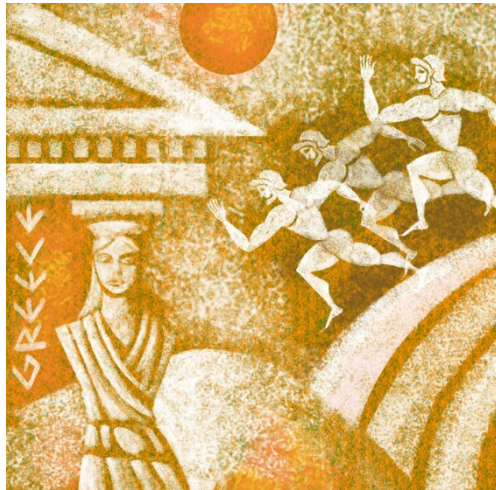


COLOSSIANS

Κολοσσαείς



Calvary Bible Church Colossians 3:1-17 Study Guide

Wednesday Night Discussion Groups

Tim & Melinda Inman

March 2-30, 2011

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.”¹

The Text: Everyone studies in their own unique way; therefore, there are several studies options available to you regarding the text of Colossians 3:1-17.

- (1) If you prefer to work from one marked copy, earlier in the year you probably already removed the working copy at the end of the Overview material, placed it in a three-ring binder, and have used it for our entire study of Colossians.
- (2) If you didn't like that option, the text has been printed throughout the material this year; so, you've probably been using the Study Guide alone. The entire letter to the Colossians is printed at the back to help you set this particular section within the context of the book.
- (3) Or, use your own bible and simply refer to this material for your study suggestions.

We will now focus in and observe Colossians 3:1-17 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.”²

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 words and themes specific to each chapter or section. These essential words unlock the meaning of the text.

Commands and instructions are always significant.

**Turn the page and follow the instructions at the bottom of pages 4 & 5...
As always, use any study suggestions that help you; and, skip those that don't.**

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

² *Ibid.*, 43.

Read the text in at least two different translations:

Colossians 3:1-17 (NIV)

1Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Week One: March 2-9, 2011—Begin on pg. 3, then...

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

1. **Read Colossians 3:1-17 on this page and the next. 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. 29-32) and read the entire book of Colossians in order to set this section in context within the letter.**
3. **This chapter begins, "Since, then..." Since what?** What does the beginning of Col. 3:1-17 tell us Paul considers to be the application of what he wrote in 2:6-23 (and the entire letter)?

Colossians 3:1-17 (ESV)

1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming. 7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. 11 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

4. **Read through Colossians 3:1-17 thoughtfully one more time.** Determine what the key words and phrases are for this particular section. **With a pencil, lightly circle the words you think are "key" to understanding this section. Circle them in both translations.** 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. 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.
5. Commands and instructions are always significant because they require action. They are the required response. **Take special note of these. Put a number by each one and number them right through the passage.** How many commands or instructions are given in this section? What does this tell us about Paul's emphasis in this section?
6. **Notice things you want to study in greater detail later and make a note in the margin.**
7. (See the information on outlining, pg. 7, and make an outline if you'd like.)

On the next page continue with meditation questions for this week...

Examine the text and think about these questions. This section requires no cultural adaptation. These words apply to us exactly as they applied to the Colossians; therefore, in this study guide we'll often make this entirely personal by saying, "we" or "us." These instructions show us how we are to live our lives; this is the "normal" Christian life. **Meditate on these things this week:**

- **Since then...what?** **What** is now true of the believing Colossians (and us)? **What** has God done to them with Christ (3:1a)?
- **Was** this mentioned before? **How** does the statement in Col. 3:1a summarize everything Paul has said about their (and our) position in Christ (**Review:** 1:13-14, 21-23, 26-29; 2:2-3, 6-15, and 20-21)? **Specifically, how** does Col. 3:1a relate to Col. 2:11-15, 20-21?
- **Because this is the case, what** is the command given in 3:1b?
- **What** is the follow-up command in 3:2? **What** is the contrast—do this, **not what?**
- **How** are the two instructions in 3:1 and 3:2 different? **Or, are they?** **How** are they the same?
- **In Col. 3:3-4, what** are the reasons Paul gives for obeying the two commands in 3:1, 2?
- **How** does being our obedience to the two commands in Col. 3:1, 2 and the fact that we have been "raised with Christ" and "hidden with Christ in God" result in our ability to obey the commands Paul gives next? **Review:** **What** was said in 2:6-15 about this? **What** did you see in 2:6-15 that told us what changes about a person who is raised with Christ and hidden in Christ in God?
- **Therefore, since you're raised with Christ, what** does 3:5 say you are to do?
- **What** belongs to your earthly nature? **What** does 3:5 say?
- **Are** these types of sins also prevalent in our culture, as they were in the culture the Colossians lived in? **Which ones** were common in your life before salvation? Think about it.
- **Why** does 3:6 say we're supposed to put to death whatever belongs to our earthly nature?
- **What** does 3:7 say about how they (and we) lived before we were raised with Christ and hidden with him in God? Should these things still be a part of our lives?
- **What** is the contrast in 3:8? **What** is the believer to do now?
- **In addition to the list in 3:5, what** else does the person who is raised with Christ and hidden with him in God put to death or rid ourselves of according to 3:8-9a? **Were** these sins part of your life before salvation? **Are** they still? **What** does 3:8a say you are to do?
- **What** is the reason given in 3:9b-10, "since you have...and have..."? **What** does 3:10 say is continually happening to your new self?
- **Where** else was the word "image" used in this letter? **Who** is the image of the invisible God? **Who** is the Creator?
- **What** does 3:11 tell us that the body of Christ—those continually being renewed in knowledge in the image of their Creator—looks like?
- **How** are believers described in 3:12a?
- **And, therefore, what** does 3:12b tells us that God's chosen, holy, and dearly loved people are to do?
- **With what,** according to 3:12, do we now clothe ourselves?
- **What else?** **What** does 3:13 say?
- **How** are believers bound together in perfect unity? **What** does 3:14 say we are to put on?
- **What** does 3:15a say is to rule in our hearts? **Why?** **What** does 3:15b say, "since..."?
- **What** does the short sentence in 3:15c say we're to do as a result?
- **According to 3:15, as we teach and admonish one another and sing in praise together, what** are we to let the word of Christ do? **How** might *that* look in our lives?
- **What** will the word of Christ dwelling in us richly produce in our hearts according to the end of 3:16?
- **What** does 3:17 say is the summation of all of this? **How** are believers to live?

Experiment with making an outline at this point. It will help you see how the main points are connected and make it easier to trace Paul's instructions and reasoning.

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 Roman numerals, with each new paragraph being categorized by a letter of the alphabet. **Example:** Colossians 3:1-3 (NIV)

- A. ¹Since, then, you have been raised Christ,
 - 1. set your hearts on things above,
 - a. where Christ is seated
 - i. at the right hand of God.
 - 2. ²Set your minds on things above,
 - a. not on earthly things.
 - i. ³for you died
 - ii. and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

➤ **Other people find that it helps them to break down the text, completing a structural analysis of 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 determine if this helps you comprehend more. **Example:** Colossians 3:1-3 (NIV)

Since then you have been raised
with Christ
set your hearts
on things above,
where Christ is seated
at the right hand of God.
set your minds
on things above,
not on earthly things
for you died
and
your life is hidden
with Christ in God.

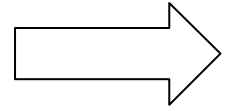
Week Two continues on the next page...

Week Two: March 9-16, 2011

What do I *see* (observation)? What does it *mean* (interpretation)?

How does this *change* me (application)?

Follow the directions on pages 9-10.



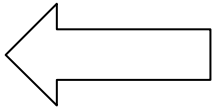
Colossians 3:1-17 (NIV)

1Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. **2**Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. **3**For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. **4**When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. **6**Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. **7**You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. **8**But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. **9**Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices **10**and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. **11**Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **13**Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **14**And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. **16**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. **17**And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.



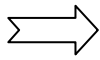
Day One: What now? How do I tie all of these ideas together?

Mark Grammatical Phrases: The exercises on pages 8-10 will help you see how the main ideas of this section tie together. Note these with marks in your working copy or on the facing page (pg. 8).


- **Mark words of contrast** (*but, however, nevertheless, or, neither, nor, not, etc.*) with a lightning bolt mark above the word (or any mark you choose that you feel shows contrast). And, record in the margin a short description of what is being contrasted. **Example:**

v. 2, *Set your minds on things above*
 NOT
on earthly things.

- **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. 13b, *Forgive*
 AS
the Lord forgave you.

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

- **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:**

...impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. **Because of these,** the wrath of God is coming



- **Mark commands** in a way that draws the eye, such as highlighting, in order to ponder on these: They clarify the purpose of the letter and make clear how the Colossians can grow to spiritual maturity. They are the forceful statements, some nuanced to command continual action and others framed in such a way as to provoke immediate compliance. There are 9 commands:

- **1)** v. 1, CONTINUALLY, “set your hearts on things above”
- **2)** v. 2, CONTINUALLY, “Set your minds on things above”
- **3)** v. 5, BEGIN NOW, “Put to death...”
- **4)** v. 8, BEGIN NOW, “But now you must rid yourselves of...”
- **5)** v. 9, HABITUALLY, “Do not lie to each other, since...”
- **6)** v.12, BEGIN NOW, “clothe yourself with...”
- **7)** v.14, BEGIN NOW, “put on love...”
- **8)** v. 15b, CONTINUALLY, “be thankful”
- **9)** v.16, HABITUALLY, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly...”

➤ 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 (~):

- v. 1, “set your hearts,” “is seated”
- v. 2, “set your minds”
- v. 9, “do not lie”
- v.10, “which is being renewed”
- v. 13, “bear with one another,” “forgive,” “may have”
- v. 15, “be thankful”
- v. 16, “let the word of Christ dwell,” “teach,” “admonish,” “sing”
- v. 17, “do” (2x), “giving thanks”



○ Two words express actions that were completed in the past, but which have ongoing or continual results. Mark like this (→):

- v.3, “is now hidden”
- v. 12, “dearly loved”

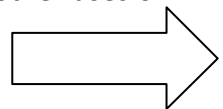
Pause to meditate on anything that this exercise revealed to you that you hadn’t previously seen before. Ask God to empower you as you grow in Christ.

Day Two: What we’ll be doing with key words and why...

Key Words: Re-assess the words you circled the first week (look at your marked copies on pg. 4 & 5). Then consider the questions you meditated on from pg. 4-6. What words that help to answer 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 you correct in your initial assessments about which words were key? If not, adjust. What significant words that were used in Col. 2:6-23 are repeated here?

WHAT TO DO: On the facing page (pg. 11) (or in your working copy or your own bible), we will now complete some marking in the text that will help us to pull together all the observations we made during our previous study days. 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 the same word in the letter.

- Use **color** or **pencil** or **ink**, whichever you prefer.
- **Mark each particular key word** (a different color for each key word, or each key word with a unique mark 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. Use whatever techniques help you.

Mark these words that you see in the text with unique markings for each one:

- **God and Jesus (all names or pronouns referring to each); make note of “with Christ” and “of Christ” phrases**
- **Recipients** (all words that refer to the Colossian believers, including pronouns, “you,” “your”)
- **Every command and instruction, if you haven’t already**
- **List what we put to death or rid ourselves of; then, list what we clothe ourselves with or put on. (see pg. 12)**
- **Key/Significant Words observed and marked during the Overview and our study of Col. 1:1-2:23** (Using similar colors or markings, in this section mark the words you’ve already marked in previous sections.)
- **Other Significant Words which are crucial for understanding Col. 3:1-17**

Colossians 3:1-17 (NIV)

1Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. **2**Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. **3**For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. **4**When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. **6**Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. **7**You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. **8**But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. **9**Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices **10**and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. **11**Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **13**Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **14**And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. **16**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. **17**And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Day Three: Okay, the key words are marked. Now what? Look over pg. 12-13 before starting to help you plan your day of bible study.



DO THIS TODAY: Make a list of all you observe about each Key Word as you question the text: In your notebook, or the margin of your working copy or bible, or the margin of pg. 8, or on pg. 11, **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.** **As always, use any study suggestions that help you; and, skip those that don't.**

HOW TO DO IT: Not all key words require a written list. Some can be marked right into the text, for instance, the list of **what we are to “put to death” or “rid yourself of.”** Here, the commands are highlighted in green; phrases pertaining to your life before salvation are lettered and highlighted with yellow in the box containing the letter; and, the qualities that belong to the sinful nature are numbered.

AN EXAMPLE:

5 Put to death, therefore, **A** whatever belongs to your earthly nature: ^{#1}sexual immorality, ^{#2}impurity, ^{#3}lust, ^{#4}evil desires and ^{#5}greed, which is idolatry. 6Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7You **B** used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8But **now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these:** ^{#6}anger, ^{#7}rage, ^{#8}malice, ^{#9}slander, and ^{#10}filthy language from your lips. 9 ^{#11}Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off **C** your old self with its practices...

(You could also mark **what we are to “clothe ourselves with” or “put on”** in a similar way.)

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 equally to us. We can also observe where the power to do this comes from and why, according to Paul, we are to obey each command. He gives a reason for each command. As you observe the text, questioning it helps you see details.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE of questioning and noting key ideas in Col. 1:1-4 follows. In this example, inside the parentheses in a different font, as sub-points under the main points, are written my own personal 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 or ponder on them. This is provided as an example of how you might want to do this. **However, do whatever works for you in recording significant information in this section.**

An example of a key word observation list that records information and questions the text:

Facts or information about my position in Christ that help me to obey the commands in this section of the letter (The facts I write down are in bold; my thoughts are not bold and are in the other font.):

- **3:1a, Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above...**
 - (I think: The key to obedience is that I have a new position. I **have been raised with Christ**; I am dead no longer. This was discussed in the last section: "In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of your **sinful nature**, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men, but with the circumcision done by Christ, 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. When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive** with Christ. He forgave all your sins..." (2:11-13). It is this position of having been raised with Christ that Col. 3:1 talks about. This is WHY and HOW I can set my heart on things above. I check to see that I marked the words in 3:1-4 about being raised and made alive in the same way that I marked them in 2:6-23; the sinful/earthly nature and the old life is highlighted in the same way throughout 2:6-23 and 3:5-9, too. This helps me to see the connection. After looking at this carefully, I see more clearly what God has done for me through Christ. WOW! And so, I am commanded to set my hearts on things above. What does that mean? How do I do it? In the concordance, I need to look up what it means to "set my heart.")
- **3:1b, Set your heart on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.**
 - (I think: This is where my heart is to be set continually—where Christ is. I need an eternal perspective, a focus on the heavenly, a constant remembrance of him and what he has done for me and what he now does for me. How will this look in my life? Where else have I read that Christ is seated at the right hand of God? What is the authority and significance of this position? I decide to examine cross references (see pg. 28). What does he do there from his position? I want to review the places in Hebrews and Romans where it talks about this. I remember from past studies that he is our Great High Priest—I'll examine his mediating and interceding for me.)

I would then continue in this same way, carefully examining all of Col. 1:1-4 to see everything listed there that will help me to obey the rest of the commands in. The purpose of the above exercise is to slow me down and cause me to really *think* about what the text says, how it applied to the Colossians, and how it applies to me. The reasons for each command are given. The first paragraph details where the power to obey comes from. Thorough and careful observation should help us to discern which word definitions we need to look up.



RECAP OF INSTRUCTIONS: Today, in your own way, complete these types of complete and contemplative lists for each of the key words or key themes in Col. 3:1-17. Ask yourself the same type of questions as in the example above; follow the suggestions the Holy Spirit brings to your mind. Try to ponder on what you're learning. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you—to empower you to set your mind and your heart on things above, where Christ is at God's right hand and, as a result, to obey his commands. **Follow HIS leading in this exercise.**

What next? Timeline of coming study:

We are taking four weeks to study this section of Colossians in order to give us time to contemplate the application necessary in our own lives. The doctrinal portion of the letter laid the groundwork for us.

Since, then, we have been raised with Christ, how should our lives change?

March 9-16: The rest of this week, days 4-5, continue to examine what we are to put to death or rid ourselves of, and how and why, Col. 3:1-11. Scan pages 14-19, and plan your strategy.

March 16-23: Finish up anything you didn't get done March 9-16; then examine what we are to clothe ourselves with or put on, and how and why, Col. 3:10-17.

March 23-30: Put it all together; summarize; develop a plan of action.

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

Part 1 of Interpretation: First, investigate the definitions of key words.

ALWAYS PRAY FIRST! Ask the Holy Spirit to help you comprehend. **OPTIONS to try:**

- **Outline the passage** if this study method helps you (see pg. 7 for how-to instructions).
- **Read the passage in other translations**, like we did on pg. 4 & 5. Also, use additional translations if it helps you. 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: "set your hearts," "set your minds," "put to death," "earthly things/earthly nature," "rid yourselves," "have taken off," "have put on," "new self," "which is being renewed," etc. **Examine any of the words that will help you comprehend the text.** How? **Page 28 details "how to use a concordance,"** or ask your group leader.
- A good Greek lexicon (dictionary) 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, "have been raised" (3:1) is Strong's #4897 or GK (NIV) #5283. Look at other verses that include words that have that same numbered definition, first those in Colossians: 2:12. Also look at synonyms—words that have similar meanings, such as Col. 2:14, "made alive." Look at all the previous terms in Colossians that have to do with life and spiritual growth. Consult **page 28 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 (pg. 26), **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.

FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1. Read carefully and thoughtfully.** All commands are significant.
- 2. Which words do you need to look up in the concordance? Circle them in the text below.**
- 3. Start to investigate these today and continue for the rest of this week and next.**
- 4. As you comprehend each definition, paraphrase the verse—write it out in your own words to see if you truly understand what Paul has written (space is given on pg. 16-19).**

Colossians 3:1-17 (NIV)

1Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. **2**Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. **3**For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. **4**When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. **6**Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. **7**You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. **8**But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. **9**Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices **10**and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. **11**Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **13**Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **14**And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. **16**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. **17**And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

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

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THIS WEEK AND NEXT (as detailed on pg. 14, Part I):

1. Use your concordance, Greek lexicon, or online study tool to look up the definition of each word you circled on the previous page.
2. Write the definition down.
3. Then re-state the verse, put it in your own words, or summarize it.
4. Investigate any cross references that you feel are necessary.

Complete this exercise in any way that helps you to understand what we're to do and how.

This week: Col. 3:1-11, Dealing with sins of the earthly nature:

1Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. **2**Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

Since you've been raised with Christ, what do you do?

"set your hearts"—Strong's # 2212, *zētēō*: *Seek after, strive for, seek in the sense of endeavor, to try to gain, to strive after with earnest and anxiety*

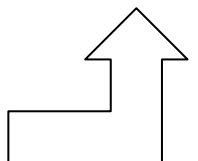
"set your minds"—

Put it in your own words:

3For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. **4**When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

What happened to you? Where is your life now? Where will it be when Christ appears?

"hidden with Christ in God"—check these cross references: Isaiah 49:1-13 (Messianic reference); Ps. 27:5-6; 31:19-20 (experience of David, an OT believer)



Summarize the entire first paragraph (3:1-4):

5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.
So, how do you take action? What do you do? Look up words; and, paraphrase instructions.

7You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

You're different now, so what do you rid yourselves of? Why are you different? What has been done to you (review 2:11-15)? What was taken off? What was put on? What did Christ do? What do you do? How are you still being transformed?

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

What does the body of Christ look like? What is the important fact?

Summarize this paragraph (3:5-11):

Personal application: What did you see about your own temptations? What kind of progress are you making in putting these things to death? How is the process of ridding yourself of these going? What still needs work? What is the evidence you see that demonstrates that you are being renewed? How are you being transformed into the image of Christ?

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

Week 3, March 16-23:

- 1. Continue with word studies**—Use your concordance, Greek lexicon, or online study tool to look up the definition of each word you circled on page 15.
- 2. Write the definition down.**
- 3. Then, re-state the verse; put it in your own words; summarize it (pg. 20-23).**
- 4. Investigate any cross references you feel are necessary.**

Complete this exercise in any way that helps you to understand.

Col. 3:12-17, Since your new self is being renewed, put on Christ's virtues:

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

"chosen" —Strong's #1588, eklektós: choice or election; those chosen by God unto salvation, selection involves thoughtful and deliberate consideration

"holy"

"dear loved"

As God's loved people, what do you do? Do you understand each of these godly qualities?

13Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you (Col. 1:10-14, 21-22; 2:13-15).

What do forbearance and forgiveness look like in the church? Why do we forgive?

Examine words; examine cross references that come to mind; think about the letter to Philemon and the example it set for the church—

14And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

How does love bind? Who or what is bound together? What is perfect unity?

Summarize Col. 3:12-14:

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

16Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. Why is the peace of Christ to rule in your hearts? How do you let this happen? It's all Christ.

"rule" — Strong's #1018, brabeúō To be a brabeús, an umpire, director or arbiter in the public Greek games. In the NT, to rule, govern, and metaphorically to prevail, abound.

Check cross reference for "rule," a contrasting term: Col. 2:18, "disqualify," Strong's #2603—

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

How does this summarize all the instructions? What does all Christ has done and continues to do for us provoke praise to the Father?

Summarize this final paragraph (Col. 3:12-17):

Personal application: What kind of progress are you making in clothing yourself with these Christ-like qualities? How is the process of putting on love going? Are you producing more unity in the body of Christ? What still needs work?

Final week, March 23-30, Part 2 of the interpretation process:

Now integrate all this information, and put it all back together. Can you walk away with these instructions in your mind so that you can apply them?

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

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. Therefore, you should now be able to summarize the content of Col. 3:1-17. **Why do this?** Just like paraphrasing helped you to ponder on the text and to see if you really comprehended the verse clearly, so summarizing allows you to pull together the basic ideas of this section and retain it when you walk away from the text and go about your daily life. This step aids your meditation on Scripture.

DO THIS: See if you can write a summary of each paragraph on the given lines.

Colossians 3:1-17 (NIV)

Theme of Col. 3:1-4: _____

1Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Theme of Col. 3:5-11: _____

5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Theme of Col. 3:12-14: _____

12Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Theme of Col. 3:15-17: _____

15Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Now, put the main idea for this entire section, Colossians 3:1-17 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 and fits within the purpose of the letter.** In this section, 3:1-17, how does Paul bring practical application to all he taught them in Col. 1:1-2:23 about Christian growth and the beauty and sufficiency of Christ?

Theme of Colossians 3:1-17: _____

[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 make it personal. What did you recognize about yourself? Where do you need spiritual and personal growth? Summarize here the areas that are now evident: _____

Part 3 of correct Interpretation: 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, crosswalk.com, and/or biblegateway.com. Investigate their commentary sections.

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 that 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 through Christ?
4. How does what God has done through Christ change everything? What do I now have the power—the ability—to do? List how the truths here change me.
5. Is there an example here for me to follow? What am I specifically commanded to do in this section, just as the Colossians were commanded? What positive motivations do I find in the passage that convince me to lead a righteous life and pinpoint for me how to do so?
6. Do any portions of Col. 3:1-17 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? What is my plan of action? What am I going to change in my life in

order to begin to implement the spiritual growth that I now realize is necessary? What needs to be adjusted? Do I recognize that if new things are coming in, old things have to go?

8. **Do I also pray this for myself**—that I would set my heart and mind on Christ, not on earthly things, that I would remember that I am raised with Christ and am hidden with Christ in God, that I might put to death the temptations to sin that are of my earthly nature, that I might rid myself of the specific sins that still plague my life, that I might clothe myself with godly actions and behaviors and attitudes since I have put on the new self, which is being renewed in Christ’s image, that I might put on love and allow the word of Christ to dwell in me richly, and that I would honor the name and person of Christ Jesus in all I do and say, giving thanks to him for all he’s done for me? **Do I recognize these truths as they apply to my own life? How will I begin now to apply them?**
9. **Is there a prayer to repeat for others? If I see these needs for growth in my own life, might my brothers and sister in Christ have the same needs and benefit from my prayers?**
10. **Is there a verse or verses to memorize?**

Truth that Transforms: “Ultimately the mirror of God’s Word brings about a conversion, meaning that we actually begin to live differently as a result of our exposure to the truth. That transformation begins the moment we come to faith, which is why we refer to that milestone as a conversion. But, true conversion is not a one-time event; it’s a transformation that results in living differently as a result of exposure to God’s truth. It’s an ongoing process of becoming more and more like Christ.”³

Coming to the passage: What did you find significant as you came to this section of Colossians?

Conviction: Search for any potential sins in order to deal with them. Though we may feel a sense of reproof and correction from portions of Scripture, the desired response is repentance in order to change and move forward. Do any portions of this section or book promote a sense of conviction within you?

Convincing: What positive motivations do you find in the Scripture passage that convince you to lead a righteous life?

Conversion: Conversion is not a one-time event, but a transformation that results in living differently as a result of exposure to God’s truth. Do any portions of this section or book cause you to want to begin to live differently?

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.⁴

³ Howard G. Hendricks and William D. Hendricks, *Living By the Book*, (Moody Press Publishers, Chicago, 2007), adapted from pg. 305 and from accompanying workbook.

⁴ Some of these application ideas are adapted from *Living By the Book*, Howard G. Hendricks and William D. Hendricks, Moody Press Publishers, Chicago, 2007, especially pg. 290-317.

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 "at the right hand of God," Col. 3:1). Find the same Greek or Hebrew reference number that is given for the Greek or Hebrew word you are examining. (For instance, "right hand" is Strong's #1188, if you're using a Strong's Concordance, or GK (NIV) #1288 if you're using an NIV Concordance). Examine several other verses or all the verses that use the same number, for instance, Matthew 26:63-64; (same account in Mark 14:61-62; Luke 22:67b-70); Romans 8:34; Eph. 1:19b-23; Heb. 1:3, 13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; and 1 Peter 3:22. These all have significant information about Jesus being at God's right hand. Matthew 25: 31-46 is one reference that talks about Jesus' right hand. Look up other scripture references, such as the Psalms (20:6; 21:8; 45:4; 48:10; 110:1; 118:15, 16, etc.), that use the same Greek or Hebrew word (different number in Hebrew) to compare the usage of the word. The Old Testament gives you more information. When the same word is studied in more than one account it is understood more fully.

Try these online sources: www.blueletterbible.org, www.biblegateway.com, and 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.studylight.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)

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

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

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

3We 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.

9For 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.

15He 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.

21Once 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.

24Now 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.

28We 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)

1I 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.

6So 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.

8See 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.

9For 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.

13When 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.

16Therefore 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.

20Since 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.

Colossians 3 (NIV)

1Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. **2**Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. **3**For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. **4**When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. **6**Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. **7**You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. **8**But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. **9**Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices **10**and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. **11**Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **13**Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **14**And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. **16**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. **17**And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

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

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

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

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

22Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. **23**Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, **24**since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. **25**Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.

Colossians 4 (NIV)

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

2Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. **3**And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

4Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. **5**Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the

most of every opportunity. **6**Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

7Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. **8**I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. **9**He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

10My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) **11**Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. **12**Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. **13**I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. **14**Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. **15**Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

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

17Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord."

18I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.