circumcision. In circumcision, the foreskin of a boy is removed, i.e. taken away. Similarly, Paul explains, a believer becomes spiritually "circumcised" when you commit yourself to Christ. In your own words, describe what he means by circumcision through Christ?

What does Paul mean when he says in verse 12 that it happened at baptism?

The outward physical act of baptism is a sign of an inner spiritual event that occurs in a Christian's life: through the blood of Jesus flowing on the cross, our sinful nature is taken away and now we belong to God.

It is important that this passage is not about the form of baptism. It is about the symbolic meaning of baptism: that the blood of Jesus removes our sins. Baptism does not save, but is a sign that God saves sinners by the blood of His Son that cleanses us from every sin (1 John 1: 7). Salvation in Christ brings a complete break with sin and is final – the old life is gone for good.

Read Genesis 17:9-14

What else does circumcision mean? Into what is the one being circumcised included?

By associating baptism with circumcision, Paul also points out that whoever is baptized, is therefore committed to Christ.

The chances are very good that you have been baptized. The water of baptism is a sign that the blood of Jesus washes you and that Jesus removes your sinful nature. The question is: Have you ever accepted Him as your Saviour? Has He already set you free and taken away your sinful nature? Or are you still trapped by your sinful nature?

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 2:12-15

Mark and write down what happen to you when you are rooted in Christ?

Verse 12(a)	
Verse 12(b)	
Verse 13(b)	
Verse 14(a)	

The key to understanding the important truth taught here is found in Jesus' words on the cross: *"It is finished."*

Read John 19:30

The expression "it is finished" is a business term which means: the debt has been paid in full. It refers to someone's debt being settled or written off. When Jesus

uttered these words, He meant His redemptive work was completed. Although He was without sin, He had been made into sin on our behalf (2 Corinthians 5:21). The earned wages of sin are death (Romans 6:23) and by dying in our place, Jesus has now fully carried the punishment that sin deserves in God's judgment. He has now settled the debt on our behalf.

How did Jesus fully settle our debt caused by sin and take away our proof of debt for good? (Refer to verse 14(b))

Now read the wonderful promise in Romans 6:23. Memorize it and thank the Lord that He has given you eternal life, undeserved!

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 4: Man-made religion is not from Christ

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Unsaved religious people follow a man-made religion. It is also often the case with saved people who, without their intention, are engaged in man-made religion. This is when there is not an intimate relationship with Christ, but rather the emphasis is on impressive ideas or teachings and / or on outward practices or precepts. Having an honest desire to know more and "progress" spiritually is a good motive - but it sometimes leads Christians on a dangerous path if they do not have or practice the necessary discernment.

The right way is to constantly compare the way you practice your faith, with the Lord's Word. It can help you not to become so attached to a certain view or preacher, that you begin to follow it rather than the Lord Himself and what your own congregation teaches you.

Read Colossians 2:16-19

What matters does Paul mention here as signs of man-made religion, not of Christ and therefore dangerous?

What is the sin such people commit according to Verse 18 (b)?

Read verse 19 again and summarize it in your own words.

Paul summarizes the issue of separation from other believers or to elevate yourself above them, by using the image of a body. With this, he emphasizes the group commitment of the believers. As a body grows together and the different parts of the body belong together and support one another, so the believers stand together.

However, the strange thing is that Paul says that this body has a head from which the rest of the body grows. Through this strange image he emphasizes:

- that Christ is the source from which the people of God "grow";
- that there is no other way to belong to the body (group) of Christ than to cling to Him and Him alone and
- the believers as a group (body) are under Jesus.

Apart from that, God Himself causes this body to grow.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 5: The emphasis on Christ alone!

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 2:20-23

Man-made religion places emphasis on man. In the Bible, however, the emphasis is constantly on the work of Christ. Yesterday we pointed out three such notions. Paul now asks them: *If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations.* (ESV) Worldly thoughts always place emphasis on man, and therefore on rules and regulations, instead of on a relationship with Jesus Christ.

In the light of our relationship with Jesus, there should be a clear difference between the life of a Christian and someone who does not know Jesus yet. However, in light of the deceptive man-made religion we studied yesterday, it is important to realize that a Christian is not immediately spiritually mature. That's why Paul is admonishing them here: Beware of living as if you still belong to this world and not to Christ!

Which man-made rules, according to verse 20 (c) and verse 21 look like impressive spiritual growth, but take your attention away from Christ and place emphasis on man?

What is the real danger according to verse 23 (c) of such a "fake" or outwardly display religion?

The fact that someone leads an outwardly very superior religious life, does not at all mean that the hold of sinful nature on them is broken.

Read Romans 12:2 and write down what believers need to do to overcome sin and to set them up to live as Christians.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Prayer

Memory verse:

For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

Colossians 2:9-10 (NIV)

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week and what He has revealed to you through Scripture.

Scripture Reading:

Colossians 2:9-23

Discussion questions

Read Colossians 1:15, 17-19 and 2:9-10 and discuss: What is the meaning of “the fullness of Christ” – and what does it mean for you that the Bible declare that “in Christ you have been brought to fullness?”

Read Colossians 2:16-17. What does Paul mean with: “the reality is Christ” (GNB)? How does the warning in these two verses help you to discern between real and man-made truths about Christianity?

Discuss the three results of a life rooted “in Christ” that Paul mentions.

Read Colossians 2:20-23 together. Affirm that you HAVE died with Christ and are set free from the ruling spirits of the universe. Encourage one another never to be distracted by the pressure of man-made religion.

Close in prayer

A CHRIST-CENTRED LIFE

Week **6**

Christ-centred living

Memory verse:

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Colossians 3:1-2 (NIV)



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CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

We are risen with Christ and He has set us free. Where do we go from here? Warren Wiersbe said: *"It does little good if Christians declare and defend the truth but fail to demonstrate it in their lives."*

Chapter 3 of Colossians is dedicated to teaching us how to live.

Read Colossians 3:1-4

Why should the Christian aspire to God's standards?
(Refer to verse 1)

Why should heavenly things become more important to us than earthly things?

What can we do to maintain this balance in the face of daily demands in our earthly life?

For what future event are we being prepared? (Refer to verse 4).

What incentive for right living does Christ's second coming give us?

The Christian's true home is with Christ. It gives us a very different perspective on earthly things. Our minds must be full of heavenly things.

Christ gives us the necessary strength to live right now. He also gives us hope for the future, for He is coming again!

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Day 2: The Old and the New

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 3:5-11

Paul contrasts our old way of life with our new way of life. What process makes this change possible?

In what sense have we already died? What effect does this death have on our thoughts, words, actions and relationships?

Colossians 3:5 and 8-9 lists several attitudes and actions that displease God. List these items and explain your own experience or temptation with regards to them.

How conscious and deliberate should this act of putting to death sinful desires and actions, be? How is our human will be involved?

Explain how the centrality of Christ and our awareness of His presence in each other is remedy against intolerance and prejudice is?

In what areas of your life and towards which people should you trust God for change?

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 3:12-15

That the believers are the chosen people of God is the result of the love of God, the love that He still pours over us. It is not because of something that we did or can do.

Read 1 Peter 2:9

What does it mean to you that you are part of God's chosen people?

Of course, the fact that we are the chosen people of God has consequences. We now belong to the new spiritual people of God around the world, so our lives must also portray this new life.

Read Colossians 3:10,12 and 14

Once again Paul uses contrast as a teaching tool as he highlights the change between “once” and “now”. What word-picture does his wording in Colossians 3:10,12 and 14 suggest?

How deliberately do we dress ourselves each day? What does this action have to do with engaging our will as we “put on” the characteristics of Christ?

The world must be able to see that we are part of God's chosen people. As we remove the rags of sin, we must put on clothes that will show that we have become new people in Christ.

Are you sure that you are part of God’s chosen people?

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 3:12-16

Being part of God's chosen people, means it is time for change. Name the five virtues that should be visible in a Christian's life and define each one (Refer to verse 12).

Knowing that Christ will appear again one day, how do you want your life's focus to reflect the following:

Christ's example (verse 13)

Christ's peace (verse 15)

Christ's word (verse 16)

What qualities are we to "put on"? (Refer to verse 14)

The Bible places a lot of emphasis on love. Christians must live in complete harmony with one another, and therefore they must cooperate in love, despite differences. This love is not a feeling, but a decision to care for one another and reach out to one another. Such a life-in-love will lead to peace.

Which qualities do you need to develop as an individual or as a member of the body of Christ?

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 3:16-17

When you hear the word “worship”, what is the first thing that comes to mind?

We often see worship as something that we do – something that we want to experience. True worship, however, is focused on God.

List the three aspects of worship mentioned in verse 16:

The message of Christ must be central. There can be no healthy spiritual life and spiritual growth without knowledge of the message of Christ.

Read Acts 2:42-47

What is the result when the message of Christ is central?

Read 1 Corinthians 2:6

Why is teaching and admonishing with wisdom so important?

Healthy teaching and admonishing unfold the richness of God's Word. It promotes genuine worship and a biblical way of life. Without sound teaching there can be no worship.

Read Ephesians 5:19

What is the most important part of singing to God?

True worship is not just intellectual or sentimental. No, true worship is something that the Christian keeps himself busy with every day and everywhere. It is not limited to singing but is worship with everything in and of you.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Prayer

Memory verse:

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Colossians 3:1-2 (NIV)

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week and what He has revealed to you through Scripture.

Scripture Reading:

Colossians 3:1-17

Discussion questions

Read Colossians 3:1. Why should Christians aspire to God's standards?

Read Colossians 3:3. In what way does Christ cause us to live spiritually?

Read Colossians 3:5-9. List the sins mentioned in these verses. What root problem lies behind all of these sins?

Read Colossians 3:12-17. List the qualities mentioned in these verses. What is the root solution to all the qualities listed here?

Why is it important to be thankful? What have you learned in this study that you can be thankful for?

Close in prayer

A CHRIST-CENTRED LIFE

Week **7**

Christ-centered Households

PERFECT VISION

Memory verse:

*Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,
as working for the Lord, not for human masters.*

Colossians 3:23 (NIV)



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Day 1: A Wife according to God's will

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 3:18 and Ephesians 5:21-24

In Biblical times, the father of the family was the authority figure in the family. In particular, he had to maintain the tradition and discipline in the family, protect and care for the family. What Paul particularly emphasizes is that wives must respect this role and position of the man.

What was Paul's command to wives in Colossians 3:18 and Ephesians 5:22? What does this mean?

Why is it sometimes difficult to obey this command?

Do you think that the role that the wife should play is still the same today?

Sin that originated in the Garden of Eden brought a separation between God and man. This resulted in broken relationships that also affected the role of wife and mother.

Read Genesis 3:16

What was the result of the broken relationship and sin for women?

Read 1 Peter 3:1-6

If you are married, think about how this God-fearing life of wife and husband can deepen your marriage to God. Is there anything more specifically you can do?

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.
Talk to Father about your marriage and your role in your
marriage.**

Day 2: A Husband according to God's will

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 3:19 and Ephesians 5:21, 25-31

In Biblical times women were seen as objects of possession and the man had authority over the woman. Paul warns that men should not abuse it.

What is the twofold command to husbands?

Are husbands released from this command if their wives do not submit to them?

God demands that a man love his wife. It is a love that is first of all willing to give without expecting anything in return. It requires a willingness to sacrifice, to forgive, and to suffer, where necessary. It is this attitude of Christ towards his church that must therefore be embodied in a marriage relationship between man and woman.

Read 1 Peter 3:7

What does it mean to live wisely (be considerate) with your spouse?

You should let your behaviour be determined by what God demands, not by your partner, your feelings or by society.

Do you think that this principle operates strongly enough in most marriages today?

Is there something missing from your marriage (if you're married) and what are you going to do to change your marriage to be what God demands?

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.
Talk to Father about your marriage and about the way
you should change.**

Day 3: Children acting according to God's will

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 3:20, Ephesians 6:1-3 and Exodus 20:12

At the time Paul wrote this letter, children had a very submissive position in the family. You may also have grown up with the expression "children should be seen and not heard".

What is a child's Biblical responsibility to his or her parents?

The Biblical principle is that children are still very immature and have yet to learn from their parents how to live properly. Therefore, obeying their parents indicates the willingness of children to learn the proper art of living from their parents. In the Bible, it is not just about the humane way of living, but also about faith in the Lord and what it entails.

How will a lack of obedience in this area affect a child's relationship with God?

What is likely to happen to a young person who has never learned to respect and respond to authority?

Do you think that your child(ren)'s faith in the Lord is strong enough to live up to this principle?

Read Acts 5:29

Do you think that children sometimes have the Biblical right to disobey their parents in specific situations? Why?

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.
Pray for your children.**

Day 4: Parenting according to God's will

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 3:21 and Ephesians 6:4

What warning do we find in Colossians 3:21?

Parents are reminded not to constantly look for faults in or annoy their children. The Greek word refers to an action that causes a kind of irritation and powerless anger in children. They must obey their parents, yet they find the actions of their parents so unfair that they cannot accept them. The result is irritation and discouragement.

There is a danger that parents may be too strict or make unfair demands on their children. Think back to your own childhood. How did you experience effect your relationship with your parents? Can you look at it today with a different eye and understand that strict action with discipline was sometimes necessary in your life?

Read Hebrews 12:5-11

What is the role that discipline should play in your child's life?

The meaning of the Greek word used for discipline is “to train someone in accordance with proper rules of conduct and behaviour.”

If you have children, do you think that you are practicing discipline in the right way? That is from a deep attitude of love towards your child? If not, what should change?

This is how God feels about us when He chastens us. How you act as a parent often shows how you experience our Heavenly Father's relationship with you. Therefore, there is a great responsibility on the parent to act in such a way that the child gets to know God's love and disciplines and not that of a fickle and unapproachable tyrant.

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.——

Day 5: Work relationships according to God's will

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 3:22-4:1 and Ephesians 6:5-7

Fortunately, we no longer have slaves today, as it was in Biblical times. The reality was that slaves had no personal freedom and was basically the property of their owners. Paul wants to guide the slaves in this situation to realize that, if he or she was a believer, they should now live in such a way that they should not impress their owner in the first place but the Lord, as He is the one who will reward them. They must therefore see and judge their social position through the eyes of Christ.

Why do you think Paul did not sharply condemn the inhumane system of slavery?

Whom did Paul give as an example for all employers?

What temptations do employers face in their treatment of employees?

Paul's greatest emphasis is on how the "owner" should behave toward the slaves as Christ expected him to. Someone in a position of authority must treat his employees fairly and with love.

This is no plea for overthrowing the existing order of slavery. Paul is not proposing any new social program, but that the power of love, which can change people and relationships, should determine their relationships. These relationships are tested and judged by the Lord.

Do you always act correctly towards people under whose authority you stand and towards people under your authority?

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.
Talk to Father about your work relationships.**

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Prayer

Memory verse:

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters.

Colossians 3:23

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week and what He has revealed to you through Scripture.

Scripture Reading:

Colossians 3:18-4:1 and Ephesians 5:21-6:9

Discussion questions

In recent years there has been a major shift in the roles in the family with the emancipation of the woman and the changes in marriages and family structures. Do you think this is according to God's will?

How can husband-wife relationships build a healthy marriage according to God's will?

Children must obey their parents. What limits should parents set in educating their children. Do you think the expression "children should be seen and not heard", is Biblical?

Paul repeatedly uses the concept of "in the Lord" to show that these social structures must have a Christ-centred foundation and form. Give practical examples of how we can still apply it today - also how it should function from positions of authority in work situations.

Close in prayer

A CHRIST-CENTRED LIFE

Week **8**

Christ to the world

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION

Memory verse:

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Colossians 4:5-6 (NIV)



DeoGloria
Family of Churches

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Begin today's study with prayer.

When Jesus came, He stepped out of the heavenly realm, into the world with the authority from God the Father to bring salvation to all. A church which is Christ centred steps outside of their comfort of buildings, their homes, their daily lives and steps into the world so that others may also know Christ. We have the privilege of being part of His plan to the world.

Read Colossians 4:2-6

What words would you use to describe your prayer life?

To what common problems with prayer did Paul refer to in verse 2?

Read Luke 18:1 and Romans 12:12

Why was Paul such an effective minister of the gospel?

What does it mean to live a life of prayer?

Paul encourages a prayer watch within the church as he reminds believers to foster a life of prayer through being persistent, diligent and continuing strongly in prayer. This does not mean that all you do is pray all day long, but it does mean that one's devotion to prayer affects everything in one's life. As you persist in prayer you become spiritually alert towards God, you become conscious of His presence, His power, His protection and His purpose, the effect of which is worshipping Him with thankfulness.

Spend time in prayer asking God to help you become persistent, alert and give thanks as you reflect on God's greatness.

Day 2: Pray for each other

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 4:3-4 and Romans 15:30-32

Describe one of your best friends. What connects the two of you?

There is a special kind of connectedness between Christians around the world. Just as John the Baptist jumped in Elizabeth's womb when she entered the presence of Jesus, so we can share a unique, inexplicable connection with God's people, even if we have never met them.

What was Paul's personal needs, for which he asked his friends to intercede?

How does intercession for another Christian's ministry make us fellow workers?

Paul was constantly under attack because of his eagerness to spread the gospel. To proclaim the gospel is to wage war with the enemy and a praying church is needed who pray conscientiously for a very specific cause. This cause is for the gospel to be proclaimed and lives to be changed by the powerful Word of God.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:17

What does this verse teach you about prayer?
How often do you pray for people to proclaim the Gospel?
How often do you pray that people will be open to the Gospel?

As believers, we should pray continuously, for the spreading of the Gospel.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.
Pray for your Pastors, school and sport chaplains
and for mission organisations we support.**

Day 3: Christ-centred messengers

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Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 4:4, Matthew 10:16 and Luke 4:16-22

Whom do you know – intimately or distantly – who is involved in ministry for the Lord? What is the extent of your involvement in their work?

Read Matthew 10:16

What does this verse teach us about the dangers of spreading the Gospel and being a messenger of Christ? Do you think it is still true today?

Read Luke 4:16-22

What does it mean to be a witness?

What do you need to be a true witness?

Time spent inwardly through prayer, affects our outward witnessing. Today's Scripture readings reveal that Paul was dependent on the Holy Spirit to help him proclaim Christ clearly. Augustine said, *Let one be a pray-er before being a speaker.*

To witness is to affirm that which we have seen and heard about Christ. We can all be confident that God will strengthen us as we ask for help to enable us to witness. We are not all pastors, but every Christian can share how they experienced God in their life.

*We must preach the gospel clear and bright
In a way that's plainly understood;
We must speak the truth and shine Christ's light
To our world for their eternal good. — Fitzhugh*

End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 4:5 and Psalm 90:12

A believer's best prayers and best intentions can be cancelled by their actions. That is why Paul warns us to act with wisdom.

Do you ever stop and consider how your actions are impacting the gospel?

Do you ever stop and consider how you use your time for the sake of the gospel?

How has your life recently given testimony towards unbelievers of God's greatness?

Today we see that witnessing involves wise actions. Prayer empowers a lifestyle of acting Christlike in two ways;

- firstly, being wise by not falling into a lifestyle of sin and
- secondly acting kind; in love, caring for others as Christ did.

When you have an intimate relationship with the Father, your relationship with other people will also be right. People will be able to see it. Because our actions are not the same as the world's actions, it will draw people to the Gospel.

Read James 3:17

What should a believer's life look like?

A prayer-filled life helps us to consider how we make use of our time for practically living out our faith.

**End today's study by returning to the Lord in prayer.
Pray that God will help us to act wisely around and
towards outsiders.**

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Begin today's study with prayer.

Read Colossians 4:6 and 1 Corinthians 12:3

What will be the content of conversations which are filled with grace and salt?

What opportunities have you had in the last few weeks where conversations filled with grace and salt took place?

How does the balance of grace and salt make conversations more appealing to non-believers?

Witnessing also involves conversations filled with grace and salt. When Jesus spoke, he drew attention with His

words and people were amazed. A salty conversation is a flavoursome conversation that is filled with Biblical words of wisdom. These words are the same, kind and encouraging words which Jesus speaks through us. His Word offers encouragement to people without, hope, to a child who is lonely, to a neighbour who is struggling.

Make a list of the people that you see and speak to every day (at home, in your work environment etc.) How should your conversations change in order to include grace and salt?

The link between us making most of our opportunities and having “grace-filled, salty” conversations is diligent prayer through which the Spirit readily gives us wisdom from the Word.

End today’s study by returning to the Lord in prayer.

Pray that God will make you even more aware of opportunities to share words filled with grace and salt towards those outside the church.

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Prayer

Memory verse:

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Colossians 4:5-6 (NIV)

Reflection:

Share with the group members how God worked in your life during this week and what He has revealed to you through Scripture.

Scripture Reading:

Colossians 4:1-6 and 1 Peter 3:15

Discussion questions

How can we as a group be more devoted to praying for the gospel to be made known together?

What recent conversation have you had which was, "seasoned with salt"? Share with each other.

How can we be more intentional about having conversations filled with grace and salt to those outside of the church?

Close in prayer

Memory Verses

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

Week 1:

...He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Colossians 1:13-14 (NIV)

Week 2:

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

Colossians 1:15–16 (NIV)

Week 3:

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 1:27 (NIV)

Week 4:

So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

Colossians 2:6-7 (NIV)

Week 5:

For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

Colossians 2:9-10 (NIV)

Week 6:

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Colossians 3:1-2 (NIV)

Week 7:

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters...

Colossians 3:23

Week 8:

Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Colossians 4:5-6 (NIV)

CHRIST OUR PERFECT VISION 2020

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