NEW TESTAMENT LETTERS / INTRODUCTORY TEACHING

COLOSSIANS

The Supremacy and Sufficiency of Christ

An introduction to Paul's letter, its message, and its application for Christian life.

KEY VERSE • COLOSSIANS 1:18

"That in all things he might have the preeminence."

Who, where, and why?

AUTHOR

Paul identifies himself as the writer (Colossians 1:1). Timothy is also named in the greeting.

RECIPIENTS

Believers in Colossae, a city in Asia Minor (modern-day Türkiye). Paul appears not to have visited them personally (2:1).

CIRCUMSTANCES

Paul writes while imprisoned (4:3, 10, 18), encouraging the church to remain rooted in Christ.

Teaching note

Colossians is often grouped with Paul's "Prison Letters." The exact place and date of writing are debated; many place it during an imprisonment in the early 60s AD.

Why did Paul write Colossians?

To strengthen believers against teaching that could pull them away from the complete sufficiency of Jesus.

KEEP CHRIST CENTRAL

Do not let impressive-sounding ideas replace the truth about Jesus (2:4, 8).

BE ROOTED IN HIM

Continue in the faith, established and built up in Christ (2:6–7).

LIVE THE GOSPEL

Let what you believe about Christ shape your character and relationships (3:1–17).

Big idea: We do not need a different or “higher” savior. Christ is enough.

Who is Jesus?

Paul's answer is the theological center of the letter.

JESUS CHRIST

Supreme • Sufficient • Lord

Colossians 1:15–20

- The image of the invisible God (1:15)
- All things were created through and for Him (1:16)
- He holds all things together (1:17)
- The fullness of God dwells in Him (1:19; 2:9)
- Through His cross, God brings reconciliation (1:20)

Teaching emphasis: Christian maturity begins with seeing Christ clearly.

How is the letter organized?

CHAPTERS 1–2 | CHRIST & BELIEF

Who Christ is, what He has accomplished, and why believers must stay rooted in Him.

CHAPTERS 3–4 | CHRIST & DAILY LIFE

Put off the old life, put on the new, and let Christ shape homes, work, prayer, and witness.

1

Christ is supreme

1:1–29

2

Stay rooted in Christ

2:1–23

3

Live the new life

3:1–25

4

Pray and witness

4:1–18

Simple outline: Know the greatness of Christ → refuse substitutes → live as His people.

What was Paul warning them about?

Colossians 2 cautions against ideas and practices that promise spiritual fullness while drawing attention away from Christ.

EMPTY PHILOSOPHY

Do not be taken captive by human tradition that is not centered on Christ (2:8).

RULES AS SPIRITUALITY

External regulations cannot, by themselves, transform the heart (2:16–23).

FALSE HUMILITY

Religious appearance or fascination with spiritual powers must not displace Christ (2:18–19).

Discussion question

What can people today be tempted to trust in alongside—or instead of—Jesus?

What does life in Christ look like?

Because believers have been raised with Christ, their everyday choices begin to change (Colossians 3:1–17).

PUT OFF

Sexual immorality, greed, anger, slander, and destructive speech (3:5–9).

PUT ON

Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and love (3:12–14).

LET CHRIST RULE

Let His peace rule, His word dwell richly, and gratitude shape worship and daily life (3:15–17).

Key principle

The gospel is not only something we believe; it changes how we treat people.

Where should the message show up?

AT HOME

Paul addresses family relationships and calls for conduct shaped by the Lord (3:18–21).

AT WORK

Work sincerely and responsibly, remembering that service is ultimately offered to the Lord (3:22–4:1).

IN THE WORLD

Pray, act wisely toward outsiders, and speak with grace (4:2–6).

A useful summary

A Christ-centered life is visible in our closest relationships, our responsibilities, and our words.

Note for teaching: explain the household instructions in their historical setting and emphasize the letter's repeated call to live under Christ's lordship.

Four anchors for your study

COLOSSIANS 1:15–16	Christ reveals the invisible God; all things were created through Him and for Him.
COLOSSIANS 1:18	**“That in all things he might have the preeminence.” (KJV)**
COLOSSIANS 2:6–7	Walk in Christ, rooted and built up in Him, established in the faith.
COLOSSIANS 3:17	Whatever you do in word or deed, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Responding to Colossians

DISCUSS

- What stands out to you about the greatness of Jesus in chapter 1?
- What competing voices can distract believers from Christ today?
- Which quality in Colossians 3:12–17 do you most need to practice this week?

CLOSING PRAYER

Ask God to deepen your understanding of Christ, keep you rooted in Him, and help your daily life reflect His character.