

## Colossians Notes

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### Introduction:

Paul had never been to Colossae, but had ministered in Ephesus for 3 years. (Acts 19; 20:17-38) Ephesus was located 100 miles to the east, near Hierapolis and Laodicea.

It is likely that Epaphras brought the gospel from Paul to Colossae. (Col. 1:7) And it is also likely that Archippus is the pastor of the church. (Col. 4:17) Philemon held a home church in Colossae. (Philemon 2)

Colossae was on a major trade route and became a soup-pot of current thought. Therefore, Paul is writing to address a very strong heresy that was beginning to surface at Colossae. Colossae contained a mixture of Judaism (law and grace), Eastern Mysticism (heightened spiritual experiences), Greek Philosophy (elevated human reasoning), and Christian Gnosticism (believed that matter was evil and denied the humanity of Jesus Christ).

- There are 34 Greek words in Colossians that are not found in the rest of the Bible, as Paul deals with the specific heresy of Gnosticism and details the true nature of Jesus Christ.

Written by Paul in 60 AD from a prison in Rome with Ephesians and Philemon. These letters were delivered by Tychicus and Onesimus. (Col. 4:7-9)

### Chapter 1:

1:1 – “by the will of God” – Whatever we do must be by the will of God...whether factory worker or pastor or anything else.

- Paul’s authority came from doing what God told him to do.

1:2 – “faithful” – In the midst of heresy and apostasy, faithfulness is very important.

- “brethren” – This letter is written to believers.

1:3 – “praying” – We’ll see some of Paul’s prayer in v. 9-12.

1:4-5 – “faith...love...hope” – These three abide. (1 Cor. 13:13)

- This church has all the earmarks of genuine faith.

1:4 – “faith in Jesus Christ” – The viability of faith is dependant on the object of that faith.

- They are not trusting in a board, synod, or an effective leader.
- “love” – (Greek “agape”) The self-sacrificial love of Jesus Christ.
- “saints” – (Greek “hagios”) Those set apart to the Lord.

1:5 – “because of the hope” – The idea is “carried along by the hope.”

- “Looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.” (Titus 2:13) The blessed hope has a purifying effect on our lives.
- “hope which is laid up for you” – The more we fix our hopes on the recompense of reward in the other world, the more free and liberal shall we be of our earthly treasure upon all occasions of doing good.
- “the truth of the gospel” – Our faith is not built on man’s philosophies, but on the infallible truth of God’s Word. (John 17:17)

- 1:6 – “in all the world” – In about 30 years from Pentecost, without TV or internet, planes or cars, radios or public address systems, but with the power of the Holy Spirit. (Col. 1:23)
- “knew” – (Greek “epiginosko”) Lit. “to know by experience.”
- 1:7 – “Epaphras” – Paul is endorsing Epaphras and his work at Colossae. No doubt, Epaphras has been attacked by the Gnostics as they try to change the doctrine.
- Epaphras was likely a disciple of Paul at Ephesus and later brought Gospel to Colossae. He is now likely an elder at the church of Colossae.
  - Paul called him “my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus.” (Philemon 23)
- 1:8 – “love in the Spirit” – Uniformity is the result of compulsion from the outside; unity is the result of compassion on the inside.
- “the Spirit” – With “our Father” and “the Lord Jesus Christ” from v.2. Trinity.
- 1:9 – “For this reason” – Because the gospel is bearing fruit (v. 6) among the Colossians in faith, love, and hope (v. 4-5).
- Because of this group’s faith, hope, and love, Paul has constantly asked God to show His will to them. Faith, hope, and love aren’t the end of God’s working in our lives. God has a will for those with faith. He has much to accomplish through His believers. Paul may desire for these people to be the one’s to know God’s will because the one’s with this strong a faith will more likely do what God shows them.
  - “pray for you” – This is Paul’s first stated prayer for the Colossians.
  - “filled” – The idea is “fully equipped.” It was a word describing a ship that was packed and ready for a voyage.
  - “the knowledge of His will” – “Be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Rom. 12:2)
    - The knowledge of our duty is the best knowledge.
  - “knowledge” – (Greek “epignosis”) Lit. “experiential knowledge.”
- 1:10 – “walk worthy of the Lord” – (Greek “axios”) Lit. “to weigh as much as.”
- “fully pleasing Him” – “Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.” (2 Cor. 5:9)
    - “Without faith it is impossible to please God.” (Heb. 11:6) The Colossians have faith. (v. 4)
  - “fruitful in every good work” – The outflow of abiding in the vine. (John 15) Christian service is the result of Christian devotion.
    - The end results are utterly important to God. (John 15:2, 8) Jesus desires these characteristics to mark a believer’s life.
  - “increasing in the knowledge of God” – We know God as He has revealed Himself in His Word.
    - The more fruitful we are in good works, the more we shall increase in the knowledge of God. “If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine...” (John 7:17)
  - “increasing” – The knowledge of God is progressive. God is infinite and we are finite; there will always be something more of God to know and understand.

- 1:11 – “strengthened with all might” – We are strengthened with might derived from another.
- “Strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man.” (Eph. 3:16)
  - He prays not only that they may be supported under their troubles, but strengthened for them: the reason is, there is more work to be done even when we are suffering.
  - “according to His glorious power” – Those who are strengthened by His power are strengthened indeed.
    - This power is for patience and longsuffering.
  - “patience” – (Greek “hupomone”) Lit. “to bear up under pressure.” This word refers to circumstances.
  - “longsuffering” – (Greek “macrothumia”) Lit. “self-restraint, slow to anger.” This word refers to people.
  - “with joy” – Despite the difficult circumstances.
- 1:12 – “giving thanks” – It is easier to be faithful to something you are thankful for. It is very hard to pull someone away from what they are thankful for.
- “inheritance” – Lit. “lot, parcel”
- 1:13 – “has delivered” – Past tense.
- These are not feelings, but present realities.
  - Jesus has saved us forever. We no longer have to worry about our salvation or the consequences of our sin. We can now focus on living to our calling. Jesus has done all this for us (v. 13-14) and that is why we can live like that with Him (v. 9-12).
  - “delivered” – or “rescued.”
  - “conveyed” – or “displaced.” As when a conquered country was deported.
    - We are waiting for heaven and the fulfillment of all He has worked into us.
- 1:14 – “in whom” – Each and every privilege and opportunity we may have in our relationship with God is a result of the person and work of Jesus Christ.
- Jesus is the source of this kind of life. It’s as we walk “with Jesus;” it’s not trying to do things “for Jesus.”
  - This refocuses us on the reason, source, and focus of our faith – Jesus Christ in all His fullness.
  - “redemption” – means “to purchase from slavery for the purpose of setting free.”
- 1:15 – “image” – (Greek “eikon”) Lit. “icon, impress.”
- Because God is unseen, we need Him to reveal Himself to us. “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” (John 1:18)
  - “firstborn” – (Greek “prototokos”) This word speaks of preeminence more than chronology.
    - Jesus is the only human being, after Adam (who wasn’t birthed), to have been born alive.
- 1:16 – “by Him all things were created” – Jesus is the source of all meaningful life, spiritually in us and physically around us.
- The firstborn nature of Jesus is in light of Him also being the Creator of all we know.
  - “for Him” – Jesus is also the end of all creation. This is for His pleasure.
    - The material world isn’t implicitly evil. The physical world is neutral and what is important is how we use it to please God. Jesus created it, and it is all to be used for His purposes.
    - The great desire of God is that we’d love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. (Mark 12:29-30) What God most wants from this creation is us.

1:17 – “consist” – Lit. “held together.”

- Quantum physics has found that matter is mostly an electrical field, a few particles moving in a broader field of space.
- 2 Peter 3:10-13 speaks of the day when the “elements shall melt (or “be loosed”))” as Jesus no longer holds it all together.

1:18 – “He” – Lit. “He alone.”

- “the head of the body” – Jesus Christ is the head of the church. (Eph. 4:15-16)
  - A body without a head is dead.
- “firstborn from the dead” – Lit. “firstborn our from among the dead.” Speaking of His resurrection.
  - “The exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead.” (Eph. 1:19-20)
  - The first and second resurrections are categories, not chronological events.
- “preeminence” – If you have Christ, you have it all.

1:19 – “in Him all the fullness should dwell” – The fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. (Col. 2:9)

- Jesus is the Son of God and God the Son.
- God is in Jesus (Col. 2:9) and Jesus is in me (Col. 1:27).

1:20 – “reconcile” – Lit. “to reconcile completely, to bring back a former state of harmony.”

- “on earth or things in heaven” – Jesus didn’t reconcile things “under the earth.”
- “made peace” – (Greek “eiro”) Lit. “to bind together.”
  - In the Garden of Eden, Adam had perfect communion and fellowship with God.

1:22 – “holy” – Lit. “set apart.” Set apart from the world and set apart unto the Lord.

- “blameless” – Lit. “without blemish.” (Eph. 1:4)
- “above reproach” – Lit. “without accusation.”
- “in His sight” – This is God’s estimation and evaluation.
  - “Christian perfection is not a perfection of performance but a perfection of relationship” – Oswald Chambers.

1:23 – “if” – The class condition “since.”

- “if indeed you continue in the faith” – The possession of the gospel would be shown by our their continuance in the gospel.
  - Reconciliation comes through continuing in the faith. It is not necessarily a once and done thing.

1:24 – “sufferings” – (Greek “thlipsis”) This Greek word is never used of Christ’s sufferings. These sufferings are not salvific.

- Paul paid a tremendous price to deliver the truth to the people of his generation.
- “The fellowship of His sufferings.” (Phil. 3:10)
- “And all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.” (2 Tim. 3:12)
- “fill up in my flesh” – Lit. “filling up in his turn the leftover parts of Christ’s sufferings.”

- 1:26 – “mystery” – The great mystery here referred to is the breaking down of the partition-wall between the Jew and the Gentile. (Eph. 2:14-18; 3:3)
- Paul uses the word mystery in response to the Gnostics who taught that only a select few could understand the mysteries, when in fact Paul says the mysteries are revealed to all in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- 1:27 – “Christ in you” – Christian salvation is a transaction where we receive Jesus Himself.
- And Jesus is the fullness of God Himself. (Col. 1:19; 2:9)
  - “hope of glory” – Christ in and through us is the only way our life can be “worthy of the Lord” (Col. 1:10). Christ in us is the only thing of value that God sees in us. We alone are “filthy rags,” but when Jesus comes into us He places within us something of eternal value.
  - If God Himself can cram Himself into us, then maybe it is possible to squeeze a camel through the eye of a needle.
  - “glory” – This is speaking of heaven, but especially of the fellowship with God there. (2 Cor. 4:6)
- 1:28 – “Him we preach” – Jesus Christ saves.
- “preach” – For the unbeliever.
  - “teaching” – For the believer.
  - “present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” – This was the goal of Christ’s ministry, and it should be our goal as minister’s as well.
  - “perfect” – Lit. “complete, mature.”
- 1:29 – “To this end I also labor” – Paul had to deal with the routine things of life without allowing them to obscure his real purpose for living.
- “striving according to His working” – This is an interesting combination of Paul’s effort and God’s working.

## **Chapter 2:**

- 2:1 – “conflict” – We get our English word “agony” from this word.
- This is the silent, internal agony of ministry.
  - Paul didn’t start the church of Colossae, but he still has a tremendous burden for them.
  - “Laodicea” – In less than 30 years, Jesus will reprove this church as self-willed and lukewarm. (Rev. 3:14-22)
- 2:2 – “knit together in love” – The thing that is to tie a fellowship of believers together is love.
- “the knowledge of the mystery in God” – The mystery is “Christ in you.” (Col. 1:27)
  - “knowledge” – (Greek “epignosis”) Lit. “experiential knowledge.”
- 2:3 – “the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” – Life can only be seen in its proper perspective as it rightly relates to Jesus Christ.
- The treasures of wisdom are hidden not from us, but for us, in Christ.
  - Seeking treasure anywhere apart from Jesus is futile.

- 2:4 – “deceive you” – Christians are susceptible to deception.
- Jesus warns of false teachers...Matthew 7:15-20.
  - Paul warns of false teachers...Acts 20.
  - Peter warns of false teachers...2 Peter 2.
  - “deceive” – means “to place a falsehood next to the truth.”
  - “persuasive words” – We live in a day where people often prefer style over substance, where form is more important than content.
- 2:5 – “your good order and the steadfastness” – Greek military terms speaking of putting into rank and battle formation.
- “your faith in Christ” – This is the basis of our faith and foundation of all we do and believe.
- 2:6 – “received” – Lit. “to take to oneself.”
- The gift under the Christmas tree isn’t yours until you take and open it.
  - “so walk in Him” – So many of the false teachers try to add something to Christ, as if to make an improvement on the work of Christ in us.
  - The great concern of those who have received Christ is “to walk in Him” – to make their practices conformable to their principles and their conversation agreeable to their engagements. But in a effort to live out the Christ life, many Christians begin to turn their eyes earthward to see what they should do next rather than focusing on and being with Him. We need to trust more, doing less on our own, and allow God to flow through.
  - “By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.” (Eph. 2:8)
  - “For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’” (Rom. 1:17)
  - God continually calls us back to our “first love.” (Rev. 2:4)
- 2:7 – “rooted” – Lit. “rooted once and for all.” This is an agricultural term.
- “built up” – Lit. “being built up.” This is an architectural term.
  - “as you have been taught” – Bible teaching is helpful in rooting us in the faith.
    - “For it is good that the heart be established by grace.” (Heb. 13:9)
  - “with thanksgiving” – A lack of thankfulness makes us vulnerable to false doctrine and deception.

- 2:8 – “Beware” – “The form of the sentence is a measure of the imminence of the peril” – Lightfoot.
- So many of the cults, the special revelation groups, are parasitic groups. They rise up among the church to feed on the flock.
  - “cheat” – means “spoil or sack a city, to take away captives.”
    - He insists so much upon the perfection of Christ and the gospel revelation, to preserve them from the ensnaring insinuations of those who would corrupt their principles.
    - The best way to prevent being spoiled by the world is to be spoiled by Jesus to the world. “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.” (John 6:68)
  - “philosophy” – Speculation. (Knowledge without a basis of authority.)
  - “empty deceit” – Worthless or empty.
  - “tradition of men” – Truth or authority passed from generation to generation.
    - All true spiritual authority comes from God, not from man (whether the pope, priest, or ordained minister).
    - This plainly reflects upon the Jewish pedagogy or religious practice, as well as pagan learning. The deceivers were especially the Jewish teachers, who endeavored to keep up the law of Moses in conjunction with the gospel of Christ, but really in competition with it and contradiction to it.
  - “basic principles of the world” – People who take a simple natural experience and try to develop a philosophy of life around it.
    - When we strive for “spiritual perfection” or “spiritual fullness” by means of formulas, disciplines, or rituals, we go backward instead of forward.
  - “not according to Christ” – All Christian growth is in going back to Jesus.
    - Flee the extra-Biblical ideologies which are always based on a human foundation.
- 2:9 – “dwells” – Lit. “dwell permanently.”
- “And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh.” (1 Tim. 3:16)
- 2:10 – “complete” – This is a finished work in Christ.
- “For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.” (Heb. 10:14)
  - “head” – (Greek “kephale”) Lit. “authority and covering.”
- 2:11-23 – The previous verses have dealt with the theological tenets of the false teachers. The apostle now turns to their practical errors.
- False doctrine leads to false practice.
- 2:11 – “without hands” – This is done in the heart.
- “putting off the body of the sins of the flesh” – The work of Christ in our lives is releasing us from the bondage of sin and death. Now we don’t have to sin.
  - “the circumcision of Christ” – “For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” (Phil. 3:3)
    - The Gnostics were attempting to move the believers away from the spiritual and into the fleshly.
- 2:12 – “with Him” – We are linked with Jesus in His death and resurrection through faith.
- “baptism” – The thing signified by our baptism is that we are buried with Christ.
    - This is in contrast to the ceremonial cleansing baths called Michvas.

- 2:13 – “being dead in your trespasses” – The state we were in before coming to Christ.
- A state of sin is a state of spiritual death. Those who are in sin are dead in sin. As the death of the body consists in its separation from the soul, so the death of the soul consists in its separation from God and the divine favor.
  - There is no life in sin. Sin steals, kills, and destroys (John 10:10). But there is life through death, the death of Christ.
  - “made alive together with Him” – Christ’s death was the death of our sins; Christ’s resurrection is the quickening of our souls.
- 2:14 – “wiped out” – Lit. “obliterated.”
- “handwriting of requirements” – The Law that we could not keep.
  - “contrary to us” – The law is a schoolmaster to lead us to Christ. (Gal. 3:24)
  - “out of the way” – It has been removed from between God and us.
  - “nailed it to the cross” – The expressions are in allusion to the ancient methods of cancelling a bond, either by crossing the writing or striking it through with a nail.
- 2:15 – “disarmed” – De-armed. (Monty Python or Star Wars)
- “principalities and powers” – The demonic forces. (Eph. 6:12)
    - Legalism is essential to the doctrine of demons. (1 Tim. 4:1-5)
- 2:16 – “let no one judge you” – Their faith in Jesus led them to break from their religious heritage of Judaism.
- “judge” – The idea is “condemn.”
  - “food and drink” – The Jewish dietary law.
  - “festival” – The feasts.
  - “new moon” – The monthly sabbaths.
  - “sabbaths” – Saturday was the sabbath-day of the Jews.
    - Circumcision (Gen. 17:11) and the sabbath (Exod. 31:17) were “signs” pointing to Christ. Nobody makes their home under the sign, but they use the sign to find home.
    - Rules and regulations cannot make us holy, no matter how we attempt to Christ-ify them. They died with Jesus on the cross. Therefore, give them no weight in your present relationship with God.
- 2:17 – “substance is of Christ” – The traditions were to point to Jesus. He is the reality of the OT types and law.
- Christ is standing between the glory of the future and the law of the past, casting a shadow.
  - The body, of which they were but shadows, has come; and to continue the ceremonial observances, which were only types and shadows of Christ and the gospel, carries an intimation that Christ has not yet come and the gospel state has not yet commenced.
- 2:18 – “cheat you” – Lit. “to declare unworthy of a prize.” It’s an athletic term referring to getting kicked out of a contest for not following the rules.
- “false humility” – Asceticism.
  - “worship of angels” – Hyper-spirituality.
  - “puffed up” – Pride.
    - They advanced those notions to gratify their own carnal fancy, and were fond of being thought wiser than other people. Pride is at the bottom of a great many errors and corruptions, and even of many evil practices, which have great show and appearance of humility.



- 2:19 – “not holding fast to the Head” – Legalism breaks our fellowship with Jesus.
- Trying to do things “for Jesus” actually separates us “from Jesus.” Turning to religious practice is to turn away from Christ.
  - Those who promote religion do in effect disclaim Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man. It is the highest disparagement to Christ, who is the head of the Church, for any of the members of it to make use of any intercessors with God but Him.
  - Any separation from the head will lead to death.
  - “Head” – (Greek “kaphale”) means “authority and covering.” (Col. 1:18)
  - “grows with the increase that is from God” – The spiritual body grows by nutrition, not by addition.
- 2:20 – “died with Christ” – This is a death to fleshly indulgence and fleshly religion.
- Christians are dead. The self has died. Personal motives are gone. Glory in results isn’t ours. So creating super-Biblical rules and trying to hold ourselves and others to them will not work. We cannot live by trying to be better; we can only surrender to the life of God provided for us.
  - “the basic principles of the world” – Col. 2:8.
- 2:23 – “self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body” – These things promote ourselves, they don’t elevate Jesus.
- Our desire to be “on-fire for God” can sometimes be more about us being on fire than it is about God.
  - “no value against...the flesh” – These legalistic practices don’t conquer sin.
  - Only Jesus can make an impact on our flesh.

### **Chapter 3:**

- 3:1 – “If” – The idea is “since.”
- The greater part of our redemption is that we were redeemed for a purpose. There is a purifying hope for the Church.
  - “seek” – The tense is “constantly seek.”
- 3:2 – “Set” – Lit. “Constantly be setting.”
- “Set your mind” – He is also asking us to change the way we think.
    - The people who enjoy life the most are those who are looking to heaven.
    - Right thinking will lead to right living.
    - “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matt. 6:21)
  - “things above” – Jesus is above. (Heb. 12:2)
    - We must acquaint ourselves with them, esteem them above all other things, and lay out ourselves in preparation for the enjoyment of them. (Ps. 27:4; Rom. 8:6; Heb. 11:14)
  - “not on things on the earth” – The “things on the earth” are not in themselves sinful, but become so if sought and thought on in preference to the things above.
- 3:3 – “you died” – We were “buried with Him in baptism.” The old life is dead through faith in Jesus Christ. (Col. 2:12, 20)
- A life “worthy of the Lord” (Col. 1:10) can only happen when we live dead to our old self and He lives through us.
  - “your life is hidden with Christ” – The new man has its livelihood thence. It is born and nourished from above; and the perfection of its life is reserved for that state.

- 3:4 – “Christ our life” – Christ Himself is the essence of the Christian life. (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21)
- The present work of Jesus in us.
  - We feed on Christ through a constant, vital relationship.
  - The key is to know the sufficiency of Christ and living like it.
- “life” – An anonymous quote says, “Life is what you are alive to.” What makes you come alive?
- “will appear with Him in glory” – The better part of our life is ahead of us.
- The future work of Jesus for us.
  - The NT teaches both; there will be a time when Christ comes for His Church and a time when Christ comes back with His Church.
  - Christians are present/future-oriented...forgetting the things which are behind.
- 3:5 – “put to death” – Because you already died with Christ (Col. 2:20; 3:3), these are things that now come under our control (Gal. 5:23).
- “fornication” – (Greek “porneia”) Sexual activity outside the context of marriage.
  - “uncleanness” – Lit. “lustful impurity,” connected with luxury and loose living.
  - “passion” – Depraved passion. The word speaks of a state of mind that excited sexual impurity.
  - “evil desire” – Ungodly desire.
  - “covetousness” – Anything that God has not given to you.
    - “Godliness with contentment is great gain.” (1 Tim. 6:6)
  - “which is idolatry” – The love of the world, that is, an inordinate love of present good and outward enjoyments, which proceeds from too high a value in the mind, puts upon too eager a pursuit, hinders the proper use and enjoyment of them, and creates anxious fear and immoderate sorrow for the loss of them.
- 3:6 – “the wrath of God is coming” – We must be careful not to presume upon the grace of God.
- This is the seething, internal, righteous anger of God.
- 3:7 – “once walked” – These things marked the Colossians’ lives before they came to Christ.
- 3:8 – “put off all these” – He moves from the external things to the internal things.
- “anger” – (Greek “orge”) The stewing, under-the-surface anger. Internal.
  - “wrath” – (Greek “thumos”) Explosive anger. External.
  - “malice” – The desire to see another person harmed.
  - “blasphemy” – Speaking against God or others and taking God’s name in vain.
  - “filthy language” – Foul and obscene language.
- 3:9 – “Do not lie” – Lit. “Stop lying.” They seemed to lack a commitment to truth.
- “have put off” – The tense is “completely and finally put off.”
- 3:10 – “put on the new man” – It is not enough to simply refuse to do the wrong things, we must also be filled with the right things.
- When we are saved, we are made new creation. “All things have become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17)
  - “is renewed” – Lit. “is being renewed.” This speaks of a process.

3:11 – “Christ is all and in all” – The union of Christ with people, irrespective of religious or cultural background.

- There is now no difference arising from different country or different condition and circumstance of life: it is as much the duty of the one as of the other to be holy, and as much the privilege of the one as of the other to receive from God the grace to be so.

3:12 – “holy and beloved” – It becomes those who are holy towards God to be lowly and loving towards all men.

- “put on” – Lit. “to envelope in, to clothe with.”
  - These are the “life-things” that take the place of the dead (v. 5).
- “tender mercies” – or “compassion, pity.” Feeling someone else’s pain.
- “kindness” – The word speaks of a gentle, gracious disposition.
- “humility” – Lit. “a humble opinion of one’s self.”
- “meekness” – One definition of this word is “power under control.” This is the temper of spirit in which we accept God’s dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting.
- “longsuffering” – (Greek “makrothumia”) Lit. “patience with and under the ill-treatment of others.”

3:13 – “complaint against another” – Lit. “blame.” Sin issues and personal offenses.

3:14 – “above all these things” – Lit. “over all things.” Let this be the upper garment, the robe, the livery, the mark of our dignity and distinction. Or let this be the principal and chief, as the whole sum of the second table of the Law.

- “love” – (Greek “agape”) Self-sacrificial love that serves to the benefit of another.
  - The success of these relationships results from self-sacrifice as we mortify our flesh.
  - This only truly comes by the Holy Spirit.

3:15 – “peace of God” – This is not the “peace with God” that was positionally given to us when we placed our faith in Jesus. The “peace of God” is an experiential peace that comes from fellowship with God.

- “rule” – Lit. “umpire.” God’s peace is to govern in us.
- “be thankful” – Paul mentions this 6 times in Colossians, and Paul is in jail as he writes this.

3:16 – “word of Christ” – The Scriptures.

- The two steps to living in God’s will: God’s Word and God’s Spirit.
- “dwell” – Lit. “dwell down, to be at home in.”
  - The gospel is the word of Christ, which has come to us; but that is not enough, it must dwell in us or “keep house,” not as a servant in a family, who is under another’s control, but as a master, who has a right to prescribe to and direct all under his roof.
- “richly” – or “abundantly.” Not only must the saint be yielded to the Word, but he must have a good knowledge of it. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God that we know as He talks to us and guides our lives. He can efficiently talk to us to the extent to which we know the Word. That is the language He uses.
  - The word is to not only keep house in our hearts, but keep a good house. Many have the word of Christ dwelling in them, but it dwells in them poorly; it has no mighty force and influence upon them.
- “admonishing” – Lit. “warning.”
- “spiritual songs” – We call them “choruses.”
  - Psalms, hymns, and choruses can all be used by God’s people in corporate worship.

3:17 – “the name” – (Greek “onoma”) Lit. “the nature.”

3:18-4:1 – Paul touches on some important and practical relationship characteristics in the light of the death we died and the life of Christ we now live in. These are small keys to living in a manner “worthy of the Lord” (Col. 1:10), and they are all positions of submission. We are not to act to prosper ourselves, but being dead to ourselves and alive in Christ, we can love others as ourselves.

- “The strength of a nation is derived from the integrity of its homes” – Confucius.

3:18-19 – “Wives, submit...Husbands, love” – The two rules of marriage. These two things play off or and complement each other.

3:18 – “submit” – Lit. “to come under, to arrange in order of rank.” A military term.

- The tenses here are in the middle voice which requires the submission to be voluntary. These verses do not give the husband the right to order submission.
- “fitting” – Lit. “in harmony with.”
- “fitting in the Lord” – The wife’s submission to her husband is a picture of Christ’s submission to the Father.
  - The wife is never expected to submit to ungodly and non-Biblical sinful situations.

3:19 – “love” – (Greek “agape”) This is the love that will cause the husband to sacrifice himself and his own wishes in the interest of the well-being of the wife.

- Ephesians 5:25 – “as Christ also loved the church.” A husband’s sacrifice for his wife is a picture of Christ sacrifice for the Church.
- “bitter” – Bitterness grows when pain is not properly dealt with.
  - Men get hurt in marriage too (unmet expectations), but aren’t always allowed to talk about it and deal with it properly.

3:20 – “obey” – The primary instruction to children. They must learn to bring their wills under control.

- For the most part, children do not create problems, they reveal them. Parents who do not discipline themselves cannot discipline their children. If a father or mother are not under authority themselves, they cannot exercise authority over others.

3:21 – “provoke” – or “irritate.”

- “children” – “But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea.” (Matt. 18:6)
- “discouraged” – If children have impossible expectations placed on them by their parents, they will likely quit trying to meet any and all expectations placed on them.
  - Sometimes parents, in an effort to keep their children from making the same mistakes they made, hold their children to standards that are too high to reach.
  - Parents must balance encouragement with training.

3:22 – “Bondservants” – These instructions also apply to employees.

- Some estimate that at this time there were 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire.
- “eyeservice” – Working hard when watched, but slacking off when the boss is away is not a way for the Christian to work.

3:23 – “heartily” – Do your best.

- “as to the Lord” – If you cannot do it unto the Lord, don’t do it.
  - We are really doing our duty to God when we are faithful in our duty to men.

3:24 – “you serve the Lord Christ” – Whatever our job or position, Jesus is the One we serve.

3:25 – “no partiality” – The righteous Judge of the earth will be impartial, and carry it with an equal hand towards the master and servant; not swayed by any regard to men’s outward circumstances and condition of life.

## **Chapter 4:**

4:1 – “Masters” – We can apply this to employers. (Eph. 6:9)

4:2 – “Continue earnestly” – or “persevere.” Lit. “hold fast in strength.”

- There is an effort required for prayer.
- “prayer” – Being devoted to prayer is one of the keys to living in and remaining with Christ.
  - Prayer is a spiritual exercise. The flesh does not like it.
- “thanksgiving” – If we have a relationship with God, we have much to be thankful for.

4:3 – “a door for the word” – Paul didn’t pray to be released from prison, but for an opportunity to further share the word with people. (1 Cor. 16:9; Acts 14:27)

- Paul knew that the word could be free, even if he wasn’t...writing from prison.
- Even Paul needed an open door to share the message of Jesus.
- “mystery” – It is a mystery. That is why it is so hard for unbelievers to accept.
- “for which I am also in chains” – It was Paul’s single request that the gospel of “the mystery of Christ” might go forward. And Paul was willing to suffer chains for it to do so.

4:4 – “manifest” – Evident. Paul wasn’t trying to be cool, but clear.

- “Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them.” (Ezek. 33:32)

- 4:5 – “wisdom” – We are to be “wise as serpents and harmless as doves.” (Matt. 10:16)
- Do them all the good you can, and by all the fittest means and in the proper seasons recommend religion to them.
  - Be supernaturally natural, not supernaturally weird.
- 4:6 – “grace” – or “gracious, pleasant.”
- “seasoned with salt” – Salt is a tasty preservative. Everything we say should point others to God. (Eph. 4:29; Rom. 2:4)
  - “how you ought to answer each one” – “Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.” (1 Pet. 3:15)
- 4:7 – “Tychicus” – He is likely going to carry this letter to the Colossians.
- “beloved brother, faithful minister” – Great characteristics of a teammate in ministry.
- 4:9 – “Onesimus” – means “profitable.”
- He was Philemon’s runaway slave who got saved while imprisoned alongside Paul in Rome. (Philemon 1:10)
- 4:10 – “Aristarchus” – He was a travelling companion of Paul, but now he is in prison.
- “Mark” – This is John Mark (Acts 12:25). He abandoned Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey (Acts 13:13), but apparently was restored to ministry by Barnabas (Acts 15:39; 2 Tim. 4:11).
  - Failing is an important part of succeeding. We learn more in our failures than in our successes.
- 4:11 – “of the circumcision” – They were born-again Jews.
- “comfort” – or “solace, relief, consolation.”
- 4:12 – “Epaphras” – He likely brought the gospel to Colossae. (Col. 1:7)
- “laboring” – or “striving.” Lightfoot translates this word “wrestling.”
  - “fervently” – Lit. “agonizingly.” The same word of Jesus praying in Gethsemane. (Luke 22:44)
  - “perfect and complete in all the will of God” – To stand perfect and complete in the will of God is what we should earnestly desire for ourselves and others.
- 4:13 – “Laodicea” – In Rev. 3, the church at Laodicea was known to be lukewarm.
- Lukewarm follows when we waver and get out of step with Jesus, the Christ; God in us. When we are in Him, walking in His fire-light, I don’t think we can help but be set on fire ourselves. Our entire life should center on being with the King. Settling for anything short of Jesus will lead to mediocrity. There can be no mixture of human philosophies with God’s commands. “The great enemy of the life of faith in God is not sin, but the good which is not good enough” – Oswald Chambers.
  - “Hierapolis” – Philip and his daughters were martyred at Hierapolis.
- 4:14 – “Luke” – He travelled with Paul through much of the book of Acts. (Acts 16:10)
- “Demas” – He will later abandon Paul for the love of the world. (2 Tim. 4:10)

4:16 – “read also in the church of the Laodiceans” – There are things in the letter to the Colossians that would benefit those in the Laodicean church.

- “read” – Lit. “read aloud.” (1 Tim. 4:13)

4:17 – “ministry” – We all have a ministry given us that we need to be faithful to fulfill. (Eph. 2:10)

- “fulfill it” – Don’t let anything move you from your calling.

4:18 – “Remember my chains” – This is an interesting salutation in light of the fact that they’ve never met him personally.

- Paul’s imprisonment was further validation of the truth of the message he carried. He does not say, “Remember I am a prisoner and send me supply,” but “Remember I am in bonds as the apostle of the Gentiles and let this confirm your faith in the gospel of Christ.” His chains as weight to this exhortation.