

Colossians Study Guide

| Date | Sunday Topic | Bible Passage |
|-------|--|---------------------|
| 10/12 | <i>Living in the Shadow of Empire</i> | Colossians 1:1-14 |
| 10/19 | Kid Connection - Determination | |
| 10/26 | <i>Battle for the Imagination</i> | Colossians 1:15-29 |
| 11/2 | <i>Truth & Lies</i> | Colossians 2:1-3:4 |
| 11/9 | <i>Being Separate - Being Together</i> | Colossians 3:5-17 |
| 11/16 | Kid Connection - Gratitude | |
| 11/23 | <i>Subversive Freedom</i> | Colossians 3:18-4:1 |
| 11/30 | <i>Embracing Suffering</i> | Colossians 4:2-18 |

Questions are adapted from *This Morning With God* by Carol Adeney (gen. ed.) from InterVarsity Press. *This Morning With God* is a daily devotional that will take you through the entire Bible in 3 years. I highly recommend it, though it may be out of print.

The following arrangement of questions and dates does not match up exactly with the Sunday topics. Instead, it has been arranged to distribute the questions more evenly where possible.

Weeks of October 12th and October 19th

Overview

Paul addresses and counters false teaching spread by false teachers, the prevailing culture and the Roman Empire itself. It is hard to overestimate the effect of living in an empire whose money proclaims the emperor to be the “son of the divine father.” How can a Christian live under the earthly rule of such an empire but still remain faithful to the true Son?

1. Skim the letter.
2. List statements made about Christ.
3. List elements of false teaching and the problems they create.
4. List positive commands given to the believers.
5. How does what you believe influence your daily life?

Col 1:1-8

1. What is an apostle? How does Paul greet the Colossians?
2. What does this opening tell you about the Christians at Colossae? What is the source of their hope? What is the source of the hope of the people around you today? What is the source of your hope for the immediate future? Your eternal future?
3. What is happening to the gospel? Who explained the gospel to the Colossians?
4. Describe Epaphras. What did he do? Would you like God to use you in a similar way? Pray that it would be so.

Col 1:9-14

1. What do you learn about prayer in these verses? Who is praying? When? For whom?
2. What are the specific requests? What has God already done for the Colossians?
3. Why do you pray? What requests do you make regularly? For whom do you pray regularly?

Week of October 26th

Col 1:15-23

1. Who is Jesus? What is his relation to God, to heaven & earth, and to the church?
2. What is Jesus to you?
3. What is the purpose of the cross? What does it mean to “reconcile?”
4. What is Christ’s final goal for you? How closely do your own goals align with his?

Col 1:24-29

1. Everyone suffers. What are some wrong-headed ways we might be tempted to handle suffering? How does Paul rejoice in his sufferings? Why does he rejoice? What is his commission?
2. What is the mystery that has been revealed? Revealed to whom? Now knowing the mystery, what implications are there for you? For your friends?
3. What is Paul’s goal in his ministry? How does he work towards this goal? What would that look like in your life?

Col 2:1-7

1. Define what you think Paul means by “strive” or “exert.” For whom does Paul pray? What request does he make?
2. What are the riches or treasures to which he refers (Col 2:2-3 and 1:27)?
3. Why is Paul writing this letter?
4. What two characteristics of the Colossians give Paul joy?
5. What does it mean to “live in him” (v7)? What would or does it mean for *you* to live in him?

Week of November 2nd

Col 2:8-15

1. How are you to distinguish between true and false teaching? Do you know of any other helpful hints or rules of thumb?
2. What has happened to you in Christ (compare 2:9 with 1:19)? Of what is Christ the head (cf. 1:18)?
3. What is the circumcision done by Christ? What is the relation between circumcision and baptism?
4. What has happened to you because of Christ? What has happened to the “powers and authorities” because of Christ?
5. What has happened to you because of Jesus’ resurrection?

Col 2:16-19

1. How does v 16 relate to the previous passage?
2. In what ways are the Colossians being judged and disqualified? How does Paul describe these practices and those who participate in them? Why are they unnecessary?
3. If you are a part of the body, who is the head? What does the head do for you?

Weeks of November 9th and November 16th

Col 2:20-3:4

(2:20-3:4 is actually a continuation of the previous week’s topic, but it can serve as a good review.)

1. What does this passage say about abstinence and self-denial? In what ways do these rules appear wise? How and why do they fall short?
2. What is the role and place of negative rules (“Do not...”) in your life right now?
3. What is the difference between these negative commands and the positive commands Paul describes in 3:1 and following? What is to occupy your mind and energy?
4. How would your day differ if you practiced Colossians 3:1-2? Commit your mind to Christ accordingly.

Col 3:5-11

1. How does v5 relate to the previous passage?
2. What sins are described and what is God’s attitude toward them? What is your attitude? Is there a disconnect? Agreement? Why?
3. Compare the old and the new natures. What is happening to your new nature in Christ?
4. How might v11 have affected their community? What issues might it have addressed? What issues might it address in your current community?

Col 3:12-17

1. What positive commands does Paul present here? How do they relate to 2:20 and 3:1?
2. What qualities are to be “put on”? [NB - *Images of clothing, putting on and putting off, and new and old natures are images deeply connected to baptism.*] Can you think of any specific ways or situations in which these qualities could shine through in your life today?
3. What is the example of forgiveness?
4. In what two places is the peace of Christ to rule? If you were to live more fully in the peace of Christ in both arenas, how might your life be different?

Week of November 23rd

Col 3:18-4:6

1. What is the proper relationship between husband and wife? Child and parent? Slave and master? List the specific commands and reasons. Do these directives apply today? What if you are wrong? How do you know?
2. How does Col 3:24-35 apply to your work?
3. How and for what are the Colossians to pray?
4. How might you live more wisely in the way you act (v5) and speak (v6) to outsiders?

Week of November 30th

Col 4:7-18

- List out each of the people in this passage and what you are told about them. What have they done for Paul? Why is he sending them back with this letter?
- Compare 4:12-13 with 1:7-8. What is Epaphras' prayer-life like? Paul's? Yours?
- With whom are the Colossians to share this letter? With whom are you to share what you have learned from this letter?