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# praying through Christ

*The gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world.*

**COLOSSIANS 1:6b**

How do you come to know God? How do you access His will and wisdom?

Whether you realize it or not, how you answer those questions reveals as much about your relationship with Jesus as it does about your theology. And this isn't a new discussion . . . it's been brewing for thousands of years, as shown in Paul's opening prayer in his letter to the Colossians.

Paul begins his letter with two prayers, each of which reveals his confidence in Christ alone for the work of the gospel in the church in Colossae. As we'll study this week, these prayers lay the groundwork for the rest of the letter, as every other concern Paul brings up comes back to his confidence expressed in these two prayers.

At the heart of these prayers—and indeed this entire letter—is Paul's earnest desire that the Colossians come to rest in the sufficiency of Jesus Christ's finished work on the cross and the continued work of His Spirit in and through the lives of those who believe in Him. He is enough, both for saving us and securing us for eternity.

Spoiler alert: it's not our good works and it's not some secret knowledge that lead us to God, as the heretics in Colossae were teaching. It's Jesus Christ Himself. He



## WEEK ONE

is enough. It's in Christ alone that we come to know God, and it's through Him alone that we are transformed and made fruitful for God's glory. It's only in getting to know Jesus more that we will experience the fullness of God's presence as we yearn for it.

As you begin this study, pause to examine your heart: Do you desire Jesus more than anything? Are you hungry to know Him more through His Word?

Be honest with yourself and with God. He already knows your heart. If the answer is, "Umm, not really," then tell Him so. And then ask Him to stir in you a hunger for Him.

If the answer is yes, then thank Him for placing that desire in you (because we know it only comes from Him), and ask Him to grow that hunger and thirst for Him. Because Jesus promises, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled" (Matt. 5:6).

Either way, friend, we are in for the adventure of a lifetime.

Let's dig in.



IN THE SAME WAY,  
the gospel  
is bearing fruit  
and growing  
throughout THE  
Whole World.

COLUSSIANS 1:6





## WEEK 1 | DAY 1

### SNACK ON THE GO

As a missionary to the Gentiles, Paul was frequently traveling and starting churches throughout Asia minor, as well as discipling others, like Epaphras, to go and start other churches throughout the region (1:7).

The gospel thus spread throughout the Roman empire, as followers of Jesus shared the good news with those they encountered, and when several people believed, they came together to form a church. Many of these first-century churches were small groups of people, tiny compared to most contemporary churches today, and lacking the liturgy and structure to their services that are familiar to us. Several of the apostles wrote letters to encourage these believers to continue in the way of Christ and to refute false teachings that were infiltrating the churches; these letters were read out loud first in the recipient church and then circulated among the surrounding churches (see Col. 4:16).

Today, we have the luxury of owning personal copies of these letters, holding them in our hands, lining our bookshelves with these pages. But often we lack the zeal of those first-century believers to read and share the truths found within these epistles.

Write out your own prayer for this study, asking God to awaken within you a hunger and thirst for His Word and His presence in your life.

Use Jeremiah 15:16 (NLT) as a starting point: “When I discovered your words, I devoured them. They are my joy and my heart’s delight, for I bear your name, O Lord God of Heaven’s Armies.”

## FEAST AT THE TABLE

### FOCUS ON GOD

Open your Bible to Psalm 119:10. Write it out as a prayer to the Lord as you begin your study of His Word today.

Are you a visual learner? Go to [myOneThingAlone.com/quickstart](https://myOneThingAlone.com/quickstart) to watch a short video tutorial on the FEAST Bible study method within our Bible Study Quickstart Guide.

## ENGAGE THE TEXT

Read Colossians. Yep, the whole book. Out loud. (It only takes about fifteen minutes. I timed myself.) As you read, imagine yourself seated among those first-century believers.

What themes are repeated over and over again? What stands out to you as you read?

Who wrote this letter (see 1:1 and 4:18)? What do you already know about the author?

Who was it written to (see 1:2)?

What do we know about this church (see 1:3–8)?

According to 1:7–8, who planted this church?

## ASSESS THE MAIN IDEA

Reread the historical background (in the introduction of this study) to familiarize yourself with the Colossians' culture, and write down three to five observations about the historical setting.

Based on what you've learned about the historical background, write down a few ways the original audience is similar to you, and a few ways they are different.

Write out the main idea of Colossians, as you understand it today, in a single sentence.

## SPARK TRANSFORMATION

One of the main themes of Colossians is that Jesus Christ is supreme and sufficient. In the coming weeks, we'll look at what that means in our lives in specific ways, but for now, spend a few minutes asking the Holy Spirit to reveal areas in your life in which you haven't believed that Christ is enough. If He shows you anything specific, feel free to write it down; but even if not, make this your daily prayer:

*Lord Jesus, You are enough for me, and You are all I need. Please show me how to live out this truth in the coming weeks.*



## TURN TO GOD IN WORSHIP

As you read Colossians today, you may have noticed that it includes several beautiful passages that point to Christ's sufficiency. Use one of them as a guide to worship, personalizing the passage and praising Jesus for the ways He is enough for those who believe.

In the space below, list out the letters of the alphabet, from A to Z, and write down His attributes, at least one for each letter. Then take some time to worship God for all He is, using the book of Colossians for inspiration.

For example, you might begin like this:

Dear God, I praise You because You are *almighty* and *attentive* to every detail in the universe. Jesus, You are the *Author* and *Finisher* of my faith and *awesome* in power.

You are *bountiful* in Your gifts and *brilliant* in splendor and glory.

You are the *Creator* of all things, the *Christ* who saves us from our sins, and the *Coming One* who will take us home to be with You.

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

I

J

K

L

M

N

O

P

Q

R

S

T

U

V

W

X

Y

Z

Praise Him for all of His wonderful ways, and use this list as a worship prompt throughout the week, turning your thoughts to worship whenever you see the alphabet.



## WEEK 1 | DAY 2

### SNACK ON THE GO

We live in a hectic world. There's hardly a moment of silence from the moment we wake up to the moment we close our eyes to sleep. And yet, it's in the midst of this busyness that our heavenly Father wants to speak to us, to remind us of who He is and who we are in Him.

Open your Bible to Colossians 1:1–2, and read these verses out loud. Write down the following:

How Paul describes God:

How Paul describes himself:

How he describes the believers in Colossae:

What one word or phrase jumps out to you? Write it in the space below. Why do you think that is connecting with your heart today?

Ask the Lord to help you believe that what He says is true. Then consider writing that word or phrase on your wrist, so you can see it and be reminded of your Scripture Snack throughout the day. Ask the Holy Spirit to continue to teach you what His Word means, and meditate on His truth, allowing it to shape your life.

## **FEAST AT THE TABLE**

### **FOCUS ON GOD**

Open your Bible to Psalm 119:11. Write it out as a prayer to the Lord as you begin your study of His Word today.

### **ENGAGE THE TEXT**

Read Colossians 1:1–2 out loud, and then write it in the space below.

Write down anything that immediately stands out to you.

How does Paul describe himself in verse 1? What does this say about his identity in Christ?

We begin our study of Colossians with a startling description of the church members. How does Paul describe the Colossians?

What do each of those terms mean? (If you're unsure, you can use a regular dictionary or find a Bible dictionary online.) Define them in the space below.

Find Bible dictionaries and commentaries at **[biblestudytools.com](http://biblestudytools.com)** or **[biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com)**.

What is Paul doing by calling them “brothers and sisters in Christ”?

What type of familial bond holds them together?

What salutation does Paul open with?

What do each of those words mean?

How does Paul refer to God in this passage? What is the significance of that term?

What do you learn about God in this text?

## ASSESS THE MAIN IDEA

What did this mean to the original audience?

Write out the main idea of this passage in a single sentence. Make it precise, concise, and memorable.

## SPARK TRANSFORMATION

When you think of yourself, what words immediately come to mind?

Would you consider yourself holy? Faithful? Why or why not?

As you begin this study of Colossians, write a prayer below asking God to search your heart and help you identify any false labels you may be wearing. Ask Him to remove those lies and to write on your heart your new identity in Christ Jesus.

## TURN TO GOD IN WORSHIP

Paul begins his letter by blessing the Colossians with the grace and peace that come from God, whom he calls “our Father.” As you wrap up your time in the study of Scripture, turn your heart to praise God, who has called you to be His child, and who makes you holy and faithful in Christ, a member of His family. Thank Him for being the giver of all grace, and the One who speaks peace over the most tumultuous storms of life. End by being still before Him, receiving His fatherly love toward you.

If you'd like, you can write down your prayer in the space below.





## WEEK 1 | DAY 3

### SNACK ON THE GO

Paul begins most of his letters, including this one to the Colossians, with thanks to God for His work in the lives of believers. Although Paul speaks highly of the faith, hope, and love displayed by the church in Colossae, he never attributes these characteristics to human effort but rather always points to God, who is the source of these virtues:

**We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people. COLOSSIANS 1:3-4**

Take a moment to reflect on your own life and recognize the ways God is working in you. What can you thank Him for today? Write a prayer of thanksgiving to Him below or in your journal.

## FEAST AT THE TABLE

### FOCUS ON GOD

Open your Bible to Psalm 119:14. Write it out as a prayer to the Lord as you begin your study of His Word today.

### ENGAGE THE TEXT

Read Colossians 1:3–8 and write it below.

Write down whatever jumps out to you in the text.

What are Paul and Timothy thankful for?

What words are repeated in this text, and how does each new mention of the word add more nuance to its meaning?

What are the main markers of the believers in Colossae?

How are faith and love interwoven in this text?

How does hope (v. 5) relate to faith and love (see also Titus 1:2)?

According to verses 5 and 6, what does the gospel do wherever it goes?

The verb in the phrase “the gospel is bearing fruit and growing” in verse 6 is a present continuous passive tense verb in the Greek, which in plain English means the action is ongoing, with or without your participation. What does this verb choice communicate about the power of the gospel, apart from human intervention?

What effect has the gospel had in the church in Colossae?

This idea of bearing fruit, increasing, being fruitful, etc., is common in Scripture. Look up Mark 4:8 and Genesis 1:28. What connection points do you notice in these texts?

The phrase “your love in the Spirit” in verse 8 implies that the Holy Spirit is the source of Christian love. What other “fruit” (see v. 6) does the gospel empowered by the Holy Spirit bear in believers’ lives (see Galatians 5:16–25)?

### **ASSESS THE MAIN IDEA**

What is the gospel? In your own words, describe this good news Paul writes of, in one or two sentences.

Write out the main idea of this passage in a single sentence. Make it precise, concise, and memorable. (Consider the following question: What effect does the gospel have in the lives of believers?)

### **SPARK TRANSFORMATION**

Have you believed the gospel of Jesus Christ? If not, or if you’re not sure, take some time before going further in this study to read and understand the good news of Jesus Christ. If you’re already a follower of Christ, review the truths of the gospel so you’re comfortable sharing the good news with others.

Before I share the good news of the gospel of Jesus and show you the way to begin a relationship with Jesus, I have to start with the bad news.

The bad news is that we are all dead in our sins, having broken God's commandments and turned away from Him. And God is holy, set apart from anything sinful, so we cannot enter God's presence or have a relationship with Him in our sinful state. The payment for sin is death, eternal separation from God.

But the good news is that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. God showed His love for us by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for our sins. Though the wages of sin is death, the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Salvation is a gift—we do not earn it or deserve it, but God gives it freely to all who believe in Him, and through Jesus we have peace with God.

But the good news gets even better! Jesus didn't remain dead—He came back to life on the third day, and God exalted Him to the highest place, and He rules as Lord over all. When we choose to accept Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf, we receive God's forgiveness of our sins, and we surrender control of our lives to Jesus.

Whether you're accepting Christ for the first time and committing your life to Him or you're already a believer, these verses are helpful to know and meditate on to more fully understand the great salvation message: **John 14:6; Romans 3:10–12; 5:1, 8; 6:23; 1 Corinthians 15:4; Ephesians 1:5; 2:4–5, 8–9; Philippians 2:9–11; Hebrews 4:16; 1 John 1:9; Jeremiah 29:13.**

What happens then is our dead spirits come to life, and we begin a relationship with God that continues for the rest of our lives and into eternity. We are adopted into God's family as His children, so we no longer fear God but instead run to Him as our Father. God welcomes us into His presence every day, and His Spirit lives inside us, empowering us to accomplish God's work here on earth and teach-

ing us more and more about our heavenly Father. We can now boldly approach God's throne of grace to find help in our time of need. And though we may still miss the mark of God's perfection and holiness, when we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and purify us from all wrongdoing. He frees us to live the life that He created us to live, filled with amazing projects, dreams, and good works that God prepared in advance for us.

The Christian life is not a set of rules, but rather it's a relationship, and God wants us to grow deeper and deeper in our intimacy with Him by intentionally seeking Him every day. Though there is no three-step formula to Christian growth (after all, what relationship works that way?), there are spiritual disciplines that we can practice to open ourselves to God's work in us, as He grows us in spiritual maturity. The most common ones practiced by Christians throughout history include prayer, worship, reading the Bible, and gathering with other Christians in church.

If you want to begin a relationship with God, tell Him so in a simple prayer from your heart. Or, you can use the prayer below to guide you:

*Dear God, I realize that I'm a sinner, and my sin separates me from You. I believe that Jesus Christ died for my sins, and that He rose again on the third day. I accept Jesus as the Savior and Lord of my life, and I believe, based on what You promised, that I am saved from my sins. Thank You for the gift of eternal life, for sending Your Spirit to live inside me, and for welcoming me into a relationship with You. Teach me how to grow deeper with You, and I look forward to an eternity of getting to know You more. Amen.*

I encourage you to look up these Bible verses that I've included in the sidebar to cement these truths in your heart and mind.

How confident do you feel in your ability to articulate the gospel to others?

What effect does the gospel empowered by the Holy Spirit have on your life today?  
In what way(s) can you grow in faith, hope, and love?

#### **TURN TO GOD IN WORSHIP**

Without the Holy Spirit of God working in us, we are helpless. But when He works out in our lives the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection for our sins, He empowers us toward radical lives of continual transformation into the image of Jesus Christ. We cannot change on our own, but the Spirit of Jesus is more than sufficient to transform us. End your time of feasting by expressing your neediness to God. Open your life wide and declare to Him, "I need You!" Confess to Him the ways in which you have failed to show hope, faith, and love, and thank Him for His forgiveness and restoration (1 John 1:8–10). Then praise Jesus for being enough and caring enough to work out His hope, faith, and love in your life.

Write a prayer of praise below.