



# Colossians

## Complete in Christ

Sample Lesson #1  
and  
Leader's Guide Answers

# The Life-Changing Gospel

*Read—Colossians 1:1–12; other references as given.*

What would happen if you gave your entire life to Jesus Christ? What extraordinary things would God do in you and through you? Evangelist Dwight Moody (1837–1899) said, “The world has yet to see what God would do through a man who was completely surrendered to Him.” What if that person was you?

The book of Colossians teaches Christians why we should give our entire lives to Jesus Christ and what our lives would look like when we do. Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, teaches us in only four short chapters how we can give Christ His rightful place in our lives. Only four chapters, but four chapters that could change your life forever!

In the first lesson Paul affirms his love for the Colossian believers and expresses his desire for their spiritual growth. He emphasizes the fact that the gospel—the truth that changed their lives—continues to change lives throughout the world. His point? The gospel of Jesus Christ is enough for all believers, for all the world, for all time. Adding to God’s Word doesn’t strengthen it. It distorts the truth and leads believers into error.

Now ask God to reveal Himself to you through His Word and conform you into the image of Jesus Christ.

1. Paul introduced himself as **an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God** (Colossians 1:1). He included Timothy, missionary companion and spiritual brother, in his initial greeting to the church. What words are used to describe the Colossian Christians (Colossians 1:2)?
  
2. When the word *saint* is applied to the New Testament believer, it signifies our dual calling to salvation and sanctification (1 Corinthians 1:2). Alexander MacLean, a famous Scottish preacher, said, “Saints are not an eminent sort of Christian, but all Christians are saints, and he who is not a saint is not a Christian.” What are some other words the Bible uses to describe the believer’s relationship to God (John 1:12; Galatians 4:5, 7; 1 Peter 2:9)?
  1. \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_).
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_).
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_).
  4. \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_).
  5. \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_).
  6. \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_).
  7. \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_).
  
3. a. Paul often expressed thankfulness for other believers (Romans 1:8; 1 Corinthians 1:4; Philippians 1:3). What specific spiritual qualities was he particularly thankful for in the lives of the Colossian believers (Colossians 1:3–4)?
  - b. Name two things Paul did to express his gratitude for the Colossians:
    1. \_\_\_\_\_.
    2. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. In what ways have you *recently* expressed your appreciation and gratitude for another Christian?
  
4. a. The Colossian church had a love for **all the saints** (Colossians 1:4). The remarkable frequency of the word **all** (28 times in only 95 verses) is more than coincidence. It emphasizes an important truth. Please list the remaining phrases that include the word **all** and their corresponding verse references in Colossians 1.

- b. What important spiritual truth *do you think* is being taught by the frequent use of the word **all** when it is linked together with the other terms?
5. The Christian traits of faith, love, and hope form a familiar triad (trio) in Scripture (Romans 5:2–5; 1 Corinthians 13:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 5:8). In these passages, hope is coordinated with faith and love, but in Colossians 1:4–5 hope represents the source from which faith and love spring. What *do you think* is meant by the phrase **the hope which is laid up for you in heaven** (Colossians 1:5)?
6. a. What was Paul referring to in Colossians 1:6 when he said, **which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit**?
- b. The phrase, **which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and is bringing forth fruit**, has profound theological implications, especially in the area of world missions. What *do you think* this important phrase teaches about the spread of the gospel (the good news of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone) throughout the world?
7. a. Bible scholars believe God used Epaphras to start the church at Colossae (Colossians 1:7; note: Epaphras is a shortened form of Epaphroditus, but this man should not be identified with the man by the same name in Philippians 2:25 and 4:18). Paul was obviously impressed with Epaphras’s spiritual character. How did Paul describe this man (Colossians 1:7)?
- b. Sometimes we view the biblical characters as otherworldly—people we read about, but whose lives could never be replicated. The truth is, however, that they were ordinary people who simply surrendered their lives to Christ and allowed Him to work through them for God’s glory. What aspects of your life would you need to surrender more fully to Christ to become a **dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ**?
8. Paul thanked God for the Colossian Christians (Colossians 1:3) and then offered a specific request on their behalf. What was it (Colossians 1:9)?
9. Some Christians are uncertain what God wants from their lives (God’s will). They appear to wander aimlessly in their Christian lives, unsure how they can serve God. List four specific things God desires every Christian to do to fulfill His will (Colossians 1:10–12).

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_).
2. \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_).
3. \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_).
4. \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_).

## 1: The Life-Changing Gospel

1. Saints and faithful brethren (brothers) in Christ.
2. 1. Children of God (John 1:12). 2. Sons (Galatians 4:5). 3. Heirs (Galatians 4:7). 4. A chosen generation (1 Peter 2:9). 5. A royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9). 6. A holy nation (1 Peter 2:9). 7. A special people (1 Peter 2:9).
3.
  - a. He was thankful for their faith in Christ and their love for other Christians.
  - b.
    1. He prayed for them regularly (Colossians 1:3).
    2. He told them he was grateful for the letter.
  - c. Answers will vary.
4.
  - a.
    1. All the world (Colossians 1:6). 2. All wisdom (Colossians 1:9). 3. All might (Colossians 1:11). 4. All patience and longsuffering (Colossians 1:11). 5. All creation (Colossians 1:15). 6. All things (Colossians 1:16–18, five times). 7. All fullness (Colossians 1:19). 8. All things (Colossians 1:20). 9. All wisdom (Colossians 1:28).
  - b. The remarkable frequency of the word *all* emphasizes the universality of the plan of God in this world. It refutes the Colossian errorists' claim of secret, special enlightenment that trapped their naive followers into an addictive spiritual bondage. There is a powerful spiritual lesson for believers of all ages—God's truth is universal, and He gives spiritual understanding to all who come to Him in faith.
5. Hope is viewed as a treasure that is being accumulated in heaven. This hope is credited to a specific account (**for you**) and the place of that deposit is **heaven**. Interestingly, a clear perspective of eternity (the believer's hope) affects our attitude toward present circumstances. In Scripture hope is not an uncertain belief in a future event (as in "I hope this happens") but a settled reality yet to be realized. There is no uncertainty regarding future fulfillment. Thus the future can be said to determine the present, for what is reserved in heaven for the believer now exercises a decisive influence upon his present conduct.
6.
  - a. The word of the truth which is the gospel (Colossians 1:5).
  - b. The Greek construction of this phrase reveals that the Word of God goes forth in and of itself bearing fruit. This means that while it is incumbent upon Christians to spread the Good News because of the command of the Lord Jesus (Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:15), the gospel also goes forth throughout the world to reach the lost. Believers should spread the message of Christ's salvation to the lost, but they must also realize that a person's salvation is the result of a sovereign God's work in and on behalf of the sinner.
7.
  - a. As a dear fellow servant and a faithful minister of Christ.
  - b. Answers will vary.
8. He prayed that they would be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding.
9.
  1. They should bear fruit in everything they do (Colossians 1:10).
  2. They should learn God's Word (Colossians 1:10).
  3. They should allow God's grace to strengthen them for every spiritual task (Colossians 1:11).
  4. They should conduct their various duties in life with an attitude of grateful praise to God the Father (Colossians 1:12).