

Our Glorious Hope

A study in Colossians



"... Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Colossians 1:27

FORD

Table of Contents

Sections	Page
How to Use this Study Guide	4
Colossians Our Glorious Hope	
Colossians 1:1-14 To Colossae With Love	5
Colossians 1:15-29 Reconciled in the Incomparable Christ	9
Colossians 2:1-8 Firmly Rooted in Christ.....	13
Colossians 2:9-15 Fully Forgiven in Christ.....	17
Colossians 2:16-23 Freedom in Christ	21
Colossians 3:1-11 The New Life.....	25
Colossians 3:12-4:1 The New Lifestyle	29
Colossians 4:2-18 Ordinary People.....	33
My Reasons for Hope.....	37

How to Use This Study Guide

Each week, as you sit down to study, begin with prayer. Before reading the lesson and answering the questions, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal His truth to you. You may find it helpful to have a few study aids such as a dictionary, a concordance, and more than one translation of the Bible. You may also find the following online resources helpful: BibleGateway.com BlueLetterBible.org

Note: The New American Standard Bible (NASB) was used for this Study Guide with consideration of the New King James Version (NKJV) and the Amplified Bible.

At the end of each week's study questions, there is a "Lift Your Heart" section. This will be an important and personal part of your study. You are encouraged to write in your journal what transpires as you listen and respond to the whispers from God's heart to yours. When you look back through your journal at the end of the study, you will be blessed and amazed at your insight and growth.

The Bible is an endless mine of priceless treasure. The "Growing Stronger" section is designed to help you dig more treasures from God's Word that will strengthen your relationship and walk with Him. May what you find there dazzle you!

Colossians 1:1-14... *To Colossae With Love*

Epaphras may have started the church at Colossae. It is likely that Paul never met these believers, yet he loved them as part of the family of God. This is one of Paul's prison epistles which reveals his determination and zeal to pray for others, even strangers, regardless of his own circumstances.

Read Colossians Chapter One

Re-read verses 1-5

1. Look up "apostle" in a thesaurus and write the synonyms here:
2. What two qualities did the Colossians have that Paul is grateful for? (verse 4)

How does the first one produce the second one?

3. How are faith and love related to the hope mentioned in verse 5?

Read verses 6-8

4. What are some ways the gospel is spread to "all the world"?

How are you a part of spreading the gospel?

5. How does Paul describe Epaphras?

Why are these characteristics important in sharing the gospel?

Read verses 9-14

6. Do you think it is possible to pray without ceasing? Explain your answer.

"Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?"
~ Corrie Ten Boom

7. What is Paul's first priority in his prayer for the Colossians?

8. Write verses 10-12 in your own words making it a personal prayer.

9. What did God the Father accomplish on your behalf? (verse 13)

How did God the Son accomplish your redemption? (verse 14)

Lift Your Heart...

Paul was very specific in his prayers for the Christians in Colossae. When you pray for another believer, are you specific? Or do you only ask God to bless them? Ask a friend to share personal prayer requests with you, note them in your journal, and use these notes to guide you as you pray for them.

Growing Stronger...

There are many prayers recorded in the Bible. Some include prayers for healing, protection, and provision. Investigate the following verses and summarize Paul's focus:

Ephesians 1:15-19

Ephesians 3:14-19

1 Thessalonians 1:2-4

Study notes for Colossians 1:1-14

Colossians 1:15-29... *Reconciled in the Incomparable Christ*

Like today, the concept that “all roads lead to God” was common in Colossae. It was important for Paul to assure them, and us, that Jesus Christ is God and has supremacy over all things. It is His supremacy that gives Jesus the power to reconcile us to God.

Read Colossians Chapter One

Re-read verses 15-18

1. According to the following verses, how did Jesus reveal the Father?

John 1:18

John 12:45

John 14:8-11

2. Using the following verses of Colossians 1, list Paul’s descriptions of Jesus:

vs. 15

vs. 15

vs. 16

vs. 17

vs. 17

vs. 18

vs. 18

vs. 18

vs. 18

Read verses 19-23

3. Write verses 19-20 in your own words.

How can these verses help you explain that Jesus is the only way to God?

*"Yeshua said, 'I AM the Way – and the Truth and the Life;
no one comes to the Father except through Me.'"*

~ John 14:6, Complete Jewish Bible

4. Using a dictionary, write the definition of "reconciliation".
5. If you have been reconciled to God, what is your before and after condition according to verses 21-22?

Before	After

Read verses 24-27

6. What reasons do you see for Paul's unusual response to suffering?
7. According to Ephesians 3:6, what is the "mystery" Paul speaks of in Colossians 1:26?
8. What difference does it make in your life to have "Christ in you"?

Read Colossians 1:28-29

9. What is Paul's goal?

How does he accomplish it?

Lift Your Heart...

Read and meditate on Colossians 1:15-19. Who is Jesus Christ to you? Write your answer in your journal.

Growing Stronger...

In difficult circumstances, you might not always know how to respond. The Bible can help you choose the appropriate attitude in trials. Consider and comment on what the following verses say about suffering.

2 Corinthians 1:6-7

2 Corinthians 4:7-12

James 1:2-4

1 Peter 1:6-7

Study notes for Colossians 1:15-29

Colossians 2:1-8... *Firmly Rooted in Christ*

Paul was concerned for the believers in Colossae, yet he rejoiced that they maintained good discipline and stability in their faith. He reminds us that our treasure is in Jesus Christ, who resides in us; we do not have to look anywhere else.

Read Colossians Chapter Two

Re-read verses 1-3

1. What are Paul's desires for the believers in Colossae?
2. How does love create unity in the church?
3. Where are you to find true wisdom and knowledge?

How is this different from the world?

Read verses 4-5

4. What warning did Paul give?
5. What attributes were displayed by the believers in Colossae which gave Paul reason to rejoice?

How are these attributes evident in your life?

Read verses 6-8

6. What are some characteristics of those who have received Christ Jesus as Lord?

Do you see these characteristics in your own life? Explain your answer.

7. Relate specific ways you can "walk in" Jesus Christ. Find verses to support your answer.

8. How can having an attitude of gratitude keep you from becoming easy prey for false teaching?

What are you thankful for today?

9. In what way can false teaching hold you captive?

*"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

Lift Your Heart...

Giving your heart to Jesus is only the beginning; now you need to “walk in” Him. Step by step, day by day, life is a journey. We are not expected to sprint through life, but rather to make steady progress. Ask God to show you how you are doing in your walk with Him; whether you are making progress or are a bit out of step. Record His response to you in your journal.

Growing Stronger...

The Christian Church has had to deal with false teachers and false doctrines since its beginning. No one thinks they would be susceptible to believing a lie, yet we are repeatedly warned to be on our guard. Intense study of real money can help bank tellers recognize a counterfeit. In the same way, we need to study the truth of God's Word to recognize false teaching. Read the following verses and summarize what you learn about false teachers, false doctrines, and their impact on believers.

Acts 20:28-31

Romans 16:17-18

Galatians 1:6-9

1 Timothy 1:3-7

2 Timothy 4:3-4

Study notes for Colossians 2:1-8

Colossians 2:9-15... *Fully Forgiven in Christ*

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Paul begins this section of his letter explaining why we can trust in the sufficiency of Christ.

Read Colossians Chapter Two

Re-read verses 9-10

1. Summarize what the following verses say about Jesus.

John 1:1-3

John 1:14

Galatians 4:4-5

Philippians 2:5-8

Colossians 2:9-10

2. According to Colossians 2:10, what has God done for all believers (who are in Christ)?

What does this mean to you personally?

Read verses 11-15

3. For the Jews, circumcision was a physical testimony of their covenant relationship with God. What did Moses say about circumcision in Deuteronomy 30:6?
4. What do you think it means that "in Him you were also circumcised...by the circumcision of Christ"? (Colossians 2:11-12)
5. How is baptism an outward testimony of a believer's relationship with Jesus Christ?
6. According to verse 13, describe your spiritual state before and after you were forgiven?
7. Everyone has a "certificate of debt" (an IOU) because of their transgressions, trespasses, and sins. Explain what God has done with yours.
8. How did Jesus ultimately triumph over our enemy Satan?

*"The death of Christ was not only a pardon; it also manifested might.
It not only canceled a debt; it was a glorious triumph.*

~ Erdman

Lift Your Heart...

You have victory in Jesus, yet you live in a fallen world. Satan has been defeated, but he has not yet conceded defeat; he has been overthrown, but he has not yet been eliminated. Ask God to reveal any areas in your life where you are not walking in the victory Jesus accomplished on the cross for you. In your journal, write your response to what He reveals to you.

Growing Stronger...

Having been made complete in Jesus Christ, how are you to live? Read the following verses and record promises and/or instructions God gives you in His Word.

Suggestion: Read the verses in their context by reading the portion of Scripture before and after each one.

Romans 6:8

2 Corinthians 5:7

Galatians 5:16

Ephesians 2:10

Ephesians 5:2

Ephesians 5:8

1 John 2:6

Study notes for Colossians 2:9-15

Colossians 2:16-23... *Freedom in Christ*

Paul has assured the Colossians that their salvation is complete in Jesus. Christ set them free from the bondage of the law with its penalty of death. Therefore, they should not allow themselves to be intimidated into thinking that genuine spirituality is found in rules, experiences, or self-denial. Instead, they should walk in the freedom that is theirs in Christ Jesus.

Read Colossians Chapter Two

Re-read verses 16-17

1. How susceptible are you to the criticism and judgment of others concerning your spirituality? Explain your answer.
2. What are some man-made (or self-made) rules you try to follow to please God?

Can these rules change your heart? Explain your answer.

3. Why is God the only One who can judge your heart?

"Legalism...is a rigid, confining, and lifeless way to live. It is easy because all it requires is a list of rules coupled with dutiful compliance. Wisdom or the skillful application of biblical principles to life's situations is unnecessary. Just comply." ~ Max Anders

Read verses 18-19

4. In what ways do following man-made rules result in false humility and pride?
5. How can spiritual quests for experiences and visions be a distraction from the truth of Jesus Christ?

How does this affect your spiritual growth?

Read verses 20-23

6. Based on these verses, what do you think "died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world" means?
7. Write Romans 12:2 in your own words.
8. Read Philippians 3:7-11.

What is of most value?

Where is your righteousness found?

9. How can a personal relationship with Jesus be a more effective deterrent to sin than following man-made rules and rituals?

Lift Your Heart...

Your salvation is a free gift; you cannot earn it, nor can you add to it. But free does not mean cheap. It is costly, bought for you by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is something to be treasured and guarded. Ask God to reveal anything you may be trying to add to your salvation in order to make yourself more acceptable to Him. Write a prayer in your journal thanking Jesus for His free gift and for the price He paid.

Growing Stronger...

God's Word is full of spiritual truths which, when applied to our lives, provide us with a firm foundation for our daily walk. Read Romans 6:3-14. Summarize some of the truths you find.

Study notes for Colossians 2:16-23

Colossians 3:1-11... *The New Life*

When you became a Christian, you died to your old life and the sin that controlled you. Your new life is hidden in Christ and safely kept. But you also live in the here and now; you must deal with your sin nature and continually die to it. Paul starts this chapter with a way to have victory over the areas of sin we are all susceptible to.

Read Colossians Chapter Three

Re-read verses 1-4

1. What are you most looking forward to when you meet Jesus face-to-face?
2. Why should heavenly things be more important to you than earthly things? (verses 3-4)
3. In what situations are you tempted to set your heart and mind on earthly things?
4. How can you set your heart and mind on things above rather than earthly things?

Read verses 5-11

5. What tendencies of your flesh are you to put to death?
6. How can you keep God's perspective on immorality and greed when our culture accepts them as normal?

7. List the six sins of the mouth mentioned in verses 8-9:
8. What are some effects of the sins named in verses 5 and 8-9 on your relationships with others? Be specific.

How do you personally gain victory over these sins?

*"It does little good if Christians declare and defend the truth,
but fail to demonstrate it in their lives." ~ Warren Wiersbe*

9. Write verses 10-11 in your own words:
10. How can being aware of Christ in others be a remedy for prejudice?

Lift Your Heart...

Like the believers in Colossae, you have been saved out of a perverse culture. How have you seen your life change for the better? Are you growing spiritually as you “put off” sinful behavior and “put on” godliness? As you express your thoughts in your journal, be sure to include a prayer of gratitude to God for the grace and strength He is giving you to make these changes.

Growing Stronger...

We each struggle with our old sinful nature. How might applying the following verses help you to live strong in your new life in Christ?

Romans 13:14

Galatians 5:16

Ephesians 6:11

Philippians 4:6-7

Philippians 4:8

Why are these better than just trying harder?

Study notes for Colossians 3:1-11

Colossians 3:12-4:1... *The New Lifestyle*

In the last lesson, we were exhorted to “put off” our old sin nature and “put on” our new life in Christ. Paul now tells us what Christian character looks like and practical instructions for living out our new lifestyle in our interpersonal relationships.

Read Colossians Chapter 3 through Chapter 4:1

Re-read verses 12-17

1. How does the description, “chosen of God, holy and beloved” (NASB), compare with your view of yourself?

What do Colossians 1:12-14 and 2:9-10 say about you?

2. List the godly virtues you find in Colossians 3:12-14:

"Our love to God is measured by our everyday fellowship with others and the love it displays." ~ Andrew Murray

3. What should your primary motivation be for forgiving others?
4. Look up “admonish” in a dictionary. Write the definition here.

Have you ever been admonished by “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs”? If so, how?

Read verses 18-21

5. Wives are to submit to their husbands "as is fitting in the Lord". From what you have learned in Colossians 3:5-17, describe godly submission.

What would it not include?

6. Why do you think submission is such a controversial subject?

7. Compare Colossians 3:21 with Ephesians 6:4.

What are parents not to do?

What are parents instructed to do?

Read Colossians 3:22-4:1

8. How can "fearing of the Lord" influence your work ethic?

9. Who are you really working for?

What difference should this make in the quality of your work?

In addition to your wages, what will be your reward?

10. As an employer, how should serving your "Master in heaven" benefit your employees?

Lift Your Heart...

Read Colossians 3:17-4:1. Is the Lord showing you an area at home or work in which you are not serving Him wholeheartedly? Ask the Lord to show you specific ways you can fully serve Him; list them in your journal. Then ask the Lord to give you the grace, strength, and gratitude to do all things in His name.

Growing Stronger...

When you allow the word of Christ to fill your life (verse 16), you will be able to build up others and you will have a worshipful, thankful heart. Search through the following verses and discover some of the benefits the word of God can bring to your life.

Psalm 119:7

Psalm 119:11

Psalm 119:24

Psalm 119:28

Psalm 119:42

Psalm 119:66

Psalm 119:130

Psalm 119:133

Study notes for Colossians 3:12-4:1

Colossians 4:2-18... *Ordinary People*

Paul has reminded the Colossian believers that they are identified with an extraordinary Christ who has absolute supremacy. He calls ordinary believers to live their ordinary lives in an extraordinary way.

Read Colossians Chapter Four

Re-read verses 2-4

1. How does Paul direct us to pray?
2. Though Paul was in chains, what was his prayer request?

What does this tell you about his heart?

3. Read the following verses. Describe God's heart toward unbelievers.

Matthew 11:28-29

Luke 19:10

John 3:16

Romans 5:8

2 Peter 3:9

Read verses 5-6

4. How are you to conduct yourself around unbelievers?

In what way will this enable you to know how to respond to each person?

5. What opportunities do you have to talk with unbelievers?
6. How can you find answers for the questions people raise about your faith?

Read verses 7-18

7. How do you think Paul was able to maintain his perspective while imprisoned?

8. Who has come alongside you in a difficult situation to encourage you?

How did they make a difference?

9. Who was Paul sending to the church in Colossae?

How did Paul describe them?

Why were they going?

Lift Your Heart...

It can be easy to view Paul as some kind of super-saint, but he would be the first to say that he was just an ordinary man. God builds His kingdom through the faithful obedience of ordinary people. Opportunities for evangelism are everywhere. In your journal, write a prayer asking God to give you the wisdom and grace to share the love of your extraordinary Savior with others. Then ask the Lord Jesus to use you as a laborer for His kingdom.

*"We are God's fellow workers,
and as such we turn to prayer to equip us for the partnership."
~ Philip Yancey*

Growing Stronger...

Colossians 4:7-18 are more than a mere list of names. They are real, ordinary people, who helped Paul carry out an extraordinary ministry for the sake of an extraordinary Savior. List some of those who worked alongside Paul.

What words or phrases did Paul use to describe these friends?

List a few ordinary people you know personally, who do extraordinary work for the sake of an extraordinary Savior. Look for an opportunity to encourage them and commit to pray for them.

Study notes for Colossians 4:2-18

My Reasons for Hope

