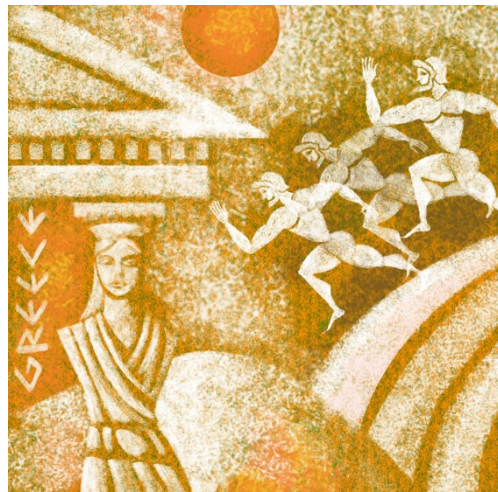


# COLOSSIANS

*Κολοσσαεύς*



## Calvary Bible Church Colossians 1:1-14 Study Guide

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Wednesday Night Discussion Groups  
Tim & Melinda Inman  
Nov. 10-Dec. 8, 2010  
Thanksgiving Break: Nov. 24, 2010

# The Inductive Method

## Observation

What does the text say?

### Overview

Establish Context by determining Historical Background

Where does it fit in the Bible timeline?

**Ask: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How?**

Make simple lists of people, places, and events mentioned in the text

Make simple lists of key words that are used throughout large portions of the entire book

Determine Book and Chapter Themes

Mark questions to return to later for future study

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## Chapter Studies

**Ask: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How?**

Make more thorough lists of people, places and events

Make more thorough lists of Key Words in chapter or section

Ignore chapter divisions when the theme is carried forward

Mark Contrasts, Comparisons, Expressions of Time, Terms of Conclusion

**Beginning of Interpretation:** Tie this all together by examining text verse by verse

Outline or complete Structural Analysis to break down difficult text

Examine meanings of Key Words as you study verse by verse

Meditate on text to determine paragraph themes

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## Interpretation

What does the text mean in correct context?

What principles do I see that tie to other sections of scripture?

Complete Cross References of those passages of scripture

Complete examination of Key Words: meaning, tense, voice

Notice and examine meaning of verbs & descriptive adjectives

Note commands and warnings

Consult commentaries after completing your own study

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## Application

Based on correct interpretation of the text:

What must I do?

How can I apply this truth to my life?

How does this affect me?

How does this better knowledge of God change me?

Meditate on scripture and Memorize important, applicable passages of scripture

## What do I see? What does it *mean*? How does this *change* me?

### Digging in: Observing, Interpreting & Applying the Text

**Read and study prayerfully each day.** “Prayer is really a key to effective Bible study. Learn to pray before, during, and after your reading of the Scriptures. Prayer is especially crucial when you come to a place in your study where you are stuck and confused.”<sup>1</sup>

**The Text:** Everyone studies in their own unique way; therefore, there are several studies options available to you regarding the text of Colossians 1:1-14.

- (1) If you prefer to work from one marked copy, remove the working copy at the end of the Overview material, place it in a three-ring binder, and use it for our entire study of Colossians.
- (2) If you don’t like the above option, the text will be printed throughout this material; therefore, you can use this Study Guide alone. The entire first chapter of Colossians is printed at the back to help you set this particular section within the entire chapter.
- (3) Or, use your own bible and simply refer to this material for your study suggestions.

**We will now focus in and observe Colossians 1:1-14 carefully and thoroughly.**

**The importance of careful, thorough Observation continues:**

“The more time you spend in **observation**, the less time you will need to spend in interpretation, and the more accurate will be your results. The less time you spend in observation, the more time you will need to spend in interpretation, and the less accurate will be your results.”<sup>2</sup>

To observe the text thoroughly ask **who, what, when, where, why**, and **how** of the text. Always look for the obvious. Slow down to see what is actually there in the text, not what you *think* is there. Repeated, significant words and phrases, which are crucial to understanding the text, are always important. A key word or phrase is one that is vital to what the author is attempting to communicate. These essential words unlock the meaning of the text.

**What words or phrases are significant in this particular section?**

As you read through the book and completed the Overview you will have noted that, in addition to the words that are significant in the entire book, there are key, significant words specific to each chapter or section. **On the next page you will find Colossians 1:1-14 in two different translations. Follow the directions on the facing page (pg. 5) to guide you through your initial observations of this section.**

**As always, use any study suggestions that help you; and, skip those that don’t.**

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<sup>1</sup> Howard G. & William D. Hendricks, *Living by the Book*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007), 100.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 43.

**Read the text in at least two different translations:**

**Colossians 1:1-14 (NIV)**

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

**2**To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

**3**We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **4**because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— **5**the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel **6**that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. **7**You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, **8**and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

**9**For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.

**10**And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, **11**being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully

**12**giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. **13**For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, **14**in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**Colossians 1:1-14 (ESV)**

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

**2** To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

**3** We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **4** since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, **5** because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, **6** which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and growing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, **7** just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf **8** and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

**9** And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **10** so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God. **11** May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, **12** giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. **13** He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

## Week One: Nov. 10-17, 2010—Read the instructions on pg. 3, then...

Focus on this: What do I see? (We'll worry about what it *means* later.)

1. **Read Colossians 1:1-14 on the facing page. Read it in each translation.** Reading a text in more than one translation helps us to comprehend meaning, and reveals new things to us because we see the same thought stated in a new way. **Read thoughtfully. Read contemplatively.** Read like you've never read it before. **Use the margins to write down observations and questions so you can investigate them later. Mark it up.**
2. **Flip to the back of this Study Guide (pg. 20-21) and read the entire first chapter of Colossians in order to set our text within the chapter.**
3. **Read through Colossians 1:1-14 thoughtfully one more time.** Determine what the key words and phrases are for this particular section. If you're using the working copy from the Overview, you will see the words you already marked in the Overview—those that were crucial to interpreting the entire book. Now focus in on the significant words in this section. A key word or phrase is one that is crucial to understanding the meaning of the text. **With a pencil, lightly circle the words you think are "key" to understanding this section.**
4. **Pay attention to what the text says about the people** you marked when you completed the Overview. Make additional notes in the margin about them. **Do you notice anything new that you missed before?**
5. **Notice things you want to study in greater detail later and make a note in the margin.**
6. (See the information on outlining, pg. 12, and make an outline if you'd like.)

**Examine the text and think about these questions. Meditate on these things this week:**

- **Why** is Paul an apostle? **What** does the text say? [Consider, what is God's will for *your* life as part of Christ's body on the earth? What big plans might he have for you?]
- When we studied Philemon **where** did we discover that Paul was as he wrote this letter? **Who** is with him as he wrote (recall *Philemon* study and examine Col. 1:1-14 and 4:7-14)?
- **How** did the members of the church of Colossae hear the gospel and become believers?
- **Where** was Epaphras as Paul and Timothy wrote? Re-read Philemon (at the end of this study guide, pg. 21, if you don't remember) to find out.
- **What** were these men engaged in doing there together? **What** does Col. 1:1-14 say?
- **Is** this what you would be doing if you were in prison for the sake of the gospel?
- **How** do Paul and Timothy describe the Colossians in this section? [Is this the type of report *you* give of others? Would this type of report be given of you?]
- **How** do they know this? **Who** told them? **Had** they ever met the Colossians (remember your Overview or use a concordance to look up *Colossae*)?
- **Where** do faith and love come from, according to verses 4 & 5?
- **What** does the gospel do? **What** is the result, according to verses 5-6a?
- **However, what** must happen before this can occur? **What** does the end of verse 6 say?
- **What** are the specific things Paul and Timothy pray for to occur in the lives of the Colossians? **How** often do they pray? [Do you pray for anyone like that?]
- **What** did God the Father do for them (and for us) according to this passage?
- **How** do they (and we) have redemption, the forgiveness of sins? **In whom?**

**Week Two: Read carefully, remembering your meditations from the first week.**

## **Colossians 1:1-14 (NIV)**

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

**2**To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

**3**We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **4**because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— **5**the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel **6**that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. **7**You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, **8**and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

**9**For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. **10**And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, **11**being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully **12**giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. **13**For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, **14**in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**After this follows the beautiful, glorious, poetic description of who Christ is, which we will begin to study in three weeks. Before moving forward in your study of Colossians 1:1-14, in order to keep Paul's praise of what God did through Christ Jesus in context, flip to the back (pg. 20-21)(or use your working copy) and read Colossians 1:15-23.**

## Week Two: Nov. 17-Dec. 1, 2010 (We will not meet on Nov. 24)

**What do I see (observation)? What does it *mean* (interpretation)?  
How does this *change* me (application)?**

### Day One: What we'll be doing and why?

We will now complete some marking in the text that will help us to pull together all the observations we made during the first week. **We want to mark the key words to help us see them more clearly and to see how each use of that particular word is connected to the other uses.** Use **color** or **pencil** or **ink**, whichever you prefer. Mark each key word with a unique mark for that particular word (a different color for each key word, or a different way of circling it, or drawing a box around it, or any other creative mark you want to use for each particular word). **The purpose of marking is to help us see what's there.**

**(1)** If you are using the working copy you used to complete your Overview, you will see that some of these words are marked already—words that are significant for the entire letter. **(2)** If you're not using the working copy, use the text on the facing page (pg. 6), or **(3)** complete this exercise in your own bible. Or do any combination of the three; it's entirely up to you.

**Mark any of these words you see in the text with unique markings for each one:**

**God**

**Jesus**

**Holy Spirit**

**Author** (including pronouns [we, I], Paul and Timothy)

**Recipients** (words that refer to the Colossians, including pronouns [you, your])

**Other people** (individuals, such as Epaphras)

**Key/Significant Words observed and marked during the Overview** (refer to the Overview material, if needed)

**Other Significant Words which are crucial for understanding Col. 1:1-14**

### **So what other words are significant and crucial?**

Re-assess the words you circled the first week (look at your copy on pg. 4). Then consider the questions you answered and meditated on from pg. 5. What words that pertained to answering those questions are crucial to understanding the text and to answering the meditation questions? What words, if you removed them from the text, would remove the meaning or intent of the passage? Were your initial assessments of what the key words were correct? If not, adjust. **Mark the words you now understand to be crucial—the words that have definitions you *must* know in order to understand the text. This is perhaps a good place to stop for the day. Unless you have the time to continue through the following steps of interpretation today, continue tomorrow.**

**Day Two: Okay, the key words are marked. Now what? Read the passage again and then...**

**Make a list of all you observe about each Key Word:**

In your notebook, or the margin of your working copy or bible, or the margin of pg. 6, **make a thorough list** of everything you observe about each of these key words, along with the verse reference. Some lists can be noted by numbering right into the text, such as lists of qualities or attributes. Question the text in order to slow you down to observe the important facts surrounding each key word or phrase. Ask: **who, what, when, where, why** and **how**.

**Why are we doing this?** Completing this exercise causes us to slow down and really *think* about the meaning of the text and how it applies to us, as well as to the Colossians. **Below is a “key word observation list” about prayer (and the associated synonyms—pray, giving thanks, etc.).** Inside the parentheses, in a different font, as sub-points under the main points, are written my own reflections or inner thoughts as I recorded each bit of information. In my own study of this section, I might write down these thoughts, or I might just meditate on them.

**As always, use any study suggestions that help you; and, skip those that don’t.**

**An example of a key word observation list: “prayer” (and synonyms)**

- **1:3, Paul and Timothy *always thank God, when they pray* for the Colossians.**
  - (This tells me that the Colossians are doing a lot right; there is *always* something for Paul and Timothy to be thankful for concerning them. Is this true of me? Is this true of our church?)
- **1:3-4, Paul and Timothy *pray* for the Colossians because they have heard of their faith in Christ Jesus and their love for all the saints.**
  - (I pause to consider—you pray for believers in a different way than you pray for unbelievers. I know the passage will reveal to me a significant way to pray for *believers*. I also wonder if someone would consider these two qualities of faith and love for all the saints to be true of me if they only heard someone else's description of me and had never met me in person. Would someone say this about me?)
- **1:9, Paul and Timothy *have not stopped praying* for them since the day they heard about the Colossian church.**
  - (Immediately I think to myself, do I pray for *anyone* with this seriousness of purpose? Can I honestly say that I have *not stopped praying* for a particular person or group of persons?)
- **1:9, Paul and Timothy *are praying and asking* God to fill the Colossians with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding.**
  - (Immediately I recognize that I will need to think about what this means further, and will need to look up some word meanings. This is significant.)

- **1:10, Paul and Timothy submit their *prayer* to God in order that the Colossians may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way** (I think: the list of the ways to please the Lord follows. I will make a separate list of "how one may please the Lord," or number it into the text).
  - (That Paul and Timothy pray this for the Colossians informs me that they clearly believe that their prayer will be heard by *God* and that a result will be produced in the lives of the *Colossians*—this is their expectation. Do *I* pray with such faith and expectation? They expect the result to be the *changed lives* of the *Colossians*, so they're pleasing to the Lord. Is that what I expect when I pray for someone? How does one live a life worthy of the Lord? How can I (like them) please him in *every way*? I need to make a separate list of what one does, or how one lives in such a way so as to please the Lord. Or, I will mark this list with numbers right into the text.)
- **1:12, Part of the list of what is pleasing to the Lord is *joyfully giving thanks* to the Father because of what he has done.** (What exactly has he done? It's right there in the text. I decide to number it.)



**Not all key words require a written list. Some can be marked right into the text. Example:**

**12**giving thanks to the Father, <sup>#1</sup> who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. **13**For <sup>#2</sup> he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and <sup>#3</sup> brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, **14**in whom <sup>#4</sup> we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**The purpose of the above exercise is to slow you down and cause you to really *think* about what the text says and how it applies to you. Today, complete these types of complete and contemplative lists for each of the key words in Col. 1:1-14. Try to ponder on what you're learning. Ask yourself the same type of questions as in the example above.**

**Tomorrow, continue on to the next exercise.**

## Colossians 1:1-14 (NIV)

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

**2**To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

**3**We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **4**because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— **5**the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel **6**that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. **7**You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, **8**and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

**9**For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. **10**And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, **11**being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully **12**giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. **13**For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, **14**in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

## Day Three: What now? How do I tie all of these ideas together?

**Mark Grammatical Phrases:** This exercise will help you see how the main ideas of this section tie together. Note these with marks in the working copy or in the copy of Colossians on the facing page.

- Mark **words of contrast** (*but, however, nevertheless, or, neither, nor, not only, etc.*) with a lightning bolt mark above the word (or any mark you choose that you feel shows contrast). **Are there any contrasts in this particular passage of Colossians?**


- Mark **words of comparison** (*like, likewise, also, in addition, as, in the same way, furthermore, just as, etc.*) with an = sign or arrow (or any mark you choose). What things are similar? What is the same? In the margin of your working copy, write what is being compared. **For example:**



v.6—All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing

JUST AS

it has been doing among you since the day you heard it  
and understood God's grace in all its truth.

-  Draw a little clock face (or another mark you choose) above words showing **expressions of time** (*then, when, after, until, at that time, the day, etc.*). **Why are these words or phrases important? Does Paul mention anything pertaining to time here?**

- Mark with an "x" words that show **conclusions or an end result** (*therefore, so that, for this reason, in order that, because, since, consequently, etc.*) and **draw arrows** to connect the linked ideas. **Ask yourself, "What is the "therefore" there for?" What is the author trying to show or prove? What is the conclusion or result that he is emphasizing? For example:**

  
And we pray this **in order that** you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him...

- Mark **commands** in a way which draws the eye, such as highlighting, in order to ponder on these: they clarify the purpose of the letter. They are the forceful statements. There are no commands in Col. 1:1-14.
- The New Testament was written in Koine Greek. Due to Greek word formation and syntax, some things would be obvious in the original Greek that are not obvious in English.

- In the Greek, these words express continuous, habitual action. Mark like this ( ~ ):



- 1:3, "pray"
- 1:5, "stored up"
- 1:6, "has come," "is bearing fruit"
- 1:9, "have not stopped praying for you"
- 1:9, "asking God"
- 1:10, "bearing fruit," "growing"
- 1:11, "being strengthened"
- 1:12, "giving thanks"

- ➔ ○ One word expresses action that was completed in the past, but which has an ongoing or continual result. Mark like this ( → ):
  - 1:13, "rescued"

As you completed this exercise, what was revealed about the passage? **Write down anything you discover that you hadn't seen in the text before. Continue tomorrow.**

**Day Four: Put this all together and take the time to think about it. Do whatever you can to slow down and observe the text thoroughly, verse by verse, breaking it down in any way that helps you understand. What works best will vary from person to person, according to how God designed each particular person to study, comprehend, and retain information.**

### **OPTIONAL: Make an Outline**

**Consider making an outline of the book at this point:** Some people find that making an outline opens the text up for them. A simple outline could be made at this point if this is something you find beneficial. **Skip it if this doesn't help you.**

➤ **Complete a word-for-word outline of each section.** If you are the type of person who benefits from this type of structural work, prepare this initial outline skeleton by filling in the theme of the entire book with a theme for paragraph as Roman numerals under the theme of the entire book. Then you can add the text word-for-word under the Romans numerals, with each new paragraph being categorized by a letter of the alphabet.

- C. For this reason, since the day we heard about you,
1. we have not stopped praying for you
  2. and asking God
    - a. to fill you with the knowledge of his will
      - i. through all spiritual wisdom
      - ii. and understanding.

➤ **Other people find that it helps them to break down the text from the first day they begin to study a book or section of the Bible.** Experiment with outline forms or simply breaking down the text in a way that makes grammatical structure more obvious to see if this helps you comprehend more.

➤ **Example:** Acts 1:8 (NIV)

But you will receive power  
when the Holy Spirit comes on you;  
and you will be My witnesses  
in Jerusalem,  
and in all Judea  
and Samaria,  
and to the ends of the earth.

**Question the text:** ask **who, what, when, where, why,** and **how** of each passage in order to help you comprehend content and determine which words meanings you will investigate.

“If you want to understand a biblical text, you’ve got to bombard it with questions. The Bible is never embarrassed to be asked questions. That doesn’t mean it will answer all of them. But you still need to ask to determine if they can be answered. Obviously, if you’re going to ask questions, you’ve also got to look for the answers. Where will you find them? In the text. Observation will give you the basic building blocks out of which you will construct the meaning of a passage. The answers to your questions will come directly from your observation process.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Howard G. & William D. Hendricks, *Living by the Book*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007), 43.

### An example of “how-to” question the text, Colossians 1:4-6:

- **How** do faith and love for all the saints spring from the hope that is continually stored up for them (and us) in heaven?
- **How** is something like this “stored up” in heaven? **What** does this mean?
- **How** is this related to what they already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel?
- **What** about hope produces faith and love?
- **How** did it produce faith and love in them? **How** does it produce these things in me?
- **Do** I have evidence of faith and love for all the saints in my life? If not, **why not**?
- **What** words in these verses do I need to examine to help me understand what this means? **Will** having a thorough definition of any particular word help?
- **Do** I need to look at other verses that mention this same word or concept?
- **If** I look at another translation will it help me to understand what this means?
- **What** else does this passage say the gospel produces besides hope, from which spring faith and love?
- **Are** faith and love for all the saints a “fruit” that the gospel produces? **Are** these signs of “growth”?

Then, **take whatever steps are necessary to answer those questions (and questions that arise from examining the rest of the passage in this same way). Focus on comprehending the text.** Use the following steps to aid your understanding. Each person studies differently, so make it a practice to always try new techniques to see if they help. **If a particular step or idea doesn’t help, try something else.** Come at the text from as many angles as possible.

### Options to try: PRAY FIRST! Ask the Holy Spirit to help you comprehend.

- Begin by **reading the passage in other translations**, like we did on pg. 4. Sometimes just reading the passage stated another way helps us to comprehend.
- **Look up word definitions** for words in this passage that you *need* to understand, for instance “stored up,” “grace,” “qualified,” “rescued,” “dominion of darkness,” “redemption,” etc. **Examine any of the words that will help you comprehend the text.** How? **Page 15 details “how to use a concordance,”** or ask your group leader.
- Use your concordance to **find other places these same key words are used** (called finding the “cross references”). We used our concordances to find people mentioned in this book and all the other places in the New Testament where they are discussed. Use the same process here, but **look up the words that are assigned the same Greek reference numbers.** For instance, “stored up” is Strong’s #606 or GK (NIV) #641. Look at other verses that include words that have that same numbered definitions. Consult **page 15 for “how to find a cross reference,”** or ask your group leader.
- **Final option:** Examine the notes at the bottom of your study bible or in one of the listed commentaries, **after** you’ve completed the above steps (**pg. 18**). Try on your own first and experience the joy of discovery; then, find out if you were right in your assessment.

**Day Five: Read carefully, calling to mind all your previous meditations on this section. Which words have you determined you need to look up in the concordance? Circle them. Start to investigate these today, continue next week.**

### **Colossians 1:1-14 (NIV)**

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

**2**To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

**3**We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **4**because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— **5**the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel **6**that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. **7**You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, **8**and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

**9**For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. **10**And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, **11**being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully **12**giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. **13**For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, **14**in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**Continue the work you started yesterday by looking up key words in the concordance (“how to” on facing page, pg. 15). Start with the most significant words or concepts in order to be sure you get those covered. After you discover the meaning of a key word and think you comprehend the verse, paraphrase it. Write what the verse means in your own words.**

## How to use a Concordance: skip this box if you already know how.

**Complete Word Studies:** The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew (some Aramaic). The New Testament was originally written in Koine Greek. Use an exhaustive concordance for a basic definition, or a lexicon or bible dictionary for expanded definitions.

### How to use a Concordance:

1. Look up the word in the alphabetized front section of the concordance. (Remember: If you're using a Strong's concordance, you have to find how the word was translated into English in the KJV. "Stored up" in the NIV is translated "laid up" in the KJV, for instance).
2. Under the word, look for the verse reference where that specific word is used
3. Look for the number on the right. Each number corresponds to a Greek or Hebrew word.
4. Turn to the appropriate dictionary or lexicon in the back of the concordance (Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament)
5. Look up the number for the definition
6. The words in italic are the definition. Write down the Greek word's transliteration (in English alphabet); and write the definition down next to your key, essential word.

**How to Find a Cross References:** Using the concordance, compare references in the Bible which use any word(s), or quoted passages of scripture, that you determined needed further study. To find these look in the concordance at the list of all the references given for the same word (such as "stored up" discussed on pg. 13). Find the same Greek or Hebrew reference number that is given for the Greek or Hebrew word you are examining. (For instance, "stored up" was Strong's #606 if you're using a Strong's Concordance or GK (NIV) #641 if you're using an NIV Concordance).

Examine several other verses or all the verses that use the same number. Look up these other scripture references that use the same Greek or Hebrew word to compare the usage of the word. When the same word is studied in more than one account it is understood more fully.

**Try these online sources: [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org), [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com), and [www.crosswalk.com](http://www.crosswalk.com). Find which you like best; they all have online concordances. Example:** The steps to Blue Letter Bible's concordance are clean and simple. On the opening page, enter the passage you want to examine in the Bible/Dictionary Search. Pick the version (translation) and press "search." When the new page opens, click the button for what kind of help you want: C is for "Concordance and Hebrew-Greek Lexicon." Next, click on the concordance number by the word you want to investigate. This opens the concordance with the definition, or *biblical usage*, as well as the cross references. All the verses where this word is used are at the bottom of the concordance entry.

**Begin to work your way through the words you circled. Look up the definitions, then re-examine each sentence or verse and paraphrase it. Put it in your own words to be sure you understand. Then, move on to the next word you want to examine until you have looked up the definitions of each one. We will continue with this next week.**

## Colossians 1:1-14 (NIV)

**Theme of v. 1, 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

**2**To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

**Theme of v. 3-8:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**3**We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **4**because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— **5**the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel **6**that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. **7**You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, **8**and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

**Theme of v. 9-14:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**9**For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. **10**And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, **11**being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully **12**giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. **13**For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, **14**in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**Theme of entire section (Col. 1:1-14):** \_\_\_\_\_

## Week Three: Dec. 1 - 8, 2010

### What does it *mean* (interpretation)? How does this *change* me (application)?

Work through this week's study at your own pace. **Take as many days as you need on each part** of the study week. For instance, Part 1 may take you one day or two or three. It all depends on how you like to study and what helps you to comprehend and meditate on God's Word. This differs from person to person. Therefore, **first scan the four parts of the week's study plan to see how you want to plan your week of study. Then, proceed** according to your own plan.

#### Part 1: Continue investigating key words (may take one or more days)

Continue examining the definitions of the words you circled on page 14 until you've looked up all the definitions you need to in order to understand the text. Continue paraphrasing each verse as you comprehend it. Put it in your own words. Continue to meditate on what you're learning.

#### Part 2: Now integrate all this information and put it all back together

As always, use any study suggestions that help you; and, skip those that don't. Work through these steps of interpretation, but save *final* interpretation until you've finished studying the entire book and can contemplate the whole.

#### Identify themes within this section, then define the entire section:

As you worked through the chapter verse by verse you pondered on the meaning or interpretation of all you discovered from observing the text, questioning the text, completing the word studies, and completing any cross reference examination. Therefore, you should now be able to construct a title or theme of each smaller paragraph that summarizes the content within this section. **Why do this?** Just like paraphrasing helped you to ponder on the text and to see if you really comprehended the verse clearly, so stating the theme allows you to pull together the basic ideas of this section. It also helps you retain what is in each section when you walk away from the text and go about your daily life. This step aids your meditation on scripture by organizing in your mind what's here. See if you can write a concise sentence that summarizes the theme of each paragraph.

**Determine the theme of each paragraph:** In pencil, work out your wording here and then transfer what you've determined into: **(1) the margin of your working copy, (2) the copy on the facing page (pg. 16), or (3) your own bible.**

What was the theme of Colossians 1:1-2?

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**What was the theme of Colossians 1:3-8?**

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**What was the theme of Colossians 1:9-14?**

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[If you discovered that you like to outline, make these themes the paragraph headings within your outline. Take the time to do that now. Experiment with outlines to help you discover what aids you in understanding the meaning of the passage.]

**Now, put the main idea for this entire section, Colossians 1:1-14, into your own words.** Tie together the key words and themes that you saw throughout this section. Summarize all your work in your own words in a statement that summarizes this section.

**The theme of Colossians 1:1-14:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### **Part 3: Next, check your conclusions**

**Final step of interpretation:** Don't consult a commentary until you are at this point in your study. Use the commentary to verify your own findings and to double-check what you have discovered. If you consult commentaries before beginning they will influence your own study. Now is the time to check your conclusions. You'll gain from someone else's study by doing this; but, remember commentary notes aren't scripture. They aren't infallible.

**Good commentaries to use (hard copies are all available in the church library):**

- *The NIV Application Commentary: Colossians/Philemon*, by David E. Garland, Zondervan
- *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Colossians & Philemon*, by John MacArthur, Moody Press
- *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Abridged Edition*, Barker & Kohlenberger III, Zondervan.

**Check the online sources to see what commentaries they have and what they say.** Usually these are older commentaries because they're beyond copyright law regulation. For instance, you'll always find *The Matthew Henry Commentary*, a solid, highly respected, reformed commentary from the 1700s. It's always worth reading. Check out: [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org), [crosswalk.com](http://crosswalk.com), and/or [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com). Investigate their commentary section.

## **Part 4: Apply what you've learned. Let God's word change you.**

### **Application: How does this work in my life? How can this change me?**

**Live it:** Begin to implement the specific portions which the Holy Spirit has moved you to observe and notice as areas of growth necessary for your own life. As you studied, periodically we asked you questions to help you consider how the text might relate to you. Now, consider the questions below to contemplate even further application. What additional applications can you find from this letter?

#### **Consider these personal questions:**

- 1. In coming to the text, what did I find to be the most significant statements? Why?**
- 2. How can these statements affect my life and change it?**
- 3. What specifically does this section tell me that Christ did and currently does in my own life?**
- 4. Is there an example here for me to follow?**
- 5. What positive motivations do I find in the passage that convince me to lead a righteous life?**
- 6. Do any portions of Col. 1:1-14 produce a sense of conviction within me?**
- 7. Do any parts of this section cause me to want to live differently? What solid steps am I going to take in that direction?**
- 8. Is there a prayer to repeat? Does the prayer in Col. 1:9, and the results it produces that are listed in Col. 1:10-12, motivate me to pray this way for others?**
- 9. Do I also seek and pray this for myself—that I be filled with the knowledge of God's will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding? What practical steps am I taking in my life to grow in this knowledge of God and his will?**
- 10. Is there a verse or verses to memorize?**

This section just begins to dip into the rich doctrine of this letter, which we will encounter in our next section study. It presents to us in a powerful way the way one man taking the gospel to a city can affect the lives of people to change for good and in a way that has an eternal impact. Because Epaphras took the gospel to his home town of Colossae and planted a church there, we have this letter that still impacts our lives today; and, we will meet these believers in heaven. Consider the spiritual heritage they have left for us, and begin to make changes to be proactive, loving, and faithful believers.

#### **In moving forward, don't make these mistakes:**

- 1. Don't substitute interpretation for application and do nothing.**
- 2. Don't substitute superficial obedience for substantive life-change.**
- 3. Don't substitute rationalization for repentance.**
- 4. Don't substitute an emotional experience for a volitional decision to change.**
- 5. Don't substitute communication for transformation and merely talk about what you've learned.<sup>4</sup>**

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<sup>4</sup> Some of these application ideas are from *Living By the Book*, Howard G. Hendricks and William D. Hendricks, Moody Press Publishers, Chicago, 2007.

# Colossians 1 (NIV)

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

**2** To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

**3** We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **4** because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— **5** the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel **6** that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. **7** You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, **8** and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

**9** For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. **10** And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, **11** being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully **12** giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. **13** For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16** For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. **17** He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18** And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. **19** For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, **20** and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

**21** Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. **22** But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— **23** if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

**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. **25** I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— **26** the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. **27** To them God has

chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

**28**We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. **29**To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

## Philemon (NIV)

**1**Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker, **2**to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home: **3**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**4**I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, **5**because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. **6**I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. **7**Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.

**8**Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, **9**yet I appeal to you on the basis of love. I then, as Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus—**10**I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. **11**Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. **12**I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. **13**I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. **14**But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced. **15**Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good— **16**no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord. **17**So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. **18**If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. **19**I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self. **20**I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. **21**Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask. **22**And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers.

**23**Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. **24**And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers. **25**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.