

# Study Leaders Topic Guide

This guide is to help the leaders and assistants lead their groups by providing the key items that should be considered in each discussion group as well as some structure. We have selected some helpful questions from the workbook as well as additional questions you may want to consider.

Date	Session	Reading	WB Pages
Monday, August 19 <sup>th</sup>	Session 1	Introduction to Colossae	6 – 16
Monday, August 19 <sup>th</sup>	Session 2		
Tuesday, August 20 <sup>th</sup>	Session 1	Colossians 1	17 – 24
Tuesday, August 20 <sup>th</sup>	Session 2		24 – 31
Wednesday, August 21 <sup>st</sup>	Session 1	Colossians 2:1-19	32 – 37
Wednesday, August 21 <sup>st</sup>	Session 2		37 – 44
Thursday, August 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Session 1	Colossians 2:20 – 3:17	45 – 52
Thursday, August 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Session 2		53 – 58
Friday, August 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Session 1	Colossians 3:18 – 4:18	59 - 71
Friday, August 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Session 2	Lessons & Action Plan	72

## Day 1 – Refocusing on Christ – Goal & Background

### Sessions 1 & 2 – Workbook Pages 6-16

- Page 6, Question 2 – Allow time for everyone to share their initial thoughts from the pre-read of Paul’s letter to the Colossians. What were the prevailing sentiments, themes, or exciting points brought out?
- Having understood the ‘Why’ and ‘How’ behind the letter, it is impactful to discuss what outcome a letter like this can have in our lives:
  - As we begin our study together, think about Christ’s position in your life. Is Christ really in 1st place in all things in your life? Identify examples of where he is 1st place in your life and opportunities of where he is not currently in 1st place. Be specific!
    - Positive Examples of where Christ is in 1st place in my life:
    - What are the contributing factors for why this is the case?
    - Opportunities where Christ is not currently in 1st place in my life:
    - What are the contributing factors for why this is the case?
- Taking into account Paul’s own personal circumstance in writing this letter, what are the lessons for us in overcoming difficulties for the advancement of the truth? What verses or examples from Scripture would support our answers? (Ex. Joseph, Esther, Nehemiah, etc.)
- What did you learn in considering Epaphras and his character? In what ways can we show the same character in our lives – give specific examples.
  - Page 12, Question 16 - Putting yourself in Paul’s position, what questions might you ask Epaphras to aid in positioning you to write a helpful letter?
- It is commonly believed that during the 3<sup>rd</sup> missionary journey, Epaphras learned the truth from Paul.

These events are recorded in Acts 18:23-19:12. Discuss the ecclesial background of Colossae with these events in mind.

- Page 13, Question 24 & 25 - Epaphras would have travelled a great distance to visit Paul - Why are you willing to travel that distance to Youth Conference? Really think about what you're hoping to accomplish by attending Youth Conference and write the top 3 reasons below with a 1-line explanation.
- Page 15, Question 13 – In the writing of this letter, what were some of the false beliefs that Paul needed to contend against?
  - What do you think we can learn from Paul's approach in how we might best approach issues that are brought to us?
- Discuss the box at the bottom of page 15 – what can we learn regarding the other members in the Colossian Ecclesia?
- **Session 2 Suggestion** -- Spend 10 minutes in your discussion group to discover and then discuss the similarities between Colossians and Ephesians. It is estimated that 78 of the 95 verses in Colossians are alluded to in Ephesians. What stands out as similar or different? What greater understanding can we come to with the help of Ephesians? This can be an insightful discussion.

## Day 2 – Redeemed in Christ – Colossians 1

*In this section, Paul builds up the magnitude of the promise that a believer has in Christ. He expresses his care for the Ecclesia, illustrates the superiority of Christ, and outlines the benefit available to believers in Christ. If the Colossians were to be successful, then they had to fully appreciate the magnitude of what was made available to them in Christ. If we fail to truly grasp the significance of the promise, then we will find that we lack the motivation to attain unto it.*

### Session 1 – Workbook Pages 17-24

- From everyone's initial reading of Colossians 1 – What are the remaining questions? What were the elements that had you excited?
- Page 17, 18 – What do you think God might be trying to teach through Paul's repetition of: "in Christ"? Elements of learning and knowledge? Completeness of Christ's Gospel?
- What were some of the key learnings in the introduction given by Paul to open this letter?
  - Why 'grace' and why 'peace'? It is worth thinking about this simple phrase and what we might be able to learn from it.
  - Take a look at the beginning of other NT letters that Paul wrote. Do you see any consistency in regards to what Paul mentions him doing on behalf of others?
  - Think about a typical day in your own life. How effectively do you feel you are in being thankful, mindful, and prayerful for your Brothers and Sisters?
    - Give some thought to what you might do to increase in this aspect of your discipleship. What is standing in your way of doing these things today?
- Page 20, Question 16 – Discuss anyone's responses to the optional study.
- Discuss the answers to the box on Page 21, Question 19.
  - Based upon the allusions discussed and the way this letter begins – how could you implement these principles in your personal dealing with others?

- **Session 1 Suggestion** -- Spend time working through the answers to the 'thought section' on Page 22, Questions 26-29. Use the box completed in Question 25 to set the scene for a framework for prayer and thinking of others.

## Session 2 – Workbook Pages 24-31

- Page 24, Question 40 – Upon reading Colossians 1:14-20, what were the initial questions that came to mind? What is the main point in this section?
- Page 25, Questions 45-47:
  - Think about the most valuable thing that you have, what was its price?
  - What does v.14 tell us was the price of our redemption? Also use 1 Pet 1:18-19; Heb 9:12-22 to fill out your understanding.
  - What perspective do you think Paul is trying to give the Colossians regarding the value of being 'in Christ' compared to anything else?
  - In what way does this understanding impact us? Think of specific ways we can show our appreciation.
- Discuss the responses to the box on Page 26 – what is this meant to convey concerning Christ's position relative to us?
- If Christ is meant to have the pre-eminence in 'all things' in our lives, how can we show that in the following areas:
  - Schooling
  - Friendships
  - Relationships / Choosing Spouse
  - Interactions with Parents
  - Free Time
  - Job / Career
  - Other
    - How effective are we at this? How can we improve? What verses might we use to assist us in this development?
- Consider how the message in Colossians 1:21-23 differs from religions today that speak about 'once saved, always saved'?
- There is emphasis on being 'grounded and settled' in the faith. Discuss practical examples and ways that we can develop our own foundations. What verses come to mind that can be of encouragement here?
- Page 29, Question 77 - In v.23, Paul warns about being 'moved away from the hope of the gospel'. What are different ways that we can be 'moved away'? Identify 2-3 practical applications that relate to each of these different ways.
- Page 29, Question 79 – In v.24, What insights does anyone in the group have on how to effectively 'rejoice in suffering'? What are practical ways that you've implemented this?

## Day 3 – Rooted in Christ – Colossians 2:1-19

*Having established the magnitude of the promise, Paul continues on in Chapter 2 to outline the pitfalls to their faith. Paul contrasts being rooted in Christ to being beguiled by the flesh. In so doing, he addresses the specific issues facing the Colossian Brothers and Sisters. Too much emphasis was placed on the external elements of their discipleship without enough focus on the internal transformation God desired. This approach led to a*

*desire for personal pre-eminence and a devaluation of the work of Christ.*

### **Session 1 – Workbook Pages 32-37**

- From your reading of Colossians 2:1-20 – what were some of the initial observations, questions or themes that presented themselves.
- Discuss the box on page 33 - what were the 4 warnings issued in Colossians 2? In what ways are these same warnings still relevant for us?
- Page 34, Question 8 – Discuss what the phrase ‘full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgement of the mystery’ means.
  - What provides us confidence that we have the truth? How do you share this with others?
- Consider the allusions to the record in Genesis throughout the early verses in Colossians 2.
  - It is helpful to work through Page 35, Questions 16-21 together as a group.
- Colossians 2:7 puts forward an important point – the idea of being ‘rooted’. What does this actually mean (have someone read Eph 3:17 and Matt 13:1-6, 18-21)?
  - Thinking about how roots work, how does this practically impact our lives and what is one way that we can tell what we are rooted in? (Matt 7:16-20)
- Think about things that you spend time on throughout the week. These are the things that you are putting your roots into and taking input/nutrient from. In this analogy, consider that the size of the root increases based on the amount of time that you spend on that element. Write down your ‘roots’ below and rank-order them based on largest to smallest based on the amount of time you spend on each during the day / week.
  - Is your current root structure aligned to produce the fruit you desire?
  - How might you better align your root structure?

### **Session 2 – Workbook Pages 37-44**

- Page 37, Question 35 – Spend time understanding the 4 elements that can ‘spoil’ a believer. How are these still applicable today? In what ways can we work to avoid them?
- Colossians 2:10 brings up the idea of being ‘complete’ in Christ – discuss the references where this word is used in Colossians and Ephesians. How can we be ‘complete’ on this side of the kingdom? How can we continue to make progress in our discipleship?
- Consider the groups answers to Page 38, Questions 42-44 related to ‘rituals.’ How can this apply to our day and age – are all rituals bad?
  - Is there an application for our day where rituals can help in our discipleship? If so, give some examples where you have seen benefit. If not, why not?
  - Tied into this is Page 41, Questions 60-64, discuss the groups responses here.
    - Based on these verses in Colossians and Hebrews, should we have rituals? Why or why not? What are the benefits? What are the dangers?
- The connection in Colossians 2 between ‘knit together’ and ‘bands’ is interesting. What is the common theme that Paul is driving the Colossian believers to think about?
- Thought to Consider - It is worth pausing to consider what it is that our approach to worshipping God produces in us. When we are regular in study, prayer, and active in ecclesial life, what does this produce in us? Do we see our level of involvement as a differentiator from our Brothers and Sisters? Or does it produce in us a closer affinity toward our Brothers and Sisters and a stronger desire to see them in the kingdom? Without realizing it, we may find ourselves slipping into the trap of self-promotion and find ourselves disconnected from Christ. The counsel here is to continue to reach for

Christ. We do this by actively connecting to our Brothers and Sisters, in love, as fellow members of the body of Christ. Pay attention to your motivation!

- How might we, in our day, find ourselves in the position described in Col 2:18?
  - Have you ever felt discouraged from your service to God because of the example of others?
  - How can this be minimized or avoided altogether? Discuss practical examples.
- Is there any relation between Col 2:16-23 and the counsel given in Romans 14? How can we understand these sections of Scripture properly in their context?

## Day 4 – Risen with Christ – Colossians 2:20 – 3:17

*Rising with Christ meant that they were to seek those things that are above. This portion of the letter defines what it really means to put to death the 'old man'. This is a key first step to transformation. But putting to death an old way of life alone is not sufficient. The putting off of the 'old' must be accompanied by the putting on of the 'new'. Paul challenges the Colossians, and us, to dig deep in examining ourselves and making real changes to how we think, speak, and behave.*

### **Session 1 – Workbook Pages 45-52**

- Read Colossians 2:20-23 and discuss how this danger of the doctrines of men can still be as influential today. What are some practical suggestions from the group on avoiding the traps outlined by the Apostle in the letter?
- Discuss how others in the group summarized Colossians 3:1-4.
  - How is the group working on maintaining their vision of 'things above'? What are solutions to elevating our minds on Spiritual things given the environment of the world around us?
  - 1 Peter 1:3-4 helps us identify what the phrase 'things which are above' includes. What are other aspects of this that we should be keeping in the forefront of our minds?
- Page 48, Question 15 – It is becoming more and more important to control our minds, allowing God to be the directing force in our lives. What were the summaries given for the passages listed in Question 15? Are there other verses that can be added to this list?
- What does it mean to be "hid with Christ in God"? What support can be used for this?
- **Session 1 Suggestion** -- Spend time on Page 49, Question 22. It is important to understand what we are to "mortify" and just as important to understand the way these aspects are still prevalent today. What are practical suggestions to put these "members" to death?
- Covetousness is dealt with severely in the Bible, and included in the list in Colossians 3. What are some ways given by God to combat covetousness? List out the supporting verses.
- When something is dead, it is gone forever. This must be our attitude once we pass through the waters of Baptism. That former way of life is non-existent, we will leave it behind. In what ways can we be exhibiting this type of behavior and attitude in our lives today (baptized or not)? Consider practical ways to improve this desired state (ex. Removing influences, reducing unhelpful distractions, etc.).

### **Session 2 – Workbook Pages 53-58**

- Discuss how the group defines the "old man" and the "new man". How can we attain to the "new man"? Page 53, Question 33 helps with this understanding.
- What are the groups thoughts on the list in Colossians 3:11 – anything of interest?

- Discuss in the group the box on Page 54, Question 38. This is a helpful exercise, again, to discuss the practical ways these 2 aspects can be achieved. In one way, we need to distance ourselves from the vices to be avoided, while moving closer to the virtues needing to be developed. What verses come to mind that can assist us in achieving this?
- Colossians 3:13 brings up the aspect of forgiveness – discuss the groups answer to Question 39 on Page 55. What were the additional verses they came up with for the importance of forgiveness?
- What is the “peace of God” that Paul speaks about? Why is this such an important aspect to understand – look at additional references for clues.
- What are the lessons that come forward from the word “rule” in Colossians 3:15?
  - Discuss ways we can let the peace of God rule in our hearts.
  - Consider how this applies at school, work, in relationships, conversations, etc.
- Discuss the answers for Page 57, Question 50 around Spiritual music.

## Day 5 – Rewarded by Christ – Colossians 3:18 – 4:18

*Rising with Christ can be somewhat of an abstract concept...what does this actually mean? In this section of the letter, Paul connects these principles to practical, everyday relationships to show applicability to daily life. Paul draws out the point that no matter where we find ourselves in this life – no matter what position, we are ultimately serving Christ in all things and need to approach our service in this manner. We'll see how these same principles apply to us as we live day-by-day in pursuit of the reward in Christ.*

### **Session 1 – Workbook Pages 59-71**

- Discuss the scriptural roles of the husband and wife in the context of what we read in Colossians 3:18-19. Page 60, Question 2-4 can be helpful here, as well as the quote from Bro. Mark Vincent.
- Colossians 3:18 lays the framework for a Godly marriage with the phrase “as it is fit **in the Lord**”. Discuss the principles of marriage and have verses to support the Biblical advice around marrying in the Truth.
- Page 62, Question 10 – What were the connecting verses found? Why might there be differences between these letters?
- Colossians 3:23 describes the attitude we should exhibit in our lives – doing things “heartily”. Think about those who worked in the service of God (ex. Noah, Nehemiah) – in what way did they do it “heartily”, how was this attitude developed?
- **Session 1 Suggestion** -- Spend time on Page 67, Question 3 and the discussion around “redeeming the time”. How can we enlarge the time we have for Spiritual activities?
- Page 70, Question 44, 46 – Epaphras is an incredible character to consider. What were the strengths of this individual and how can we develop similar qualities in our walks before God?

### **Session 2 – Lessons & Action Plan**

*\*Finish any remaining pages from Session 1, but leave ample time for the lessons and action plan\**

- What major themes from the book of Colossians have affected you having completed the study?
- What difference has this study made in your life?
- How can we hold onto these foundations in this evil, crooked world?
- What are we going to do differently back home to impact ourselves and all those around us?