

3) What does it mean to you to say that you already ARE a saint? What does it mean to say that others in the church are? Is this concept difficult to accept? Why or why not?

**LEADER NOTES:** There are many in the church who spend a lot of time beating themselves up. Perhaps you yourself do, or you have such an individual(s) in your group. Maybe linger on this question and work to really internalize the idea that we are presently saints. This is also a difficult concept to consider when we are in deep conflict with a fellow believer. Perhaps linger on that aspect of this; that there are people in the church who may frustrate us who are also, already, saints.

4) Accountability homework: Paul is encouraging and praying for the Colossians. If it is appropriate to your group dynamic (confidentiality and trust are strong), have each member share one person they want to focus on encouraging and praying for this week. Check back next week with one another to see how it went.



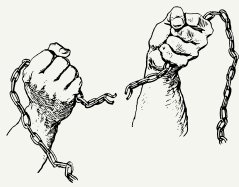
GREATER THAN

STUDIES IN COLOSSIANS



Fall Sermon Series

**Week 1 Study Guide**



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## Colossians 1:1-14 - Study Guide

1) Much of the sermon centered on a favorite triad of Paul's: faith, hope, and love. Let's explore those concepts a little further. What are they, and why do you think Paul sees them as so closely related? Assign these texts to your group and have each member read aloud the passage to aid your discussion:

- 1 Corinthians 13:13
- Galatians 5:4-6
- 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5
- 1 Thessalonians 5:6-9
- Romans 5:1-5

**LEADER NOTES:** There's a lot of directions this could go, and it's okay for the discussion to be open-ended. Eventually, try to move the discussion to what faith, hope, and love look like in your own lives. You may even want to use a whiteboard to create a chart of how your group sees faith, hope, and love interacting with one another. Recall concepts from the sermon. If discussion seems to be stalling, see what people think of these definitions from Frederick Buechner:

**Faith:** "Faith is not being sure where you're going, but going anyway. A journey without maps. Tillich said that doubt isn't the opposite of faith; it is an element of faith."

**Hope:** "Hope is ultimately hope in Christ. The hope that he really is what for centuries we have been claiming he is. The hope that despite the fact that sin and death still rule the world, he somehow conquered them. The hope that in him and through him all of us stand a chance of somehow conquering them too. The hope that at some unforeseeable time and in some unimaginable way he will return with healing in his wings."

**Love:** "Of all powers, love is the most powerful and the most powerless. It is the most powerful because it alone can conquer that final and most impregnable stronghold which is the human heart. It is the most powerless because it can do nothing except by consent. Love is not primarily an emotion, but an act of will. We can love our neighbors without liking them. In fact liking them may stand in the way of loving them by making us overprotective sentimentalists instead of reasonably honest friends. But liking often follows on the heels of loving. It is hard to work for people's well-being very long without coming in the end to rather like them too."

2) In the sermon, Tyler talked about the church, in difficult moments, stopping to remind itself of who Christ is and who THEY are in Christ. Talk about a time in your Christian walk where you lost sight of one or both of those things. What impact did losing sight of that have on your life? How did you end up coming back to who Christ is and who you are?