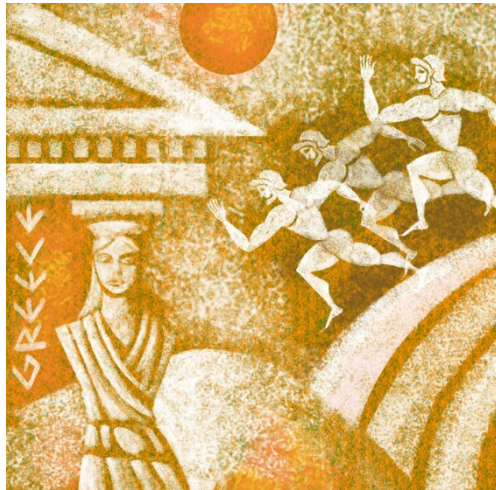


# COLOSSIANS

*Κολοσσαεύς*



## Calvary Bible Church Colossians 1:24-2:5 Study Guide

---

Wednesday Night Discussion Groups

Tim & Melinda Inman

Jan. 19-Feb. 2, 2011 – Two weeks only on this section

# 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

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

## 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

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

## 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

↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓

## 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 1:24-2:5.

- (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. Colossians 1 & 2 are printed at the back to help you set this particular section within the context of these two chapters.
- (3) Or, use your own bible and simply refer to this material for your study suggestions.

**We will now focus in and observe Colossians 1:24-2:5 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.

#### **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. These essential words unlock the meaning of the text.

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

**Turn the page and begin...**

---

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

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

## Week One: Jan. 19-26, 2011—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 1:24-2:5 on the facing page (pg. 5). Read it in each translation.** Read thoughtfully. Read contemplatively. Read like you've never read it before. 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. **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. 17-18) and read the entire first and second chapters of Colossians in order to set this section in context within these two chapters.**
3. **Read through Colossians 1:24-2:5 thoughtfully one more time.** Determine what the key words and phrases are for this particular section. **With a pencil, on the facing page lightly circle the words you *think* are "key" to understanding this 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.
4. Pay attention to what Col. 1:24-2:5 says about the key ideas of Col. 1:1-14 and Col. 1:15-23. **What themes are carried forward? Make notes in the margin about ideas that tie to the power of the gospel to change lives (1:1-14) and that give more revelation about who Christ is and what he has done (1:15-23).**
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. 15, 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 rejoicing?
- **What** is he "filling up" in his flesh?
- **Does** any question present itself about the meaning of the phrase "what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions"? If so, investigate this further during these two weeks.
- **What** does Paul's willingness to suffer tell us about how important the furtherance of the gospel is to him? **Do** we have this same zeal about the gospel?
- **What** is Paul's purpose in becoming a servant of the church by the commission of God?
- **What** phrases and words are used to describe Christ and the gospel?
- **What** all is stated in the passage concerning "the mystery"?
- **Who or what** does the text plainly state that this mystery is?
- **What** more do you learn about Christ in this passage to add to what you learned in 1:13-23?
- **What** does Paul say that he and Timothy do in order to present everyone perfect in Christ?
- **How** does Paul say he fulfills this commission? **On what** does he rely?
- **What** does the passage say about the energy Paul relies on? **Do** we rely on this energy?
- **In addition to the Colossians, who else** does Paul struggle for?
- **What** is Paul's stated purpose in struggling for them and writing this letter?
- **Why** does Paul tell them all of this? **What** is he trying to protect them from?
- **What** two things does he say delight him about the Colossians?

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

**Colossians 1:24-2:5 (NIV)**

**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. **2:1** I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. **2**My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, **3**in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. **4**I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. **5**For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

**Colossians 1:24-2:5 (ESV)**

**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. **2:1** I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. **2**My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, **3**in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. **4**I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. **5**For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

**Move on to the next two pages for the final suggestion for this week's study...**

**FINAL DAY OF WEEK #1, WHAT TO DO: Follow the instructions on the facing page (pg. 7) to help you mark up the text** so that you can pinpoint the key themes and words more clearly. Slowing down to examine the text will help you as you begin to interpret it next week.

### **Colossians 1:24-2:5 (NIV)**

**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. **2:1**I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. **2**My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, **3**in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. **4**I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. **5**For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

**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). **For example:**

v. 26—*the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations*  
*BUT*  
*is now disclosed to the saints*

- 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. **Do you see any in this section?**

-  Draw a little clock face (or another mark you choose) above words showing **expressions of time** (*now, when, after, until, at that time, ages, generations, etc.*). **Why are these words or phrases important?**
- Mark with an “x” words that show **conclusions or an end result** (*therefore, so that, for the sake of, 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:**

*I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions **for the sake of** his body, which is...*

- 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. 1:24-2:5.
- 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 ( ~ ):
  - 1:28, “admonishing”
  - 1:28, “teaching”
  - 1:29, “struggling”
  - 1:29, “powerfully works”
  - 2:1, “to know”
  - 2:4, “may deceive”
  - 2:5, “delight to see”
- Words that express action that was completed in the past, but which has an ongoing or continual result. Mark like this ( → ):
  - 1:26, “has been kept hidden”
  - 2:1, “have not met me”

**THINK ABOUT IT:** As you completed this exercise, what was revealed about the passage? On the facing page, write down anything you discover in the text that you hadn’t seen before.  
 Continue next week.

**Week Two: Jan. 26-Feb. 2, 2011**  
**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 pinpoint what we need to examine more closely after 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 of that same word. 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. 8), or **(3)** complete this exercise in your own bible. Or do any combination of the three; it's entirely up to you.

**WHAT TO DO: On the facing page, mark the words you now understand to be crucial—the words that have definitions you *must* know in order to understand the text. Mark any of these words you see in the text with unique markings for each one:**

- **God**
- **Jesus**
- **Author** (including pronouns [we, I], Paul and Timothy)
- **Recipients** (words that refer to the Colossians, including pronouns [you, your])
- **Other people** (individuals, those at Laodicea, all who haven't met Paul)
- **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. 1:24-2:5**

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

1. First, reassess the words you circled the first week (look at your copies on pg. 5).
2. Then consider the questions you answered and meditated on from pg. 4 and the important ideas you saw as you marked the text on pg. 6.
3. What words will help you answer your questions and understand the key ideas in the text? What words, if you removed them from the text, would remove the meaning or intent of the passage? Were your initial assessments correct about which words were significant? If not, adjust. Mark additional key words.

## Colossians 1:24-2:5 (NIV)

**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. **2:1**I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. **2**My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, **3**in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. **4**I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. **5**For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

Okay, the key words are marked. **NOW WHAT? Read the passage again. Then begin to make a list of all you observe about each key word, phrase, or idea. Continue tomorrow if you run out of time. As you do this, question the text.** This slows you down so you can observe the passage carefully. A short example of how you might do this is given on the next page.

**However, do whatever works for you as you make your own observations.**

**Turn the page and continue...**

**End of Day One and into Day Two: OBSERVATION: HOW?** 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>

**Make a thorough list of everything you observe about each of these key words and ideas, 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.**

**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 question-asking “key word observation list” about *suffering* (and the associated synonyms—*afflictions, labor, struggle, etc.*).** In this example, my own personal reflections or inner thoughts or questions are written down as I recorded each bit of information. In my own study of this section, I might write down these private 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 *part* of a key word observation list on “suffering” (and synonyms)**

- **1:24a, Paul rejoices in what was *suffered* for them. ESV says “I rejoice in my *sufferings* for your sake.”**
  - (I think: What has been suffered for the Colossians specifically? What else does the letter say? What type of suffering has occurred? He is in prison. What other examples can I recall from 2 Corinthians and Acts about how Paul suffered and how he rejoiced as he did? Paul reacts to suffering by rejoicing. Is this how I react to suffering? Do I rejoice or do I complain when I suffer for the sake of the gospel?)
- **1:24b, Paul fills up in his flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s *afflictions*, for the sake of his body, which is the church**
  - (I think: In his own body Paul “fills up” (look up the word) what is still lacking in Christ’s affliction in some way. What does this mean? Christ’s crucifixion and death met all the requirements; nothing is lacking. But, the church is his body; and, the church suffered then and still suffers. Does the church carry on the suffering of Christ in conformity to his suffering? In Paul’s last letter before he was martyred he wrote, “Everyone who wants to live a godly life will be persecuted” (2 Timothy 3:12). Is there fellowship in suffering with Christ? How does 1:24b relate to the continued suffering of believers? I need to investigate this further. )

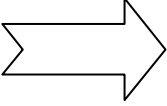
**Now, compile your own observation lists of the important words in this section.**

---

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

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

### The plan for the rest of the week: Days 3-5

- 
1. Work through this week's study at your own pace. **Take as many days as you need on each part.** For instance, Part 1 may take you one or two days. 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.
  2. Therefore, **first scan the four parts of the week's study plan (pg. 11-15) to help you plan the rest of the week's study. Then, proceed according to your own schedule.**

### Part 1: Investigate the definitions of key words (may take one or more days)

**HOW? Options to try: PRAY FIRST! Ask the Holy Spirit to help you comprehend.**

- **Outline the passage** if this study method helps you (see pg. 15 for how-to instructions).
- **Read the passage in other translations**, like we did on pg. 5. Sometimes just reading the passage stated another way helps us to comprehend.
- **Look up word definitions** for the words in this passage that you *need* to understand, for instance "suffered," "fill up," "afflictions," "mystery," "perfect," "powerfully works," "be encouraged," etc. **Examine any of the words that will help you comprehend the text.** How? **Page 16 details "how to use a concordance,"** or ask your group leader.
- A very thorough Greek lexicon is available at: <http://www.studylight.org/lex/grk/>.
- Use your concordance to **find other places these same key words are used** (called finding the "cross references") if you need additional help comprehending the meaning. **Look up the words that are assigned the same Greek reference numbers.** For instance, "mystery" is Strong's #3466 or GK (NIV) #3696. Look at other verses that include words that have that same numbered definition. Consult **page 16 for "how to find a cross reference,"** or ask your group leader. **Ideas for examining the cross references of "mystery" are also given on pg. 16.**
- **Final option:** Examine the notes at the bottom of your study bible or in one of the listed commentaries (pg. 14), **after** you've completed the above steps. Try on your own first and experience the joy of discovery; then, find out if you were right in your assessment.

**Instructions for how to begin are at the top of the next page...**

**GETTING STARTED:**

- 1. Read the text carefully**, calling to mind all your previous meditations on this section.
- 2. Which words have you determined you need to look up in the concordance? Circle them.**
- 3. Start to investigate these today and tomorrow**, working through the text verse by verse.
- 4. As you comprehend each definition, paraphrase the verse—write it out in your own words to see if you truly comprehend.**

## Colossians 1:24-2:5 (NIV)

**Theme of v. 24-27:** \_\_\_\_\_

**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.

**Theme of v. 28-2:5:** \_\_\_\_\_

**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. **2:1**I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. **2**My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, **3**in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. **4**I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. **5**For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

**Theme of entire section (Col. 1:23-2:5):** \_\_\_\_\_

## 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. 12), or (3) your own bible.

**What was the theme of Colossians 1:24-27?**

---

---

**What was the theme of Colossians 1:28-2:5?**

---

---

---

[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 1:24-2:5 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 this section, how does Paul bring forward the importance of Christian growth and the sufficiency of Christ in order to prepare them to resist deception? **Work out a statement in your own words; and then, add it to the copy on pg. 12.**

**The theme of Colossians 1:24-2:5:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 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 God has done for me?
4. How does having Christ in me change everything? List how the truths here change me.
5. Is there an example here for me to follow? How can I model Paul's labor for the gospel?
6. What positive motivations do I find in the passage that convince me to lead a righteous life?
7. Do any portions of Col. 1:24-2:5 produce a sense of conviction within me?
8. Do any parts of this section cause me to want to live differently? What solid steps am I going to take in that direction? What is my plan of action?
9. Is there a prayer to repeat for others? Does Col. 2:2-4 provide an effective prayer guide?

**10. Do I also pray this for myself—that I be encouraged in my heart from what I learn in God’s Word and that I seek unity with others, not division, so that I may have the full riches of complete understanding, and may come to know Christ more intimately, seeking to learn from him more wisdom and knowledge, of which he is the Treasure Storehouse, so that I am not easily deceived? What am I doing to produce loving unity in the church? What practical steps am I taking in my life to grow in this wisdom and knowledge that Christ provides?**

**11. Is there a verse or verses to memorize?**

**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>

**How To Tools:**

**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.

- A. Now I rejoice
  1. in what was suffered for you,
- B. and I fill up in my flesh
  1. what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions,
    - a. for the sake of his body,
    - ii. which is the church.

➤ **Other people find that it helps them to break down the text, completing a structural analysis 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 effectively.

**Example:** Col. 1:24 (NIV)

```

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.
  
```

<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.

## How to find definitions and cross references:

**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. For instance, an exceptional cross reference study of "mystery" can be done, moving chronologically through the New Testament: Mark 4:3-20; Luke 8:5-15; Matt. 14:3-23; 2 Thess. 2:7-8; 1 Cor. 2:6-8; 4:1, 2; 13:1-2; 15:51-58; Rom. 11:28-36; 16:25-27; Eph. 1:9-14; 2:19-3:11; 5:22-32; Col. 1:24-27; 2:1-4; 4:3-6; Rev. 10:5-7. Starting at the beginning and moving through each of these cross references in the order in which they were written (as listed here) shows how God revealed the mystery to the apostles and prophets, how they grew in their comprehension of it, how it affects our lives, and how God will bring the mystery to final fulfillment.

**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. Also, a very thorough Greek lexicon (dictionary) is available at: <http://www.studydrive.org/lex/grk/>. Just enter the word or the Strong's number you want to look up in the search box on the right hand of the page. A detailed definition will be given.

# 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.

## Colossians 2 (NIV)

**1**I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. **2**My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, **3**in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. **4**I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. **5**For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

**6**So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, **7**rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

**8**See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

**9**For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, **10**and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. **11**In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, **12**having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

**13**When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, **14**having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. **15**And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

**16**Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. **17**These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. **18**Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. **19**He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

**20**Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: **21**"Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? **22**These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. **23**Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.