

A study in
COLOSSIANS



HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

This 7-week study in Colossians is designed to be used by groups of any size, in any setting - anything from two friends reading the Bible together in their lunch break, to an entire Connect group meeting after dinner on a weeknight. All you need is a Bible and this booklet.

Before you begin, it might also be helpful to watch through the Bible Project's introductory video on Colossians (only 9 mins long), available on their website:

<https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/colossians/>

Each study in this booklet has **three** components:

- 1) looking at the passage using the questions provided,
- 2) discussing the application questions that go with it, and
- 3) finishing with personal reflections.

For a 60-minute bible study we recommend you structure your time in the following way:

1. Reading the passage (5 mins)
2. Explaining what the passage is about (10 mins)
3. Discussing what the passage means (10 mins)
4. Discussing the application questions (25 mins)
5. Sharing your response to the passage (10 mins)

Week ONE

Colossians 1:1-14

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

*What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?
What things are unclear or confusing?
What do you think the main point of this passage is?*

4 Discuss the following application questions:

Verse 12-14 are a great summary of the gospel. Put it in your own words and explain it to the group in a few sentences.

Paul says that faith in Jesus, and love for God's people spring from the eternal hope that we are promised. Do a hope check... do you have sense of hope for what God has promised you?

Paul describes a life 'worthy of the Lord' as:

- Bearing fruit in every good work
- Growing in the knowledge of God
- Being strengthened by God's power
- Giving joyful thanks

Which of these four do you see the most growth in your life? Which is the one that needs the most work? Why?

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

*What is God saying to me?
What does this mean for how I live?
Does this change what I think or believe?
Is there anything I should do or stop doing?
Is there something I want to be held accountable for?*

Week TWO

Colossians 1:15-23

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

*What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?
What things are unclear or confusing?
What do you think the main point of this passage is?*

4 Discuss the following application questions:

Read the description of Jesus in verses 15-19.

Does this change your view of Jesus? Does it change your view of the universe? What is your gut reaction to this claim?

The end of verse 16 says, "all things have been created through him and for him". Is there any area of your life that you are wanting to keep separate from Jesus?

The gospel is a message of reconciliation (see verses 19-23). Would you describe yourself as a friend of God?

Describe the difference that Jesus has made in your life by filling in the blank:

Once I was _____ but now, through Jesus I am _____.
Could you describe further?

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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Week THREE

Colossians 1:24-2:5

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

*What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?
What things are unclear or confusing?
What do you think the main point of this passage is?*

4 Discuss the following application questions:

Verse 27 says that the mystery of God is “Christ in you, the hope of glory”. Have you experienced Christ’s presence in your life? If so, can you share about it?

Can you think of a time that you have experienced Christ’s power? How would you describe it?

Most people have a picture of what it looks like to be a mature Christian. What would you say is your picture of someone who is a mature Christian?

How does your picture compare to Paul’s description in verses 2-5?

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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Week FOUR

Colossians 2:6-23

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

*What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?
What things are unclear or confusing?
What do you think the main point of this passage is?*

4 Discuss the following application questions:

Paul urges the Colossian believers not to move on from Jesus (verses 6-8). Have you ever been tempted to 'move on' from Jesus towards other types of teachings or practices we find in our world? What did you find appealing about them?

Verses 9-15 describe life in Christ as fullness. Would you also describe the Christian life as 'full'? What do you think being full in Christ looks like in our lives today?

Colossians 2:13-14 tells us that God has forgiven all our sins, yet the Colossian believers were being judged for how they lived their lives (verses 16-18). Have you had times when you've been made to feel judged by others? Or times when you've never felt good enough?

The world is full of empty rules and practices designed to make us better people, but in reality the only one who can help us grow us to maturity is Christ (verses 20-23). Which of the world's 'rules' do you need to watch out for? What would it look like instead for you to live in Christ? (verse 7).

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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Week FIVE

Colossians 3:1-14

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

*What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?
What things are unclear or confusing?
What do you think the main point of this passage is?*

4 Discuss the following application questions:

As those who have been raised with Christ, we are told to set our hearts and minds on things above (verses 1-2). Does this come easily to you, or is it a struggle? Is there anything you've found which helps?

Our new identity in Christ also comes with a new way of living (verses 9-10). Do you feel a sense of being made new in Christ? Has anything from your 'old self' had to be put to death over the years? (No need to be specific, unless you are comfortable sharing with the group).

Verses 12-14 describe the new way of living we are to clothe ourselves with as Christians. Which 'item of clothing' do you find the hardest? Why?

Which do you see the most on display in the lives of Christians you know? At church? In yourself?

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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Week SIX

Colossians 3:15-4:1

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

*What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?
What things are unclear or confusing?
What do you think the main point of this passage is?*

4 Discuss the following application questions:

Every Christian has been called into the body of Christ (verse 15). Do you have a strong sense of belonging in the Christian community? How do/can you contribute to the peace of the body of Christ?

Verse 17 tells us to do everything – word and deed – in the name of Jesus, with thankfulness. Is there any area of your life that you feel is 'off limits' to Jesus?

The instructions in verse 18-4:1 are not arbitrary roles for society. They are a response to having a new identity in Jesus. What is the most important change that Jesus has made in your life?

Do you inhabit any of the roles in verses 18-4:1? How does belonging to Jesus change the way you act in this role (consider you work roles in place of the master-slave roles)?

NOTE: This is a controversial passage. If you still have questions about the justice of the passage, we recommend listening to the sermon "A New Identity, A New Community" available on the DBC website.

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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Week SEVEN

Colossians 4:2-18

1 Begin by reading the passage. Have someone read it aloud, then have someone else re-read it.

2 Using your own words, have a go at explaining what this passage is about.

What is said? What happens? If it's a story, what's the plot?

3 Discuss what you think this passage means.

*What is it saying about God? What is it saying about people?
What things are unclear or confusing?
What do you think the main point of this passage is?*

4 Discuss the following application questions:

Verse 2 tells us to devote ourselves to prayer. What do your habits and patterns of prayer look like?

We are told to pray for two things in this passage: the spread of the gospel (verses 3-4) and the maturity and perseverance of believers (verse 12). In your prayers, which of these do you find more natural?

Verses 5-6 give us instructions for how to act toward unbelievers, and how to speak about faith with them. What do you find most challenging in these verses? Are there particular people in your life you are connecting with and/or having spiritual conversations with?

Verses 7-18 paint a picture of the community of faith in Colossae, and their priorities. Is there anything particular that stand out to you, and gets you excited?

5 Finish by taking turns sharing: what is your response to this passage?

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