
THE BOOK OF

COLOSSIANS

TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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COLOSSIANS 1:1-2

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Colossians 1:1-2 (NIV)

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Father, today I thank you for your Grace and your Peace. I ask that you continue to sustain me and draw me to your will.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"Grace and Peace"

MESSAGE

We are about to dive deep into a wonderful book. Colossians is a book that drives us into the arms of Jesus. Here we will see how intimate God desires to be with us. He is our all in all, and like John explained to us, we will see what it means to be in Christ and Christ in us. What appears as a quick salutation is really a mighty promise we have in our relationship with the Father. Today we greet each other with a simple "Hello," or "What's happening?" Paul greets us with a much deeper statement. We have here a reminder of what our relationship with Jesus and the Father is really based on and what it produces in our life. **GRACE:** The entire basis of our relationship with the Creator of the universe is rooted in grace. From the moment of salvation and every moment thereafter God's amazing grace is what keeps us alive. Grace is the most precious gift we receive. Because we do not deserve or earn it, our fleshly emotions are confused. The flesh wants to work for everything it gains.

Grace solves the problems of the flesh, but is a relationship of the spirit. Our spiritual nature (our spirit) desires only what God can provide. He provides HIS amazing grace. Throughout Colossians we will see the depth of our spiritual relationship with the King of Kings. **PEACE:** The search of every person on earth is for peace. Many search for it through money, fame, power or glory. Our relationship with the Creator of the universe is our only path to peace. All others lead to brokenness and frustration. Peace is not a part of Jesus; it is Jesus. God does not dispense his Son in parts and pieces; we get the whole, and the whole is what allows us to not only have relationship with Him, but with those whom we encounter each day. Paul starts us off with a journey to the Creator of the universe with two of the most simple and yet profound words that can impact us: **GRACE** and **PEACE**.

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COLOSSIANS 1:3-8

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Colossians 1:3-8 (NIV)

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people— 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel 6 that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace. 7 You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, 8 and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Thank you, Father, for sending your Son to not just die for me but to love me and live in me. Allow your Spirit to work in, with, and through me today.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

“...you heard it and truly understood God's grace.”

MESSAGE

Paul continues the message of grace as he begins to pray for the Colossians. The prayer is a prayer of thankfulness, thanking the Father for what He has done. And what has the Father done? “...we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus.” The Father is the author and creator of our faith in Him! What a great love we have from the Father. In fact, the passage goes on to say, “...the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven...” Our faith is not of ourselves; it is produced and stored in heaven by the Father Himself. The next amazing thing we see is the description of Jesus, “...the true message of the gospel that has come to you...” Throughout the New Testament we have heard over and over about Jesus being “The Word,” and about Him being “The Way, The Truth and The Life.”

What is amazing here is it is so plainly spelled out that JESUS is the gospel, He is the good news, He did not come bearing it... He is it! Read verse 6 carefully; “...the gospel is bearing fruit and growing...” Here we see the foundation Paul will explain over and over again in Colossians. Christ is Supreme; Christ through the Holy Spirit is the Fruit of the Spirit. It is His Spirit dwelling in us that is at work. We do not need to struggle and work to please God or execute His will, HE is in us executing it each and every moment we allow Him control our lives. What an exciting life when Christ is our life.

TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Colossians 1:9-14 (NIV)

9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, 10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, 12 and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Father, today we thank you for your Son and for all you have brought to us through Him and your Holy Spirit each day.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

“...God to fill you with the knowledge of HIS will...”

MESSAGE

In this passage we take a tour of what God has done for us in the past and how He works with us today. As you read the passage for today, take note of what He has done for you. What we received from God at first (and still have and always will have):

- Redemption; the forgiveness of sin
- Rescued from the dominion of darkness
- Brought to the kingdom of the Son
- Qualified us to share the inheritance

What we get from God day by day:

- Filling us with HIS will...Spiritual wisdom and understanding
- Growing by the knowledge of God
- Strengthened with all power; according to HIS glorious might (always HIS power, never ours)

What happens with the above in place:

- A life lived worthy of (and pleasing to) the Lord
- Bearing fruit (i.e., Christ manifest in our life)
- Endurance, patience and joyful thanks

It is an amazing life we live when Christ is our life!

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COLOSSIANS 1:15- 20

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Colossians 1:15- 20 (NIV)

15 The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Father, today I thank you for your son, Jesus, and for what you have done for me through His supremacy in all things.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"...in Him all things hold together."

MESSAGE

There is just too much of value here to add any commentary. Read slowly, verse by verse, and meditate on what God has done for you through Jesus Christ, His Son. "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross." Hallelujah! What a SAVIOR!

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COLOSSIANS 1:21-23

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Colossians 1:21-23 (NIV)

21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— 23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Father, thank you for your Son Jesus Christ and for reconciling me to yourself through His work. Draw me to your eternity each and every day.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

“...to present you holy in his sight.”

MESSAGE

Verse 21 starts out with a reminder that we were once enemies and alienated from God. What a desperate state! Many Christians today have not fully lost that feeling. They continue to focus on the past and what they have not done or not accomplished. This attitude of looking back encourages this feeling of alienation from God. This is NOT the place or attitude God desires us to be. The purpose of Colossians (and the rest of the Bible) is to keep us focused on the future, the real future: ETERNITY. God is a God of eternity. Eternity is where He resides each and every day. Because of that we are able to live in eternity TODAY! Why? Because of Christ Jesus. We have seen so far in Colossians that Christ is supreme over all the earth and every created thing. We have just seen in the last passage that through Christ, God has reconciled all things to Himself, and now we see the very personal message directed to you and me.

“Once you were alienated from God and were enemies,” (and if you want to dwell on the past, this is past tense) but NOW we are reconciled (and have been since the cross) to God through Christ. God sees us as holy because of our relationship in Christ. There is no reason to think about the past, only eternity and today, because today we are in Christ and Christ is all about eternity. One small point to remind anyone who wonders about those who have not heard this good news.... Paul makes it clear that it has been proclaimed to every creature on earth.... That includes you and me!

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COLOSSIANS 1:24-29

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Colossians 1:24-29 (NIV)

24 Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. 25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— 26 the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. 27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. 29 To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Father, today may your will be done in my life. Today I ask that you alone are my power, and may the world about me see you alone.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

“...this mystery, which is Christ in you...”

MESSAGE

Our relationship with God may always be a mystery to some and to all of us at some times. Here we are able to clearly see our relationship with God.

- The mystery...Christ in YOU!
- The hope of glory
- Perfect in Christ
- Struggling with all HIS energy
- HE powerfully works in me

Our relationship with the Creator of the world is very intimate. He is right inside us and it is all about HIM. It is about HIS power that saved us, it is about HIS power that sustains us. It is about how HE lives in, with, and through us. It is about what HE wants to do with us, not what we want to do for Him.

Too often we still have the mistaken belief that it is all about us. What can I do for Him? What has He called me to do? What Paul is showing us is that it is all about what Jesus wants to do with us. He is in us working with HIS power, doing HIS will. We need to yield to Him and let Him get on with it. We are presented perfect in CHRIST...in Christ alone.

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COLOSSIANS 2:1-5

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Colossians 2:1-5 (NIV)

1 I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. 2 My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. 4 I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. 5 For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Father, we thank you for your Son Jesus. We seek your wisdom and ask that you reveal yourself to us today.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"...Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

MESSAGE

Chapter 2 starts us out with a double check. Paul wants us to know how much he is struggling, and how he wants the believers to be encouraged and united in love. But this struggling, must be understood in context with the last sentence of chapter 1, "I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me." The understanding here is that Paul was telling us how he struggles before he told us he was struggling. He was 100% engaged with Jesus, allowing HIM to be his life. Paul was not struggling and frustrated in the human way we sometimes think about, he was simply allowing the power of Christ to work in, with, and through himself. This is the story of Colossians: Christ in you. Not just at the moment of salvation, but throughout our life HE alone is the power. We had no power to save ourselves and in the same manner, we have no power to do the work of God after we are saved, only to allow God to work through us.

Paul also gives us a way to see life with clarity, "...so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." This is followed up by an important reminder. We should ONLY listen to what Christ has to say, and all should be evaluated upon that. Everything other than Christ is NOT wisdom. "I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments." Paul was encouraged in his ministry to the Colossians and encouraged them, just as we will when Christ is allowed to do HIS will in our lives.

TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

COLOSSIANS 2:6-8

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Colossians 2:6-8 (NIV)

6 So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, 7 rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. 8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Father, this week let this world have no influence on our lives. We ask that Christ alone be our eyes, our ears, and our very being.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"...just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord ..."

MESSAGE

Paul continues to state his message in very plain and simple language, often forgotten in the sophisticated world we live in. He clearly states what our relationship with Jesus is like. "So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him..." How did we receive Jesus? 100% by Faith in God! 100% by grace, God's work alone, none of it was ours. Paul's message: continue to live that way.

How do we grow in Jesus?

"...rooted and built up in him..."

Once again Paul explains the process is all about Jesus' work, not ours.

The result of the above?

"...strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness."

And the things we are NOT to do?

"See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ."

The plain and simple message?

CHRIST JESUS... yesterday, today, and forever!

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COLOSSIANS 2:9-15

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Colossians 2:9-15 (NIV)

9 For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, 10 and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. 11 In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. 13 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14 having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; 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.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Jesus, today I thank you for your will in my life. Today, I entrust my very being to you and ask that your will be done, not mine.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"...you have been brought to fullness."

MESSAGE

This letter of Colossians continues to go deeper and wider with each verse. The issue with most Christians is not that they do not do enough; they simply do not believe enough. They do not believe what they have received at the moment of salvation. YES, the Father has accepted them as sons and joint heirs to the Kingdom of God. YES, the Son gave His life that they may live eternally. But do they (we, I) believe the fullness of what we are hearing here in Colossians?

"For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives..."

"...you have been brought to fullness."

"...God made you alive with Christ."

Colossians is all about the fact that it is Christ in YOU, it is the POWER of Christ, and it is not the goal of what I can do for God, but what God can do with, in, and through me. This is the exciting news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is all about HIM, and we become the beneficiary TODAY! Paul goes on to write that the circumcision (setting apart) of the sinful nature is not done by man but by Christ. This is the power we must see in our lives. The power of Christ, the very life of Christ in us is what separates us from our daily sin, not our struggling and fighting with the flesh, nor the Enemy, nor this world. It is 100% Jesus who redeems us from our struggles with all these things. We simply need to entrust ourselves into His daily plan and allow Him to do His work in us, following moment by moment His will as He leads us into His plan.

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JOHN 14:5-14

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

John 14:5-14 (NIV)

5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" 6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." 8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." 9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"...it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work."

10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. 11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. 12 I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

This week praise God for His mercy and salvation. Praise God that He raised Christ from the dead, and sing praises to Him that He also raised you from the dead and you now live in Christ!

MESSAGE

As we reflect on the power and glory of Christ's resurrection, it is important to understand what it has done for us. The death and resurrection of Christ holds the sum of our Christianity. Without these events we would have a mere religion, not a living relationship with the God of the universe. And what is it that we have? It is the Power of Christ living in us. Galatians 2:20 reminds us that, "...I no longer live, but Christ lives in me." This is our new nature, a nature that is powered by Christ! Jesus many times let the disciples (and us) know of this relationship with the Father. This was not a set of rules and regulations, but a life-changing event that God was in control of and desired for us to have. While comforting the disciples prior to His crucifixion, He lets the disciples know He would be leaving, but not to be afraid. Philip is concerned and asks that Jesus show them the Father so they will know the way and the place Jesus will be.

The response from Jesus is timeless and important and appropriate for both Philip and the disciples 2000 years ago as well as for us today. Jesus said to Philip, "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father...The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work." We too have that relationship as believers, Christ living within us. When we allow Him to be our functional life source, His will is done, not ours. What a blessing that is! This week remember the resurrection and remember that Christ is ALIVE in YOUR body working out His will. Our task is to be the vessel, not to figure it all out ahead of time. Entrust everything to Him this week.

TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

COLOSSIANS 2:16-23

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Colossians 2:16-23 (NIV)

16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. 17 These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. 18 Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. 19 They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its

ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow. 20 Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: 21 "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? 22 These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. 23 Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"...have an appearance of wisdom...but they lack any value..."

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Father, today I thank you for your Son, Jesus Christ. Today I ask that you and you alone power my thoughts and actions. I entrust my very being to you again today.

MESSAGE

How do we live our daily life in the midst of this ever-changing, crazy world we live in? By what power do we overcome the flesh? Is it by working hard and doing good things, self-discipline and hard work? Paul is very clear here that it is NOT the flesh and the principles of this world or anything remotely connected to this world. He says it is Christ alone. Let's explore this fascinating passage. What you eat, what you drink, New Moons, and Sabbaths.

- Paul says these are merely shadows of the things to come; reality is in CHRIST.

False humility, worship of angels, visions, etc.

- These produce puffed up people with idle notions and a lost connection with the Head (Jesus Christ).

Read the passage in the Contemporary English Version (CEV): 19 they are no longer part of Christ, who is the head of the whole body.

Christ gives the body its strength, and he uses its joints and muscles to hold it together, as it grows by the power of God. It seems pretty clear about who does what. Paul reminds us in the last three verses that we have died WITH Christ so we are dead to the principles of this world, and when we submit to the world and use its rules and principles (aka our own flesh or power, the world's power... things like harsh discipline and forced rules and regulations) we have NO power to change. Again read the CEV version of verses 20 through 23 [emphasis mine]: You died with Christ. Now the forces of the universe don't have any power over you. Why do you live as if you had to obey such rules as, "Don't handle this. Don't taste that. Don't touch this."? After these things are used, they are no longer good for anything. So why be bothered with the rules that humans have made up? Obeying these rules may seem to be the smart thing to do.

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CONTINUED

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MESSAGE

They appear to make you love God more and to be very humble and to have control over your body. But they don't really have any power over our desires. We cannot change ourselves we have no power to change ourselves,

only Christ who has already changed us can orchestrate real change in our lives, so let's go back and let HIM do it!

TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:1-4 (NIV)

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Father, help me to understand what it means to have you as my life. Thank you that you are my life today and in the life to come.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

“When Christ, who is your life...”

MESSAGE

I find the more time I am able to spend with Jesus the more simple it all becomes. I have spent a career in a complex world, constant juggling of responsibilities and working to control situations. A perfect outcome was the only success, all else was a failure. Even in the church and in my relationships with others there has been ongoing concern about getting the right things done and insuring I am “all about” what it is all about. As I have grown closer to Jesus, the simpler I find life. Colossians has been a big part of this revelation, and verse 4 of chapter 3 is a real eye-opener, “When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” I would like to ask you to look at only a PORTION of this verse. While all of it applies, too often we look at the future when we “will appear with Him in glory,” and we forget this is also a present tense verse, right now CHRIST IS OUR LIFE! This reminds me of a quote by Watchman Nee in his book *The Normal Christian Life*: God makes it quite clear in His Word that He has only one answer to every human need--His Son, Jesus Christ. In all His dealings with us He works by taking us out of the way and substituting Christ in our place.

The Son of God died instead of us for our forgiveness: He lives instead of us for our deliverance. So we can speak of two substitutions—a Substitute on the Cross who secures our forgiveness and a Substitute within who secures our victory. It will help us greatly, and save us from much confusion, if we keep constantly before us this fact, that God will answer all our questions in one way only, namely, by showing us more of His Son. Today we need to remind ourselves that Christ is our life, this very day and this very hour. These first verses of chapter 3 are a beautiful reminder of what He has done for us in the past and continues to do with us and for us in the present and the future. He is at the same time seated with God the Father and we are hidden in Him and He is our life. What an amazing truth to absorb.

TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

COLOSSIANS 3:5-11

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:5-11 (NIV)

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Father, today I thank you for your son Jesus. I thank you for all He HAS done and will continue to do. I rest in your assurance that you have my life secure in your arms.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

“...put on the new self, which is being renewed...”

MESSAGE

The whole concept of Christ as our life now continues to open up to us. Verse 5 states “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature...” and lists the litany of sins we must avoid. One way to look at this verse is to start thinking about all the things we need to accomplish, the hard work we have to do to insure that our earthly nature (the flesh, the old man, our Adamic nature) is controlled by our efforts and kept in check by our strength and discipline. Right? Wrong! If this is our response, then we have not read this book. We have only let our eyes drift swiftly through the words. Remember what we have noted since the beginning of the book:

- ... they (self-efforts) lack any value in restraining...
- ... struggling with all HIS energy, which so powerfully works within me...
- ... just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him rooted and built up in him...
- ... and you have been given the fullness of Christ
- ... God made you alive with Christ...

• ... the reality, however, is found in Christ
In verse 20 of chapter 2, we are told we have “died with Christ.” Our need today is to remember both in a positional and practical basis that the old self has been put to death with CHRIST, not by us so we cannot change that. This is a completed task. The “job” of a believer is to remind themselves that they have died with Christ and that because of that and through that, TODAY the old self has no power, and therefore has no power over us. Daily we need to remind ourselves that the old nature is dead and that Christ is alive and working IN, WITH, and THROUGH us. We need to be thankful moment by moment for what Jesus HAS done and IS doing, and entrust our very life and every circumstance to Him alone for its proper conclusion. What is the hardest part for all of us? We are in process. We want to cling to the old and not embrace the new self which is Jesus in us. Look at verse 10 and 11, “and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator...but Christ is all, and is in all.”

TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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MESSAGE

We have to remind ourselves of the Creator Jesus Christ and what He has promised to do, and then rest in his promise and watch Him do it.

That is what will allow us to NOT do all those things listed in earlier verses.

TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

COLOSSIANS 3:12-17

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:12-17 (NIV)

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Father, thank you for your son Jesus Christ. Thank you that He lives and moves in my very being. Father, today I ask that Christ alone rule my heart.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts..."

MESSAGE

In the few verses prior to this passage we had a view of the things that were NOT to be done, with an emphasis on how that is accomplished: by the power of Christ. As we read, "...Christ is all, and is in all." The book continues with a very similar theme with a slightly different perspective. The theme is firmly planted that Christ is our power and Christ is our all. Verse 15 is very clear about how we are to clothe ourselves, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts..." We begin in verse 12, "...clothe yourselves with ..." and a long list of seemingly impossible articles: "...compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience," none of which were on the list of required courses I had in school. Yet these are noted as what we are to wear as Christians walking about this earth, as those who claim to be one with Christ. So it is not enough to NOT do evil but we must also do GOOD? The ability to accomplish this good is the same as what we discovered in the previous verses.

- The process is also clearly the same, stated to us in

a different way to reinforce what we have been learning all through this wonderful book: "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts..." We cannot do it; we must allow Christ to do it. This lesson is easy for me to understand as I think of my own struggles with doing good. I can readily recall individuals that have come into my life who were seemingly impossible to be patient with, or one or two whom I had no compassion for. I even recall one I just did not want to love. And yet Jesus called us to love our enemies. Here we have been called to put on first the virtue of Love. What have we read here in Colossians and throughout the Bible? Christ is love; we must put on Christ! And it is the peace of CHRIST that is to rule our hearts. He alone can be patient with EVERYONE; He alone can be Love to ALL. It is not I who can have humility and compassion, only CHRIST living through me can accomplish any of these actions. By allowing Christ to be our life, ALL of these actions ARE accomplished! This week allow Christ to be your life.

TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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MESSAGE

We have to remind ourselves of the Creator Jesus Christ and what He has promised to do, and then rest in his promise and watch Him do it.

That is what will allow us to NOT do all those things listed in earlier verses.

TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

COLOSSIANS 3:18-4:1

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:18-4:1 (NIV)

18 Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. 20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. 22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. 25 Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism.

Chapter 4

1 Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Father, today I seek your will. I ask you to open my heart to what you have for today. Open my eyes to your will in my life, and allow me to walk with you each step of the day.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters...”

MESSAGE

Okay, finally, here it comes: ...THE RULES. Are you thinking, “I knew this GRACE talk was too good to be true. There had to be rules to follow, things to do, much to prove ourselves worthy of this relationship with the Creator of the Universe?” Here it is, it even says so in my Bible, “Rules for Christian Living.” That is the heading above these verses in my Bible. Breathe deep, and let’s look closely. For the purists, it would be good to remember that headings are not part of the original Scripture. They are simply man’s attempt to sectionalize the Bible for reading purposes, much like the chapter numbers and verses numbers. (Notice this week’s devotion has only one verse of chapter 4. That verse is part of the same thought or paragraph of the balance of the verses from chapter 3.) Foundationally we need to remember that Scripture is to be read as a whole, in its context, and

most importantly, by listening to the voice of God, the Creator of the Universe and our personal Creator. It is the Holy Spirit of God speaking directly to us. It is a personal book. It is a book that is to be absorbed, not dissected to the finest detail. It is a message personally written to each of us by a personal God. So let’s inspect one of the verses (at the risk of too much dissecting) in the midst of these “rules”. An oft quoted verse is verse 23, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters...” A heavy emphasis has at times been placed on the word “work” and the surrounding verses, outlining actions and activities. If we instead focus on the phrase “with all your heart” and focus on the book of Colossians as a whole, the Bible as a whole, the current chapter and its preceding chapter, we will remember that our hearts are to be dead to

TRAVELING PRAYER PARTNERS

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MESSAGE

the flesh and alive with Christ. Once again we see the **SAME** message that flows from a heart fully occupied by **CHRIST**.

Today let your life be a life of Christ in action and you at rest in the Father's precious will for your life..

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COLOSSIANS 4:2-18

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THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

Colossians 4:2-18 (NIV)

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. 5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Final Greetings

7 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. 8 I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. 9 He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here. 10 My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas.

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK

Father, your will be done today. Allow me to rest in it.

(You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) 11 Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. 12 Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. 13 I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. 14 Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. 15 Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. 16 After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea. 17 Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord." 18 I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

QUOTE FOR THE WEEK

"He (Epaphras) is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, matured and fully assured."

MESSAGE

Colossians ends with a great focus on prayer and its impact on us as believers. (e.g., "Devote yourselves to prayer," "pray for us," "pray that I," "He is always wrestling in prayer...") It also wraps up with some touching thoughts on the family of God as individuals and the community of the Colossians. I would like to end my thoughts on this book with a few comments on prayer. We see much throughout the Bible about prayer, and if we look closely from the beginning to the end, it is one of the major themes of the Bible and the relationship with our Creator.

The quote from verse 12 seems to bring it all together, "...wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, matured and fully assured." Look carefully at the threefold reason or focus of prayer.

That we:

- Stand firm in all the will of God
- Be matured
- Be fully assured

While my own prayer life continues to include tangible requests,

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MESSAGE

(e.g., that someone may be healed, for relief of pain, for a specific answer) it has gradually become closer to the overarching message of Colossians and more frequently to the root of this verse: not my will but His. While it can be a struggle at times, "Father, your will be done," has become my simple prayer for myself and those around me. My daughter recently helped me see this as she experienced a fall that paralyzed the lower half of her body. Her first comment to me was, "Dad, please pray that God be glorified through this." She understood what God's will was. Here are a few final thoughts on prayer.

- Prayer is for OUR benefit not God's. He knows and still greatly desires to talk with us.
- It is an encouragement to know others are praying for us... let's keep it up.
- Prayer gives us visible indications of God's results and control, something we humans need.
- Prayer draws us closer to God; something HE desires above all else.