

RCC Women's  
Ministry



  
*Knowing Christ*

LESSONS FROM PAUL'S  
LIFE & MINISTRY

*Colossians & 2 Timothy*

*August - November 2023*



# Knowing Christ

## LESSONS FROM PAUL'S LIFE & MINISTRY

"We proclaim Christ! We warn everyone we meet, and we teach everyone we can, all that we know about Him, so that, if possible, we may bring every man up to his full maturity in Christ Jesus. This is what I am working at all the time, with all the strength that God gives me."

-The Apostle Paul  
Colossians 1:28-29

## *Complete In Christ*

### COLOSSIANS

Tuesday Evening:

August 29: Intro

September 12: Lesson 18

September 26: Lesson 19

October 10: Lesson 20

October 24: Lesson 21

## *Poured Out For Christ*

### 2 TIMOTHY

Tuesday Evening:

November 14: Lesson 22

November 28: Lesson 23

# Knowing Christ

## LESSONS FROM PAUL'S LIFE & MINISTRY

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-The Apostle Paul  
Colossians 1:28-29

## *Complete In Christ*

### COLOSSIANS

Friday Morning:

September 1: Intro

September 8: Lesson 18

September 1: Lesson 19

September 15: Lesson 20

September 29: Lesson 21

## *Poured Out For Christ*

### 2 TIMOTHY

Friday Morning:

October 13 Lesson 22

October 27: Lesson 23

# Knowing Him

## Lessons from Paul's Life and Ministry

### Lesson 18 Colossians 1

#### The Supremacy of Christ

The book of Colossians is a modern-day reminder that the foundational issues that fashioned the early church are still relevant to the twenty-first century. In it believers are told that character is at the heart of Christian conduct and that the truth must be taught and fought for by each succeeding generation of God's family.

**Read Colossians 1:1–29.** (If you have time, read through all four chapters of the book.)

#### *At a glance*

The main theme of this letter is that Christ is supreme in all things. From your initial reading, what stands out to you as distinctive about Christ and His work?

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Paul writes to an audience that views Christianity from a variety of philosophical perspectives, the result of blending ideas with worship of more than one god. He is concerned that the believers in Colosse might become deceived by the lies of false teachers. Some believers were accepting the fact that works (circumcision) must be added to their faith in order to be saved. Others thought that people had to attain a higher degree of knowledge to be like God (Gnosticism). And still others were following the astrological charts of the stars to direct their Christian walk. Paul's purpose is to help these believers protect themselves from those who would undermine the simplicity and sufficiency of their faith in Christ.

1. What close companion of Paul's is acknowledged as helping him write this letter?  
v. 1
  - a. What words does Paul use to identify his audience?
  - b. What form of greeting does he use in addressing them?

Rather than immediately dealing with the problem of false teachers in Colosse, Paul presents the truth of the gospel and the pre-imminence of Christ in all things. Repeating a pattern evident in some of his other epistles, he is quick to give thanks for the believers and acknowledge his heart to remember them in prayer.

In verses 4–8, Paul forms his prayer for the Colossian believers on the basis of their need as a body.

2. For what three important virtues does Paul give thanks to God on their behalf?  
vv. 4–5
  - a.
  - b.
  - c.
  - d. What does Paul recognize as the source of this fruit evident in the believers lives?
  - e. In addition to the church at Colosse, where else is this fruit of the gospel in evidence? v. 6
  
3. The faith, hope, and love in evidence in the church of Colosse was first planted by one of God’s servants; who was it? v. 7
  - a. God uses some of His children to plant the seeds of the gospel and some to water those seeds, but who is responsible for giving the increase and supplying the growth? See 1 Corinthians 3:7.

**Look closer** Paul was visited in prison by Epaphras, who brought him a good report. His commendation of their love in the Spirit (v. 8), refers to the fruit produced by the Holy Spirit working in the lives of Christians (Galatians 5:22–23). Which of these: *faith, hope, love*—is God working into your life at the present time? How?

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Paul next shifts his prayer from thanksgiving to supplication for what these people really need. Reflecting back on the good report brought by Epaphras, Paul prays that his readers will live lives that are pleasing to God.

4. In verses 9–11, for what does Paul pray?
  - a. v. 9
  
  
  
  - b. v. 10
  
  
  
  - c. v. 11
  
  
  
  - d. Personal: Look carefully at the elements of Paul's prayer. Which part is most applicable to you at this time? Why?

<p><b>Selah</b> Take a moment now and do what Paul describes in verse 12: <i>“Give thanks to the Father who has qualified [you] to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.”</i> What makes you qualified to share in the blessings of salvation?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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5. In addition to qualifying us as saints, what else has God done on our behalf?  
v. 13

Paul uses this opportunity to elaborate on the “Son of His love” (v. 13), expounding on the truth about Jesus Christ.

6. Use the verses that follow to help you understand who Christ is; and then state what you learn about Him in your own words. Don't rush the process, rather take time to meditate on what each aspect means to you personally.

a. v. 14

b. v. 15

c. v. 16

d. v. 17

e. v. 18

**Memory verse:**

*“Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” Colossians 1:28*

**Viewpoint**

Learn to view your circumstances through the lens of God's truth rather than looking at God's truth through the eyes of your circumstances. Practice this with the *In focus* word search below and then with the *Up close & personal* look to follow.

**In focus:** Write a definition for the following words, using the resources you have on hand (i.e., additional Bible translations, dictionary, Bible dictionary, concordance, etc.).

minister (1:25) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

stewardship (1:25) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

perfect (1:28) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Up close & personal:** It is the blessed responsibility of every believer to proclaim Christ in their sphere of influence and help other believers grow to full maturity. What have you learned through the process that you can pass on to someone else?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Reconciled in Christ

### Reread Colossians 1:19–23.

Jesus Christ is supreme in all things because “*it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell*” (v. 19).

1. By what means is God able to reconcile all things to Himself? What is the result?  
v. 20
  
2. Contrast and compare verses 21–22 with Ephesians 2:11–13. What do you learn about your estranged position before reconciliation? (Consider that you were an enemy of God in both your *mind* and your *behavior* and what it took to reconcile you to God.)

The word “If” in verse 23 could best be translated “since” to avoid misunderstanding the context of Paul’s words. Paul is not saying that believers will be presented holy and blameless if they remain faithful (salvation does not depend upon performance or works). He is confident, rather, that these believers will avoid false teaching and will remain faithful to the message of the gospel that reconciled them to God.

3. Personal: What “safeguards” are you building into your Christian walk that will assist you in recognizing and avoiding false teaching and in remaining faithful to Christ?



## Service for Christ

### Reread Colossians 1:24–29.

Paul was made a minister of the gospel specifically to reach out to the Gentiles and to bring every believer to maturity in Christ. Because maturity is the goal—part of ministry involves suffering and Paul knew this better than most. Writing from prison, he rejoiced in his suffering on behalf of Christ because it meant identification with Christ in His (Philippians 3:10).

1. For what reason did Paul endure suffering? vv. 24–25
  
2. How does Paul refer to the message he was sent to share? v. 26 What does this mean?
  
3. What is this secret message? v. 27 (See also Ephesians 3:1–6.)
  
4. Look up verse 28–29 in several different translations. What kind of effort does it take to *do the work* of the ministry?
  - a. What is the goal of ministry's labor and the object of suffering for the Lord?
  
  - b. What is the good news for everyone who shares in the work with Paul? v. 29

**Be transparent**

The aim of ministry and personal goal of every Christian is to please Christ. Is He number one in your life? How are you currently working to please Him?

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# A Clear Perspective

*“ . . . It pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me . . . ” Galatians 1:15-16a*

As God writes your story, use this page to let Him highlight and clarify what He revealed to *you* this week. Revisit the points that stood out to you and note your findings below.

1. As you studied God’s Word this week, how did your viewpoint change?

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2. What word of truth came into sharper focus for you?

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3. In what way have you grown closer to the Lord?

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4. What relevance is there between this week’s memory verse and your daily life?

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***Memory Verse:*** Write out this week’s verse from memory.

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# Knowing Him

## Lessons from Paul's Life and Ministry

### Lesson 19

#### Colossians 2

#### Fullness in Christ

Paul is about to tell his readers the single greatest truth regarding every Christian's struggle to be holy: *"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power"* (2:9–10). Because Jesus is Himself the fullness of God, the believer's relationship with Him allows that same fullness. There is no need to look anywhere else for satisfaction in this world.

**Read Colossians 2:1–23.**

#### *At a glance*

As you engage in your initial reading of chapter two, make note of the things that come to mind in today's world that lure believers in turning away from Christ and turning toward false teaching.

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1. What was the reason for Paul's inner conflict? v. 1

Paul was anxiously struggling on behalf of the believers in Colosse and all others who had not met him in person. He understood the attractive influence of some false teachers and how successful they could be in winning over young believers and those who did not have a strong scriptural foundation.

2. How did Paul insist these believers could avoid being deceived? v. 2

The words *"knit together in love"* are the same as *being united in love*. The image Paul portrays here is that of a body being held together by *joints and ligaments* (v.19), to ensure a strong, cohesive component. Since false teachers were divisive and destructive, the strength found in unity prevents believers from becoming vulnerable, providing the support needed to remain spiritually sound and healthy.

- a. In contrast to the false philosophical teaching that was prevalent in the church, what specific understanding about Christ does Paul state that all believers need? v. 3
  
- b. Why does Paul feel the need to make this case? v. 4

If believers come to an established understanding of who Christ is and their sufficiency in Him, smooth persuasive talkers will have no influence over them.

- 3. Though Paul was not with them in person, what about the Colossian church gave him cause to rejoice? v. 5
  
- 4. What command does Paul give for living the Christian life? v. 6

The Christian life is sometimes referred to as a race that believers run in order to win a prize, which is the upward call of God in Christ. But here, Paul uses another word to describe the believer's progress: "*as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so **walk** in Him.*"

- a. In order for there to be steady continued growth, describe what must take place? v. 7

Attaining to a higher degree of knowledge isn't the answer. The understanding that we are complete in Him, coupled with daily growth in Him, provides the strength and abundance that Paul is speaking about in these verses.

- 5. Paul's warning becomes increasingly straightforward in verse 8; what is it? Whose responsibility is this?

The words "*cheat you,*" literally mean to *be taken captive, carried away, or kidnapped.* The reference is to someone who is carried away into slavery because of departing from the truth. The argument Paul makes here is not against all philosophy but, specifically, against that which was being propagated by false teachers.

- 6. What two sources does Paul cite regarding this philosophy that is not of Christ? v. 8

7. What point does Paul drive home to help believers realize they do not need to look to the world for answers or satisfaction in life? vv. 9–10 (Personalize verse 10 in your answer by inserting the pronoun “I”.)
- a. v. 9
  
  - b. v. 10

**Selah** How does realizing that in Christ all the fullness of God lives in bodily form, and that you are complete in Him, help to strengthen you right now?

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**Memory verse:**

*“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.” Colossians 2:6–7*

**Viewpoint** Learn to view your circumstances through the lens of God’s truth rather than looking at God’s truth through the eyes of your circumstances. Practice this with the *In focus* word search below and then with the *Up close & personal* look to follow.

**In focus:** Write a definition for the following words, using the resources you have on hand (i.e., additional Bible translations, dictionary, Bible dictionary, concordance, etc.).

rooted (2:7) \_\_\_\_\_

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built up (2:7) \_\_\_\_\_

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established (2:7) \_\_\_\_\_

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abounding (2:7) \_\_\_\_\_

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Up close & personal: A Christian that is *rooted, built up, and established*, is also overflowing with thanksgiving! For what are you particularly thankful today?

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*"The greatest danger regarding cults . . . is complacency—considering ourselves and our children to be immune from their attraction. If Christ is not the center of a Christian's life, that Christian is ripe for another spirit . . ."* (Paul Fox)

## Forgiven in Christ

### Reread Colossians 2:11–15.

In verses 11–15, Paul completes the point he started in verses 9–10 about the believer's completeness in Christ.

1. Paul uses two illustrations to explain that our salvation is the work of God alone. What is the spiritual significance of each one? vv. 11–12
  - a. *circumcision made without hands* – (See Deuteronomy 30:6 and Romans 2:29.)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. *buried with Him in baptism* – (See Romans 6:1–7 for help.)

At the moment of salvation the new believer's old nature is *cut away* or *put off*, and Christ's new nature is *put on*. It is a work of God that only He can perform. The baptism Paul describes is the spiritual baptism where we become united with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

2. In your own words, describe the fullness of your salvation as Paul relates it in verses 13–14.

3. On the cross, Jesus Christ not only paid the price for sin, He won the victory over the powers of evil. How did He do it? v. 15

The victory was won, the battle was done—Satan was defeated and conquered! Defeated, however, still present in this world and still seeking to rob, kill, and destroy Christians. But once we understand our fullness in Christ, we are able to have power over his evil influence!

**Salah**

Learn to be spiritually strong because of who *you* are in Christ; don't allow the enemy's tactics to intimidate you. What understanding are you gaining through your study this week that will help you overcome? Reflect on this point throughout the week and see the difference it will make in your perspective and the application of God's truth!

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## Freedom in Christ

### Reread Colossians 2:16–23.

Not only are we as believers *full in Christ*, but we are also *free in Christ*—free from sin's power; free to live full lives that are pleasing to God.

1. Because of our fullness and freedom in Christ, what must we *not* do? vv. 16–17

This is a difficult area for many believers, but Paul says we must not allow others to judge us. The word *judge* means to pronounce unfavorable judgment on, to find fault with or to criticize. Apparently, the Colossian believers were being swayed by those who were judging them on what they ate or drank and on the religious days they celebrated. The basis for this criticism was *legalism*—measuring one's own or another's spirituality by keeping man-made rules and regulations. It is not any way to live and God has set us free from it! Paul states that keeping man's rules is just a *shadow of things to come*; but the *substance—reality*—is found in Christ.



2. What is the other area being targeted for criticism?
  - a. v. 18
  
  - b. v. 19
  
  - c. What do you think happens when a believer loses connection with the Head?

Paul's final word of caution is found in verses 20–23, where he warns of asceticism—the deprivation of the body's normal desires in order to achieve God's favor and approval.

3. What is wrong with this philosophy? vv. 20–23
  - a. Can you think of some everyday examples of this kind of false humility?
  
4. Self-denial has an appearance of wisdom; it looks good but has absolutely no value against what? v. 23 Give an example.

**Be transparent** Look again at verse 8. What lasting reminder will help you to avoid the pitfalls of asceticism and other forms of legalism? Ask God to seal this to your heart.

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# A Clear Perspective

*“ . . . It pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me . . . ” Galatians 1:15-16a*

As God writes your story, use this page to let Him highlight and clarify what He revealed to *you* this week. Revisit the points that stood out to you and note your findings below.

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4. What relevance is there between this week’s memory verse and your daily life?

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***Memory Verse:*** Write out this week’s verse from memory.

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# Knowing Him

## Lessons from Paul's Life and Ministry

### Lesson 20 Colossians 3

#### The Higher Perspective

Is it possible to become saved and yet not find satisfaction and significance in the Christian life? Yes, sadly, it is possible to receive Christ as Savior but not progress very far in Christian growth or fulfillment. Paul realized this fact all too well; hence, he calls all believers to gain ground in their daily walk by looking up through a higher perspective.

**Read Colossians 3:1–25.**

#### **At a glance**

As you read through this chapter initially, make mental note of the *virtues* of the new life that stand in stark contrast to the *vices* of the old life, and note the difference today in terms of your human relationships.

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God does not want His children to simply endure the disciplines of the sanctified life; rather He desires that we passionately pursue our relationship with Him, spiritually prospering every step of the way! Here in chapter three, the challenge is to make the ordinary—extraordinary by placing Christ in the center of everything.

The false teachers in Colosse were attacking the deity as well as the sufficiency of Christ. Paul corrects this thinking by stating that believers do not need to follow more rules or obtain more knowledge, but come to an understanding of their spiritual identification with Christ.

1. What truth does Paul begin with in verse 1?

Paul goes on to more fully explain our new life in Christ in the verses that follow.

The reality that we have been raised with Christ should produce a new kind of motive in us.

2. Because of our identification with Christ, where should our minds be focused? Why? vv. 1-3

a. Conversely, where should our minds *not* be? What do you think Paul means by this? See Romans 6:2 and Colossians 2:20.

**Look closer**

Because of your new identification with Christ, the “old you” has died to sin, and the “new you” is *hidden with Christ in God*. In order to understand this better, look at Galatians 2:20 Philippians 1:21; and 2 Corinthians 5:17. You are once and for all sealed with the Holy Spirit, safe and set apart for Him! What is the biggest change you have noticed in your perspective?

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Paul is not suggesting that believers disregard the details of earthly life so as to mentally dwell in some mystical realm, but to view life from a different perspective—a heavenly one—with the aim of impacting temporal choices and circumstances. We should learn to calculate (work through) our thoughts, emotions, and actions from an eternal perspective.

3. What has been hidden in the past will one day be revealed. As a believer, what are you promised in verse 4? See also 1 John 3:1–3.

Within the context of the first four verses, notice how many times Paul mentions Christ. Using this as his foundation, Paul goes on to elaborate on how spiritual living is based on the character of Christ.

Because of everything Paul has previously mentioned in verses 1–4, “*Therefore,*” he says, “*put to death your members which are on the earth . . .*”

4. List the specific things that are to be put to death in verse 5.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Why are these behaviors and heart attitudes to be eliminated?
  - a. v. 6:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. v. 7:

Some things are worthy of being put to death; others must be replaced with something else. In verse 8, Paul switches the imagery to that of old worn out clothing that must be discarded, and something new put in its place.

6. What are the old habits that must be replaced with new ones befitting a godly lifestyle? vv. 8–9

As we *put off* the old, we also make room to *put on* the new—that which is created in the image of Christ (v. 10).

7. What distinctions have been abolished within the Christian community, revealing that your relationship with Him is all that really matters? v. 11

**Memory verse:**

“*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*” Colossians 3:16

## **Viewpoint**

Learn to view your circumstances through the lens of God's truth rather than looking at God's truth through the eyes of your circumstances. Practice this with the *In focus* word search below and then with the *Up close & personal* look to follow.

**In focus:** Write a definition for the following words, using the resources you have on hand (i.e., additional Bible translations, dictionary, Bible dictionary, concordance, etc.).

raised [with Christ] (3:1) \_\_\_\_\_

renewed [in knowledge] (3:10) \_\_\_\_\_

image [of Him] (3:10) \_\_\_\_\_

**Up close & personal:** Think of something you've either put to death completely or discarded like old clothing, as you've learned what it means to be a Christian. (Note it briefly below.)

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## The Christian Lifestyle

### **Reread Colossians 3:12–17.**

Verses 12–17 list the virtues that stand in contrast to the previous mentioned vices. The old things put away are now to be replaced with the character of Christ.

1. Of what does Paul remind the believer? v. 12a
  
2. The above words are specifically descriptive of God's chosen people in the Old Testament—the nation of Israel (Deuteronomy 7:6). How are they applicable to you today as a Christian? See 1 Peter 2:9–10.

3. Take time to briefly define (in your own words) what the “well-dressed” Christian wears. Show-off your new lifestyle by *putting on* the following: (vv. 12–13)
  - a. tender mercies (compassion) –
  - b. kindness –
  - c. humility –
  - d. meekness (gentleness) –
  - e. longsuffering (patience) –
  - f. bearing with one another –
  - g. forgiving one another –
  - h. By what standard of measurement are you to forgive others? v. 13
4. Paul saves the most important article of the Christian’s clothing for last; what is it? Why is it so important? v. 14
5. In order to maintain unity in the body of Christ, what must believers do? v. 15
6. What is essential to exhibit the character of Christ and grow on to maturity? v. 16
7. When the Word of Christ finds a comfortable home in the believer’s life, there will be evidence of loving instruction and correction as well as corporate thanksgiving and worship. Whose name will be honored by the person adorned in this way? v. 17
  - Personal: How “well-dressed” are *you*? Can others see Him in you?



## The Christian at Home and at Work

### Reread Colossians 3:18–25 and 4:1.

Exhibiting the character of Christ is proof of His transforming power at work in your life! Godly choices and behaviors reveal that you are being made into His image.

Paul has moved from the foundation of the Christian life, to the Christian lifestyle, and now to the home and workplace—the areas that are most often tested. In a sense, he presents us with a prayer list, beginning with the relationships most important to us. Be sure to give time each week to praying for them.

1. What instruction does Paul give to each relationship? Why do *you* think this is?
  - a. Behavior at home toward: (vv. 18–21)
    - Wives –
    - Husbands –
    - Children –
    - Fathers –
  - b. Behavior at work: (vv. 22–25; 4:1)
    - v. 22 –
    - v. 23 –
    - v. 24 –
    - v. 25 –
    - 4:1 –



Which relationship is most difficult for you right now; and what article of “new clothing” do you need to put on to exhibit Christ? Ask God to help you today.

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# A Clear Perspective

*“ . . . It pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me . . . ” Galatians 1:15-16a*

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***Memory Verse:*** Write out this week’s verse from memory.

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# Knowing Him

## Lessons from Paul's Life and Ministry

### Lesson 21 Colossians 4

#### Ordinary People—Extraordinary Service

Is it possible for a Christian navigating through a world filled with all manner of enticements, deceptions, and substitutions to live an undiluted, uncorrupted life before God? Yes! It isn't a matter of God accomplishing His will by using exceptional people, but of ordinary people taking deliberate steps in obedience to Him. Paul wants every believer to *know* the God we serve and to *serve* the God we know.

**Read Colossians 4:1–18.**

#### **At a glance**

Paul's encouragement in this chapter has to do with basically three things: (1) being watchful in prayer, (2) walking in wisdom, and (3) using words of grace, so that you know how to answer every man, woman, and child He brings across your path. Imagine what a difference *you* can make for the kingdom of God by giving heed to these three priorities. Please share your thoughts.

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Paul had just finished making his appeal to believers (3:18–4:1) regarding their relationships within the Christian home and workplace. He now broadens that counsel to include the whole church body. His closing remarks in this letter have to do with a plea to deepen the personal devotional life with the Lord and a call to witness with the whole life to the world.

1. What is the nature of Paul's three-fold appeal for prayer in the following? Why is each one so vitally important? v. 2
  - a. *earnest* – (See also Romans 12:12 and Acts 1:14.)
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. *watchful* – (See Matthew 26:41; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; and 1 Peter 5:8.)

- c. *thankful* – (See Ephesians 5:20 and Colossians 2:7.)
2. Even though Paul is in chains, his focus in prayer is on others. What are his specific requests?
    - a. v. 3 –
    - b. v. 4 –

The fact that Paul is in prison physically does not prevent him from proclaiming Christ to all who would listen. The Word of God is not bound by the things of this world!

3. If believers are to be effective in using every opportunity to get the message of the gospel across, what does Paul say they must do? v. 5
4. What does Paul insist must accompany a *wise walk*; for what reason? v. 6

There's an old saying that "*you can draw a lot more people with honey than you can with vinegar.*" That being true, how careful we, as Christ's representatives, must be to make sure we are drawing people *to* Christ rather than driving them away.

In Paul's time, salt was used for two main purposes: as a preservative to keep food from spoiling and as a flavorful additive.

**Selah** Think about it . . . in order for your words to be *favorable* and *salty*, what would your speech need to consist of? Cite a couple of examples.

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5. Personal: Reflect back on some of your conversations this past week. How favorable has your talk been lately? Please explain.

**Memory verse:**

“Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.” Colossians 4:6

**Viewpoint**

Learn to view your circumstances through the lens of God’s truth rather than looking at God’s truth through the eyes of your circumstances. Practice this with the *In focus* word search below and then with the *Up close & personal* look to follow.

**In focus:** Write a definition for the following words, using the resources you have on hand (i.e., additional Bible translations, dictionary, Bible dictionary, concordance, etc.).

door (4:3) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

manifest (4:4) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Up close & personal:** How aware are you of the open door opportunities the Lord gives you to speak about Him? Pray that God would give you an increased sensitivity to the leading of His Spirit in this area and then walk through the next open door.

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**Witness with Your Life!**

**Reread Colossians 4:7–18.**

Verses 7–18 should be read and examined closely from the perspective of being much more than a list of Paul’s co-workers and friends. They are real individuals—ordinary in themselves—but whose lives and ministries became extraordinary because of their God!

**Look closer**

As you look closely, make note of what made each of them important to Paul, and also what you can learn personally from their example. (Use your cyclopedic index or concordance to add additional information, noting any cross references.)

- vv. 7-8: Tychicus
  
- v. 9: Onesimus
  
- v. 10: Aristarchus
  
- v. 10: Mark
  
- v. 11: Jesus Justus
  
- vv. 12–13: Epaphras
  
- v. 14: Luke
  
- v. 14: Demas
  
- v. 15: Nympha
  
- vv. 16–17: Archippus

**Be transparent**  
*Be transparent*

Paul's consuming passion was to communicate the message of Jesus Christ. He was careful to fulfill the ministry he had received from the Lord. Where has God entrusted you to get out the message of His Son? How are you doing?

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*"The most important question is not how much work is being done but how much Jesus is doing through you. Look up; God's ceiling is unlimited." Corrie Ten Boom*

# A Clear Perspective

*“ . . . It pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me . . . ” Galatians 1:15-16a*

As God writes your story, use this page to let Him highlight and clarify what He revealed to *you* this week. Revisit the points that stood out to you and note your findings below.

1. As you studied God’s Word this week, how did your viewpoint change?

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2. What word of truth came into sharper focus for you?

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3. In what way have you grown closer to the Lord?

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4. What relevance is there between this week’s memory verse and your daily life?

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***Memory Verse:*** Write out this week’s verse from memory.

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# Knowing Him

## Lessons from Paul's Life and Ministry

### Lesson 22 2 Timothy 1–2

#### Leaving a Legacy

How does a parent motivate a child who, for whatever reason, is not living up to his or her potential? Paul had to face that question as the end of his own life drew near. Soon he would pass the mantle of responsibility to Timothy, his son in the faith, along with the charge to remain strong and fulfill his ministry to the Lord. It was time for Paul to take a look back at what matters most and remind Timothy of who he was in Christ.

**Read 2 Timothy 1–2.**

#### ***At a glance***

We don't usually realize the impact one life will make on another until that life is gone. As you make your initial reading of these two chapters, what impresses you most about the influence we have on our fellow Christian sisters and brothers?

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Paul and Timothy shared a deep bond of friendship but in Paul's salutation, he reminds him of his appointed position as an apostle by the will of God. In addition to the loving counsel of a spiritual father, Paul firmly declares the truth to his wavering son.

1. In the midst of great personal suffering, what made it possible for Paul to give thanks? v. 3
  - a. What did Paul want Timothy to be assured of? vv. 3–4

2. Who was responsible for bringing Timothy to faith in Christ? v. 5

Timothy's grandmother Lois and mother Eunice listened to Paul preach the gospel on his very first missionary journey (Acts 13:13–14:21) and were converted to Christianity. By the time of Paul's second journey, these two godly women had led Timothy to saving faith. It was due to their influence that Timothy had *"from childhood . . . known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus"* (2 Timothy 3:15). Paul commends these women for their spiritual nurturing, and Timothy for the sincere faith that Paul was sure was in him as well.

### **Salah**

Personal: Who are some of those that have influenced you to become a believer and to grow in your Christian walk?

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### **Memory verse:**

*"For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."*  
2 Timothy 1:7

### **Viewpoint**

Learn to view your circumstances through the lens of God's truth rather than looking at God's truth through the eyes of your circumstances. Practice this with the *In focus* word search below and then with the *Up close & personal* look to follow.

**In focus:** Write a definition for the following words, using the resources you have on hand (i.e., additional Bible translations, dictionary, Bible dictionary, concordance, etc.).

ashamed (1:8) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

testimony (1:8) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Up close & personal: Have you ever been in a situation where the peer pressure made you feel ashamed of the Gospel? How did you handle it? What did you learn?

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### **Look closer**

True discipleship is costly and Jesus made it very clear during his earthly ministry what that cost entails. Take a close look at His words in Matthew 10:32–33; 37–39 and Mark 8:36–38. What do you learn about the cost of discipleship?

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## Don't Be Ashamed!

### **Reread 2 Timothy 1:6–18.**

Based upon what Paul has presented as motives for serving Christ in verses 1–5—authority of our calling, thankfulness, genuine love for others, praying for their needs—the remainder of verses 6–18 focuses on the admonition to not be ashamed of the Lord Jesus Christ. We're not told specifically what caused Paul to speak to Timothy in this manner but we can assume something had happened to Timothy that made him waver in His calling and perhaps even in his faith. Whatever difficulties Timothy had already encountered had taken a toll on him. Paul knew that Timothy would be targeted for personal persecution, possible imprisonment and even death after he was gone. It was critically important for him to deal head on with Timothy's fears if he was to be effective in his ministry. Paul issued only one commendation, saying, "*I am mindful of the sincere faith within you*" (1:5). The remainder of Paul's letter deals with the exhortations necessary to keep from becoming ashamed and re-ignite the spiritual fire in his protégé.

Perhaps you've experienced disappointment, discouragement, or even defeat that has cooled your spiritual fervor. Prayerfully put yourself in Timothy's shoes and ask God to encourage you today through His Word.

What we're given in verses 6–18 is a very personal glance at a loving spiritual father encouraging his son with what he needs most to succeed. Paul is speaking to Timothy directly but also to us indirectly. Make note of which of the following areas are of particular importance to you at this time.

1. **Stir up your gift (v. 6):** Paul reminds Timothy of something he already knew—that he'd been given a spiritual gift when Paul laid hands on him to receive his ministry. The word Paul uses for *stir up* in the Greek literally means *to kindle afresh* or *keep the fire alive*. Each believer has a grace gift from God (for further study you may reference these gifts in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4).

- a. Where does Paul place the responsibility for using this gift?
- b. *Keeping the fire alive* means exercising your gift on a regular basis. What gift has God given to you? If you don't know, ask God to show you.
- c. Where or how are you currently using your gift? Does it need to be rekindled?

2. **Use your resources (v. 7):** *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”* Think of how you can use each of your resources to help you maintain your witness for Christ.

- a. Power (Acts 1:8; 2 Corinthians 4:7) –
- b. Love (1 John 4:18) –
- c. Sound mind (1 Corinthians 2:16) –

3. **Accept your suffering (v. 8):** At the time Paul wrote this letter, to be associated with the Lord or with Paul, His prisoner, would mean almost certain criticism, persecution, and imprisonment or even death.

- a. Paul invited Timothy to join with him in his supreme life purpose; what was it? Philippians 3:10
- b. What does Paul say is the inevitable cost of following Christ? 2 Timothy 3:12
- c. Personal: Have you known suffering for righteousness sake? How?

4. **Remember your calling (8b–11):** “. . . *Who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began*” (v. 9)

a. What does Paul say your calling is *not* dependent upon? Upon what is it based?

b. What is the nature of your calling according to Ephesians 1:4?

5. **Trust your Savior (v. 12):** Paul’s intimate personal relationship with Jesus Christ convinced him of God’s faithfulness. He was persuaded that God would keep safe everything Paul had committed to him.

a. Because of Paul’s assurance of God’s faithfulness, he was able to pen the words of Romans 8:35–39. Read these words and consider how they might keep you from being ashamed of your faith in Christ.

b. Personal: How intimately acquainted are you with the Lord? Please explain.

6. **Guard your treasure (vv. 13–14):** “*Hold fast the pattern of sound words . . . that good thing which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Spirit who dwells in [you].*” Only two things in this world are of utmost importance to God: His Word and people. There will come a day when we will have to answer for what we did with Jesus Christ; how we upheld and defended the Word of Life.

a. When the Lord considers you, how safe is His Word with you? How do you regard it and handle it? Can He depend on you to keep it safe and use it wisely to represent Him?

7. **Choose your friends wisely (vv. 15–18):** Paul contrasts a few of his relationships with us in these verses. What can we take away from this? We can be sure to use wisdom in surrounding ourselves with those who are like-minded people of integrity whose aim is to glorify God by pointing us to Christ at all times.

a. Take a moment to assess the close friendships you keep; are they drawing you nearer to Christ or driving you further away? What would the Holy Spirit have you to do about it?

## Be Strong in Grace

### Reread 2 Timothy 2:1–26 for review.

Paul summarized the counsel previously stated in chapter one to Timothy by emphasizing his need to “be strong” (v. 1). It was not a suggestion on Paul’s part but rather a command. Timothy had no reason *not* to be strong, Paul had reminded him of his sincere faith, his gift, his resources, and so it was not an issue of having more, but of using what he’d already been given.

1. According to verse 1, who did Paul recognize as the source of Timothy’s strength?

The grace that forgives the sinner is the same grace that empowers the saint! To employ the full use of that grace requires the believer to respond in obedience.

2. In verses 2–6, Paul names four different aspects of the believer’s spiritual life that exemplify our obedience. What is the predominant mark of each one?
  - a. v. 2b
  - b. vv. 3–4
  - c. v. 5
  - d. v. 6

Paul goes on in verse 7 to say: “*Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things.*” Once again Paul does not make a suggestion but rather a strong command. The verb *consider* means to *carefully and clearly perceive with the mind, mulling over and fully understanding*.

3. In addition to the examples of *teacher—soldier—athlete—farmer*, notice where Paul points Timothy? What simple, powerful fact does he mention? v. 8

The verb *remember* in the Greek conveys the idea of *continuing to remember* the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the supreme example in every aspect of life. We must remind ourselves that we worship and serve the *living* Lord—“*Firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have preeminence*” (Colossians 1:18b).

- a. What else does the Bible tell us that Jesus became for our sakes? See Romans 8:29 and Hebrews 12:23.

Paul was entrusted with the message of this gospel, being called to suffer for it.



4. Though imprisoned, what does Paul have to say about the gospel itself? For whose benefit did Paul endure all things? vv. 9–10

In verse 11, Paul shares a faithful saying that contains eternal blessing for all who remain strong. *“If we died with Him, we shall also live with Him”* is a reference to the believer’s identification with Christ in His life and death. *“If we endure, we shall also reign with Him”* refers to our suffering and glorification with Christ. Those who endure to the end will reign with Him (Revelation 3:21).

The last two stanzas (vv. 12b–13) are in the negative: *“If we deny Him, He will also deny us.”* This speaks of those who only temporarily profess to know Christ, but who do not actually follow Him by becoming identified with Him. *“If we are faithless, He remains faithful; He cannot deny Himself.”* This states that Christ’s faithfulness is not contingent upon our faithfulness to Him; He remains faithful no matter what His children do. Timothy most certainly would have understood the meaning behind Paul’s words. The instructions here are not for Timothy only; he was to continue reminding others of these things in demonstration of his faithfulness in the ministry.

5. What was Timothy to charge others to do; why? v. 14
  - a. What was he to give heed to himself? v. 15
  - b. What must he avoid? Why was this so important? vv. 16–18

Referring to the Lord’s servant, Paul introduces the metaphor of different kinds of vessels to illustrate the point of faithfulness and unfaithfulness within the church (v. 20).

6. Using verses 20–26, describe a vessel fit for honor.
  - a. Using the same verses, describe a vessel fit for dishonor.

<p><b>Be transparent</b></p> <p>Paul shares in verse 19 what is every Christian’s responsibility; put this in your own words. How are you doing?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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# A Clear Perspective

*“ . . . It pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me . . . ” Galatians 1:15-16a*

As God writes your story, use this page to let Him highlight and clarify what He revealed to *you* this week. Revisit the points that stood out to you and note your findings below.

1. As you studied God’s Word this week, how did your viewpoint change?

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2. What word of truth came into sharper focus for you?

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4. What relevance is there between this week’s memory verse and your daily life?

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***Memory Verse:*** Write out this week’s verse from memory.

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# Knowing Him

## Lessons from Paul's Life and Ministry

### Lesson 23 2 Timothy 3–4

#### Perilous Times Ahead

If you knew you were living in the last days, how would it motivate you to prepare for the future? The very term “last days” conjures up mental images of apocalypse, catastrophe, end of the world and Judgment Day. But the Bible teaches that the last days actually began with the ascension of Christ and continue up through today and until the time of Christ’s return. In these concluding chapters of 2 Timothy, Paul discusses the behavioral characteristics of people in the last days and the coming apostasy. The exact date of the end is unknown but a look at history from a biblical perspective along with a social inventory of our culture reveals to us that we are rapidly approaching Christ’s imminent return.

**Read 2 Timothy 3–4.**

#### *At a glance*

From your first glance of these chapters, what stands out to you personally as evidence that you are living in the last days?

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The Apostle Peter spoke of the last days in 2 Peter 3:11 saying, *“Therefore since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God?”* Paul’s closing words in chapters 3–4 are an encouragement to persevere through hard times and remain faithful to Christ by focusing on Him and serving Him, whatever the circumstances.

Paul uses explicit terms to describe for Timothy and all his readers what the last days will entail.

1. Life will continue as it always has, but what does Paul say is coming? v. 1  
What do you think Paul means by this?

2. What ungodly characteristics will be evident as man's character continues to digress on a downward spiral? Write them out from the verses indicated below.
  - a. v. 2
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. v. 3
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - c. v. 4
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - d. What does Paul emphatically say we should do when encountering such individuals? v. 5 (Consider the potential consequences if you don't.)

We recognize from the descriptions given in these verses that increasing ungodliness will exist on a broad scale—even in the church! In verse 5, Paul summarizes the real issue: people will have a *form of godliness but will deny its power*. In other words, it is possible to know the word of God without knowing the God of the Word! People may profess God with their mouths, yet deny Him with their lifestyle. True righteousness is evident in the heart and life that has been *reborn*—renewed by the power of God. The outward behavior reflects the inward transformation that has taken place.

Paul clearly had the false teachers in mind in verses 6–9.

3. What was their method of operation? v. 6 (Consider the implications here.)
  - a. Who were they targeting? Why were they so vulnerable?

Paul describes these women as “*always learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (v. 7). They must have been familiar with the Old Testament scriptures and adept at discovering and discussing theological matters, but they had not made personal application of the truth to their daily lives. The fact that these women were “loaded down with sins” probably means they were not cleansed from them, which in turn blinded them to the truths of God's Word.

Two men—Jannes and Jambres—are mentioned as examples of men in opposition to the truth. Jewish tradition depicts these men as sorcerers of Pharaoh’s court in Egypt, who opposed God’s authority by resisting Moses. They succeeded to a point, but because they were counterfeits, they could not withstand the power of God!

4. How does Paul compare the minds of these two men with the false teachers of his day? vv. 8–9
  - a. What does Paul say regarding their faith?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - b. Regarding their progress?

A counterfeit is a substitute that is based on lies—it cannot stand up to the light of truth—eventually it will be exposed for what it is.

**Selah** Think about it . . . as a follower of Jesus Christ, your attitudes and actions should emanate from your relationship *with Him*—from the Holy Spirit who is within you. If this is not the case then something is wrong. It isn’t the occasional sin or failure you should be concerned about; but rather old habit patterns still present, continual destructive behavior or ongoing bad choices that are a warning sign for you to heed! Has God put His holy finger on something in your life He considers a red flag? Note it here and then use Paul’s words in Colossians 1:9–14 as your prayer regarding this area. Continue to pray it through until the Holy Spirit changes your mind and you change your behavior.

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**Memory verse:**  
*“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16–17*



Learn to view your circumstances through the lens of God's truth rather than looking at God's truth through the eyes of your circumstances. Practice this with the *In focus* word search below and then with the *Up close & personal* look to follow.

**In focus:** Write a definition for the following words, using the resources you have on hand (i.e., additional Bible translations, dictionary, Bible dictionary, concordance, etc.).

perilous (3:1) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

gullible (3:6) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Up close & personal:** Are *you* someone who is easily influenced by others? If so, what two important things will prevent you from being misled? See 2 Timothy 2:15, 21.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### The Charge to Endure

The beliefs we hold will be evident in the lives that we live. Paul had just finished telling Timothy that false teachers would be revealed but, eventually, they would come to ruin because they cannot withstand the scrutiny of Scripture. Now Paul will offer his own life as the example of one who truly knows and walks with God.

#### Reread 2 Timothy 3:10–17.

One of the best ways to remain focused in the present trial is to reflect back on God's faithfulness in the past. Paul knew that Timothy needed a refresher course in his own Christian heritage as well as a reminder of the power contained in God's Word.

1. Personal: select one aspect of Paul's life from verse 10 and share how his example has influenced *your* life as a believer. His *doctrine—manner—purpose—faith—longsuffering—love—perseverance*. (Circle one.)

Timothy was often Paul's traveling companion throughout areas such as Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. He witnessed firsthand Paul's faithfulness to the Lord and he witnessed the Lord's faithfulness to Paul.



2. What does Paul remind Timothy about the Lord's faithfulness in verse 11?
  
3. Timothy was no doubt present during Paul's trials and even shared with him in some. What lasting truth does Paul share with him in verse 12?

Everyone who desires to live godly lives will suffer persecution, but it's interesting to note that, as believers, we do not get to choose our times of suffering; rather, God chooses them for us according to His sovereign purpose. We do, however, get to choose how we will handle our sufferings. If we choose compromise, the path may be easier, shorter and more predictable in some respects; but if we choose obedience, though the path is strewn with obstacles, it is safer than a known way because God is with us.

4. What does Paul say about the fate of ungodly men and women? v. 13
  
5. As a spiritual father, what personal exhortation did Paul share with Timothy? vv. 14–15

At a time when being a Christian could cost your life, Paul knew the power and potential of the Scriptures to save lives: *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness"* (v.16).

**Look closer** *"By inspiration of God"* is the same as *God-breathed*: *"Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"* (2 Peter 1:21). Because God is the Author of all Creation, the Bible is His authoritative Word over all. Paul states that it is profitable for the following: (Write the purpose of each one in your own words.)

*Doctrine* \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*Reproof* \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*Correction* \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

*Instruction* \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

What is the goal? v. 17 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Fulfill Your Ministry

### Read 2 Timothy 4 for review.

Paul warned Timothy that over time people would be less willing to listen to the truth but that he must remain faithful to his calling and leave the results to God.

1. What motivated Timothy to follow through with his commitment? v. 1

Paul had the right perspective on Christian service and wanted Timothy and the readers of this letter to retain it as well. Today, in much of the world, God is unknown; to many within the church, God has become too familiar. We are in danger of losing our reverential fear of God—our wholesome dread of displeasing Him. We are much too casual about our relationship with Him and our commitment to serve Him. Listen to the words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:9–10: *“We make it our aim . . . to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”*

Paul’s final charge to Timothy is simple: *“Preach the Word!”* Throughout Paul’s two letters to Timothy, he made numerous references to the word of God.

2. Look up a few of these references and note the various terms he used to describe the scriptures.
  - a. 1 Timothy 1:10; 2 Timothy 1:13
  - b. 1 Timothy 1:11
  - c. 1 Timothy 2:7
  - d. 1 Timothy 4:13

### **Look closer**

What drove Paul and Timothy to follow through was the certainty that the Lord Jesus Christ will appear to judge the living and the dead. To understand this a little more clearly, take a closer look at two passages of scripture that speak of Him as Judge: one that deals with salvation, the other with the believer’s works. Write down the similarities and differences you notice.

Judge of Life and Death: John 5:24–30

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Judge of Works and Rewards: 1 Corinthians 4:1–5

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The pastor's commitment to ministry is a full time one: "*in season and out of season,*" but this could also apply to any devoted servant of the Lord.

3. What methods of ministry are utilized by the servant who is prepared? v. 2

4. Why is it so important for God's pastor or servant to give out God's Word?

a. v. 3

b. v. 4

If God's Word is what controls God's servant, it also affects every other aspect of life: *the Word influences your choices; your choices reflect your priorities; your priorities reveal your beliefs* to a world desperate for the truth!

5. Personal: Hopefully, your aim is to please the Lord and fulfill His purpose for your life. Answer the following exhortation in verse 5 to the best of your ability by sharing your comments:

a. Are *you* being watchful in all things?

b. Are *you* enduring afflictions?

c. Are *you* proclaiming the Word of God in your sphere of influence?

d. Are *you* fulfilling your ministry?

6. In looking back, what was Paul's view of his life as he wrote this letter? v. 6

- a. How did he summarize his life and ministry? v. 7
  
- b. What was he eager to receive from the Lord? v. 8
  
- 7. According to your observations of the remaining verses 9–22 . . .
  - a. What was important to Paul?
  
  - b. Who was important to Paul?
  
  - c. What did he retain as his #1 priority at all times?
  
  - d. Who remained with him to the very end?

***Be transparent***  
*Be transparent*

You've looked at Paul's values—what he wanted to pass on as a lasting legacy to Timothy. Compare Paul's with your own: what is important to you? Who is important to you? What are your priorities?

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Who promises to remain with you forever; how does this fact encourage you today? See Hebrews 13:5

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# A Clear Perspective

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