

# **The Most Excellent Way**

*The Christian Solution to Chemical Dependency  
“Becoming GOD-Dependent”*

## **COLOSSIANS**

**“You Are Complete”**

Bible Study Homework



***“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in  
bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ,  
who is the head over every power and authority.”***

***COLOSSIANS 2:9-10 NIV***

# COLOSSIANS

## “You Are Complete”

### Bible Study Homework

#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Themes from Colossians.....	3
Overview .....	4
Study One..... “That I May Be Filled with Knowledge of His Will .....	5
Study Two..... “The Supremacy of Christ” .....	9
Study Three..... “Jesus — My Life” .....	13
Study Four..... “That I May Walk in a Manner Worthy” .....	17
Study Five..... “Being Complete in Jesus” .....	22
Study Six..... “Brand New Relationships” .....	26
Study Seven..... “A Brand New Voice” .....	29

Scriptures are from New International Version of the Bible unless otherwise noted.

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## **COLOSSIANS Megathemes**

<i>THEME</i>	<i>EXPLANATION</i>	<i>IMPORTANCE</i>
<b><i>Jesus Christ is God</i></b>	<i>Jesus is God in the flesh, Lord of all creation, and Lord of the new creation. He is the expressed reflection of the invisible God. He is eternal, preexistent, omnipotent, equal with the Father. He is supreme and complete.</i>	<i>Because Jesus is supreme, our lives must be Christ centered. To recognize Him as God means to regard our relationship with Him most vital and to make His interests our top priority.</i>
<b><i>Jesus is Head of the Church</i></b>	<i>Because Jesus is God, He is the head of the church, His true believers. Jesus is the founder, the leader, and the highest authority on earth. He requires first place in all our thoughts and activities.</i>	<i>To acknowledge Jesus as our head, we must welcome His leadership in all we do or think. No person, group, or church can regard any loyalty as more critical than that of loyalty to Him, Jesus.</i>
<b><i>Union with Jesus</i></b>	<i>Because our sin has been forgiven and we have been reconciled to God, we have a union with Jesus that can never be broken. In our faith connection with Him, we identify with His death, burial, and resurrection.</i>	<i>We should live in constant contact and communication with God. When we do, we all will be connected with Jesus and with one another.</i>
<b><i>Man-made Religions</i></b>	<i>False teachers were promoting a heresy that stressed man-made rules (legalism). They also sought spiritual growth by discipline of the body (asceticism) and visions (mysticism). This search created pride in their self-centered efforts.</i>	<i>We must not cling to our own ideas and try to blend them into Christianity. Nor should we let our hunger for a more fulfilling Christian experience cause us to trust in a teacher, a group, or a system of thought more than in Jesus Himself. Jesus is our hope and our true source of wisdom.</i>

## COLOSSIANS ~ Overview

*“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.”*

*COLOSSIANS 2:9-10 NIV*

**R**emove the head coach, and the team flounders. Break the fuel line, and the car won't run. Unplugged, the electrical appliance has no power. Without the head, the body dies. Whether for leadership, power, or life, connections are vital!

Colossians is a book of connections. Writing from prison in Rome, Paul combated false teachings which had infiltrated the Colossian church. The problem was “syncretism,” combining ideas from other philosophies and religions (such as paganism, strains of Judaism, and Greek thought) with Christian truth. The resulting heresy later became known as “Gnosticism,” emphasizing special knowledge (*gnosis* in Greek) and denying Jesus as God and Savior.

To combat this devious error, Paul stressed Jesus' deity and his sacrificial death on the cross for sin. Only by being connected with Jesus through faith can anyone have eternal life and only through a continuing connection with Him can anyone have power for living. Jesus is God incarnate and the *only* way to peace with God the Father. Paul emphasized believer's connections with each other as Christ's body on earth.

Paul's introduction to the Colossians includes a greeting, a note of thanksgiving, and a prayer for spiritual wisdom and strength for these brothers and sisters in Christ (1:1-12).

He then moves into a doctrinal discussion of the person and work of Jesus (1:13-23), stating:

- ◆ Jesus is the “image of the invisible God” (1:15);
- ◆ Jesus is the Creator (1:16);
- ◆ Jesus is the “head of the body, the church” (1:18);
- ◆ Jesus is the “firstborn from the dead” (1:18).
- ◆ His death on the cross makes it possible for us to stand in the presence of God (1:22).

Paul then explains how the world's teachings are totally empty when compared with God's plan, and he challenges the Colossians to reject shallow answers and to live in union with Jesus (1:23—2:23).

Against this theological backdrop, Paul turns to practicalities — what the divinity, death, and resurrection of Jesus *should* mean to all believers (3:1-4:6):

- ◆ Because our eternal destiny is sure, heaven *should* fill our thoughts (3:1-4).
- ◆ Sexual impurity and other worldly lusts *should* not be named among us (3:5-8).
- ◆ Truth, love and peace *should* mark our lives (3:9-15).
- ◆ Our love for Jesus *should* also translate into love for others – friends, fellow believers, spouses, children, and parents (3:16-4:1).
- ◆ Furthermore, we *should* constantly communicate with God through prayer (4:2-4).
- ◆ And we *should* take every opportunity to tell others the Good News (4:5-6).

In Christ we have everything we need for salvation and for living the Christian life.

Read the book of Colossians as a letter written to and for an embattled church in the first century, providing a living lesson of the connectedness of the body of Christ. Also read it for its timeless truths. Gain a fresh appreciation for Jesus as the *fullness* of God and the *only* source for living the Christian life.

Because Jesus is the exact likeness of God, when we learn what He is like, we see what we need to become. We need to nurture our vital connection to Him as our top priority.

SOURCE: LIFE APPLICATION BIBLE

**“That I May Be Filled with a Knowledge of His Will”**

*Read through the following questions after reading the Scripture passage for this week,  
and may our Lord richly bless you as you draw closer to Him.*

**STUDY ONE ~ COLOSSIANS 1:1-14 NIV**

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,*

*<sup>2</sup>To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse:*

*Grace and peace to you from God our Father.*

*<sup>3</sup>We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,*

*<sup>4</sup>Because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints—*

*<sup>5</sup>The faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in  
heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel*

*<sup>6</sup>That has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing,  
just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it  
and understood God’s grace in all its truth.*

*<sup>7</sup>You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant,  
who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf,*

*<sup>8</sup>And who also told us of your love in the Spirit.*

*<sup>9</sup>For this reason, since the day we heard about you,  
we have not stopped praying for you and asking*

*God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.*

*<sup>10</sup>And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please  
Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,*

*<sup>11</sup>Being strengthened with all power according to His glorious might  
so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully*

*<sup>12</sup>Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to  
share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.*

*<sup>13</sup>For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness  
and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves,*

*<sup>14</sup>In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

◆ **FOCUSING**

1. How many cards and letters do you usually receive at Christmas? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. When was the last time you received a letter from a stranger? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. When was the last time you received a letter that really cheered you up? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

◆ **STUDYING GOD’S WORD**

4. Who wrote the letter to the Colossians? (1:1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ◆ **The Most Excellent Way ~ “You Are Complete in Christ”** ◆

5. Who was with Paul when he wrote this letter? (1:1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Colossians, along with Philippians, Ephesians, and Philemon, is called a *prison epistle* because Paul wrote it from prison in Rome. The prison was a house where Paul was kept under close guard at all times (probably chained to a soldier), but given certain freedoms not offered to most prisoners. He was allowed to write letters and to see visitors.

6. How did Paul address the Colossian Christians? (1:2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. How did Paul greet his audience? (1:2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: The city of Colosse was 100 miles east of Ephesus on the Lycus River. It was not as influential as the nearby city of Laodicea, but as a trading center it was crossroads for ideas and religions. Colosse had a large Jewish population—many Jews fled there when they were forced out of Jerusalem under the persecutions of Antiochus III and IV, almost 200 years before Christ. The church in Colosse was founded by Epaphras (vs. 1:7), one of Paul’s converts. Paul had not yet visited this church. His purpose in writing was to refute heretical teachings about Christ which had been causing confusion among the Christians there.

8. Why did Paul offer prayers of thanksgiving for the Colossians? (1:3-4) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Letters in Paul’s day frequently began with the writer’s name, followed by a blessing. Paul usually added Christian elements to his greetings, reminding his readers of his call by God to spread the gospel, emphasizing that the authority for his words came from God, and giving thanks for God’s blessings.

9. From what source did the believers’ faith and love spring? (1:5) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. What did Paul stress about the Gospel? (1:5-6) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Throughout this letter, Paul combats a heresy related to gnosticism (see note for 2:4). Gnostics believed it took special knowledge to be accepted by God; for them, even if they claimed to be Christians, Christ alone was not the way of salvation (1:20). In his introductory comments, therefore, Paul commends the Colossians for their faith, hope, and love—three main emphases of Christianity (1 Corinthians 13:13). He deliberately omits any mention of knowledge because of the heresy. It is not *what* we know that makes us Christians, but *whom* we know. Knowing Christ is knowing God.

Wherever Paul went, he preached the Gospel—to Gentile audiences, to hostile Jewish leaders, and even to his Roman guards. Whenever people believed in the message he spoke, they were changed. *God’s Word is not just for our information, it is for our transformation! Becoming a Christian means beginning a whole new relationship with God, not just turning over a new leaf or determining to do right. New believers have a changed purpose, direction, attitude, and behavior.* They no longer seek to serve themselves, but they “bring forth fruit” for God. What “fruit” has God’s word produced in your life? What fruit do you still lack?

11. Who taught the gospel to the Colossians? (1:7) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. What did Epaphras tell Paul and Timothy about the Colossians? (1:7-8) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Epaphras founded the church at Colosse while Paul was living in Ephesus (Acts 19:10). For some reason, Epaphras visited Rome and, while there, told Paul about the problem with Colossian heresy. This prompted Paul to write this letter.

## ◆ **The Most Excellent Way** ~ “*You Are Complete in Christ*” ◆

13. What else did Epaphras tell Paul about the Christians in Colosse? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Because of their love for one another, Christians can have an impact that goes far beyond their neighborhoods and communities. Christian love for others comes from the Holy Spirit (see Galatians 5:22). The Bible speaks of it as an action and attitude, not just an emotion. It is a by-product of our new life in Christ (see Romans 5:5; 1 Corinthians 13). Christians have no excuse for not loving others—Christian love is not a feeling but a decision to *act* in the best interests of others.

14. What was Paul’s primary prayer for these Christians? (1:9) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. What results did Paul want for the Colossians? (1:10) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. How could the church at Colosse have spiritual strength? (1:11-12) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17. How does God enable believers to share in His inheritance? (1:12-14) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Paul was exposing a heresy in the Colossian church that was a forerunner of Gnosticism. Gnostics valued the accumulation of knowledge, but Paul pointed out that knowledge in itself is empty. To be worth anything, it must lead to a changed life and right living. His prayer for the Colossians has two dimensions—that they might *understand* what God wants, and that they might also have the power to *do* God’s will. Paul wanted the Colossians to be wise, but to *use* their knowledge. Knowledge of God is not a secret that only a few can discover; it is open to everyone. *God wants us not only to learn more about Him, but also to please Him* by the way we live because it results in helping others.

Sometimes we wonder how to pray for people we have never met. Paul had never met the Colossians, but he faithfully prayed for them. His prayers teach us how to pray for others, whether we know them or not. We can request that they: (1) *understand God’s will*, (2) *gain spiritual wisdom*, (3) *please and honor God*, (4) *do kind things for others*, (5) *know God better and better*, (6) *be filled with God’s strength*, (7) *endure in faith*, (8) *stay full of Christ’s joy*, and (9) *always be thankful*. All believers have these same basic needs. When you don’t know how to pray for someone, remember Paul’s prayer pattern for the Colossians.

The Colossians feared the unseen forces of darkness, but Paul says that true believers have been *transferred from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom, from guilt to forgiveness, and from the power of Satan to the power of God*. We have been rescued from a rebel kingdom to serve the rightful King. Our conduct should reflect our new allegiance.

In verses 12-14, Paul lists five benefits God secured for us when Christ died on the cross:

- (1) He made us fit to be part of His Kingdom (see 2 Corinthians 5:21);
- (2) He rescued us from Satan’s domination and made us His children (see also Colossians 2:15);
- (3) He brought us into His eternal Kingdom (see Ephesians 1:5-6);
- (4) He bought our freedom (“redemption”) from sin and judgment (see Hebrews 9:12); and
- (5) He forgave all our sins (see Ephesians 1:7).

### ◆ **UNDERSTANDING THE WORD**

18. What do you find appealing about the way Paul started his letter to the Colossians? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

19. Why did Paul praise a group of Christians he had never met? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The Most Excellent Way ~ "You Are Complete in Christ"**

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- 20. How are the results of faith, love, and hope evident in your life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 21. How is the gospel bearing fruit in your church? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 22. What can we learn about praying for others from Paul's prayers for the Colossians? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 23. If Paul were to write you a personal letter, what might he say to you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

◆ **DOING THE WORD**

- 24. What is one way you will improve your prayer this week? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 25. What missionaries will you pray for on a regular basis over the next month? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 26. To whom will you write an encouraging letter sometime during the next week? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*May the Lord richly bless you through His Word!*



**“The Supremacy of Christ”**

*Read through the following questions after reading the Scripture passage for this week.  
May our Lord richly bless you as you see Him in His fullness.*

**STUDY TWO ~ COLOSSIANS 1:15-23 NIV**

*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*

*<sup>16</sup>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.*

*<sup>17</sup>He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.*

*<sup>18</sup>And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy.*

*<sup>19</sup>For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him,*

*<sup>20</sup>And through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood, shed on the cross.*

*<sup>21</sup>Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.*

*<sup>22</sup>But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation—  
if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel.*

*<sup>23</sup>This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.*

◆ **FOCUSING**

1. What person comes to mind when you think of greatness? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Whom do you look up to? Why? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What qualities stand out in a person you admire? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

◆ **STUDYING THE WORD**

4. What is Christ's relationship to God? (1:15) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is Christ's relationship to Creation? (1:15-17) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. How do “all things . . . hold together” under Christ? (1:16-17) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (1:15-16): This is one of the strongest statements about the divine nature of Jesus found anywhere in the Bible. Consider:

(1) Jesus is not only equal to God (Philippians 2:6), He is God (John 10:30, 38; 12:45; 14:1-11).

## ◆ **The Most Excellent Way ~ “You Are Complete in Christ”** ◆

- (2) Jesus not only reflects God, but He reveals God to us (John 1:18; 14:9).
- (3) Jesus came from heaven, not from the dust of the ground (1 Corinthians 15:47) and is Lord of all (Romans 9:5; 10:11-13; Revelation 1:5; 17:14).
- (4) Jesus is completely Holy (Hebrews 7:26-28; 1 Peter 19; 2:22; 1 John 3:5), and
- (5) Jesus has authority to judge the world (Romans 2:16; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Timothy 4:1).

Therefore, He is supreme over all creation, including the spirit world. We, like the Colossians believers, must believe that Jesus is God or our Christian faith is hollow and meaningless.

NOTE (1:16): Because the false teachers believed the physical world was evil, they thought God Himself could not have created it. If Christ were God, they reasoned, He would be in charge only of the spiritual world. But Paul explains that both the spiritual and physical worlds were created by and are under the authority of Christ Himself. He has no equal and no rival.

7. What is Christ’s relationship to the church? (1:18) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Why was the resurrection of Jesus significant? (1:18) \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (1:18): The resurrection (Christ is “firstborn from the dead”) proves Christ’s lordship over the material world. All who trust in Christ will also defeat death and rise again to live eternally with Him (1 Corinthians 15:20; 1 Thessalonians 4:14). Because of His death on the cross, Christ is exalted and elevated to the status that was rightfully His (see Philippians 2:5-11). Because He is spiritually supreme (preeminent) in the universe, we should surely give Him first place in our thoughts, attitudes and activities.

9. How did Paul explain the deity of Christ? (1:19) \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (1:19): Christ is fully divine — He has *always been* God and He *will always be* God. See Philippians 2:5-7. The *incarnation* was the act of the preexistent Son of God voluntarily assuming a human body and human nature. Without ceasing to be God, He became a human being, the man called Jesus. He did not give up His deity to become human, but He set aside the right to His glory and power. In submission to the Father’s will, He limited His power and knowledge. Jesus of Nazareth was subject to place, time, and many other human limitations. What made His humanity unique was His freedom from sin. In His full humanity, Jesus showed us everything about God’s character that can be conveyed in human terms. The incarnation is explained further in these passages: John 1:1-14; Romans 12:2-5; 2 Corinthians 8:9; 1 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 2:14; and 1 John 1:1-3.

10. What did God achieve through the work of His Son? (1:20) \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (1:20): Christ’s death provided a way for all people to come to God (to be reconciled). It removed the sin that keeps us from having a right relationship with our Creator. This does not mean that everyone has been saved, but that the way has been cleared for anyone who will trust Jesus to be saved. We can have peace with God and be reconciled to Him by accepting Christ as our Lord and Savior.

11. How did Christ bring us to God? (1:21-22) \_\_\_\_\_

12. Why was reconciliation necessary? (1:21-22) \_\_\_\_\_

13. What is a Christian's position before God? (1:22) \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (1:21-22): *No one* is good enough to save herself. If we want to live eternally with Jesus, we must

## ◆ **The Most Excellent Way ~ “You Are Complete in Christ”** ◆

depend totally on God’s grace. This is true whether we have been murderers or honest, hardworking citizens. We have all sinned repeatedly, and *any* sin is enough to cause us to come to Jesus Christ for salvation and eternal life. Apart from Christ, there is no way for our sin to be removed.

14. What is the role of faith in reconciliation with God? (1:23) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. What kind of faith did the Colossians have? (1:23) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
16. What was Paul's confident expectation? (1:23) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (1:22-23): The way to be blameless is to trust Jesus Christ to take our sin away. We must remain “grounded and settled” (KJV), “established and steadfast” (NAS) in the Gospel, *putting our confidence in Jesus alone to forgive our sins, to make us right with God, and to empower us to live the way He desires.*

When a judge declares the defendant “not guilty,” she has been acquitted of all charges. Legally, it is as if the person had never been accused. When God forgives our sins, our record is wiped clean. From His perspective, it is as though we had never sinned. God’s solution is available to all of us regardless of our background or past behavior.

NOTE (1:15-23): The Colossians had several misconceptions about Jesus, which Paul directly refutes:

- (1) They believed that matter is evil, so they said God would not have come to earth as a true human being in bodily form. Paul states that Christ is the exact likeness of God, is Himself God, and yet dies on the cross as a human being.
- (2) They believed God did not create the world because He would not have created evil. Paul says that Jesus Christ, who was also God in the flesh, is the Creator of both heaven and earth.
- (3) They said Christ was not the unique Son of God, but rather one of many intermediaries between God and people. Paul explains that Christ existed before anything else and is the firstborn of those resurrected.
- (4) They refused to see Christ as the source of salvation, insisting that people could find God through special and secret knowledge. Paul affirms that a person can be saved through Christ alone.

### ◆ **UNDERSTANDING THE WORD**

17. Why did Paul take the time to describe the qualities of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
18. What difference does our understanding about Christ make? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
19. How would you explain reconciliation (with God) to a non-Christian friend? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
20. What does the work of Christ on your behalf mean to you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
21. In what way are we all under Christ's authority? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
22. In what way are you under Christ's authority? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
23. How firm is your faith? \_\_\_\_\_

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24. What can a person do if his or her faith is weak? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

◆ **DOING THE WORD**

25. When will you take time this week to meditate on this powerful, compelling description of Christ?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

26. What truths about Christ do you want to remember when you present the gospel to unbelieving friends?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

27. How will you strengthen your faith in Christ this week? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*May God richly bless you as you study His Word!*

**“Jesus ~ My Life”**

*Read through the following questions after reading the Scripture passage for this week.  
May the Lord richly bless you as experience your freedom to live in Jesus.*

**STUDY THREE ~ COLOSSIANS 1:24-2:5 NIV**

*1:24 Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church.*

*1:25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—*

*1:26 The mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints.*

*1:27 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.*

*1:28 We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.*

*1:29 To this end I labor, struggling with all His energy, which so powerfully works in me.*

*2:1 I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally.*

*2:2 My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ,*

*2:3 In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

*2:4 I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.*

*2:5 For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.*

◆ **FOCUSING**

1. When was the last time you had a good physical workout? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. How do you feel after strenuous physical exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

◆ **STUDYING THE WORD**

3. Why did Paul rejoice? (1:24) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What did Paul do for the sake of the church? (1:24) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE (1:24):** When Paul says he “fills up that which is behind of the affliction of Christ (KJV),” he does not mean Christ’s suffering was inadequate to save us, nor does he mean that there is a predetermined amount of suffering that must be paid by all believers. Paul is simply saying that suffering is unavoidable in bringing the Gospel of Christ to the world. It is called Christ’s suffering because all Christians are related to Christ.

When we suffer, Christ feels it with us. But this suffering can be endured joyfully because it changes lives

## ◆ **The Most Excellent Way ~ “You Are Complete in Christ”** ◆

and brings us into God’s Kingdom (see 1 Peter 4:1-2, 12-19).

*“For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also suffer for his sake . . . (Philippians 1:29, NIV).* Suffering, in of itself, is not a privilege. But when we suffer because we faithfully represent Christ, we know that our message and example are having an effect and that God considers us worthy to represent Him. Suffering has these additional benefits: (1) it takes our eyes off of earthly comforts; (2) it weeds out superficial believers; (3) it strengthens the faith of those who endure; (4) it serves as an example to others who may follow us. Suffering for our faith doesn’t mean we have done something wrong. In fact, the opposite is often true—it verifies that we have been faithful.

5. What commission did God give Paul? (1:25) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. To what mystery did Paul refer? (1:26) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. To whom had God chosen to make known a mystery? (1:27) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (1:26-27): The false teachers in the Colossian church believed spiritual perfection was a secret and hidden plan that only a few privileged people would discover. Their secret plans was meant to be exclusive. Paul calls God’s plan a *“mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations” (KJV)*, not in the sense that only a few would understand, but because it was hidden until Christ came. God’s secret plan was *“Christ in you, the hope of glory”* — He planned to have His Son, Jesus, live in the hearts of all who believe in Him.

8. How did Paul help believers become spiritually mature? (1:28-29) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. What kind of effort did Paul expend in preaching and teaching? (1:29) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (1:28-29): The word *perfect* means mature or complete, not flawless. Paul wanted believers to mature spiritually. Like Paul, we must work and strive (like an athlete in competition), but we do not do it in our own strength. We have the power of God’s Spirit working in us. We can learn and grow daily motivated by love, not fear or pride, knowing that God gives the energy to become mature.

Christ’s message is for everyone, so everywhere Paul and Timothy went they brought the Good News to all who would listen. An effective presentation of the Gospel includes warning and teaching. The warning is that without Christ, people are doomed to eternal separation from God. The teaching is that salvation is available through faith in Jesus. As Jesus works in you, tell others about Him, warning and teaching them in love. Do you know someone who needs to hear this message?

10. What did Paul want his audience to know? (2:1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (2:1): Laodicea was located a few miles northwest of Colosse. The city was wealthy, a center of trade and commerce, but later Jesus would criticize the believers for their lukewarm commitment to Him (Rev. 3:14-22). The fact that Paul wanted this letter to be passed on to the Laodiceans (4:16) indicates that false teaching had spread there as well. Paul was counting on the ties of love to bring the churches together to stand against this heresy and to encourage each other to remain true to God’s plan of salvation in Jesus.

11. What was Paul's stated purpose? (2:2-3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. What is hidden in Christ? (2:3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The Most Excellent Way ~ “You Are Complete in Christ”**

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13. How would a commitment to the full knowledge of Christ protect the Colossians? (2:4) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. How was Paul unified with the church at Colosse? (2:4) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (2:4): The problem Paul was combating in the Colossian church was similar to *gnosticism* (from the Greek word for *knowledge*). This *heresy* (a teaching contrary to Biblical doctrine) attacked Christianity in several basic ways: (1) It insisted that important secret knowledge was hidden from most believers; Paul however, said that in Christ we have all we need of God’s provision for us. (2) It taught that the body was evil; Paul countered that God Himself dwelt in a body—that is, He was embodied in Jesus Christ. (3) It contended that Jesus only seemed to be human, but was not; Paul insisted that Jesus is fully human and fully God.

Gnosticism became fashionable in the second century. Even in Paul’s day, these ideas sounded attractive to many and they could easily seduce a church that didn’t know Christian doctrine well. Aspects of this early heresy still pose significant problems for many in the church today. The antidote for heretical ideas is a thorough acquaintance with God’s word through personal study and sound Bible teaching.

15. What delighted Paul? (2:5) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

◆ **UNDERSTANDING THE WORD**

16. Paul had never met the Colossian Christians; how could he have suffered for them? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17. How is suffering an essential part of the Christian life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

18. Why did Paul work so hard for the Colossians? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

19. What results did Paul expect from his work for the sake of the gospel? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

20. What can you do for the church of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

21. When have you become tired because of your work for the kingdom of God? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

22. What makes a church encouraged and united? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

23. What “fine-sounding arguments” draw some Christians away from the faith? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

24. What can we do to grow in our understanding of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

25. What will *you* do to grow in your understanding of Christ? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The Most Excellent Way ~ “You Are Complete in Christ”**

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◆ **DOING THE WORD**

26. What kind of “spiritual workout” would increase your stamina for the Christian journey ahead this week?

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27. How will you learn more about Christ this week? \_\_\_\_\_

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*May God richly bless you as you study His Word!*



**“That I May Walk in a Manner Worthy”**

*Read through the following questions after reading the Scripture passage for this week.  
May our Lord richly bless you as live to please Him.*

**STUDY FOUR ~ COLOSSIANS 2:6-23 NIV**

<sup>6</sup> So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in <sup>h</sup>im,  
<sup>7</sup> Rooted and built up in <sup>h</sup>im, strengthened in the faith as you were taught,  
and overflowing with thankfulness.  
<sup>8</sup> See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy,  
which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.  
For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,  
<sup>10</sup> And you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.  
<sup>11</sup> In Him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature,  
not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ,  
<sup>12</sup> Having been buried with Him in baptism and raised with Him  
through your faith in the power of God, who raised Him from the dead.  
<sup>13</sup> When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature,  
God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins,  
<sup>14</sup> Having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us  
and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross.  
<sup>15</sup> And having disarmed the powers and authorities,  
He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.  
<sup>16</sup> Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink,  
or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day.  
<sup>17</sup> These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.  
<sup>18</sup> Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you  
for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen,  
and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions.  
<sup>19</sup> He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body,  
supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.  
<sup>20</sup> Since you died with Christ to the basic principle of this world, why,  
as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules:  
<sup>21</sup> “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”?  
<sup>22</sup> These are all destined to perish with use,  
because they are based on human commands and teachings.  
<sup>23</sup> Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom,  
with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment  
of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

◆ **FOCUSING**

1. What good advice have you never forgotten? \_\_\_\_\_
2. In what ways would you characterize yourself as permissive, and in what ways would you characterize yourself as strict? \_\_\_\_\_

## ◆ **The Most Excellent Way** ~ “*You Are Complete in Christ*” ◆

### ◆ **STUDYING THE WORD**

3. How did Paul tell the Colossians to continue in Jesus? (2:6-7) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (2:6-7): Accepting Jesus as Lord of your life is the beginning of life with Jesus. But you must continue to follow His leadership by being rooted, built up, and established in the faith. Every day He desires to guide you and help you with your daily problems. You can live for Jesus by:

- (1) Committing your life and submitting your will to Him (Romans 12:1-2);
- (2) Seeking to learn from Him, His life, and His teachings (3:16); and
- (3) Recognizing the Holy Spirit’s power in you (Acts 1:8; Galations 5:22).

NOTE (2:7): Paul used the illustration of our being rooted in or connected to Jesus. As plants draw nourishment from the soil through their roots, so we draw our life-giving strength from Jesus. The more we draw our life from Him, the less we will be fooled by those who falsely claim to have life’s answers.

4. What false teaching was Paul concerned about? (2:8) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (2:8): Paul writes against any philosophy of life based only on human ideas and experiences. Paul himself was a gifted philosopher, so he is not condemning philosophy. He was condemning teaching that credits humanity, not Jesus, with being the answer to life’s problems and thus becomes a false religion. The way to resist heresy is not to quit using your mind, but to study and focus on Christ’s words, the foundation for your faith.

5. What did Paul affirm about Christ? How? (2:9-10) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. What did God give the Colossian believers? (2:10) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (2:9): Again Paul asserts Christ's deity. “*All the fullness of the God-head bodily*” (KJV) means in Christ there is all of God in a human body. (See the note on 1:15-16.)

NOTE (2:10): When we know Jesus Christ, we don’t need to seek God by means of other religions, cults, or unbiblical philosophies as the Colossians were doing. Jesus alone holds the answers to the true meaning of life, because Jesus *IS* life. He is the unique source of knowledge and power for the Christian life. No Christian needs anything else than what He has provided to be saved. We are complete in Him.

7. Why do Gentile Christians have no need to conform to Jewish rules and regulations? (2:11-12) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (2:11-12): Jewish males were circumcised as a sign of the Jews’ covenant with God (Genesis 17:-14). With the death of Jesus, circumcision was no longer necessary. Now our commitment to God is written on our souls, not our bodies. Jesus sets us free from our evil desires by a spiritual operation, not a bodily one. In baptism, we let God operate on our souls to remove the old nature and give us a new nature.

8. How did the Cross cancel the written code? (2:13-14) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. From what did Jesus deliver us? How? (2:15-17) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (2:12-15): Before we believed in Jesus, our nature was evil. We disobeyed, and ignored Him (even at our best, we did not love Him with all our heart, soul, and mind). The Christian, however has a new nature. God has crucified the old rebellious nature (Romans 6:6) and replaced it with a new loving nature (3:9-10). The penalty of sin died with Jesus on the cross. God has declared us not guilty, and we need no

## ◆ **The Most Excellent Way ~ “You Are Complete in Christ”** ◆

longer live under sin’s power. God does not take us out of the world or make us robots—we will still feel like sinning, and sometimes we will sin. The difference is that before we were saved, we were slaves to our sinful nature, but now we can choose to live for Christ.

NOTE (2:14): We can enjoy our new life in Jesus because we have joined Him in His death and resurrection. Our evil desires, our bondage to sin, and our love of sin died with Him. Now, joining Him in His resurrection life, we may have unbroken fellowship with God and freedom from sin. Our debt for sin has been paid in full, our sins are swept away and forgotten by God; and we can be clean and new. (See Ephesians 4:23-24.)

NOTE (2:15): These principalities and powers are not the demonic forces but, as in 2:10, are more likely the angels who were mediators of the Law (Galatians 3:19). The Colossian false teachers were encouraging worship of angels. But at Jesus’ death, He surpassed the position and authority of any angel. So rather than fear them or worship them, they are to be viewed as demoted rulers.

10. How did Paul encourage the Colossians to practice their freedom in Jesus? (2:16) \_\_\_\_\_

11. How did Jesus fulfill what the Old Testament foreshadowed? (2:17) \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (2:16-17): Paul told the Colossian Christians not to let others criticize their diet or their religious ceremonies. Instead of outward observance, they should focus on Jesus alone. In our worship, traditions and ceremonies can help bring us close to God, but we should never criticize fellow Christians whose traditions and ceremonies differ from ours. It is not important how we worship, but that we all worship Jesus.

NOTE (2:17): The purpose of the Old Testament laws, holidays, and feasts was simply to point toward Christ. Paul calls them shadows of the real thing—Christ Himself. Jesus came and dispelled the shadows.

12. Whom did Paul accuse of trying to rob believers of their spiritual rewards? (2:18) \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (2:18): The false teachers claimed that God was remote and could be approached only through various levels of angels. They taught that people had to worship angels in order to eventually reach God. This is unscriptural; the Bible teaches that angels are inferior to God, and forbids worshipping them (Exodus 20:3-4; Revelation 22:8-9).

13. What were the characteristics of the false teachers? (2:18-19) \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (2:18): The false teachers were proud of their humility! This false humility brought attention and praise to themselves rather than to God. True humility is viewing ourselves as we really are from God’s perspective and acting accordingly. People today practice false humility when they talked themselves down so that others will think they are spiritual. False humility is self-centered; true humility is God-centered.

NOTE (2:18): The expression “fleshly mind” is another way of saying that these men had a man-made religion. The false teachers were trying to deny the body by saying it was evil but their desire for attention from others showed they were actually obsessed by it. Their philosophy that the flesh was evil came from the flesh itself — they made it up (2:8)!

NOTE (2:19): The fundamental problem with the false teachers was that they were not connected to Christ, the Head of the Body of believers. If they had been joined to Him, they could not have taught false doctrine or lived immorally. Anyone who teaches about God without being connected to Him by faith speaks falsely about Him.

14. How did Paul challenge the legalism that had infected the church? (2:20-21) \_\_\_\_\_

## ◆ **The Most Excellent Way ~ “You Are Complete in Christ”** ◆

NOTE (2:20): How do we die with Christ, and how are we raised with Him. When a person becomes a Christian, she is given new life through the power of the Holy Spirit.

15. What are the failings of human commands and teachings? (2:20-23) \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (2:20-23): People should be able to see a difference between the way Christians and non-Christians live. Still, we should not expect instant maturity of new Christians. Christian growth is a lifelong process. Although we have a new nature, we don't automatically have all good thoughts and attitudes when we become new people in Christ. But if we keep listening to God, we will be changing all the time. As you look over the last year, what changes for the better have you seen in your thoughts and attitudes? Change may be slow, but your life will change significantly if you trust God to change you.

NOTE (2:20-24): We cannot reach up to God by following rules and rituals or by practicing religion. Paul isn't saying all rules are bad, but that keeping of laws or rules will not earn salvation. The Good News is that God reaches down to man and we respond. Man-made religions focus on human effort; Christianity focuses on Christ's work. Believers must put aside sinful desires, but doing so is the by-product of our new life in Christ, not the cause of it. Our salvation does not depend on our own discipline and rule keeping, but on the power of Jesus' death and resurrection.

NOTE (2:22-23): We can guard against man-made religions by asking these questions of any religious group:

- (1) Does it stress man-made rules and taboos rather than God's grace?
- (2) Does it foster a critical spirit about others, or does it exercise discipline discreetly and lovingly?
- (3) Does it stress formulas, secret knowledge, or special visions more than the Word of God?
- (4) Does it elevate self-righteousness, honoring those who keep the rules, rather than elevating Jesus?
- (5) Does it neglect Christ's church, claiming to be an elite group?
- (6) Does it teach humiliation of the body as a means to spiritual growth rather than focusing on the growth of the whole person?
- (7) Does it disregard the family rather than holding it in high regard as the Bible does?

NOTE (2:23): To the Colossians, the discipline demanded by the false teachers seemed good, and legalism still attracts many people today. Following a long list of religious rules requires strong self-discipline and can make a person appear moral, but religious rules cannot change a person's heart. Only the Holy Spirit can do that.

### ◆ **UNDERSTANDING THE WORD**

16. What “additions” to faith in Christ have you encountered from teachers in your Christian community?

\_\_\_\_\_

17. How are you affected by popular religious rules floating around today? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

18. What does “fullness in Christ” mean to you? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

19. Paul's advice kept the Colossians growing in their faith; what Christian leaders have helped you stay on track spiritually? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

20. How deep are the roots of your faith? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**The Most Excellent Way ~ "You Are Complete in Christ"**

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◆ **DOING THE WORD**

21. This week, how will you best exercise the freedom you have in Christ? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

22. How will you help a Christian friend get rid of his or her false ideas about Christ? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*May God richly bless you as you study His Word!*

## **“Being Complete in Jesus”**

*Read through the following questions after reading the Scripture passage for this week.  
May our Lord richly bless you as imitate Him.*

In Chapter Two, Paul exposed the wrong reasons for self-denial. In Chapter Three, he explains true Christian behavior — putting on the new nature by accepting Jesus and regarding the old nature as dead. We change our moral and ethical behavior by letting Jesus live within us, so that He can shape us into what we *should* be.

### **STUDY FIVE ~ COLOSSIANS 3:1-17 NIV**

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.*

<sup>2</sup>*Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*

<sup>3</sup>*For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*

<sup>4</sup>*When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. (4)*

<sup>5</sup>*Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*

<sup>6</sup>*Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.*

<sup>7</sup>*You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.*

<sup>8</sup>*But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.*

<sup>9</sup>*Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices*

<sup>10</sup>*And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

<sup>11</sup>*Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.*

<sup>12</sup>*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*

<sup>13</sup>*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

<sup>14</sup>*And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

<sup>15</sup>*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*

<sup>16</sup>*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*

<sup>17</sup>*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

### **◆ FOCUSING**

1. What's the nicest suit or outfit you have ever worn? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. When you're finished with your old clothes, what do you often do with them? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## ◆ **The Most Excellent Way ~ “You Are Complete in Christ”** ◆

### ◆ **STUDYING THE WORD**

3. Where did Paul tell the Colossians to turn their attention? (3:1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Where did Paul tell the believers to focus their concern? (3:2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What was the Colossians’ security? (3:3) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (3:2-3): “*For ye are dead*” (KJV) means we should have as little desire for this world as a dead person has. The Christian’s real home is where Jesus lives (John 14:2-3). this gives us a different perspective on our lives here on earth. To “*set your affection on things above*” means to look at life from God’s perspective and to seek what He desires. This is the antidote to materialism; we gain the proper perspective on material goods when we take God’s view. The more we see life around us as God sees it, the more we live in harmony with Him. We must not become too attached to what is only temporary.

6. Why should believers look forward to Christ’s return? (3:4) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (3:4): Jesus gives us power to help us live now, and He gives us hope for the future — He will return again. In the rest of this chapter Paul explains how Christians should act *now* in order to be prepared for Christ’s return.

7. What must die? (3:5) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. What evil activities does God seek to eliminate from our lives? (3:5) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (3:5): “*Mortify therefore your members*” (KJV) means we should consider ourselves dead and unresponsive to evil desires: sexual sin, impurity, lustful desires, and materialism. Just like diseased limbs of a tree, they must be cut off before they destroy us. We must make a conscious, daily decision to remove anything that supports or feeds these desires and to rely on the Holy Spirit’s power.

9. Why is God’s wrath coming? (3:5-6) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. What had the Colossians taken off? (3:7-9) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (3:8): Paul’s words to “put off” these sins can also be translated, “lay aside the old self and put on the new.” This action was not so much mystical but practical and moral. Be done with your old morals and commit yourself to those Jesus teaches. Paul was appealing to the commitment the believers had made in their baptism (2:12) and urging them to remain true to their confession of faith. They were to “put off” the old life and “put on” the new way of living given by Jesus and guided by the Holy Spirit. If you have made such a commitment, are you remaining true to it?

NOTE (3:9): Lying to one another disrupts unity by destroying trust. It tears down relationships and leads to open war in a church.

11. What had the Colossians put on? (3:10) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (3:10): The Christian is in a *continuing education program*. The more we know of Jesus and His

## ◆ **The Most Excellent Way ~ “You Are Complete in Christ”** ◆

work, the more we are being changed to be like Him. Because this process is lifelong, we must never cease learning and obeying. There is no justification for drifting along, but here is an incentive to find the rich treasures of growing in Him. It takes practice, review, patience, and concentration to stay in His will.

12. What distinctions are removed in Christ? (3:11) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (3:11): Barriers of nationality, race, education, social standing, wealth, religion, and power should not apply in the Christian church. Jesus breaks down all barriers and accepts all people who come to Him. Nothing should keep us from telling others about Jesus or accepting into our fellowship any and all believers (Ephesians 2:14-15). Christians should be in the business of building bridges, not walls.

13. What virtues does God seek to plant in us? (3:12, 14) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. How were the Colossian believers called to clothe themselves? (3:12-17) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (3:12-17): Paul offers a strategy to help us live for God day by day:

- (1) Imitate Jesus' merciful, loving attitude (3:12-13);
- (2) Let love guide your life (3:14);
- (3) Let the Peace of God rule in your heart (3:15);
- (4) Always be thankful (3:15);
- (5) Keep God's Word in you at all times (3:16);
- (6) Live as Jesus Christ's representative or ambassador (3:17).

NOTE (3:13): The key to forgiving others is to remember how much God has forgiven you. Is it difficult for you to forgive someone who has wronged you a little when God has forgiven you so much? Realizing God's infinite love and forgiveness can help you love and forgive others.

NOTE (3:14-15): Christians should live in perfect harmony (“perfectness”). This does not eliminate all differences in opinion, but loving Christians will work together despite their differences. Such love is *not* a feeling, but a decision to meet the needs of others (see 1 Corinthians 13). It leads to peace between individuals and among the members of the body of believers. Do problems in your relationship with other Christians cause open conflicts or mutual silence? What you can do to heal those relationships with love?

15. Why did Paul call on the believers to be peaceful and thankful? (3:15-16) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (3:15): The word “rule” comes from athletics: Paul tells us to let Jesus' peace be “umpire” in our hearts. Our hearts are the center of conflict because there our feelings and desires clash — our fears and hopes, our distrust and trust, our jealousy and love. How can we deal with these constant conflicts and live as God wants? Paul explains that we must decide between conflicting elements by using the rule of peace — which choice will promote peace in our souls and in our churches?

NOTE (3:16): Although the early Christians had access to the Old Testament and freely used it, they did not yet have the New Testament or any other Christian books to study. Their stories and teachings about Jesus were memorized and passed on from person to person. Sometimes they were set to music, and so music became an important part of Christian worship and education.

16. What should we do? How? (3:17) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17. What is one principle that ought to guide everything we do? (3:17) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (3:17): As a Christian, you represent Jesus at all times — wherever you go, whatever you say,



**The Most Excellent Way ~ "You Are Complete in Christ"**

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whatever you do. What impression do people have of Jesus when they see or talk with you?

◆ **UNDERSTANDING THE WORD**

- 18. If you consistently set your sights on Christ and heaven, how would your life be different?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 19. What old, "earthly" clothing do you need to get rid of? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 20. How does wearing "Christ's clothing" affect the way you live your daily life? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 21. What Christian virtues are you lacking? \_\_\_\_\_
- 22. What spiritual process is involved in "putting off" and "putting on"? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 23. What is involved in replacing old habits with new ones? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 24. How should life in Christ affect the way you treat others? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 25. How are all your relationships to be built around Christ? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 26. Why do we need to be loving toward others? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 27. Why is a thankful spirit an important part of holy living? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

◆ **DOING GOD'S WORD**

- 28. Which of God's goals for holy living do you need to apply to your life this week? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 29. How will you be more thankful and loving to those who are close to you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*May God richly bless you as you study His Word!*

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**“Brand New Relationships”**

Paul describes three relationships: (1) husbands and wives, (2) parents and children, and (3) masters and slaves. In each case there is mutual responsibility to submit and love, to obey and encourage, to work hard and be fair. Examine your family and work relationships. Do you relate to others as God intended? (See Ephesians 5:21-6:9 for similar instructions.)

*Read through the following questions after reading the Scripture passage for this week.  
May our Lord richly bless you as imitate Him.*

**STUDY SIX ~ COLOSSIANS 3:18 – 4:1 NIV**

***3:18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.***

***3:19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.***

***3:20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.***

***3:21 Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.***

***3:22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.***

***3:23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,***

***3:24 Since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.***

***It is the Lord Christ you are serving.***

***3:25 Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.***

***4:1 Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.***

**◆ FOCUSING**

1. If you were to make up a slogan that describes your family, what would it be? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Generally speaking, how do you get along with others? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**◆ STUDYING GOD’S WORD**

3. What should wives do? (3:18) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What should husbands do? (3:19) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. How should children respond to parents? (3:20) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Why does obedience to parents please the Lord? (3:20) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The Most Excellent Way ~ “You Are Complete in Christ”**

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7. Of what do fathers need to be careful? (3:21) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. How can children become discouraged? (3:21) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. What directives did Paul give slaves? (3:22-25) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. How were slaves called on to serve Christ? (3:23-24) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. How would God measure out full justice in the master-slave relationship? (3:25) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What instructions did Paul give masters? (4:1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. What insight did Paul give masters? (4:1) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Paul does not condemn or condone slavery, but explains that Jesus transcends all divisions between people. Slaves are told to work hard as though their master were Jesus himself (3:22-25); but masters should be just and fair (4:1). Perhaps Paul was thinking specifically of Onesimus and Philemon—the slave and master whose conflict lay behind the letter to Philemon (read the letter). Philemon was a slave owner in the Colossian church, and Onesimus had been his slave (4:9).

◆ **UNDERSTANDING THE WORD**

14. How do God’s instructions to families help family members become mature Christians? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
15. Why should wives submit to their husbands? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
16. Why does God tell husbands not to be harsh with their wives? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
17. Why should Christian parents rear their children in an atmosphere of encouragement? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
18. How can Christian parents rear their children in an atmosphere of encouragement? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
19. How can God's instructions to slaves apply today to Christian employees? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
20. Which of God’s principles for Christian households challenge you to change? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The Most Excellent Way ~ "You Are Complete in Christ"**

**◆ DOING GOD'S WORD**

21. What is one way you will improve the way you treat each member of your family?

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22. How will you have an attitude of service toward others in your home, work, and church? \_\_\_\_\_

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*May the Lord bless you as you study His Word!*

**“A Brand New Voice”**

*Read through the following questions after reading the Scripture passage for this week.  
May our Lord richly bless you as share His Good News with others!*

**STUDY SEVEN ~ COLOSSIANS 4:2–18 NIV**

*Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.*

<sup>3</sup>*And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.*

<sup>4</sup>*Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.*

<sup>5</sup>*Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.*

<sup>6</sup>*Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.*

<sup>7</sup>*Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.*

<sup>8</sup>*I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts.*

<sup>9</sup>*He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.*

<sup>10</sup>*My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.)*

<sup>11</sup>*Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings.*

*These are the only Jews among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me.*

<sup>12</sup>*Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.*

<sup>13</sup>*I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis.*

<sup>14</sup>*Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings.*

<sup>15</sup>*Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.*

<sup>16</sup>*After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.*

<sup>17</sup>*Tell Archippus: “See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord.”*

<sup>18</sup>*I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.*

◆ **FOCUSING**

1. What’s your favorite salty snack? \_\_\_\_\_

2. If you had to eat all food without salt for a day or two, how would this affect your eating habits? \_\_\_\_\_

◆ **STUDYING GOD’S WORD**

3. What did Paul prescribe for all believers? (4:2) \_\_\_\_\_

## ◆ **The Most Excellent Way ~ “You Are Complete in Christ”** ◆

NOTE (4:2): Have you ever grown tired of praying for something or someone? Paul says, “Continue.” Persistence demonstrates our faith that God answers our prayers. Faith shouldn’t die if the answers come slowly, for the delay may be God’s way of working His will in your life. When you feel weary in your prayers, know that God is present, always listening, always action — maybe not in ways you had hoped, but in ways He knows are best.

4. What request did Paul make of his readers? (4:3-4) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. What did Paul say about the Christian's public life? (4:5-6) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (4:5): “*Walk in Wisdom toward them that are without*” means we should be wise in our contacts with non-Christians, making the most of our chances to tell them the Good News of salvation.

6. How should believers speak to others? (4:6) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

NOTE (4:6): When we tell others about Jesus, it is important always to be gracious in what we say. No matter how much sense the message makes, we lose our effectiveness if we are not courteous. Just as we like to be respected, we must respect others if we want them to listen to what we have to say.

7. Who was Tychicus? (4:7) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. Why did Paul send Tychicus to Colosse? (4:7-8) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Who was Onesimus? (4:9) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

10. Whose greetings to the Colossians did Paul include in his letter? (4:10-14) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

11. Which of Paul's partners in ministry were Jews? (4:10-11) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

12. What did Epaphras do on behalf of his church at Colosse? (4:12-13) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. What relationship did Luke and Demas have to Paul? (4:14) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

14. To whom did Paul send greetings? (4:15) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

15. Where did Paul want his letter read? (4:16) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

16. What instruction did Paul send Archippus? (4:17) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

17. How did Paul conclude his letter? (4:18) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The Most Excellent Way ~ “You Are Complete in Christ”**

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NOTE (4:18): Paul usually dictated his letters to a scribe, but often ended with a short note in his own handwriting. This prevented false teachers from writing letters in the name of Paul. It also gave the letters a personal touch.

To understand the letter to the Colossians, we need to know that the church was facing pressure from a cult-like heresy that promised deeper spiritual life through secret knowledge (an early form of gnosticism). The false teachers destroyed faith in Jesus by undermining His humanity and divinity, and attempted to divide the physical and spiritual.

Paul makes it clear in Colossians that Jesus alone is the source of our spiritual life, the Head of the body of believers. He is Lord of both physical and spiritual worlds. The path to deeper spiritual life is not through religious duties, special knowledge, or secrets. It is only through a clear connection with the Lord Jesus Christ. We must never let anything come between us and our Savior.

◆ **UNDERSTANDING THE WORD**

- 18. Why is prayer important? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 19. How much time do you devote to prayer each day? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 20. How did Paul set an example for mature interpersonal relationships? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 21. How well do you relate to unbelievers? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 22. Paul demonstrated the value of teamwork in ministry; how well do you work with other Christians for the kingdom of God? \_\_\_\_\_
- 23. Paul spoke highly of his Christian friends; what can you praise about your Christian friends? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

◆ **DOING THE WORD**

- 24. How will you season your speech with God’s grace among non-Christians? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 25. How will you remember to speak well of family members and Christian friends this week? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 26. What personal relationship will you improve during the next few days? How?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*May our Lord Jesus Christ embolden you to share His Good News!*