



# PATHWAY BIBLE GUIDES

COLOSSIANS

# Fullness in Christ





**PATHWAY BIBLE GUIDES**

---

# **Fullness in Christ**

**COLOSSIANS**

**BY JAMES STONE**



**matthiasmedia**

SYDNEY • YOUNGSTOWN

*Fullness in Christ*

Pathway Bible Guides: Colossians

© James Stone 2018

This resource was downloaded from [GoThereFor.com](http://GoThereFor.com) and may only be used within the ministry of the licensed group/church and only whilst the licence remains current. Please also familiarize yourself with and respect the other licence conditions, which can be found at [www.gotherefor.com/licence](http://www.gotherefor.com/licence).

Matthias Media

(St Matthias Press Ltd ACN 067 558 365)

Email: [info@matthiasmedia.com.au](mailto:info@matthiasmedia.com.au)

Internet: [www.matthiasmedia.com.au](http://www.matthiasmedia.com.au)

Please visit our website for current postal and telephone contact information.

Matthias Media (USA)

Email: [sales@matthiasmedia.com](mailto:sales@matthiasmedia.com)

Internet: [www.matthiasmedia.com](http://www.matthiasmedia.com)

Please visit our website for current postal and telephone contact information.

Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Please direct all copyright enquiries and permission requests to the publisher.

Cover design and typesetting by Lankshear Design.

# CONTENTS

---

Before you begin .....	5
1: Please and thank you (Colossians 1:1-14) .....	7
2: The real Jesus (Colossians 1:15-23) .....	13
3: Toil and mystery (Colossians 1:24-2:5) .....	17
4: Fullness and freedom (Colossians 2:6-23) .....	21
5: New clothes for new people (Colossians 3:1-17) .....	25
6: New households (Colossians 3:17-4:1) .....	31
7: Engaging with God and with outsiders (Colossians 4:2-6) .....	37
8: Fellowship in Christ (Colossians 4:7-18) .....	41
For the leader .....	47



# BEFORE YOU BEGIN

---

The 21st century continues to offer a vast array of tantalizing possibilities for developing a deeper and more vibrant spiritual life. If you ‘Follow this 6-step program’ or ‘Cultivate these 4 habits in your life’ or ‘Keep these particular practices’ then you will experience a richer relationship with God, or swim in deeper spiritual waters, or taste more sweetness in your everyday life, or... The options and their promises go on and on.

It may come as a surprise that things were no different in the first century. Although it would seem that the apostle Paul had never met the believers in Colossae, he was deeply concerned for them because of the threat posed to their faith by alternate teachings about Jesus and the Christian life. Paul knew that an incorrect or even an inadequate view of Jesus inevitably leads to disaster in a person’s faith and Christian life.

But what if Jesus is so glorious, so precious and so superior that he renders all other so-called avenues to God completely irrelevant? What if his work on the cross is so powerful, so thorough and so significant that other alternatives are unnecessary? What if Jesus’ person and work is all that is needed to bring a person complete fullness in their relationship with God?

Welcome to the short but wonderfully rich book of Colossians, where we see so clearly who Jesus is, what he has done in his death and resurrection, and how we are to live out the reality of our fullness in Christ.

*James Stone*

March 2018

# 1. PLEASE AND THANK YOU

---

Colossians 1:1-14



## Getting started

How would you respond if someone asked you, “What can you tell me about the book of Colossians?”





## Light from the Word

1. What do we learn from the following verses about the writers of this letter and the people it was written to?

- The writers: 1:1, 4, 9, 23-25; 2:1, 5; 4:3, 10, 18

- The recipients: 1:2, 5-7, 27; 2:8, 16, 18

Read Colossians 1:1-14.

2. In pairs, create a flow chart/logic diagram from verses 3-8. Try to show the relationship between the ideas of faith, love, hope and gospel. Share your diagrams with the rest of the group.

3. What does Paul thank God for?
4. How would you explain the relationship between faith, love and hope?
5. What is the relationship between faith, love, hope and the gospel?
6. The gospel is at the heart of Paul's thankfulness for the Colossians. How prominent a place does the gospel have in your prayers?

7. In the second half of the passage, Paul shifts from thanking God to making certain requests of God. In verse 9, what does he ask God for on behalf of the Colossians?

8. What is the connection between being filled with the knowledge of God's will (v. 9) and living a life worthy of the Lord (v. 10)?

9. What is this life that is "worthy of the Lord" like (vv. 10-12)?

10. How do Paul's requests for the Colossians compare with your regular prayer requests?



## To finish

Why do you think Paul finishes this part of his letter in the way he does?

In what way/s has Paul's example in prayer challenged you to change the way you pray for yourself and for others?



## Give thanks and pray

- Thank God for revealing himself in his word, and particularly for giving us this book of Colossians.
- Ask God to help you grow in your love for Jesus and your understanding of him as you consider the message of Colossians.
- Thank God for rescuing us from the dominion of darkness and bringing us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.
- Thank God for the gospel, which tells us of the hope laid up for us in heaven, and produces faith in Jesus and love for others.
- Ask God to captivate you with his priorities in prayer, as demonstrated by Paul's model.
- Pray in line with Paul's requests in verses 9-12.

## LEADER'S NOTES

# 1. PLEASE AND THANK YOU

---

## Colossians 1:1-14

► Remember 60/40/20

### Big idea

A 'big idea' will be provided for each study. We suggest you don't share this with the group; rather, the hope is that the group members will discover the big idea (or something very close to it) as they study the passage for themselves. The big idea should help you as the leader to know what the study is about and help you to keep discussions headed in that direction.

The big idea for this first study is for everyone to be challenged and captivated by Paul's model of prayer in light of the gospel.



### Getting started

The best questions to use for discussion starters are those that encourage contributions from each group member, provide an initial foray into the topic or passage at hand, and gently focus the hearts and minds of participants in the direction in which the study is headed. If group members feel at ease to share at this point then they are more likely to contribute as the study progresses.

So try to encourage most (if not all) group members to provide some kind of response to the 'Getting started' question—even if only to admit they are not sure how they would respond, or even if they can only come up with the classic Sunday School answer ('Jesus') or the fact that Colossians is in the New Testament. For the purposes of this particular question, any contribution is helpful. After gathering contributions encourage the group to see that, God-willing, by the end of the series they will be better equipped to respond to such

a question because they will have grown in their understanding of this part of God's word.

## Studying the passage

If you have more than 8 weeks available in which to study Colossians, you might like to do an introductory session before this study to help your group members get an overview of the book. You could print out Colossians and read through the whole book together, encouraging people to mark on the way through the things they find surprising, thought-provoking, confusing or challenging. In doing this they will begin to see some of the main ideas in Paul's letter to the Colossians.

If, however, you don't have the time to do a whole introductory study, then the initial question in this study is designed to help the group members to see among other things that Paul describes himself as a minister of the gospel and of the church (1:23-25), that Paul is in prison (4:3, 10, 18), and that he and the Colossians have not met face to face (2:1). The Colossians, most likely Gentile Christians (1:27), heard the gospel from Epaphras (1:7), and Paul then heard of the Colossians' faith (1:4). Finally, Paul seems to be writing to the Colossians to address a particular problem they are facing (2:8, 16, 18).

When you get to question 2, it might be a good idea to provide an example flow chart (preferably a simple one) for those in the group who may be unfamiliar with them. You could use a flow chart based on a different passage in the Bible or even from something else entirely, such as a textbook. If you are using a translation other than the ESV for your normal Bible reading and study, it is advisable to use a more literal translation of the Bible for this particular exercise if possible (e.g. ESV, NASB), as these make the connections between various words and ideas more obvious than other translations.

Provide encouragement to those who may not feel that they have put together a 'good' flow chart/logic diagram. The point of the exercise is not to end up with a good or polished end product, but rather to help group members engage with the logic of Paul's writing here. This logic is then further explored in the ensuing questions.

The flow chart/logic diagram should be helpful in answering questions 4 and 5, so encourage group members to refer back to their previous work if necessary. Paul indicates that faith and love flow from hope (v. 5). This hope is something that is heard about in the gospel, "the word of the truth" (vv. 5-6a).

Question 6 shifts from observation to application so that the study doesn't feel dry. It also completes the 'circle' of healthy Bible reading—observation, analysis and application. In answering this question, remember that as a leader you have an opportunity to model the kind of honesty and reflection you would like to see in your group members.

The words “so as to” at the beginning of verse 10 (“so that you” in the NIV) help us to see that Paul’s main request is in verse 9 (question 7), and the verses that follow explain the reason for this particular request (question 8). He asks God to fill the Colossians “with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding” *so that* they will “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him”. You cannot walk in a manner worthy of the Lord if you haven’t been filled with the knowledge of his will. The colon that the Bible translators have inserted after “fully pleasing to him” in the ESV (“please him in every way” in the NIV) helps us to see that what follows in verses 10b-12 is a description of walking in a manner worthy of the Lord (question 9).

It seems as though Paul did not know the Colossians personally. He is praying for people that he most probably has not even met! It might be worthwhile mentioning this point at the conclusion of the present discussion (question 10).



## To finish

Paul’s thankfulness in the first part of this passage (vv. 3-8) was very much rooted in the gospel. So too his requests (vv. 9-14) are for the gospel to work itself out in the lives of the Colossians. It is therefore entirely appropriate that at the conclusion of this section he finishes with a statement of that gospel. Additionally, the gospel also acts as a powerful motivator to pray in the same way Paul prays.