

Colossians

COLOSSIANS 1-2

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Paul's letter to the church at Colossae was most likely written from Rome around AD 61 or 62. It is one of Paul's prison letters written alongside Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon. Though there was a body of believers at Colossae, it is clear that Paul was writing to them to correct false teaching. There was apparently much false teaching that was trying to influence Christians and alter the gospel of Jesus, and we can see reflections of this also in the New Testament letter written to the nearby city of Ephesus. As a book, Colossians can be divided into two parts: 1) Colossians 1-2:23, in which Paul comes against the false teachings trying to infiltrate the church. 2) Colossians 3-4 which focusses on defining Christian living. We learn very clearly that how we act and react is a key part of what we believe and who we are in Christ.

DISCOVERING GOD – COLOSSIANS 2:1-10

– 1 –

Paul teaches that in the gospel are all the hidden things which help us come alive and enter eternity.

In Christ, we have new life which is not of this world.

(v. 1-3)

– 2 –

Paul teaches that we must walk and live in Jesus Christ, not just acknowledge Him.

True Christians live like they talk.

(v. 4-7)

– 3 –

Paul shares that in Christ is all fullness; we are complete in Him.

The traditions of this world are always seeking with no answer.

(v. 8-10)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Our answers about God will not be found through anything except the person of Jesus Christ. When we come to Christ in repentance and accept Him as LORD, we must walk in Him. That is where we learn and grow in His Spirit.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, THANK YOU FOR HELPING ME TO LIVE FOR YOU.

Christian Graces

COLOSSIANS 3-4

DISCOVERING THE WORD

One of the more interesting things about reading the end of the book of Colossians is how Paul recognizes individuals who are helpers and friends to him in the ministry of the gospel. These people were working hard to communicate the message of Christ, and who even suffered for their dedication to God. Paul also mentions Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, as one of these people. Paul did not have the easiest of histories with Mark or Barnabas. Acts 12 tells us that Paul and Barnabas disagreed so strongly over Mark leaving their first missionary journey that they split up. They both continued to minister, but not together any longer. By the end of Paul's ministry, however, the situation is different, whether by the working of God in his heart or by age and experience, probably both, Paul has moved beyond earlier disagreements and back to Christian unity once again.

DISCOVERING GOD – COLOSSIANS 4:1-10

– 1 –

Christian employers must give their employees the same respect and honour God gives to them.

In Christ, we see and live differently because of God's authority in our lives. (v. 1)

– 2 –

Paul teaches that the speech of a Christian should always be graceful. We are responsible for what we say and how we say it.

(v. 2-6)

– 3 –

Paul gives Mark the just title he deserves, because of Christ. We must be careful in our judgments.

God works with each Christian to better our character. (v. 7-10)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Every day, we must set our heart, soul, mind, and strength to becoming more like the LORD Jesus. As we follow Him, the Holy Spirit will change us from the way we are to the way we need to be.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, THANK YOU FOR HELPING ME TO GROW IN YOUR WORD.

Thessalonica

1 THESSALONIANS 1-3

DISCOVERING THE WORD

1 Thessalonians was written as a letter to the church at Thessalonica, early on in Paul's ministry. It's believed to have been written not long after Timothy joined Paul's mission, and it seems to be aimed at answering questions that the Thessalonians may have about God and the gospel of Christ. Back in Acts 17, we saw Paul, Silas, and Timothy evangelizing in Thessalonica for a short time. Thessalonica was the largest city in the important Roman province of Macedonia. Paul, Silas, and Timothy faced strong opposition there from Jewish leaders and city officials alike. So much so that they had to leave more quickly than was normal. Even though they were able to establish a church, it makes a lot of sense that Paul would send back a letter aimed at answering questions and providing encouragement.

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 THESS. 3:1-13

– 1 –

The Christian Church has always been fought against in this world.

As Christians, we should not be surprised or shaken in persecution.

(v. 1-5)

– 2 –

Paul's concern for the Thessalonian believers was real and true. True Christian leaders are concerned that people serve Jesus Christ.

(v. 6-10)

– 3 –

Paul demonstrates that prayer for the Church is required and expected by the leaders of the Church.

Jesus Christ leads us to pray for one another.

(v. 11-13)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

God remains consistent in His call to spiritual leaders—they are called to pray for, care for, and help the Church. The Church is the temple of the Holy Spirit. God is building His Kingdom now, and we need to respond to His call on our personal lives to live for Him.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, THANK YOU FOR GIVING US ETERNAL LIFE. HELP US TO TAKE YOUR KINGDOM SERIOUSLY.

People Who Know

1 THESSALONIANS 4-5

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The Thessalonian Christians knew God and understood that God's Kingdom was coming. Paul calls them "sons of the light". They knew how they were supposed to live, they knew God, and they knew persecution. It is interesting to me that they were told to comfort one another with the knowledge that Christ was coming back again. Today, so many of us seem programmed to immediately divide or argue over the details of the second coming of Jesus, but it is not supposed to be this way. We are supposed to trust God with the details and know that regardless, Christ *is* returning! For the Thessalonians, this reminder encouraged them in their suffering. Yes, they were suffering now, but one day the suffering of the righteous ends with the culmination of our faith – being with Christ our Saviour and King. Suffering in the body is one thing, we all have to deal with measures of this, but Christians are a people who will not suffer spiritual torment or death, we will be saved from God's wrath! Our destination is not hell, not destruction, not suffering, our destination is glorious peace and rest in God.

DISCOVERING GOD – 1 THESS. 5:1-15

– 1 –

Those who know Jesus Christ as LORD are not ignorant. Christians know from God's Word that Jesus Christ is coming back soon.

(v. 1-4)

– 2 –

The return of Christ is the way we look forward to the plan of God. The world will not just go on from one generation to another—it will culminate to the plan of God.

(v. 5-11)

– 3 –

We should not repay evil for evil but pursue what is good for everyone. As Christians, we should become less and less selfish in life.

(v. 12-15)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

God helps us to age well! As we commit our lives to follow Him, the Holy Spirit trains us to become selfless.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I WANT TO HONOUR YOU IN ALL I DO, IN MY WORK, REST, AND PLAY.

Prayer for the Word

2 THESSALONIANS 1-3

DISCOVERING THE WORD

God has preserved His Word in the form of the Scriptures so that we can direct our lives according to what it says. The Bible reveals the character of God to us; its histories, poems, commands, and teachings work to give us a dynamic picture of God. More than this, as we study the Word with the intention of growing in God, He is faithful to meet us and grow us. Think about what Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 3:1-2, “Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may run *swiftly* and be glorified, just as *it is* with you, and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith”. It strikes me here that the Word of God can accomplish God’s good purposes (ISAIAH 55:11). This verse also reveals something about the wicked; it calls them unreasonable. Wickedness has always been unreasonable, to be freed from it we need to be healed by God.

DISCOVERING GOD – 2 THESS. 3:1-11

– 1 –

Evil men and women do not have faith in God.

The knowledge of God and our submission to Him is good and reasonable.

God is faithful.

(v. 1-3)

– 2 –

God’s love brings patience to us in Christ.

When we grow in the Word of God, the Holy Spirit will direct our hearts to God’s love and patience of Christ.

(v. 4-5)

– 3 –

Paul did not burden the people by taking from them.

Christians should work to serve the advancement of the Word of God.

(v. 6-11)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

When we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, He provides all that we need (MATTHEW 6:33). We should never resort to shady ways in our lives or business, if we know and love the LORD. The Word of God is pure and we need to be people who live it as well as teach it.

TODAY’S PRAYER

LORD, I LOVE YOUR WORD.
HELP ME TO READ AND
UNDERSTAND IT.

Pastors & Deacons

1 TIMOTHY 1-3

DISCOVERING THE WORD

In 1 Timothy, we see Paul writing to his fellow minister and spiritual son, Timothy. He had established Timothy as a leader in the Church and was now instructing him on how to develop and organize leadership within the Church. When I read 1 Timothy, I'm struck with how far Church leadership has drifted from the Biblical truths that tell us what it should be, and with how holy a calling it is. The Word is clear on several points that we struggle with in today's culture. Right off the bat, Paul tells Timothy, "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife..." (1 TIMOTHY 3:2). This is the beginning of a list of several things. We would be wise to remember that it is God who makes the leadership issue in the Church an important one. What God says is important, we should treat as important. As James wrote, "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment" (James 3:1). We should listen to what the LORD tells us about pastoral requirements.

DISCOVERING GOD — 1 TIMOTHY 3:1-13

— 1 —

A pastor is a spiritual leader whose lifestyle is devoted to God, and is able to teach. We must pray carefully about the right men who are selected by God to be pastors. (v. 1-6)

— 2 —

A pastor must have a good and solid testimony from the LORD, that all can see. Our testimonies are real, based on what the Holy Spirit has done, and nothing that we have made ourselves. (v. 7)

— 3 —

Deacons and their wives also have a deep call on their lives. We should pray deeply for those who will become deacons in our churches. (v. 8-13)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

God knows best when it comes to Church leadership. Let's take God's instructions seriously, while also remembering to pray regularly for those who are doing the work. We should never base our decisions on feelings only, God will show us and help us know who is right for the work.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, PLEASE HELP ME TO HONOUR YOUR WORD AND PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR SPIRIT.

How to Be

1 TIMOTHY 4-6

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Does the Bible teach us on how we are to work our jobs? Yes, it does! Paul laid out principles that are still applicable to our relationship with work and our employers and employees. In 1 Timothy 6, Paul was writing to Timothy to help him navigate difficult situations that Christians were finding themselves in. From his instruction, we can see that Christians should work in noticeably different ways than what our world often propagates. It is very easy to say you are a Christian, it is much harder to live as one. God can and will empower us through the Holy Spirit for a godly life, but we have to be willing. It isn't always an easy road, but it is a good one. It is a road that requires us to change, which is only truly possible through the work of God. When we work to change ourselves, we'll experience some success, but without the forgiveness of our sins from God and the work of the Holy Spirit, lasting deep change will elude us.

DISCOVERING GOD — 1 TIMOTHY 6:1-10

— 1 —

We understand the importance of honouring those in authority over us, when we come to Jesus Christ. As we follow Christ, the main reason for service is love.

(v. 1-2)

— 2 —

Godliness does not mean we benefit financially from it, it means we love the LORD Jesus Christ. We do well to remove ourselves from talk that bashes and bruises.

(v. 3-5)

— 3 —

Godliness with contentment is great gain. We should pray for help in how we work.

(v. 6-10)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The LORD has saved us from the ravages of hell. As we learn to live for Him, He also saves us from the consequences of evil living here on earth. Our lives are better here with God, and they will be better there with God.

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, HELP ME TO GROW
AND DO BETTER IN MY LIFE.**

Be Faithful

2 TIMOTHY 1-4

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The end of 2 Timothy records what are probably the last official written words of Paul the apostle. 2 Timothy is already a deeply personal letter, but at its end we see Paul asking Timothy to bring him his parchments, or books. Paul was likely close to death and perhaps wanted to review what he had studied and even what he had written to the Church. One thing that strikes me though, is that Paul was faithful. He says in 2 Timothy 4:1-2, "I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word!" Paul kept the Word at the center of his entire ministry. It reminds me of the beginning of the gospel of John that says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (JOHN 1:1). We, too, need to keep the Word of God close to our hearts and in the forefront of our minds, as we continue to build God's Kingdom.

DISCOVERING GOD — 2 TIMOTHY 4:1-8

— 1 —

We must keep the preaching of God's Word at the center of everything we do. We serve God by living His Word.

(v. 1-4)

— 2 —

Paul senses his time is at an end and concludes with a command to Timothy. Be watchful and endure all things for Christ.

(v. 5-6)

— 3 —

A crown of righteousness awaits all believers; we will have something to throw down at the feet of God. Our best life is not now, but in eternity with God.

(v. 7-8)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The LORD keeps all His servants on earth until they are finished. If you are alive, you need to continue! God has given us all assignments, don't become weary, instead reach out to God for encouragement and purpose. God loves you and wants you building!

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, PLEASE CHANGE MY WAYS OF THINKING SO THAT I CAN HEAR AND FOLLOW YOU.

Growing Faith

TITUS 1-3

DISCOVERING THE WORD

When you believe in Jesus Christ, ask Him to come into your life, and dedicate yourself to following Him, you change. We run into obvious problems when we call ourselves Christians without that commitment inspiring belief in the work of Christ. What is a Christ follower supposed to look like? What are they supposed to be like? What does it mean to become someone who loves God so much that you change? The answer to these questions can be found in the short New Testament book of Titus. Titus was another minister of the gospel to Paul, one who matured into a man of strong character and faith in the LORD. The book of Titus is a letter written to Titus from Paul. In this letter, Paul speaks under the influence of the Holy Spirit and directs Titus to teach specific things about our relationship with Jesus. Paul tells us how we need to be as people.

DISCOVERING GOD — TITUS 3:1-11

— 1 —

Believers in Jesus Christ do not feature rebellion.

We are people who serve God by respecting authority.

(v. 1-6)

— 2 —

The works of true Christians are driven by faith; they are good and profitable for everyone. We need to pay attention to what we do and

how we do it.

(v. 7-8)

— 3 —

The way a true Christian lives is not consumed by conspiracy and fables, but in the Word of God. Our best work comes from the

study and application of the

Bible. (v. 9-11)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The Bible contains the LORD's instructions to us. Even Jesus Christ has commands; love each other, being one of the most well-known. We should always work to know and understand what the Bible says and what God is saying to us, especially in these last days.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO READ AND UNDERSTAND YOUR PRECIOUS WORD.

Be Christ-like!

PHILEMON

DISCOVERING THE WORD

It is really good when we can get together as Christians and have great fellowship and fun. It should grow our bonds and be encouraging, but it doesn't always come naturally. Christians can and do still have difficulty with each other sometimes. While difficulties are normal, we need to know and apply the power of God's Holy Spirit to work through our issues and forgive and accept one another. There are going to be people that we don't naturally get along with, or who really rub us the wrong way. There can even be people who genuinely mistreat or offend us. Yet, as long as it is in our power, we have an obligation as children of God to try to reconcile and still include other Christians in our lives. In today's reading we get to see that Paul got to know Onesimus, a person who seems to have sinned against a man named Philemon. Now that Onesimus was a Christian, Paul has an interesting request for Philemon.

DISCOVERING GOD – PHILEMON 1–21

– 1 –

Paul speaks highly of Philemon, and compliments him! We must remember that God sees all sides of us—the good, the bad, and the ugly.
(v. 1–7)

– 2 –

Through Christ, Paul boldly makes his request to Philemon. God will confront our weakness, even when it hurts.
(v. 8–13)

– 3 –

Paul gives Philemon the choice to make the right decision. Our best decisions are always God's way and not our emotional way.
(v. 14–21)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

We will run into deep struggles in our lifetimes. Some of these struggles will be between us and other Christians. We should pray that the LORD will give us the chance to make it right before eternity. After all, Christians will all live together in eternity, someday soon.

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, HELP ME TO
MAKE ALL MY DECISIONS
YOUR WAY.**

Following Jesus Christ

HEBREWS 1-4

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Despite some of the really the bad history between Jews and Christians, it is true that to follow Christ is to follow a Jewish King. Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old Testament law and prophets. Nearly the entire first round of Christians were Jewish Christians. Jesus lived and ministered within ancient Judaism. Of course, Jesus and His followers were then rejected by Judaism, and Christianity and Judaism were split; one still awaiting a Messiah, and the other following the Messiah that God provided. As we read the book of Hebrews, some of you may know it as the King James Version calls it, "The epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews". It is true, however, that we don't know with confidence who wrote it due to debate in the early church. However, the earliest church knew that it came from an authoritative and apostolic source and so accepted the letter as Biblical, as should we. Regardless of its authorship, Hebrews emphasizes that there is so much more in Christ to be gained in the Old Testament than lost. We should not throw it out but learn of God's amazing nature.

DISCOVERING GOD — HEBREWS 3:1-13

— 1 —

Jesus Christ is God.

We serve God through Jesus Christ, who is God.

(v. 1-4)

— 2 —

Christians are the house of Christ; He dwells inside of each of us. It is God who builds and restores us, as the Master builder.

(v. 5-6)

— 3 —

A hardened heart to the message of Christ as LORD separates us from God. We must remain pliable to God's will in our lives.

(v. 7-13)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The LORD teaches us carefully and rightly. We must remember to learn by listening to Him. We read His Word and learn from the Holy Spirit who helps us change our minds and attitudes.

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, HELP ME TO FOLLOW
WHAT YOUR WORD SAYS.**

God Is Faithful

HEBREWS 5-8

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The LORD did what He said He would. “Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah— not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day *that* I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people” (JEREMIAH 31:31-33). God fulfilled His promise. We now have a new covenant in which we see Jeremiah’s prophecy completely fulfilled: Jesus Christ. He is the new covenant! When we come to God and acknowledge Jesus Christ as our LORD, we are taking His fulfilling promise personally. God saves our soul from the destruction of hell.

DISCOVERING GOD — HEBREWS 8:1-10

— 1 —

The Tabernacle is a copy from heaven. Christians are the Temple of the LORD.

(v. 1-5)

— 2 —

Jesus Christ is God, He is LORD. When we give our lives to Christ, we give our lives to God.

(v. 6)

— 3 —

God’s law is written on our hearts. We worship Jesus Christ by following Him with our lives.

(v. 7-10)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Our relationship to God is supposed to be very personal. As we live to worship Him, we become closer and closer in communion with Him. He is the way, truth, and life!

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, HELP ME TO LEARN
HOW TO WORSHIP YOU.**

Christ, Once For All

HEBREWS 9-10

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The Bible gives us an explanation for the evil we experience, right in its first chapters: Sin. Sin is now a very real part of our personal lives, and our world. It is visible around us every day, in multiple ways. Wars are a consequence of sin. Any type of fight and trouble, whether it's interpersonal or international, is because of sin. Crime, jealousy, greed, stealing, over consumption, out of control passion, all of these and more are an outworking of sin. Too often people even want to experience what it feels like to hurt others by their desires. How do we deal with this type of corruption in ourselves and others? According to the Bible, it is only through Jesus Christ. We must repent and ask for God's forgiveness. We must be honest with Him and with ourselves. As we yield to God's desires in our lives, the Holy Spirit begins to change us and lead us into a better, more meaningful life. Hebrews 10 explains the details to us.

DISCOVERING GOD — HEBREWS 10:1-10

— 1 —

The sacrifices we make do not take away the consequence of sin.

Christ is the only One who can forgive us of our sin.

(v. 1-4)

— 2 —

Doing the will of God, Christ offered Himself as the sacrifice for sins forever.

We are recipients of the fulfilled covenant of God.

(v. 5-9)

— 3 —

We are sanctified by Jesus Christ through faith. Come

to Jesus Christ today and repent of your sins.

(v. 10)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Through Christ's blood, He has sanctified us. Now we are reconciled to God and can become the people He intended us to be. Let's praise the LORD night and day for forgiving us of our sins.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I PRAISE YOUR NAME
FOR SAVING ME FROM THE
RAVAGES OF HELL.

Keep Right with God

HEBREWS 11-13

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Fear is an effective motivator. We've really seen this over the last several years in our world. With wars, global sickness, economic deterioration, natural disasters, there's so much that seems out of our control and so summons fear. The world is a dangerous place. However, these realities and the fear they invoke do not have to control us. As Christians, we can be excited to live despite great evil. This is not all there is for us, and God is coming back soon! We can live and see the miracles of God moving in our world that seems out of control. In reality, God is in control despite all the evil. A huge help to me is reading and reflecting on the Bible. It speaks into our lives in all times, and it recenters our minds around the One who gives peace that passes all understanding.

DISCOVERING GOD — HEBREWS 13:1-6

— 1 —

We should show hospitality to strangers; it is possible to encounter angels and not know it. Jesus Christ has called us to love one another in this time and place.

(v. 1-2)

— 2 —

We are to remember those who are persecuted for Christ's sake as though we are with them. Let's pray regularly for our brothers and sisters who are persecuted.

(v. 3)

— 3 —

As we keep God first in our lives, He has promised to never leave or forsake us. We must keep God and His Word close to our hearts and minds.

(v. 4-6)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

One of the best ways to understand what God is doing today is to read and understand His Word. Let's remember to pray before we read the Bible and ask God's Holy Spirit to help and teach us as we grow and apply His Word in our lives.

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, HELP ME TO READ
YOUR WORD AND HEAR
YOUR SPIRIT.**