

Colossians is a book that is focused on eternity, Heaven and motivation for living a life that is devoted to Christ on Earth. A key verse for the book of Colossians is: "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God." Colossians 3:2-3. Use this Nine part discussion series to dive into this rich book of the Bible. (This series is loosely based on Pastor Pat Schultz's ten sermons on Colossians, which he preached in 2010-2011.)

The Hope of Heaven...Gives Great Joy Now!
Part 1 - Colossians 1:1-14

Icebreaker: How does it make you feel when a friend tells you the specific things he or she notices and appreciates about you?

Read Colossians 1:1-14

1. In Col. 1:3-6, what are the characteristics of the Colossian church that cause Paul to always be thankful?
2. Who are some people that you consider to be examples of displaying faith, love or hope?
3. How much time have you spent thinking about or contemplating what Heaven will be like?
4. How do you think a vibrant 'hope of Heaven' produces faith in Christ and love for other Christians in our lives?
5. How do you think the 'hope of Heaven' can stir up in us, some of the qualities listed in verses 10-12?
6. The phrase "brought us into" carries the meaning in the ancient world of transference from one kingdom to another kingdom. What is something you are thankful to have been rescued from? What is something you are thankful for, now that you have been brought into the Kingdom of the Son?

Prayer: Prayer for the person on your left by filling in the blanks with his/her name in this personalized version of Colossians 1:9-14.

Dear Lord I pray that you would "fill _____ with the knowledge of Your will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. And I pray this in order that _____ may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please You in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to Your glorious might so that _____ may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified _____ to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. For You have rescued _____ from the dominion of darkness and brought _____ into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Christ is Supreme Over All!
Part 2 - Colossians 1:15-20

Icebreaker: What problems have you encountered in helping someone understand why Jesus is the only way to God?

Read Colossians 1:15-20

1. How many statements can you write down from this passage that describe why Jesus is Supreme? Begin each statement with: "Christ is..."

2. Go around the room taking turns reading a statement from your list. After each statement is read aloud, ask the following questions:

"How has God deepened your understanding or appreciation of this aspect of Jesus' character or nature?"

(For example: You could share how discoveries made through microscopes or telescopes have added to your appreciation of Jesus' supremacy over nature?)

"How does this aspect of Jesus' character or nature impact my life or motive me or encourage me?"

(For example: You could share how understanding Christ as the Head of the church has motivated you to be more committed to your church.)

Prayer: Take turns worshipping and praising Christ with simple prayers based on the statements you wrote down and your answers to the two questions above. (For example: *Jesus, You are the creator of the Universe. I stand in awe of you whenever I stop to look around at all you have made from the stars above to the tiniest bug. I worship You as the powerful creator.*)

The Hope of Glory: Christ in You
Part 3 – Colossians 1:21-29

Icebreaker: What goal has been compelling enough to make you willing to suffer to reach it?

Read Colossians 1:21-29

- 1.) In verses 21-23, what is the “before & after” that Paul shows has occurred in these believers lives, in their relationship with God and in their behavior?

- 2.) How did these changes occur (see Col. 1:19-22)?

- 3.) In the New Testament, a *mystery* doesn’t usually refer to something mysterious, but rather to something that was previously hidden which God now wishes to make clear. What is the mystery Paul is speaking about?

- 4.) Take a minute to review Col. 1:15-20 & your discussion about Christ’s Supremacy from last week. How does that phrase “Christ in you” – affect or surprise you in this context?

- 5.) Read several different translations of Col. 1:28-29, if possible. What are some characteristics that a believer who is perfect, mature, or complete exhibit? How are you pursuing this goal?

- 6.) What happens when you labor with all your energy towards spiritual maturity? How can meditating on the truth “Christ in you” – help you labor with all His energy?

Prayer: Share something you would like to apply to your life from this discussion. Then pray for the person on your left. You may use this sample prayer, if you wish:

*“Dear Lord, I lift _____’s request up to you. Please help _____
to apply Your truth to his/her life. Amen.*

Champions with Christ
Part 4 – Colossians 2:1-14

Icebreaker: Complete this statement, “I would feel fulfilled if…”

Read Colossians 2:1-14

1. Since we know that “Christ is in you” (Col. 1:27), what do you find encouraging in Colossians 2:1-4?
2. Read Ephesians 2:8-9. How does a person receive Christ? How then is a person to continue in Christ (Col. 2:6)?
3. How have you gotten off track in the simplicity of walking with Christ in the past? What has kept you feeling discouraged or defeated?
4. What is Paul’s answer for feeling empty, discouraged or defeated in Col. 2:9-10?
5. Read Col. 2:11-15. Why do you think it is important to remember all that Christ has done for us? What does His work imply about you?
6. In the end we either go through life on ‘self-power’, or ‘God-power.’ Which has been your tendency lately? What is a step you could take to ensure you are being empowered by God?

Prayer: Pray for each other based on your answer to #6. You may use this sample prayer, if you wish.

“Dear Lord, please help _____ to go through life being empowered by You, rather than trying to do it by will-power. Help _____ to take the step of _____ and tap into Your power this week. Amen.”

Experience a Lasting Victory
Part 5 - Colossians 2:16-23

1. Go back & silently reread Col. 2:9-15, insert your own name every time you read “you” or “us.” How does this impact how you view of yourself?

Read Colossians 2:16-23

2. What “shadows” were the Colossians trying to add to reality in Christ?
3. Even good or spiritual things can be shadows for us today. What have you found yourself ‘needing’ or ‘depending on’ in order to feel good about your walk with Christ?
4. When you ‘feel bad’ about not measuring up to our standards of a good Christian, do you think you are sensing the conviction of the Holy Spirit or might you be sensing some ‘guilt-laden whispers’ from your enemy the devil?
5. Have you ever seen Colossians 2:23 in your life? You tried really hard in your own power to overcome a bad habit or character flaw...only to fall flat on your face?
6. What is the key, in your own words, to experiencing a victorious Christian life, according to Colossians chapter 2?

Prayer: Pray for the person on your right, using the following personalized version of Colossians 2:9-15 to pray that he/she would walk in the victory Jesus has already won for them!

Dear Lord, help _____ to walk in the victory Jesus has already won for him/her. For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,¹⁰ and in Christ _____ has been brought to fullness. Jesus is the head over every power and authority. _____’s whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when _____ was circumcised by Christ,¹² having been buried with Him in baptism, in which _____ was also raised with Him through _____’s faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead.¹³ When _____ was dead in his/her sins, God made _____ alive with Christ. He forgave _____ all his/her sins,¹⁴ having canceled the charge of _____’s legal indebtedness, which stood against him/her and condemned _____; He has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Amen.

Life after Death
Part 6 – Colossians 3:1-11

Icebreaker: As a child, how did setting your heart on a certain toy or gift affect how you acted and what you thought about?

Read Colossians 3:1-11

1. What do you think it means to set your mind on things above?

2. What is a current situation in your life where you are being challenged with the choice to set your mind on earthly things or to set your mind on things above?

3. Greed is identified as idolatry in verse 5. How does thinking of sin in general as an idolatry issue (i.e. focusing on or prioritizing something rather than God) clarify what needs to change on a heart level?

4. What is the only solution Paul offers for dealing with our sinful nature? (Col. 3:5)

5. When something dies (including our sinful nature), pain is usually involved. How can having a “Colossians 3:1-4 Perspective” help make these kind of hard choices?

6. What would it mean for you to make Christ your all? Is there anything in your life that you need to re-prioritize or put to death so that Christ can be your all?

Prayer: Pray for each other based on your answer to #6. You may use this sample prayer.

*“Dear Lord, please help _____ to make Christ his/her all by
_____ & making You his/her highest priority. Amen.*

Love Over All
Part 7 – Colossians 3:12-17

Icebreaker: What is the most daring thing you have ever done?

Read Colossians 3:12-17

1. V. 12-13 – How does understanding that we are “dearly loved” by God empower and motivate us to love others?
2. Which of the ‘clothes’ listed in verse 12 do you tend to ‘leave in the closet’ more than others?
3. How does understanding that we are forgiven by God give us the ability to forgive others?
4. V. 14-15 – How have you experienced love and unity in the body of Christ? Why is that so important?
5. V.16 – The word “admonish” (in the NIV) can also mean warn, rebuke or reprove. When was a time that you were grateful that someone “spoke the truth in love” to you, even if it was hard to hear? How does v.17 serve as a guide for how best to lovingly share a hard truth?
6. V. 17 - Which part of ‘lovingly sharing the hard truth’ is more challenging for you? The lovingly part or the hard truth part?

Prayer: Pray for each other based on your answer to this question: What is one way that I can more fully ‘put on love’ this week?

“Dear Lord, please help _____ to put on love by doing _____ . Thank you for loving us, Jesus, and for being our example for how to love other people. Amen.

Transformed Relationships
Part 8 – Colossians 3:18-4:1

Icebreaker: Who is someone you look up to?

Read Colossians 3:18-4:1

1. V.18-19. How are the roles & responses in marriage spoken of here different from what is valued in the rest of the world? How does each role & response reflect a part of the triune God?
2. V. 20-21. What is the motivation, listed here, that children are supposed to have for obeying their parents? What are some ways that you or other parents could reinforce this in their home?
3. These verses depict parents and children interacting closely. What are some ways you have noticed that the world, your flesh or the devil tries to influence parents and children to be separated from each other?
4. V. 22-24. While this passage doesn't condone slavery, it does give counsel on how to make the best of even that horrible circumstance. How might these same principles apply to the workplace? (Think employees & supervisors, etc...)
5. How do you think your flesh, the world and the devil have influenced you in the opposite direction of what is pictured in this passage?

Prayer: Pray for each other based on your answer to this question: In which of these relational spheres do I need to reflect Christ and his ways more: marriage, with children, or on the job? What is a step I can take in the right direction?

“Dear Lord, please help _____ to reflect Christ in their relationships. Please help _____ to take the step of _____ in order to reflect you more (in marriage, with children or on the job). Thank you for loving us, Jesus, and for desiring to transform our relationships with your love. Amen.

Making the Most of Your Life
Part 9 – Colossians 4:2-18

Icebreaker: What is something on your “Bucket List”?

Read Colossians 4:2-18

1. V.2-4 – How devoted are you to prayer? What keeps you from praying?
2. What motivates you to pray?
3. V.5-6 – How have you experienced a willingness to share your faith more, when you have been praying for specific people to come to Christ and for opportunities to share your faith?
4. When was a time that you made the most of an opportunity to share your faith or encourage someone toward Christ? How was being ‘full of grace’ important?
5. V.7-18. Which description of Paul and his feelings for those he is writing to, or of the actual individuals he greets catches your attention? Why?
6. How do you think Paul and those he writes to are ‘making the most’ of their lives?

Prayer: Share one person you know or see regularly that you would like to pray to come to a saving relationship with Christ. Pray that person to come to Christ and for God to give you an opportunity to share Christ with them. You may use this sample prayer, if you wish.

“Dear Lord, please bless _____ with a saving relationship with You. Give me an opportunity to share my faith with _____ and to be ‘full of grace’ in my conversations with them. Amen.