

COLOSSIANS 1:1-29

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HISTORY:

The majority hold that Apostle Paul is the author of this book. Colossians was probably written during Paul's imprisonment at Rome and some dispute that the letter was written from Caesarea of Ephesus. It was written to the saints and faithful brothers in Christ which are at Colosse (Col.1:2). The purpose was to combat an extremely dangerous and threatening heresy that was arising in the Colosse church.

¹The little book of Colossians (only four chapters) was written by the Apostle Paul to a group of believers in a city called Colosse. Colosse was not a city of tremendous importance, but it had some significance as one in a triad of cities (Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse) in the Lycus Valley. The Apostle Paul wrote to this little church which had been founded and initially pastored by a man named Epaphras, because they were undergoing some problems. They were being confronted by men teaching false doctrine about the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, the Apostle Paul wrote this letter to straighten them out.

The City of Colosse:

²The ancient city of Colosse was located in the area known in the Bible as "*Asia Minor*". Another name for the region was "*Phrygia*". Today the country of Turkey covers this area. Colosse was one of three cities within sight of one another in the Lycus Valley, sitting by the Lycus River. The other cities, Hierapolis and Laodicea, the chief city of the area, were only six miles apart. Colosse was twelve miles away and was the least important of the three. The city was about one hundred miles east of Ephesus. The Lycus valley produced olives and figs. Both Laodicea and Colosse had developed a beautiful purple-dyed wool. The name "*Colosse*" comes from the Latin "*collossinus*", meaning "*purple wool*". When the Romans came along, they built new roads that ended up causing the economy of Colosse to shrink and by Paul's day it was a small city.

The Church at Colosse:

Paul never visited Colosse so far as is known. The church had never seen his face and the book of Acts does not record a mission to the area. In Acts 19, we read of Paul coming to Ephesus and teaching for two years. The gospel was being preached to Jews and Gentiles from the entire region. Many people were coming to faith in Jesus Christ and turning from their sins. One of the Gentiles who received Christ during this time was named Ep-af-RAS (meaning "*lovely*" being based on the name of the Greek goddess "*Aphrodite*"). After being discipled by Paul and raised up in the ministry, he went to the town of Colosse and preached the gospel. Many of the Colossians responded to the gospel by receiving Christ. A church in Colosse came about; was formed because Epaphras came and told them about Jesus Christ, and the Colossian Christians were being talked about all over the world for their incredible growth. They say that, he was also the area pastor of Laodicea and Hierapolis. The church met in Philemon's home, a convert of Paul (Phile.10). The church was primarily Gentile in membership, for they were aliens from God's promises to

¹ <http://www.biblebb.com/files/mac/sg2137.htm>

² <http://www.calvaryfullerton.org/Bstudy/51%20Col/2009/51%20Col%2001a.htm>
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Israel. The church showed some strengths despite the heresy. They held "*faith in Christ Jesus*" and showed "*love to all the saints*" (Colo.1:4). They were bearing evangelistic fruit, reaching people for Christ (Colo.1:6).

Colossians:

In Chapter 1, Jesus is preeminent. Before you get anything – you need to know who Jesus is and what He's done. In Ephesians, the church is seen as the body of Christ. However, in Colossians, Christ is seen as the Head of the church. So, with that background, let us now begin our study of Paul's epistle (letter) to the Colossians.

...An Apostle

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother. ³What is an apostle? The word apostle (*apostolos*) means a person who is especially sent to go among men as an ambassador or messenger. There are some who teach that there were only twelve apostles, but the Bible makes it clear that there were many who were called apostles that were not part of the original twelve (Acts 14:14, Rom 16:7; 1Cor 12:28-29; 2Cor. 11:13; Gal 1:19; 1Thes. 1:1 with 1Thes. 2:6). The Bible says that God... Eph. 4:11-13 "*...gave some {as} apostles, and some {as} prophets, and some {as} evangelists, and some {as} pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God...*" Until there is unity in our faith and our knowledge of Jesus, we will always need apostles, prophets, evangelists, and pastor/teachers to equip and edify us.

...The Will Of God

Paul's call to the ministry was not one that he could brag about, for it was not his natural-born talent and desire - it was a command by the will of God; that is his profession and work was exactly what God wanted him to do. The profession Paul wanted did not matter; only God's will for his life mattered.

POINT:

There is only one profession for any believer: the work God wants him to do. God has put every believer upon earth for a specific task. If the believer chooses some profession or job other than the work God wants him to do, then he is out of the will of God. He is not fulfilling his God-given purpose for being upon earth.

The profession chosen by God for Paul was that of being a minister, in particular, an apostle. He was sent forth by God, to do the will of God. He does not go forth on his own or by the authority of other men. His profession and authority are both of God.

...Brotherhood

Paul mentions Timothy, a young disciple or student of his. Timothy had joined Paul to learn all he could about the ministry and to serve right along side of Paul. The relationship mentioned by Paul was not that of a student or disciple. It was not even that of a fellow preacher, teacher, or administrator. It was that of being a brother in Christ. This stresses a significant fact: that there are many different relationships in life—relationships such as:

- Employer and employee
- neighbor and neighbor
- teacher and student
- friend and friend
- Worker and worker
- merchant and merchant
- minister and parishioner

All relationships of life are important and have their place in the welfare of society, but there is another relationship that is essential: that of the brotherhood.

³ <http://rondaniel.com/library/51-Colossians/Colossians0101.html>
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POINT:

A man does not walk as a solitary figure upon this earth. He walks among people—people just like himself. Thus a man who walks aloof does not understand life.

Paul knew that brotherly relationships were essential. Paul and Timothy wrote several epistles together - Paul dictating and Timothy acting as amanuensis - copying down what Paul said. Treating one another as brothers is the secret to peace in both the world and the church.

1:2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

...Saints and Faithful

Paul is writing to saints and faithful brethren that are set apart from the world making a clear distinction in their level of spiritual maturity. Thus, saints are believing sinners set apart from sin to holiness, set apart from Satan to God, thus being consecrated for God's sacred fellowship and service. In other words we are called to be what we are.

- A soldier must by his posture and behavior, live up to his vocation.
- A rich man should not believe his resources by living the life of a pauper.
- Christians, too, must live up to their name and calling. However:
 1. Being carnal saint—refers to worldly; those who are controlled by human nature rather than by God; following after the flesh (appetites, smoke, drink). However, these carnal saints or believers may or may not continue on with the Lord Jesus. They may continue at a slower pace. Some in the Colossian church were not continuing on. They were not fully committed. Therefore, they were running the risk of falling into the error of false teaching and turning away from Christ. **The point is this:** a person can be a carnal believer or carnal saint within the church. When a person truly comes to know Christ, he is just beginning his journey with the Savior, a journey that has a much higher level of spiritual growth to reach.
 2. Being a saint and faithful brethren—refers to those who have set their lives apart for Christ and had continued on. They were loyal and steadfast in their allegiance and they held firm against the attacks of worldliness and false teaching. They were not shaken by the temptations of the devil or by the urges of the flesh. This letter was written from Rome by Paul, while he was in prison. Thank God for faithful saints and leaders.

...Grace be unto you, and peace

Every one of Paul's epistles contains this greeting in the first few verses. First of all, we must understand what grace is. Grace is God's unmerited favor on us. In other words, He loved us when we were unlovable. He gave us the gift of salvation when we were completely undeserving. He provided forgiveness for our sins while we were still in our sins. And it is only after we understand grace, that we will experience true peace. That is why Paul was always using the phrase ("*Grace be unto you and peace from God...*"), and why he always used it in that order. Life has two basic spiritual needs—Grace and Peace. Therefore, he possesses all the inner strength and confidence that are needed to overcome and to walk joyfully in the world, regardless of circumstances. Remember this is a letter and he introduces himself, who it's to, and speaks blessings over their lives. And the blessings always come from God.

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1:3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,—Paul begins by saying that he and Timothy were always thanking God for them and praying to God about them. This is a power-packed passage that covers the great pillars of the Christian life. You know pillars are strong supports or the foundation of an organization or society. The great pillars are good reasons for giving thanks to God. This stirs Paul to thank God that the pillars exist in the lives of the Colossian believers. The Colossian believers could not exist as a church without the foundational support of the pillars. Paul gives thanks to the only living and true God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This means something of critical importance: Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He is exactly whom He claimed to be.

1:4 Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints. They heard of their faith in Christ Jesus and their love for all the saints. It's so good when you hear good things. Paul commends the Colossians for their faith, love, and hope laid up. The great pillars of Christian life are of faith and love. The basis of our love is not how lovable others are, but how much God has loved us. We don't have to force ourselves to love the people in the church; we just need to let God's love flow through us. **The great pillar of faith** is faith in a particular person: and that is the person of Christ Jesus our Lord. What is there about Jesus Christ that makes faith in Him so superior to faith in other great leaders or faith in the great qualities of human life? Stated as simply as possible, **Jesus Christ brings us in touch with God** and makes it possible for God to adopt us as sons and daughters. We must always remember: the Father-son/daughter relationship with God does not automatically exist. Jesus Christ is able to bring any person who is spiritually fatherless to His father, however, you will have to want Him. Jesus Christ has the right to ask His Father to adopt the fatherless person. And Jesus Christ makes a Father-son/daughter relationship possible between God and the believer. **The point is this:** faith in Christ Jesus assures a person of God's wonderful presence and blessings. It means that:

- God looks after the believer as a father looks after his child.
- God helps and directs the believer through all the trials and temptations of life.
- Now the believer has the very strength of God at his disposal as he faces life day by day.
- And the believer is assured of living with God forever and ever.

Another way to look at the great pillar of faith is: Faith in Christ is like a sphere, an area, a territory, a world in which the believer lives and believes; in which he lives, moves, and have his being in that world of faith in Christ. He does nothing that his faith in Christ forbids, and this faith becomes his very world, the great pillar of his life.

1:4b There is **the great pillar of love.** The love being spoken about is not the natural love which all men should have for one another. This is the love which believers hold (embrace) for each other. One giving himself to love as Christ loved; proclaiming that he will live to the ultimate degree; he will sacrifice himself for men even as Christ sacrificed Himself. The love is stirred by the Holy Spirit, that is, the believer's love is supernatural love. The Holy Spirit who lives within the believer, arouses the love of God within the heart of the believer. The believer is actually stirred to love others by the Spirit of God. **The point is this:** believers possess a great love for all men—the very love of Christ. But they possess a very special love for fellow believers. Why? Because they have all committed themselves to follow the same Lord. They all live and move in the faith of Christ, in the same sphere or world of faith. There is bound to be a very special attachment and love by the same Holy Spirit. As stated, a true believer has a special love for everyone on earth, but he has a very special love for his fellow believers. This means that there is no room within the church or among believers for:

- Division • Envy • Strife • Cliques • Criticism • Hard feelings • Grumbling • or Argument.

In conclusion, faith and love are the two great pillars of the Christian life. The person who has faith in Christ Jesus and loves as Christ loved is the person who constructs the two foundational pillars of life.

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1:5 For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel. The great pillars have one great basis, the believers hope. The hope that God gives, is the reason we surrender our lives to Jesus Christ., and go to such limits to love one another. The hope or reward is the hope laid up for us in heaven. What is that hope?

- It is the hope of being raised from the dead and being given a new and perfect and glorious body—a body just like Jesus.
- It is the hope of the Lord's return and of being with the Lord Himself forever.
- It is the glorious inheritance we are to receive from God as sons and daughters of His.

Note that the "**word of truth**" and "**the gospel**" are both mentioned in verse 5. They are the same. Man cannot find hope—not a permanent or eternal hope any place else. The only lasting hope ever offered to man is found in the Word of truth of the gospel—the Word of God. It is not false, but it is Truth. The gospel is the truth of God. This means that hope offered to man is true; not a desire or guess that may or may not be true. Paul is addressing all the believers together, saying that the hope you have laid up (stored up like a treasure) you've heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel. What he's saying is, "**Don't believe the false teachers; believe what you've heard from the word Epaphras preached to you.**" What qualified Epaphras to proclaim the gospel? First, he heard the gospel himself and experienced its power personally. He knew firsthand what it was to be brought out of darkness into light.

1:6 Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth. This wonderful encouragement lets us know that, the gospel, this "**word of truth**" or "**grace of God in truth**" which had come to Colosse through Epaphras was "**heard**".

1:7 As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ. Epaphras did not simply lead the Colossians to Christ and then abandon them. He taught them the Word and sought to establish their faith.

1:8 Who also declared unto us your love in the spirit. Then he declared (*informed, made plain and clear by giving a report*) this (*sacrificial*) love (*like God*) of the Colossians to Paul in the Spirit. How else could we manifest a "*God*" like agape love, except by the supernatural enablement of His Spirit? The idea of the preposition "*in*" means in the sphere of, or in a sense in the "**atmosphere**" of (the Spirit). Think of a fish, in what atmosphere are they most "**alive**"? The water of course! As long as they are "**in**" the sphere or "**atmosphere**" of the water, they function as God intended. By analogy, the same goes for believers who as they learn to dwell more and more in the "**atmosphere**" of the Spirit, bring forth the fruit of the Spirit which includes love. When you learn about something, you want to share it. This hope laid up in heaven is for the individual (the whole world) who gives up his heart and life to pursue the hope. Therefore thanksgiving is in order. Paul can't help but thank God for the Colossians; for their faith, love and hope; and hearing about how the gospel has brought about fruit in their lives.

1:9 For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. At some point Paul had been visited in prison by Epaphras, pastor of the great Colossian church. Apparently, he felt a need for some counsel and advice on how to handle the false teaching that had seeped into the church. This is the purpose for the letter to the Colossians; to encourage the church and its believers to get rid of the false teaching and to continue on with Christ. Being in prison and unable to reach them, what could he do? Only two things:

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1. He could write them and share the Word of God in a letter.
2. He could pray for them.

Paul did both. The present passage covers his prayer. He asked three things; All three requests are needed by every church and all believers, in particular those who face false teaching.

1. **Prayer Request 1: to know God's Will—"to be filled with the knowledge of God's Will" (1:9).**
It is not enough to hear of God's Will, but our desire is to be filled with the knowledge of God's Will. Nothing is to flow through us nor out of us that is not of God's Will. God's Will involves all of life, everything we do every moment of every day. **The point is this:** God tells us how to live life, and what He tells us is **His Will**.
 - i. Therefore, we are to study what God has said. We are to study and learn until the knowledge of His "Will" just floods our lives to such a degree that doing His "Will" flows out into our conduct and behavior.
 - ii. As we study, wisdom and understanding has to be established within us. "*Wisdom*" (*sophia*) is the ability to judge rightly; having insight. While "*Understanding*" (*sunesei*) is the ability to comprehend; applying the basic principles to decisions. How? By studying the Word of God! Think about how little most people know about God's Will. Is it any wonder that so many have been deceived by false teaching? That so much of our ministry is superficial and formal? **"Through wisdom is a house builded; and by understanding it is established: and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches" Prov.24:3-4.**

1:10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

2. **Prayer Request 2: to walk worthy of Christ.**

This is a critical point for the believer. After doing what we just talked about, we got to walk it out. There is a difference between hearing and knowing something and then having the ability to do that something. The critical point is putting what we know into practice. We are to live out the will of God; we are to practice and do the will of God including myself. Knowing the will of God is of no value until we have committed our lives to do it. "**Walk**" (*peropatesao*) means that we set our lives—our behavior and conduct after Christ. "**Worthy**" (*axios*) means to have the weight of or comparing the value of. Our walk is to weigh as much as the walk of Christ. We are to live equal to; we are to live up to; we are to live with the same glory as, all of what God has called us to be! Our conduct is to conform to the will of God as much as the conduct of Christ. We are to live a life just as worthy as the life of Christ. The will of God is to control our behavior as much as it did the behavior of Christ. Christ is the pattern and we are the copy. The copy is just like the pattern (*Wuest*). There is only one way. We must be totally committed to do two things.

1. We must be "**fruitful in every good work.**" No person is pleased when we do only half of what He says. To please anyone we have to do all that He says. How much more true with God!
2. We must grow in the knowledge of God. How? We walk with Him: associate, fellowship, and share with Him. The more we walk with Him, the more we "**Increase in the knowledge of Him.**"

1:11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.

3. **Prayer Request 3: to possess the power of God; "strengthen with all might."**

This is seen by asking two questions:

1. What good is it if the believer knows God's Will, but he does not have the power to do God's Will?

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2. How can the believer walk worthy of Christ if he does not have the power to do God's will?

Many in the world believe that man has the strength within himself to become spiritually strong; that it is a matter of the will and discipline; that man can apply himself and conquer the circumstances of life. And, to some degree, this is true. But man's flesh fails in three critical areas.

1. The flesh cannot become perfect; neither can it do anything about perfection.
2. The flesh cannot conquer death.
3. The flesh cannot do what this verse says; it cannot be patient and longsuffering against all the traumatic trials and temptations of life and be joyful at the same time in itself.

Where does such power come from? From God, and we secure His power through prayer.

1. God's power gives us a spirit of **"patience"** (*hupomonen*); endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, constancy, perseverance. Rather it is His Spirit that stands up, quickens our spirit, and faces the trials of life.
2. God's power gives us a spirit of **"longsuffering."**
3. God's power gives us a spirit of **"joyfulness"** through all the trials and tribulations of life.

1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints

In light:— God has done three great things for man. If we concentrate upon these three things the depth of what God has done will erupt in our lives for good and we will **"give thanks to the Father."**

1. God has given us an **"inheritance."** Sometimes we can fall into the trap of thinking that we have to do something to earn God's favor. The truth is you already have it. You have it through the blood of His dear Son Jesus. You have it because it was predestinated, that is foreordained. The fact that God would take sinners—totally depraved sinners—and save them will cause praise upon praise, and then give us an inheritance—that of being made the very heritage of God, the very possession of God is truly outstanding! It was predestinated that Jesus would go to the cross that we would receive the inheritance. Inheritance always comes after death.

1:13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

2. God has **"delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His dear Son."** Picture a person trying to walk and stumble through a world of darkness. The power of darkness is a kingdom, a realm, or world, but also a power, actively enslaving man and standing in opposition to the light. However, the Father Himself has **"delivered"** (*erusato*) meaning rescued or snatched us from darkness and **"translated"** (*transferred, brought*) **"us into the kingdom of His dear Son."** Remember, that if there is the power of darkness, there is the kingdom of Christ's light, existing. And God's kingdom is greater!
 - a. His rule and reign already exists in the spiritual world, in heaven.
 - b. His rule and reign already exists in the hearts and lives of believers in this physical world.

Why did God do that? Because of His great love for us! How did He do that? Through His only begotten Son dying on the cross and rising from the dead! He did it for us! **He delivered us!**

1:14 In whom we have redemption through his blood even the forgiveness of sins.

3. God **"has redeemed us through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins."** The contract of sin was death for the sinner's life. The ransom God paid in full was with the shed blood of Jesus for our penalty of sin. The blood had to come from the Perfect Lamb, the spotless Lamb of Jesus; no other way. He bore the bondage of sin through His blood and sin's penalty was broken!
 - a. Any person who truly believes that Jesus Christ died for him is forgiven his sins.
 - b. God takes his faith and counts it as the death of Jesus Christ.

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- c. God sees the man as being in Jesus Christ, as being in the death of Jesus Christ.
- d. God counts the death of Jesus Christ for the death of the man.
- e. Therefore, the guilt and penalty for breaking God's laws are completely removed.
- f. The man's sins and guilt are sent away or washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ.

Paul was allowing them to see that he was still praying for their growth, and their maturity. And, he was still giving thanks to the Father for what He had completed in them through His Son Jesus.

1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:—This scripture comes because false teaching had seeped into the Colossian church. It was called "*Gnosticism*." The false teaching attacked Jesus Christ; both His work and Person. Therefore, Paul takes up the pen and proclaims the Person of Christ to the Colossians.

1. **First**, Jesus Christ is "*the image of the invisible God*." The image expresses Christ's deity in relation to the Father, it is the very stamp of God as He was before the incarnation (Jh.17:5). The word is not form (Phil.2:6), He is not the form but "*image*" (eikon) meaning the exact image. In the incarnation, *the invisible God became visible in Christ*: deity was clothed with humanity (Matt.17:2), deity under some human limitations. *Christ in God*: visible, audible, approachable, knowable, and available. All that God is, Christ is.
2. **Second**, Jesus Christ is "*the firstborn of every creature*." This expresses Christ's deity and sovereignty in relation to Creation. Christ was the first-born not the first created. First-born signifies priority in time. All creation is His heritage.

So we have here declared the invisible God was before Creation, the visible God came to Creation, and the firstborn of every creature has all authority over Creation because He was not created and His name is Jesus Christ.

1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:— "**By Him**" means that He is the divine agent. It means creation took place in Christ, within His very being. The word "*created*" at the beginning, shows that Creation is a past, perfect work. The second time, "*created*" shows that Creation is a permanent work. The Gnostics believed all matter is evil, thus the creation is evil. Paul says that indeed God the son, who also came in a material body, is the God who created all things. All means all. And God did not see His Creation as evil, but as very good (Gen.1:31).

- "**all things**" collectively, that is, all things within the universe were created by Christ.
- "**all things**" individually, that is, every single detail of Creation, was created by Christ.

The heretics at Colosse taught people to worship various levels of angels (Colo.2:18), but Christ, not angels should be worshiped. Created things are never to be worshiped. All visible and invisible things, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers were created in heaven and earth by the Lord Jesus Christ: by Him and for Him.

1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. Christ existed prior to all creation. He is the great "I Am!" (Jh.8:58). The Gnostics had taught that Christ was created at His human birth and He did not have preexistence. But Paul lets them know that Christ was before everything else and in Him all things hold together.

1. Jesus Christ was before all things in time—before the first thing was ever created.
2. Jesus Christ is before all things in importance, supremacy, and preeminence—nothing is superior to Him.
3. Jesus Christ is what holds the world together.
 - a. that keeps the universe from flying apart and disintegrating.
 - b. that keeps all creatures from utterly destroying themselves through savagery.

Things are held together by His: • love • energy • unity • force • power • order • cohesion • solidarity.

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1:18 And he is the head of the body, the church:— Just as Christ rules and reigns over the natural creation, He also rules over human creation, the church. He is THE authority over the church. The picture is: the human body with Christ as the Head, and the church as His body. When the church is called the body of Christ, at least three ideas are pictured.

1. **There is the idea of life.** A body cannot live apart from the head and a head cannot live apart from the body. Both the head and the body are absolutely necessary for there to be life. Now we see that without Jesus Christ, the church does not exist. And without the church, the life of Christ on earth could not be known or exist. Christ is made known only through the lives of His people, the church.
 - a. If any part of the world is without the church (His body), that part of the world cannot know Christ the Head.
 - b. If the world sees a body of people with some head other than Christ, then that body of people is not the church, not the true church.
2. **There is the idea of activity and its source.** It is the body that acts, but it is the Head that tells the body to act.
 - plans for the body • directs the body • guides the body • inspires the body • activates the body... The body does nothing without the Head. All that the body does begins in the Head.
3. **There is the idea of control.** The Head is to rule and reign over the body. The body is to be controlled by the Head, not act apart from the Head. When Christ does not control the church body, it is because there is some malfunction, some problem within the body.

1:18b ...who is the beginning, — Jesus Christ is the beginning of the church. The word "*beginning*" (*arche*) has a twofold idea.

1. "**Beginning**" means creative power. When something first begins, it is created or brought into being by some person or thing greater than itself. Jesus Christ was the Person who gave birth to the church. He is greater than the church; therefore, He had the power to create the church and bring it into existence.
2. "**Beginning**" means first in time. Jesus Christ was the Person of the church. He began the church; therefore, He was the Head, the great and glorious Founder of the church. All others who come into the church follow Him. A person, who does not follow Christ the Founder, fails to really enter the church which He founded. A person may sit in the pews of a building and hear the voice of the preacher, but unless he follows Christ, he is not in the body and movement of the church's Founder. He follows some other body and movement.

1:18c ...the firstborn from the dead; — Jesus Christ was the first to arise from the dead. There are three ways that the resurrection of Christ and the church are closely related.

1. The resurrection of Christ is the very reason the church exists. If Jesus Christ had not risen from the dead, there would be no church. Now the church can live forever with Christ. Therefore, when a person truly believes in the resurrection of Christ, God takes that belief and counts the person as being in Christ. When man is ready to leave this world, he will be resurrected right into the presence of God. Death is conquered!
2. The resurrection of Christ and the life of the church means there is a new life available for the church. When Christ was raised from the dead, His body and life were entirely different from His former body and life. So it is with the church. The church is to be a picture of the resurrected and changed life of Christ.
3. The resurrection of Christ is the power by which the church is to live. The church is to live as resurrected beings—beings with a new life, a life of power and energy that conquers all the trials of life; power to conquer all the trials and temptations of life. Such power is available, and it is to be alive and active in the church. In fact, the resurrected power of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be the very life blood of the church.

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1:18d ...that in all things he might have the preeminence. Jesus Christ is eminent above all others. Paul first proclaims the preeminence of Christ in Creation, and then, His preeminence in redemption.

- Jesus Christ is the preeminent Person in the universe because He died and arose again for man's salvation. Christ was perfectly obedient to God the Father in dying and being raised from the dead, that God the Father has made God the Son preeminent in all things. The point is this: God's great love for His Son explains why the church exists. God had created the world and man to worship and serve Him, but when man rebelled and refused to honor Him, God had to accomplish His purpose some other way. He provided the way through His Son Jesus Christ.
 - a. Jesus Christ has been exalted to the right hand of God the Father (Mk.16:19).
 - b. Jesus Christ has been given a name above every name (Phil.2:9).
 - c. Jesus Christ has been given all things (Rev.5:12).
 - d. Jesus Christ has been both Lord and Christ (Messiah, Savior) (Acts 2:36).
 - e. Jesus Christ has been exalted above all (Jh.3:31).
 - f. Jesus Christ is Lord of both the living and the dead (Rom.14:9).
 - g. Jesus Christ has a more excellent name than the angels (Heb.1:4).
 - h. Jesus Christ has more glory than even the greatest of men (Heb.3:3).
 - i. Jesus Christ is the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last (Rev.1:11).
 - j. Jesus Christ has all things under His feet (Eph.1:22).
 - k. Jesus Christ has all things subject to Him (1Pt.3:22).

1:19 For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;— ⁴God put everything that He has into Christ. And God put everything that He is into Christ. This includes all God's character, His nature and His power. Jesus Christ is filled with all the fullness of God Himself. All that God is, dwells in Jesus Christ. ⁵Actually the Spirit of the Father, Word, and Holy Ghost were all caught up in the working of the Spirit within the body of Jesus. Jesus Christ is fully God in all God's divine nature. The word "*dwelling*" (*katokeo*) means to make permanent abode or to be at home permanently. All the fullness of God was at home in Christ before He came to earth, at home in Him while He was on earth, and shall continue to be at home within Him throughout all eternity. In fact, because of what God the Son has done in coming to earth—dying and rising from the dead—God the Father wants His Son to have the preeminence and which pleases Him. The church can please the Father only by praising and serving the Lord Jesus Christ, the One in whom dwells all the fullness of God.

1:20 And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself;— Sin separated us from God because of Adam and Eve and ⁶caused man to become spiritually dead. Once Christ went to the cross, by His blood, He had reconciled the Elect of God back to God. "*Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*" Rom 5:1. Romans 5:1 states that those who are saved have peace with God. Therefore, those who are reconciled unto God are brought into the same fellowship Adam and Eve had before they sinned, and that is why the word in the Greek for "*reconcile*" means "a reconciliation of a former relationship." We have peace through the blood of His cross. How does the "*blood of the cross*" reconcile us to God?

- The cross was the place where criminals were executed. This means that Jesus Christ died as an unjust criminal, yet He was not a criminal. He did not deserve to die, for He had broken no law. He was not there because of His own sins. He was there dying for someone else. He was the **Just** dying for the **unjust**. If the Just died for the sins of the unjust, then the unjust is no longer guilty of sin. He is freed from

⁴ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/col-lbw.htm>

⁵ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/colossians/02.html>

⁶ http://www.scionofzion.com/colossians_1_16_20.htm

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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the charge of being a sinner: he is no longer considered unjust; he is considered just. How? by faith. When a person truly believes that the Just Christ died for his unjust sins, God counts it so. Being freed from the charge of sin, the person becomes acceptable to God.

1:20b ...by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. All things are reconciled to God, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven. This does not mean universal salvation. Scripture does not teach that every person shall be reconciled to God. Those who are not the Elect of God are still at enmity with God, that is, they are still the enemies of God. The next verse makes that clear. Therefore, as we look ahead to the life that will exist in the new heaven and earth, the life of the future will be a life of reconciliation with God. It means that everyone who is there, will be reconciled to God.

1:21 And you, that were sometimes alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. You can also pertain to us. We were once in that place. "Alienated" means that we were estranged from God. "Enemies" means we were hostile and at war with God. The seat of hostility is in the mind—the thoughts, attitude, and disposition of their minds by doing wicked works. This indicates willful opposition and personal animosity.

1:22 In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable and unproveable in his sight:— The sacrificial suffering and death had to happen in the flesh of Jesus, so He could present us as holy, blameless, and unproveable. Christ's righteousness is our righteousness. all of this through His precious blood.

1:23 If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven;—⁷Paul says "IF INDEED YOU CONTINUE..." Once saved (reconciled to God), we can still be lost!

1. What about "the security of the believer?"

- 1) Though the Bible does teach the security of the BELIEVER
- 2) It also teaches the insecurity of the UNBELIEVER
- 3) And it teaches that a BELIEVER, if not diligent, can become an UNBELIEVER! (He 3:12-15; 16-4:2, 11)

2. And so, Paul emphasizes that we must "continue in the faith", which involves:

- a. Being "grounded and steadfast" (thus the need for follow-up)
- b. "not moved away from the hope of the gospel," which can occur through:

- 1) Error or false doctrine (2Pet. 3:17).
- 2) Temptations to sin (2Pet. 2:20-22).
- 3) Trials and hardships in life (Rev. 2:10).

1:23b ...whereof I Paul am made a minister;— Now, Paul talks about his source. Paul often defended his right to speak for God. Every time he said, "*I am an Apostle*," he was saying, "*I am a sent one from God*." At the end of *Colossians 1:23* he says, "...I, Paul, am made a minister." In other words, he didn't choose to become a minister, God made him a minister. That fact gave him credibility and punch in speaking to the Colossians. When Paul referred to his ministry, he was defending his right to speak for God--to establish his authority. Paul wanted the people to hear him as the spokesman for God--not as a self-styled, self-appointed, non-credentialed teacher like so many that existed in the world. So, he repeatedly accredited his ministry.

⁷ http://executableoutlines.com/col/col_05.htm

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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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 (NIV). Paul was in prison when this Epistle was written, being a minister of the gospel of Christ, was not ashamed of his imprisonment, but was willing to rejoice in his suffering to fulfill his God given task. As we serve the Lord Jesus Christ with the recognition that God has called us, what kind of attitude should we have? What spirit should we have? Paul answers this in the first three words of verse 24 "**Now I rejoice....**" What's the spirit of the ministry? Joy. The spirit of the ministry is joy. Whatever ministry you have been given is to be enjoyed.

He's simply saying that suffering is unavoidable in bringing the Good News of Christ to the world. When we suffer, Christ feels it with us. But this suffering can be endured because it changes lives and brings people into God's kingdom. There are two needs of the church:

1. The need for a minister who will tirelessly labor for the church, that is, for the body of Christ.
 2. The need for believers who will tirelessly labor for the church, that is, for the body of Christ.
- The church needs a minister (servant) who will willingly suffer for others.

Not only was Paul looking to heaven for comfort, but he realized that while he was on this earth, doing the work of the ministry for the sake of people like the Colossians, he was filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions. The message teaches that the minister of God actually completes the suffering of Christ. When Christ was upon the earth, He loved the church and gave Himself for it; therefore, He poured out His heart and life for the church, that is, for believers. Christ ministered, served, worked, labored, and did it all laboriously. Christ bore whatever was necessary in order to build the church. And in so doing He left the pattern for all those who would follow after Him. Serving the church in this world is not easy. The believer knows that without Christ men are lost and doomed to judgment. Therefore he suffers whatever burden and pain necessary to reach and grow people. So Christ's afflictions are not yet complete. His body will still suffer until the day that we are caught up to be with Him for eternity. Part of the reason that Paul rejoiced was because he was counted worthy to share in the sufferings of Christ. According to verse 24, Paul endured his suffering for the sake of the church--to win people to Christ and then to mature them in Christ. And he certainly paid a price. What benefit do people get from ministers? There is much benefit to having the Word of God presented to us, having the complete Word preached to us.

1:25 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God;—

- The church needs a minister who has been chosen by God to proclaim the Word of God. 1:25

Paul was made a minister by God. He was not in it because:

- He thought it was a good profession to enter.
- Some friends thought he would make a good minister.
- He had the natural talents for the ministry

What an enormous call and responsibility, yet it comes from God; therefore, it must be fulfilled by God. Paul was chosen to carry out, minister the Word of God, that is, to make the Word of God fully known.

1:26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: 1:27 To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (NIV).

- The church needs a minister who will share the great mystery of God—the glorious message of "Christ in you, the hope of glory." 1:26-27

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What does this mean? You see 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 plan was meant to be exclusive. However, Paul calls God's plan "*the mystery*", a secret, not in the sense that only a few would understand, but because it was hidden until Christ came. Remember that the word "*mystery*" means secret, some secret that God was not able to reveal to the world until man had been prepared to receive it. "...*now made manifest to His saints*." This is two-fold, two parts to its revelation:

- First, the mystery is that Christ actually will live within the hearts and lives of the believer. The Holy Spirit is the personal presence of Christ.
- Second, the mystery of God is that Christ will live within any person, no matter who they are—God is no respecter of persons.

Who could have imagined that God's secret plan was to have His Son Jesus Christ, live in the hearts of all who believed in Him? Christ was made known to and dwells in the Gentiles; that is, it is not limited by racial or national lines. The critical fact is that it is now revealed: it cannot only be known, but known by many persons.

When God sent His Son Jesus Christ into the world to die for man, God showed the world that He loves every person equally. He does not favor anyone—not one person—much less a class or nation of people. Every person can **now** approach God and become acceptable to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ, the hope of glory. Jesus Christ is the mystery of God and it is Jesus Christ that reveals God to men.

- When people look at Jesus Christ, they see God.
- When people come to know Jesus Christ, they come to know God personally.

Once a person approaches God through Jesus Christ God places His Spirit within the person's heart.

1:28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:—

- The church needs a minister who will preach Christ and will warn and teach every man.
 - **The minister is to preach Christ.**

For this declares the very opposite of what man has always done. Man has always proclaimed principles, ideas, theories, positions, rules, codes, morals, laws, philosophies, institutions, and religions. This is not the minister's proclamation. He is to preach a Person, not things, no matter how good they may be.

- **The minister is to warn every man.**

Man must be warned: he cannot enter glory unless Christ is in him. No man is perfect; no man has enough righteousness to make himself acceptable to God. Man cannot earn or do enough righteousness to become perfect. Man's only hope is Christ, for Christ alone is righteousness; Christ alone is perfect. Man must be warned.

- **The minister is to teach every man.**

It is not enough to warn men. Once they respond to the warning by inviting Christ into their hearts, they have to be taught. They need to learn how to live out the great teachings of Christ. The minister is to teach in all wisdom.

1:29 Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

- The minister is to labor and labor to present every person perfect in Christ Jesus. (Eph.4:12-16).
- The church needs a minister who will labor and work—strive laboriously, depending upon Christ for energy.

The word "**labor**" (kopiao) means to toil and to struggle in labor and work to the point of exhaustion, fatigue, and pain. It is a picture of an athlete struggling, agonizing, and pushing himself well beyond his capacity in order to

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achieve his objective. The word "*working*" (*energeia*) means energy and efficiency, and is only used of superhuman power (Wuest). In this case, it is the power of Christ! When the minister has gone as far as he can, Christ steps in and infuses energy and power into his body—an energy and power that works in him mightily. The only way to experience this physical energy and power of Christ is to use all of your own strength; being completely empty. Paul depended upon God in his labors! He realized that without God he was nothing, and could do nothing worth lasting. So he always looked to God for help in accomplishing his goal. If we will view ourselves as Paul viewed himself, as a servant and steward, consider your suffering for your brethren a great privilege and source of joy, then we will be convinced that we gladly devote ourselves to the same goal Paul had! ⁸As we completed chapter one of the book of Colossians, verses 23-29, we heard Paul talking about how he'd been made a minister of the gospel, and how he'd made sure that he was a beneficial one: a minister who proclaimed Jesus to them, admonished them about sin, and taught them the full Word of God. He knew that it was only by presenting the whole counsel of God that he could know they would be presented as complete in Christ. And it was because of this that Paul worked so hard, laboring and striving.

SUMMARY:

1:1-8 Paul's authority for writing this letter is found in his identity as "*an apostle (one sent) of Jesus Christ.*" Paul refers to his apostleship because he is unknown to the Colossians. This refers to his authoritative title, signifying equality with the Twelve, because he has seen the risen Christ. It refers to the dignity of his office; he is clothed with authority and endued with power. His appointment was not by the Twelve, by religious leaders, by his family, nor by himself. This is an assertion of his divine authority. As an act of courtesy, Paul includes Timothy in the salutation. Timothy was not an apostle; he was a brother, Paul's spiritual son. In this letter he speaks to the saints and the faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse (**1:1**). As he greets them, he says "*Grace be unto you.*" He's saying Grace gives you what you don't deserve; mercy withholds from you what you do deserve. Grace always precedes peace. "*And peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,*" speaking of the calm tranquility of the heart amidst disturbing circumstances. The source of grace and peace is from God. In other words, he's setting the atmosphere by giving assurance to those in Christ (**1:2**).

After "*Grace*", and "*Peace*", come "*Thanks*" because there is much to be thankful for. Thanksgiving precede (comes before) intercession; praise precede prayer and also follows. He lets them know that there is a continual prayer for them since hearing of their faith in Christ Jesus and the love they have for all the saints (**1:3**). Love is the evidence of faith and love is the characteristic mark of Christianity. He lets them know the reason for their love—the hope laid up for them in heaven—there is an absolute certainty of its possession in the future. (Paraphrasing): "*You heard this word of truth from Epaphras, before *Gnosticism crept in, but I'm just reassuring you. You know this word because you began to bring forth fruit; you began to increase since the day you heard it.*" The grace of God was fully apprehended and should have made them immune from Gnosticism (**1:4**). Paul states that "*hope*" is the reason for their faith and love: "*because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.*" The idea of "*hope*" does not mean a wishful thinking, as it is used so often in our day. It is anticipation, expectation, and an awaiting of fulfillment of that which is certain (**1:5**).

Peter said that God "has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Peter 1:3-5).

⁸ <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/51-Colossians/Colossians0201.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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How did Paul endure the most grueling of times with a spirit of joy and patience? His life was rooted in hope of what was ahead through Jesus Christ. The word that came unto the Colossians was personal, yet it came to the world also, universally. The Word brought forth fruit in them; grew and increased in them, but not the world. Epaphras, one that had experienced that change, brought that word unto them. *"He also informed us of your love in the Spirit."* Another thing about the gospel is that it's by faith, it results in love, it rests in hope, it reaches the world, it reproduces fruit, and it's rooted in grace (1:6-8).

From verses 9-14 is Paul's "Intercessory Prayer" for them. *"For this cause...since the day we heard it we have not ceased to pray for you. We desire you be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding."* Sometimes we wonder how to pray for missionaries and other leaders we have never met. Paul had never met the Colossians, but he faithfully prayed for them. His prayer teaches us how to pray for others, whether we know them or not. Father I pray for those that are reading this prayer ...

- That they to be filled with the knowledge of "You" will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding (1:9).
- I pray that they might live a life worthy of "You", one that pleases "You" in every way; bearing fruit and growing in the knowledge of "You" (1:10).
- Strengthen them with all might according to "Your" glorious power so that they may have patience and longsuffering with joyfulness (1:11).
- Now I give "You" thanks Father for all that "You" have done: qualifying them in the kingdom of light to share in the inheritance "You've" given (1:12).
- I thank "You" for delivering them from the power of darkness, and translating them into the kingdom of "Your" dear Son (1:13).
- I thank "You" for the redemption through "Your" blood, even the forgiveness of sins (1:14).

When you don't know how to pray for someone, pray the Word! Verses 9-11 is the Intercessory Prayer.

Verses 12-14 are the Benefits God has secured for us when Christ died on the cross. That's why you begin to Thank Him. Understanding Truth and Living Truth has to go hand in hand. We cannot do one without the other.

We will have to know the "Will of God".

1:15-29⁹ In these verses we find Paul explaining the relationship of Jesus Christ to *creation*.

- I. He existed before creation (1:15). The "Firstborn" cannot be a part of *creation* if He *created* "all things." This means that He preceded the whole *creation* and He is Sovereign over all *Creation*.
- II. He created all things (1:16). "Through Him all things were made" (Jh.1:3). This includes all things in heaven and earth.
- III. All things exist for Him (1:16b). Christ is not only the one through whom all things came into being, but also the one by whom they continue to exist. Everything in *creation* exists for Him.
- IV. He holds all things together (1:17). Jesus Christ not only made all things, He controls all things and by Him all things are held together. Even though rulers (human or spiritual) may oppress us, they are what they are by God's permission and power; they can do nothing except He permits it (Rom.13:1-7). This is certainly comforting for us to know.
- V. He is the head of the Church (1:18). No believer on earth is the head of the church. This position is reserved exclusively for Jesus Christ. Therefore, no denomination or local assembly can claim to be "the

⁹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/colossians-115/>
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body of Christ", because that body is composed of all true believers.

¹⁰If there is to be *reconciliation* between God and man, the initiative and action must come from God. The false teachers in Colosse said that the angels could in some way bring men closer to God. But it was only through the blood of Christ that peace was made between God and man (**1:19-20**). Religion is man seeking God; Christianity is God seeking man (II Cor.5:18-20).

This is simply a detailed look at Paul's ministry. In these verses, Paul presents eight different aspects of the ministry of a servant of God--eight different aspects that should characterize the life of anybody who serves the Lord Jesus Christ, whether it's teaching, preaching, or ministering in any capacity within the framework of Christianity (**1:24-29**).

APPLICATION:

Very simply, the **Will of God** is to give thanks, to do right, and not to do wrong. We can't help but be in awe of Jesus Christ and His greatness. He has done so much for us and He is who He says He is. He is Preeminent, Supreme, Self-existent, Messiah, and Head of all Creation! Accept His love and salvation today! Start walking right to please Him. His Holy Spirit will lead and guide you. When you get God's leading, do it - before you change your mind.

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¹⁰ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/colossians-119/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

How Great A Struggle

2:1 For I would that ye knew that great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;— The need for a minister who will tirelessly labor for the church, that is, for the body of Christ was covered. Now we will cover the second need: The need for believers who will tirelessly labor for the church, that is, for the body of Christ; who are consistently growing (a mature believer) in the Lord. One of the great tragedies of today's society is the lack of consistency. Few people are consistent in their daily walk with the Lord. It has become a struggle. When Paul talks about what a great struggle; a great conflict, *Col. 1:29-2:1* goes hand in hand.

^{1:29}For this I labor [unto weariness], striving with all the superhuman energy which He so mightily enkindles and works within me.

^{2:1}For I want you to know how great is my solicitude for you [how severe an inward struggle I am engaged in for you] and for those [believers] at Laodicea, and for all who [like yourselves] have never seen my face and known me personally (AMP).

Remember Paul had never seen the Colossian church personally; he was not the minister on the field, Epaphras was. Paul also wanted this letter passed on to the Laodicean church and all others, and he was counting on 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 Christ. He did not only write a letter, he labored in prayer.

POINT:

This says something of enormous importance: ministers are to wrestle in prayer for believers and churches all over the world so churches can be mature in the Lord. A half-hearted, half-committed minister can only produce half hearted, half-committed people.

Paul was struggling and striving against adversaries for the sake of Christians everywhere. He labored hard, toiled, strove, agonized, struggled, and wrestled in prayer. Prayer is not easy; it is laborious. This giving and striving is an example not only coming from Paul but originates from the One that placed it in him, our Lord Jesus Christ. Striving for people that will never meet this side of heaven is a great calling. As you look at the usage of these words of agony throughout the New Testament, you begin to understand that Paul's battlefields were both spiritual and physical. The contests of struggle were fought both in prayer (Luke 22:44; Col. 4:12) and in earthly conflict (1Thess 2:2; Phil 1:30). And the reason for his struggle was that they would be kept on the right path, not following after false doctrine (Luke 13:24; 1Cor 9:25; 1Tim 6:12; 2Tim 4:7; Heb 12:1).

Be Encouraged

2:2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;— Paul hoped that the ultimate result of his struggle for them would be two things: (1) Encouraged (*comforted*) hearts and (2) full assurance of understanding. The word "*comforted*" (*paraklethosin*) means to be strong, strengthened, established, and braced. Where does such strength come from? Where is the spring from which such confidence and assurance flow?

- Strong hearts come from love—from being knit together with others in love.

A person who feels emotions of neglect, overlooked, ignored, without friends, left out, or by-passed seldom feel <http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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strong, confident, or assured; On the contrary, he feels weak unacceptable, and incapable of handling situations. He feels insecure, which either causes him to withdraw or react in a superior and boastful attitude. **The point is this:** the answer to a strong, confident, assured heart is love—being knit together in love with others. The church is to build love among everyone, not neglecting or overlooking anyone. This does not certainly come from religion, ceremony, ritual laws, or rules and regulations; it comes from love—hearts knit together in love.

- Strong hearts come from knowing that what you believe about God is accurate, and true.

2:3 In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Once God's Spirit infuses strength within the believer's heart, both assurance and confidence comes alive and gives absolute assurance that we truly know God and are adopted as His dear sons and daughters; that what we believe about God is accurate. The Spirit of God instills that confidence within our hearts. When a person has "*full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*" (2:2-3), then that person has matured in truth, and has the ability to apply and use truth wisely. The Colossians didn't need to go to the Gnostics and pay to learn secret knowledge of how to reach God. The *treasures of wisdom and knowledge* were hid in Christ. The teaching of Christ was open to everyone because He is a revealer when you seek Him. We never exhaust the treasures of knowledge in Christ, there is always more to learn.

Often, we get overwhelmed by our own circumstances, and become convinced that God will never get us out of this mess, that this trial will never be over, or that we'll never have victory over our sin. But then God brings someone like Paul across our path, who has a testimony of victory, of deliverance, of God's faithfulness. It encourages us that God is still working, still on the throne, and still paying attention to us. You can recognize people that God brings to you for encouragement, because He makes a supernatural, spiritual connection between your hearts. They become knit together in love.

2:4 And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

- The church needs mature believers who will resist seduction and deception.

Now this is the point I need you to comprehend: "...lest any man should beguile you with enticing words." The word "*beguile*" (paralogizetai) means to mislead, delude deceive, cheat, seduce, and lead someone astray. The need for believers:

- Believers can be seduced by the persuasive and eloquent words of false teaching.

Arguments

- The creation of the world by God.
- The virgin birth or the incarnation of God in human flesh.
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
- Salvation by grace through faith etc.

The arguments can be against any of the major teachings of Scripture. If they are persuasive enough, some persons are led astray. They begin to question the truth and to wonder and doubt. The very reason Paul has proclaimed that all wisdom and knowledge exist in Christ is to protect believers against false teaching. Believers are to know that all truth is in Christ, and they are to seek all truth in Christ.

- Believers can be seduced by the enticing and appealing words of those who live after the lusts of the flesh. Human nature is easily influenced by...
 - appearance ▪ attractiveness ▪ charisma ▪ thoughts
 - insinuations ▪ suggestions ▪ imaginations ▪ desires

Therefore when some idea is made in an appealing way, people are enticed and led astray from Christ. Again, the truth and the wise course of behavior for the believer is found in Christ. The course of wisdom is to turn away from the seduction of enticing words and suggestions.

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2:5 For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

- The church needs mature believers who will maintain discipline—order and steadfastness.

The word "**order**" (*taxin*) means to maintain military discipline, array, and arrangement; to hold a solid front. The word "**steadfastness**" (*stereoma*) means to stand fast and persevere; to be immovable, steady, and unyielding; to never crack, give in, or back up. This too, is a military word. **AND THE BELIEVERS WERE RESPONDING LIKE A VICTORIOUS ARMY.** They were maintaining their discipline and holding their order and standing fast, even as Paul was writing this letter. Even during withstanding, a minister's encouragement is still needed. Paul says that he was with them in spirit, joying, and watching them gain the victory over the false teachers.

2:6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

- The church needs mature believers who will walk in the Lord.

This means at least **two things** for believers:

1. **First**, believers walk justly as they have received Christ—by faith.

There is a continued walk with Christ by faith. When you received Christ, you trusted His righteousness, His death to cover your sins and to make you acceptable to God. Therefore, our lifestyle continues to trust His righteousness and death. It is all of that that continues to cover our sins and make them acceptable to God. We have nothing within ourselves to earn, merit, deserve, or make God accept us. We can do nothing and we can possess nothing that will secure the approval of God. The believer is only acceptable before God in Christ—trusting His righteousness and death by faith.

2. **Second**, believers received Christ as Christ Jesus the Lord.

That is, when believers received Him, they accepted Him as the true Messiah and Lord from heaven; you accepted Him as the Lord of your life. Therefore, we are to walk before Him as Lord; we are to continue walking and serving Him as the Lord of our lives.

2:7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

There are **three** particular **things** the believer is to do in verse 7:

1. The **believer** is to be rooted and built-up in Christ.

There are two pictures in this statement. The picture of being rooted is that of a tree. The other is the picture of being built or constructed—that of a building. **The point is this:** the emphasis is upon a strong attachment and a flow of nourishment and life from Christ to the believer. That means, the believer is so nourished because of strong roots in the soil of his Word; so built up upon the foundation of Jesus Christ, that his walk is continuously strong and unbroken. His life and mind are focused upon Christ without interruptions, drawing all nourishment and strength from Him. This is critical, for there is no other permanent nourishment or strength—not that lasts forever and imparts eternal life to the human soul.

2. The **believer** is to walk established in the faith just as he has been taught.

The word "*established*" means to be firm, stable, holding fast and not letting go. This shows the utter necessity for strong teachers in the church. When believers have strong teachers, they are to learn all they can about the faith and hold fast to it. They are not to let it go!

3. The **believer** is to walk overflowing with thanksgiving.

Christ Jesus has done so much for the believer—so much that flows on and on, never ceasing, not even for one moment of any day. Therefore, the believer learns to walk in an unbroken spirit of thanksgiving—a thanksgiving that overflows in praise to the Lord moment by moment throughout the day.

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As we have learned, the Gnostics were trying to pull the Colossians away from the simple teachings of Christ and back into the slavery of a human system of rules that could not help them. The importance of this passage is clearly seen in the meaning of scripture.

2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit,— The word "*beware*" (*blepete*) means to take heed, look out, guard yourself. Why? Lest any man spoil you through philosophy. The word "*spoil*" (*sulagogeo*) means to lead into captivity or slavery. Being continually watchful for false teaching does not come naturally. Paul is not encouraging a "*critical spirit*" but a "*discerning spirit.*" We will know Christ and His truth well, anything false is revealed immediately by the light of Christ's Spirit. When we are filled up with Christ and His blessings, there is no emptiness in us looking for something else to fill it. See that no one takes you captive through philosophy.

2:8b ...after the tradition of men,— ¹¹Philosophy (*philosophia* from *philos* = friend/lover + *sophia* = wisdom) is literally a love of wisdom, and came to mean "*tenets*" (*doctrine*) of heathen Gentile philosophers. The Gnostics were fond of "*philosophia.*" The love of human wisdom is a product of human mind and that produces human tradition which is followed down through the ages. It is not God's revelation; rather it was speculative, mythical and misleading. This was hollow and deceitful philosophy. That means it sounded good but there was nothing inside. Instead, men should love Christ, Who has made true wisdom unto us and in whom are stored all the treasures of true wisdom and true knowledge. Only Christ's truth carried a real reward.

2:8c ...after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. ¹²The word "*rudiments*" (*stoicheion*) refers to parts of a systematized, regulated arrangement. What is represented is something that is in itself is only "*elemental*" and thus less than complete. Paul contrasts these limited elements with the fullness which is put on display in the Person of Christ. That is the theme of this chapter -- the contrast between limited, elemental things, and the completeness that is found only in Jesus Christ. We end up concentrating on all the little bits and pieces and forget the big picture. It doesn't matter if the systematized approach to faith is built up from worldly philosophy, science, religious doctrines and rituals, etc. It doesn't matter what rituals you perform, food you eat, festivals you keep, or day you worship on, since all of those things are elemental types and shadows that reach their fulfillment in Christ. The purpose in all these is to lead to spiritual understanding and it is not in themselves righteousness. To assign them a place of importance equal to faith in Jesus is to then take away from and diminish the completeness of Jesus.

To concentrate on the "*rudiments*" can result in capture of the person. The person can become more concerned with these limited elements than with the fullness of unity with Christ. And thereby, can never reach unity in Christ because they are always trying to add something to Him, that is, of their own will-power; to build up knowledge bit by bit or act by act. People trust their own talents and "*careers*" for material provision and become captured by material things. All of it can capture the mind to the point where it directs the heart away from the fullness that is only in Jesus Christ. Anyone who seeks to add on to or replace Jesus with anything else is using vain philosophy and deceitful speech for the purpose of capturing the heart, mind and soul of others. I could go on and on; however, the point has been covered.

2:9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. The word "*fullness*" (*pleroma*) means that not a single part of God's nature is lacking in the nature of Christ. The word "*dwells*" (*katoikei*) means to be at home, to be permanently settled and present. This tells us that the fullness of God has always dwelt in Christ, even before He came to earth; that the fullness of God was not just a temporary gift to Jesus. What does all this mean to us in a day

¹¹ http://www.preceptaustin.org/colossians_28-15.htm

¹² <http://www.pheugo.com/faithmatters/index.php?page=FaithMatters.Avoidcapture>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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to day living? It means two wonderful things:

1. First, God is not far off in outer space someplace. God is not unconcerned with the world. As His fullness dwells in Christ, it dwells in us who have accepted Him.
2. God is love, not evil. Only a God of evil would leave man in the dark where he would have to grope and grasp and stumble. His fullness directs us as Christ is in us.

The Gnostics believed Christ was not the supreme God but only one of the lesser emanations from Him; one of the angels. They claimed to know the secret and the only way to God, but actually it was and is the Christians who know the way. The answers to the world and life are not found in a philosophy, nor in human ideas, but found in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Think for a moment: if the "*Person*" (God) really created the world, then the answer to life and creation (truth and reality) are bound to be wrapped up in Him. Christ is not just a partial representation of God, like an angel sent as God's representative. In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead. And those who worship Christ are worshiping God, since Christ has the fullness of Deity. For in Him dwelleth (*inhabiteth; continually abideth*) all the fullness of the Godhead. In Jesus of Nazareth, God was uniquely and bodily among us (Emmanuel). The incarnation was real. Here, our Lord Jesus Christ was one Person with two natures: the God-man.

2:10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:—The word "**complete**" (*pepleromenoi*) means to be made full. We seek no other source of grace and truth; we show no allegiance to anyone else; and we submit to no other authority. Christ is the head; He is the source of life; and He is sovereign over life. God did this in connection with Jesus Christ. And believers have complete (full life) in Christ. There is no rule, authority, or power standing between Christ and man, for He is the Head; head of all principality and power. Since the power of God rested in Jesus Christ, and Christ alone, He overcame all other powers; therefore, His authority ruled as head of all principalities and powers.

2:11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands,— Some in the Colossian church were stressing the ritual of circumcision. They said that a man had to be circumcised to be saved, that God would not accept him unless he was circumcised. Giving his heart to Jesus Christ was not enough. Circumcision was the ritual of faith to the Jews. It symbolized two things:

1. **First**, circumcision was a sign or testimony of his faith in God, declaring to the world that he and his family were going to follow God.
2. **Second**, circumcision symbolized the cutting away of the body of sins that were in the flesh. When the foreskin was cut off and removed it was a picture of sin.

This was the true picture of circumcision, what God had intended until Christ came. Let me say that again, "*Until Christ came!*" But what happen was that man corrupted God's purpose for circumcision. Man began to say that a person became acceptable to God, not because he trusted God, but because he was circumcised. False teachings and religion have always tended to add to God's laws. That's why God had to send Christ. The true religion stresses Christ and Christ alone. Real religion is spiritual and not physical; and it's wrought in Christ not by hands of men. It's the inward circumcision, not outward. What the law could not do, Jesus Christ accomplished for us. The extent of this circumcision is the whole body not just one organ.

Christ is the author of this circumcision, not Moses.

Jews	Believers
• external surgery	• internal—the heart
• only a part of the body	• the whole body of sins
• done by hands	• done without hands
• no spiritual help in sin	• enables them to overcome conquering sin

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2:11b ...In putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:— It is letting Christ cut away the sin out of our flesh. How? - By death. When He died, He died for our sins. He cut away both sin and guilt and throws it away. The flesh is removed from the throne and the Christian is set free from his sinful nature. The sinful nature is not eradicated, for we can still sin (1Jh.1:8), but its power is broken, as we yield to Christ and walk in the power of His Spirit. The old nature (the body of sins of the flesh) was put off rendered inoperative—so that we need no longer be enslaved to its desires. Our physical members are to be instruments not of unrighteousness unto sin, but of righteousness unto God (Rom.6:11-14). This allows us to stand before God without sin.

2:12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. This means we are jointly entombed with Christ; sharing in His experience. The literal meaning is "*to dip, to immerse.*" the figurative meaning is "*to be identified with.*" The Jewish nation was "*baptized unto Moses*" when they went through the Red Sea. There was no water involved in this baptism because they went over on dry land. In this experience, the nation was identified with Moses. Paul used the word "*baptism*" in a figurative sense in this section of his letter—for no amount of material water could bury a person with Christ or make him alive in Christ.

When a person is saved, he is immediately baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ and identified with the Head, Jesus Christ. This identification means that whatever happened to Christ also happened to us. When He was buried, we were buried; when He died, we died, and when He arose, we arose with Him—and we left the graveclothes of the old life behind. All of this was through the faith of the operation of God. Baptism symbolizes our experience of death to the old life and resurrection to the new life (Rom.6:3-5). It is the power of God that changed us, not the power of water. We are therefore raised from the dead because of Christ's resurrection. Although water Baptism, is an outward expression of an inward experience. Without saving faith, water baptism is an empty, meaningless ceremony. It is through faith, we receive Christ (Jh.1:12-13), and faith that He was raised from the dead.

2:13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;— "*Dead*" means lifeless or useless. Man's idea of death involves either the denial of a life hereafter or else the giving of another chance to work oneself into the favor of God. Man's view of death varies according to a person's background and beliefs; environment, training, and heritage. The verse is saying that man is already dead; man was condemned to eternal death before receiving life in Jesus Christ, turning to the deadness of the law was not the answer? "*The uncircumcision of your flesh*" means the body of the sins of the flesh (Col 2:11) —the sinful desires; the old fleshly nature were not yet put off. The penalty for sin is death. The word "*quicker*" (*sunezoopoiesen*) means to make alive; to bring to life. The believer is brought to life from the dead with Christ by God, for when he has truly trusted in Christ, knowing Christ died for his sins, God identifies us with what Christ has done, therefore we never have to die for our sins. The penalty for our sins has been already paid. Christ paid the price. He bore the guilt, the judgment, the condemnation, and the punishment for our sins. Consequently, we are forgiven all trespasses. How wondrous is that?

2:14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;— "*Blotting out*" means erased, wiped away, obliterated, cancelled the note. This explains the forgiveness. "*Handwriting of ordinances*" were the crimes of the criminal written and placed at the location of execution; a legal note or debt. Three expressions describe the law:

1. It is written in ordinances, expressed in decrees and commandments.
2. It was against us, had a valid claim on us.

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3. It was contrary to us, because we couldn't meet the claim.

¹³So here the law became our enemy because it openly showed us that we were guilty of breaking God's law. But when Christ went to the cross, He had fulfilled the demands of God's righteous law and because we were in Christ, being baptized unto His death, we were found not guilty of the violation of God's law. As this verse states it, Christ completely obliterated the charges against us. Note three things:

- Christ "*blotted out the handwriting of the ordinances.*"
- Christ "*took the law out of the way*" for man. He lived a sinless life thereby becoming the higher standard or the higher law for man, keeping it and fulfilling the law perfectly.
- Christ "*nailed the law to the cross.*" That is, Christ bore the judgment and punishment passed down by the law upon man.

To receive what Christ has done, man has to come to himself to the list of charges against him (sin). And he should sense the wrong he has done in his life, for it is his violation of God's laws that condemns him to eternal death. Only as he senses or comes to himself and acknowledges his transgressions will he ever turn to God to be saved. This has to happen, for you can't be contrary to God and have sins blotted out. This was a once and for all removal. In the East, a bond is cancelled by nailing it to the post. So we see our bond of guilt was nailed to His cross. Hallelujah!

2:15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

¹⁴Usually principalities and powers are speaking of the power of darkness. "*Spoiled*" meaning striped away, disarmed or renounced. It was Satan, who Jesus destroyed on the cross. Satan was defeated. He even lost the keys to hell. Jesus took them away from him and went into hell, and brought out many captives with Him. ¹⁵Satan had no power to stop any of God's Elect from becoming saved. Just as the victories of the ancient conquerors resulted in a great homecoming parade, normally the conquered people were paraded before the cheering crowds of the victorious ones. The way Christ shows us openly is the fact that we have become saved and we begin to start working in the Kingdom of God to bring others into the Kingdom, that is, to evangelize the lost and train the saved. Just like a great parade for the victors, Christ is showing us to the powers of darkness which He triumphed over and which we triumph over through Christ.

SUMMARY:

Paul was struggling (contending) for those at Colosse and Laodicea and all whom he never seen. He wanted the church to be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding; that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Christ. He did not want them to be deceived in any manner by fine-sounding words. He told the Colossians that all wisdom and knowledge were found in Christ so that no one would delude them with persuasive argument. The Gnostic heretics were preying on Christians. False religion is often presented in a way that fascinates the intellect. The teachers appear to know things that others do not understand. Protecting the flock from such teachers is serious work. Even in writing the letter in a Roman prison, Paul was present with them in spirit. The Colossians received Christ by grace. Paul tells them since they have received Christ, now continue to walk (live) by His standards, being permanently rooted and built up in Him, established in the faith. This is what they've been taught to do. This is an ongoing process because they will experience an abundance of thanksgiving (**2:1-7**).

¹³ http://www.scionofzion.com/colossians_2_11_15.htm

¹⁴ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/colossians/03.html>

¹⁵ http://www.scionofzion.com/colossians_2_11_15.htm

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¹⁶The word "Beware" in verse eight summarizes the rest of the chapter, in which Paul warns them of the dangers of "*The Colossian Heresy*". These dangers include being cheated through philosophy and vain deceit, and defrauded of their reward by those who appeal to false humility, the worship of angels, false visions, and strict regulations according to the commandments and doctrines of men which really have no value against the indulgence of the flesh. In Christ they are made complete, having undergone a circumcision not made with hands, in which God made them alive together with Christ. Since Christ has also nailed to the cross the "*handwriting of requirements*" that was against them and taken it out of the way. Satan's power was stripped. Christ triumphed at the cross where the sins were taken away and nailed. He openly put Satan to shame (**2:8-15**).

APPLICATION:

Everything is in Christ. Continue to follow after Him being established in your faith! Make a distinction in what the Word says and what someone says. Check it out for yourself. All God has done for man to live in this world was accomplished through Jesus Christ to give us an expectant end.

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¹⁶ http://executableoutlines.com/colo/colo_02.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

COLOSSIANS 3:1-25NEXT 4:1-6

3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Paul had been telling the Colossians that man-made religion appears very wise, but has no value against fleshly indulgence. Their dependence should be a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. The believer's life is a life risen with Christ. This means that we are in union with Christ; whatever Christ experienced, we experienced. When He rose from the dead, we rose with Him, we conquered death, and we are raised to new life. ¹⁷If the Colossians have died to self and been resurrected with the life of Christ, then they will seek those things that pertain to the kingdom of heaven, and not things down here on the earth. But we are also looking at something else. We are looking at Christ sitting at the right hand of God who is the Head over us, Colossian 1:18.

3:2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. The first priority of Christians walking in the spirit is: do not seek the wealth of the world, political positions of authority in the world for self; or even corporate positions of power and authority in the world for self. Instead, seek the things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven, which pertains to the coming millennial kingdom of Christ on the earth. Set your affection on heavenly things and not earthly things.

1. First, seek those things above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God.
2. Second, set your "**affection**" (*phromeite*), your mind on things above and not on things on the earth.

3:3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. We change our behavior by letting Christ live within us, so that He can shape us into what we should be rather than merely what we might want to be in ourselves. Paul says that we have already died with Christ; that is, co-crucifixion, and co-resurrection, with Christ, spiritually, therefore we are locked together with Christ in security.

3:4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Christ is now our life and gives us power to help us live, and He gives us hope for the future. This is where our real lives are lived—through Him. And one day, Christ will be returning to earth. And if you are a Christian, whether your body died or was "**Raptured**", you will return with Him. You will be revealed in glory, even as He will be.

Put Away:

3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

TERMS:

- **Mortify:** put to death quickly.
- **Fornication:** illicit sexual intercourse between unmarried partners; similar to, but not identical with adultery.
- **Uncleanness:** impurity in thought and speech, dirty mindedness, indecency.
- **Inordinate affection:** depraved passion, uncontrolled lust, an evil desire.
- **Evil concupiscence:** wicked craving and sensualness beyond natural expression.
- **Covetousness:** greedy desire to have more; entire disregard for the right of others.
- **Idolatry:** the worship of false gods, putting things in place of God.

Since we have died with Christ, we need to consider our bodies as unresponsive and dead to the idolatrous

¹⁷ <http://www.ffruits.org/firstfruits02/bookofcolossians.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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pursuit of evil (the things listed above). The flesh must be kept in the place of death. It must be kept nailed to the cross. This is never easy, so we must make a conscious, daily decision to live according to God's values and to rely on the Holy Spirit's power. Paul tells the Colossians to "**mortify**" or put to death the "**members**" (those animal impulses that are earthly) in you; the old flesh nature. Therefore consider the members as alive to God and dead to sin. **The point is:** There is the fleshly nature, and there is the spiritual nature. The contrast is easy to understand. The Spirit urges us to put to death, "*sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*" God does not regard sin with indifference. Sin is sin whether you call it "**little**" or "**big.**"

3:6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:— It is because of these things that come from the old flesh nature that the wrath of God will come upon the children of disobedience (unbelievers), that they once walked in and practiced. The Greek word for "**wrath**" means anger associated with punishment. The verse is clear that God will punish His children who are disobedient.

3:7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. Yes, you used to be immoral and greedy, lustful and impure. But now as a Christian, it is not to be present in your life. Does this mean that you are not tempted? That your body doesn't have immoral desires? That your mind isn't tempted by money? Not at all! However, your response to those temptations should be very different than they used to be. It's a choice! Put them to death (cut away) and do not entertain them!

Put Off:

3:8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

TERMS:

- **Anger:** uncontrolled temper, a deep seated emotion of ill-will, a settled feeling of habitual hate, revengeful resentment.
- **Wrath:** boiling agitation, fiery outburst of temper, violent fit of rage, passionate outbreak of exasperation.
- **Malice:** vicious disposition, depraved spite, willful desire to injure, cruel malignity which rejoices in evil to others.
- **Blasphemy:** slanderous talk, reviling, evil speaking, railing insults, reckless and bitter abuse.
- **Filthy communication:** obscene speech, shameful speaking, foul-mouthed abuse, dirty epithets, unclean stories.

The sins we had to put away in verse 5 were of the body. Now, we have the sins that are done with spiteful actions toward others. Paul exhorts them to "**put off, lay aside, and rid themselves of**" the sins that they now practice and he lists these sins as follows: temper, angry outbursts, ill-will toward fellow Christians, malicious gossip, and vulgar speech coming out of their mouths. This list is a bit different from the one Paul gave directly before it. These next things have to do with spiteful actions toward others, which are also things that characterize the affinities of the lost children of disobedience of the domain of darkness. They are transgressions of Christ's Law of Love.

Paul was appealing to the commitment the believers had made in their baptism and urging them to remain true to their confession of faith. **The point is:** these Christians had already put away many sins in their lives, but they still had many sins in their lives that they still needed to put away from themselves. So, when people see these things coming from Christians, what do you suppose they think? ("*There's not much difference between him and most everyone else in the world*"). But we are different because of the Spirit of

God within us to rely on!

So, the way the Spirit is telling us to deal with these things in our current every day state of salvation is that we are to cast them off now, in the same manner as the old man was cast off in the past by Christ. You see this is not works for salvation. This is working out the salvation that you already have in the Spirit, with awe and reverence for what you see, in the Spirit, in the heavenlies. The word Paul uses for "**cast them off**", is a Greek <http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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word that is used for taking off dirty clothes and throwing them aside. Paul's point is that we are in the new man of the last Adam, which is Christ. We have already put off the old man, which of course is the old self, which represents the body of the first fallen Adam. In salvation, we are in the one new man which is the body of Christ, that Christ established in Himself. Paul explains that Christ "*in Himself*" makes all groups of people whom He saves, "... *into one new man*," Ephesians 2:15.

Don't Lie:

3:9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;— One temptation that we find is so easy to give into is to lie to one another. We lie for many reasons: to protect our reputation, to make things easier for ourselves, or to stay out of trouble. Paul is calling this to the attention of the Colossians, telling these Christians to stop lying to each other, since they had put off the old man or the old nature. The Colossian Christians are to tell the truth in every situation. If he does slip and tell a lie, he is convicted by it, repents and gets cleansed by the Holy Spirit. Many Christians today will tell a lie without the slightest feeling of guilt. Many Christians do not even comprehend that lying is a grave sin. Because, the truth of the matter is, when we lie to one another, we're really lying to God. There is no difference in a little lie or big lie, a lie is a lie.

Put On The New Man

3:10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:— In addition to "*putting off the old man*", the Colossians had also "*put on the new man*", which is a reference to the new life in Christ. The new man is the person you are, after being saved. The new man is received, from Christ, at the time of the second birth, and is the regenerated man, the new nature. The new man is the nature of Christ and the new man must be renewed in knowledge in the believers who have decided to follow Christ. Renewed speaks of a continuous action. The crisis of salvation leads to the process of sanctification. It affects both character and conduct to be fashioned after the image of Jesus Christ. It requires perseverance and tenacity to realize the salvation of the soul, and it is not complete until the point of death or rapture. The battle of the new man occurs in our minds. That is why your mind must be renewed in the full knowledge of the New Covenant in Christ. And this is the action that we would have to take. When we renew our minds with God's revealed knowledge, we hold our heads up high and dwell on heavenly things; we practice, review over and over His Word; and we learn and obey His Will. The "*new man*" does not lie but speak the truth. It is the old man or the old flesh nature that causes us to lie. The new man that is being conformed to the image of Christ is trustworthy. You can count on Him to speak the truth. Becoming more like Christ will take a lifetime.

No Distinctions

3:11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all. As a Christian becomes conformed to the image of Christ, all distinctions (differences) disappear. National distinctions disappear as there is neither Greek nor Jew. Jews referred to all people outside the nation of Israel as Greeks. In this day we would say there is neither Jew nor Gentile for the Christian conformed to the image of Christ. There are no religious distinctions (i.e., circumcised or uncircumcised) for the Christian that is in Christ. We are all one when we walk in Christ. There are no cultural distinctions when we are in Christ. Anyone foreign to Greek culture was a Barbarian, and a Scythian was a wild, savage nomad. Cultures disappear when Christians become conformed to the image of Christ. Economic or social distinctions (i.e., slave or free) disappear when Christians put on the life of Christ. It is important to understand that this verse is referring to Christians who are realizing the salvation of their souls and not to every Christian. Many immature Christians still cling to these normal human distinctions based on national, religious, cultural and socioeconomic factors. Christ is absolutely everything.

Continue To Put On

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3:12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;—

TERMS:

- **Bowels of mercies:** a heart of compassion, mercy in action, and heartfelt sympathy for the less fortunate.
- **Kindness:** thoughtfulness of others, unselfishness, sweetness of disposition, gentleness, and graciousness. This fruit of the Holy Spirit and refers to the inner attitude.
- **Humbleness of mind:** This refers to the outward expression of that inner attitude. Humbleness is modesty, it places self last, and regards self as least (Eph.2:8).
- **Meekness:** not weakness, but lowliness; delicate consideration for others. It is the opposite of arrogance and self-assertion. Pride has no place in the Christian life.
- **Long-suffering:** patient under provocation. This denotes the restraint which enables one to bear injury and insult without resorting to retaliation. It accepts the wrong without complaint. Long-suffering is an attribute of God (Rom.2:4) and a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal.5:22).

These are the attire of the new man; his spiritual wardrobe of practical righteousness; the characteristic that are to be of the earthly nature. These things are now true of all who come to faith in Christ under the New Covenant. The command in this verse is to be obeyed at once. And it is to, believers who are called:

1. **Elect*** of God, i.e., chosen of God.
2. **Holy**, i.e., set apart by God and for God.
3. **Beloved**, i.e., loved by God.

NOTE:

* ¹⁸ Notice that in this trinity of favor (that God gives us in His Son) the first thing that Paul calls us is "the elect." This is the translation of the Greek word "eklektoi." The word is derived from the preposition, "ek," and the verb, "lego." These two words combine in the Greek to mean "pick out." The noun form is, "eklektos." It refers to people who have been picked out. So, when you hear the statement, "I elected you." The equivalent is, "I picked you out" To say, "You are 'the' elect," is to say, "You are 'the' picked out." This is important, so stay with me. This word does not mean that God merely identified you. It means God selected you, and so your identity is that you are elect. But there is more: To be elect always means to be selected unto something. Whenever you elect someone, you are electing them unto, or "to be," something. It is like Deuteronomy, "Yahweh your God has elected you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth" Deuteronomy 7:6.

Notice that the same way we're to put off those negative things, we are to put on the positive ones. Paul exhorts the Colossians as born-again believers who have been set apart and loved by God, to **"put on"** the *"bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering."* The bowels are the intestines, the heart, the lungs and the liver, and the Hebrews considered the **"bowels"** as the seat of the more tender affections of kindness, benevolence and compassion. These affections are not automatic upon spiritual rebirth, but they must be **"put on"** as a Christian would put on new clothes that are fresh and clean. When you clean the inside, the outside will match, because what's on the inside will come outwardly in your speech and behavior. The putting off of the old man is likened to the removal of old, dirty clothing, and the putting on of the new man is likened to putting on clean, fresh clothing. We need to make a conscious effort to make changes in our character: being compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, patient, bearing with one another, forgiving, loving, and thankful.

Forbear And Forgive

3:13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as

¹⁸ <http://www.bridgewaybiblechurch.com/index.php/sermons/79-colossians-verse-by-verse-expository-sermons>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

TERMS:

- **Forbearing one another:** put up with things we dislike and get along with those who disagree. Christians can disagree without being disagreeable.
- **Forgiving one another:** the word forgiving (*Gr. charizoman*) is built on the same root as the word grace and means to bestow favor unconditionally. This means that the Christian will always treat the offending party graciously. The Christian not only forgives, he forgets.
- **Quarrel:** a cause of blame, a ground for complaint. He thinks himself angry.

The key to forgiving others is remembering how much God has forgiven you. Realizing God's infinite love and forgiveness can help you love and forgive others. We are to imitate Christ's merciful, forgiving spirit.

Put On Love

3:14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. If these are merely things that we are trying to follow without being saved, then they are just outward expressions of a written commandment, and so Colossians 3:13 just becomes another law list to follow in the lost flesh. They appear like the real clothing, but they are fakes. But, for us who have put on the new man in the Spirit, to put these things on in Christ is to put on Him, and so the key to what Paul is saying is that what ties all this together is the main outer robe, that is like the layers of clothing that people would wear in the time of Paul. You would have your undergarments, and over them you would have your tunic; and you would have your main outer robe that brings it all together and covers it all. On top of these things, like an outer garment, put on charity, love. Love is the basis and cloak of all the graces. The bond that binds the others together; the bond of perfection, meaning completeness; full grown and mature. The love of Christ is that beautiful outer robe that covers all the other manifestations, and brings it all together. This kind of love is not an emotion. This is action love of commitment, and caring that is stronger than emotions. In fact, it keeps on going even when emotions die or change.

¹⁹The Law of Christ of the New Covenant is love. So, the point is that though we can do all the other things, the outer love garment must be there as part of the complete outfit. We can even piously speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but if we do so, and do not have love, we are just noisy instruments making loud sounds. Even if we have the gift of prophecy, without love, we are nothing. Even if we have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, we are nothing. Even if you give all your possessions to feed the poor in a religious act, and if you surrender your body to be burned in a religious act, but do not have love, it profits you nothing (*1 Corinthians 13*). Listen, being able to do a list of religious or nice looking things does not make you manifest the King. Doing things that look like love, does not mean you are doing the love itself. It looks like you are on the throne. You think you look good, but the reality is that the emperor has no clothes. **The big point** with this principle is that without real, Holy Spirit love, then, you are just an actor, and acting is what anyone can do.

Peace Will Rule

3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. The Christian who has the love of God ruling in his life also has the peace of God ruling in his heart. Do problems in your relationships with other Christians cause open conflicts or mutual silence? Consider what you can do to heal those relationships with selfless acts of love. Then the "**peace of God will rule in your heart.**" The word "**rule**" comes from "**athletics.**" Paul tells us to let Christ's peace be "**umpire**" in our hearts. Our hearts are the center of conflict because there our feelings and desires that 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?

¹⁹ <http://www.bridgewaybiblechurch.com/index.php/sermons/79-colossians-verse-by-verse-expository-sermons>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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Paul explains that we must decide which choice will promote peace in our souls and in our churches (conflicting elements or peace)? We are to demonstrate the heart-peace which Christ demonstrated. It is a tranquility of soul which is not ruffled by adversity nor disturbed by fear. There is so much to thank God for concerning the riches of Christ. God wants us to be just as thankful for the people around us in the body of Christ. The Spirit wants us to recognize the Spirit in them too.

Dwell In God's Word

3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. Paul exhorts the Colossians to allow "*the word of Christ*" to dwell in them abundantly in teaching everyone (i.e., all individually) wisdom and admonishing each other in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in their hearts. The "*word of Christ*" is the manifestation of Christ, who is the Living Word. The word "*dwell*" means to feel at home. The Word of Christ is to feel at home in believers. We are to allow, "*Let*" the Word of Christ saturate us and remain in us as a rich treasure. This Word is to be the living truth giving us wisdom and not man-made traditions. This Word is used in teaching and admonishing one another in:

- **Psalms** are songs from the book of Psalms.
- **Hymns** are other songs of praise, and
- **Spiritual songs** are other songs that affect your spirit by faith.

The Psalms are repeated in the New Testament at least 116 times. The Psalms were filled with Messianic prophecies that declared the reality of the Messiah that was to come, and now has arrived, has given His life, raised from the dead, and now sits at the right hand of the Father as King of kings and Lord of lords. To sing these, is to sing Scripture to one another. They can be personal testimony songs where the body sings about victories, desires, fulfillment, salvation, and hope in Christ. Spiritual songs by implication are not carnal. They come from the Spirit and the Word in our hearts. Together, we give thanks to our great and glorious God. We do all of this as the one body, operating the way we should--connected--in unity—and focused.

Do In The Name Of Jesus Christ

3:17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Paul sums up the point by telling the Colossians that whatever they speak or do, they should do it in the name of the Lord Jesus. This means that every word and act of a Christian should be said or done in the power and authority of Jesus Christ. When a Christian speaks or acts in the name of Jesus Christ, this means that Jesus Christ would have said the same thing or acted in the same manner. The more a Christian speaks and acts in the name of Jesus Christ, the more he is conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. This is losing one's soul or life for the sake of or on account of Jesus Christ, and will result in the salvation of one's soul at the Judgment Seat of Christ. This Christian does not speak and act in accordance with his flesh nature, but he speaks and acts in accordance with the Holy Spirit and the nature of Christ.

3:18-21 Wives are to submit to their own husbands.²⁰Selfishness will bring division and conflict in the home. The word submission comes from the military meaning to arrange under rank (**3:18**). It doesn't mean that one is necessarily better than the other but only means they have different rank. A husband must love his wife and not be harsh or resentful toward her (**3:19**). He is to also have the responsibility of headship and leadership in the home. This is to be carried out with a sacrificing and serving love and not any bitterness." (Heb. 12:15). Children obeying their parents are doing what is right (Ephesians 6:1). Here we see obedience to parents is to be "in all

²⁰ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/colossians-318/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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things” and the reason is to please the Lord (3:20). The word “fathers” (3:21) could be translated “parents.” Parents are to encourage their children and not discourage them. This means parents need to take time to listen to their children, pray with them, help them develop their skills and in making the home the happiest and best place on earth.

3:22-25 Paul had given instruction of being servants (workman) to their masters. ²¹In the early church slavery was an established institution and the Christian owed complete obedience to his master. In fact, servants were to strive to do a better job because they were Christians (3:22). At least half of the people were slaves. Servants were to obey and please God, not just to avoid punishment. Even if their master didn't commend them they knew that their reward would come from the Lord. A Christian worker ought to be the best worker on the job. “Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord” (3:23). We can be sure that we “will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward” (3:24). But Christ has no favorites! He will punish evil people, just as they deserve (3:25). There is to be no partiality, no matter what a person's position may be, whether he is the slave or the master.

SUMMARY:

Paul had been telling the Colossians that man-made religion appears very wise, but has no value against fleshly indulgence. If they were risen with Christ, then seek the things above where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Then set their affections on things above not things on earth. Paul says that we have already died with Christ and that's where their lives are hidden with Christ in God. This is where our real lives are lived—through Him. When Christ appears then they will appear with Him in glory. Paul tells the Colossians to “mortify” or put to death the “members” (those animal impulses that are earthly) in them; the old flesh nature. It is because of these things that come from the old flesh nature that the wrath of God will come upon the children of disobedience., for they used to walk in immoral and greedy, lustful and impure ways, but now have put them off. And don't lie to one another because they've put off the old man. Continue to renew that new man in knowledge after Him who created you. As a Christian becomes conformed to the image of Christ, all distinctions (differences) disappear (3:1-11).

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

1. Imitate Christ's merciful forgiving spirit (3:12-13).
2. Let love guide you (3:14).
3. Let the peace of Christ 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. Do everything as though you were Jesus Christ's representative (3:17).

The passages are very clear. We *"can only do all things through Christ Jesus which strengthens us"* Phil.4:13.

APPLICATION:

What impression do people have of Christ when they see or talk with you? It is impossible to obey God if you're playing the part of the Christian Lone Ranger. You know the kind: *"I've been hurt in church, betrayed by believers."* Love is the key to it all. We need the fellowship of other Christians. We can all learn from each other, and should never miss the opportunity to learn from another believer.

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²¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/colossians-322/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

4:1 MASTER, give unto your servants that which is just and equal: knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven. Now Paul turns around and instructs the masters. ²²Paul is reminding these masters that they have a Master up in heaven, who is watching the way they deal with their subordinates here. To have a really good servant, you must be a good, honest master. Give them a job to do, and when they have done a good job, let them know that you are pleased with them. The way we measure to the people here on the earth is the same way God will measure to us in heaven. We should never take advantage of someone, just because they are working for us. Masters and servants are brothers, if they are both believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. God is not a respecter of persons. We are all one in Christ. Whatever position you are filling here on the earth, do it to the best of your ability. Be kind to all people, and especially those you are over.

4:2 Continue In prayer, and watch In the same with thanksgiving;— These passages will cover two of the most important subjects for the believer—that of his prayer life and his witness. Paul gives this instruction that the Christians, whether slaves or masters must persist in prayer.

- 1. First, continue steadfastly in prayer.** The word "**continue**" (*proskartereite*), means to be constant, persevering, and unwearied in prayer. "**Steadfastly**" means consistent with conviction; unfaltering; firm and steady. It means to be in constant and unbroken fellowship and communion with God. It means to never face a moment when we are not in prayer. How is this possible? It means to:
 - develop an attitude of prayer
 - walk in a spirit of prayer
 - take a mental break from our work
 - and spend a moment in prayer
 - pray always when our minds are not upon some duty
 - arise early and pray before daily activities begin
 - pray before going to bed

Although there are many things that compete for our time, we are to make all of these a continual practice. If we would learn to captivate useless daydreaming and wandering thoughts to use as minutes for prayer; communing with God, we would discover what it is to walk and live in prayer. We are the ones who have to discipline ourselves to pray. If we do not pray, then prayer never gets done. The scripture says:

- *"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalted itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" 2Cor.10:5.*
- *"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" Matt.7:7.*
- *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" Phil.4:6.*
- *"Confess [your] faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" Jam.5:16.*

- 2. Second, watch in prayer.** The word "**watch**" (*gregorountes*) means to stay awake, be alert, be sleepless, be active, concentrate. It means to fight against distractions, drowsiness, sluggishness, wandering thoughts, and useless daydreaming. It means to discipline our minds and control our thoughts as we pray. We are responsible for watching and concentrating. We continue to remain alert and sensitive when situations arise in our lives and then we take those concerns to the Lord.
- 3. Third, pray with thanksgiving.** When someone does something for us, we thank that person. The One Person who has done more for us than anyone else is God. His hand is constantly upon our lives,

²² <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/colossians/06.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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looking after and caring for us, therefore, we continually thank Him. Throughout the day, praise should be lifted up to Him as we go about our daily affairs. We should never forget His Son—that He actually took our sins upon Himself and bore the judgment and punishment of them for us. This alone should continually fill our hearts with thanksgiving and praise in our prayers. *"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" 1Cor. 15:57.* Prayers are prayed to the Father in the name of Jesus.

Our prayer life is to be constant and steady, not casual fellowship with the Master. We are to watch, being sensitive to His Will as we give Him thanks for all He has already done and is about to do.

4:3 Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:— *"Withal"* means at the same time. There was Paul and others who needed prayer.

4. **Fourth, pray for others**, in particular for their ministry. Be an intercessor for God's ministers. Remember Paul was in prison, but he had also requested prayer. Paul could have asked that the church pray for his release, for a not guilty verdict in his upcoming trial (he was not guilty), or for a peaceful end to his life. But this is not what he requested. He requested prayer for his ministry. He wanted the believers praying that God would give him: opportunities for witnessing—for sharing the mystery or salvation of Christ, and to witness boldly.

As Paul ministered to others, he also needed prayer. God has established the spiritual law that He works in response to prayer. Whether we believe it or not, God clearly says that prayer is a law of the universe. Prayer is the law by which He works and moves in behalf of men and their world. Therefore, if we want the blessings of God upon our lives and ministries; if we want the work of God going forth in power and bearing fruit, we must pray for the ministers of the gospel. We must intercede in prayer.

Only God can open the right door—a door for the Word, not the door of the prison. *"The mystery of Christ"* is the Gospel of Jesus Christ revealed at the proper time. It revealed that salvation is offered to the Gentiles as well as the Jews (Eph.3:2-6). It was a mystery to them that had not heard the truth. God is able to open that person's heart to receive the gospel at the right time. Paul being in bonds or chains really didn't stop him.

- Some of Caesar's household was saved.
- Paul, also, preached in the home where he was under house arrest.

²³Paul was in bonds, because he would not compromise the Word of God. Wherever you are, God will open a door for you to minister. Are you willing if there is just one person there?

4:4 That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. There was a burning desire to speak the Word that even a child could understand it. It was real in him and therefore, he wanted it to be real in others, that they could not say that they didn't understand it. As the power of the Holy Spirit spoke through Paul, it had clear and free utterance. There might have been some that wanted to hinder his speech, but they could not. As the saints pray, he would speak with boldness as he ought, and God would have His way.

4:5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Note three significant points:

1. **Believers** are to walk in wisdom, meaning walk wisely, meaning;
 - that we walk thoughtfully, figuring out how to live for Christ before the world.
 - that we walk righteously and godly.
 - that we walk guarding every step.
 - that we walk doing good works.

Believers are to be wise in how they act toward outsiders or unbelievers, which comes to our next point.

²³ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/colossians/06.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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2. **Unbelievers** need your witness. The phrase *"them that are without"* refers to the unbelievers of the world, those walking through life without Christ and God.
- without hope beyond this life. • without assurance of life hereafter with God. • without peace.
 - without help in facing the trials and traumas of this life. • without God's care and deliverance.
 - without security. • without fellowship with God and His family of believers. • without freedom from guilt—no assurance of forgiveness of sins. • without light—no freedom from the darkness of death and the grave.

Scripture (Eph.2:12-13) paints a sharp contrast between unbelievers who are without Christ and believers who are within Christ. We might resent unbelievers for their ungodly lifestyle, and have as little to do with them as possible, but God loves the lost and so must His children who have His nature. Jesus braved criticism in order to relate to outcasts and sinners. It becomes very important how we relate to them, if we think about their souls.

3. Believers are to redeem the time. That means make the most of every opportunity; seek to grasp every moment to live for Christ, looking for opportunities to bear witness especially by the way we live. Live every moment for Christ in our behavior and our speech to witness. *"The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few" Matt.9:37.*

There is the price of self-denial and strenuous work to be paid as we use the time allotted to us.

4:6 Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man. How we talk with unbelievers is important, for that is one of the main ways they will see Christ in us. One of the secrets of Jesus' success with people was that they knew almost instantly how much he valued and loved them in spite of their failings. Christ was full of grace and truth.

- **Let your speech be always with grace**— we must do it in love and gentleness. Be pleasant and hold their interest when you speak the message with kindness, courtesy, and graciousness.
- **Let your conversation be seasoned with salt**— our conversation is to be exciting, enjoyable, and drawing the unbeliever to Christ. That's what flavor does, it gets the senses palate; the appetite excited for more of your witness. Instead of turning from you, they would be turning toward you being thirsty and hungry for more of God's Word. They will begin to reach out for this Jesus you're talking about because you know how to answer every man as you ought! It is the power of the Holy Spirit who gives you the utterance and the power of the Holy Spirit who draws them as seen in your life.

SUMMARY:

Paul turns around and instruct the masters that are over servants. Pray diligently. Stay alert, with your eyes wide open in gratitude. Don't forget to pray for us, that God will open doors for telling the mystery of Christ, even while I'm locked up in this jail. Pray that every time I open my mouth I'll be able to make Christ plain as day to them. Use your heads as you live and work among outsiders. Don't miss a trick. Make the most of every opportunity. Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put them down, not cut them out (4:1-6). —The Message Bible.

APPLICATION:

As Paul has given the spiritual disciplines for new life in Christ, it gives us opportunities to act accordingly. The task of acting as a mentor to someone is best supported through prayer and cautious speech.

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