

Lesson 40
Col 1-4

General Theme of the Book: Superiority of Christ and His reflection in the life of the believer.

- a. Paul prays that the Colossians will grow into the full expression of who they are **in Christ**; being fruitful and growing in their experiential knowledge of God. 1:2-12
1. That they would grow in the **knowledge** of God's will and bear fruit. 1:9
 2. That they would live lives **worthy** of the calling that they had received. 1:10
 3. That they would be thankful of their position in Christ seeing that they have been **qualified** by God. 1:12-13
 4. That they would apprehend the promise of their eternal **inheritance**. 1:12

Application: What are some of the ways that you grow in your knowledge of God?

- b. Paul develops the doctrine of the **cosmic Christ**. Christ is infinitely and inconceivably the highest authority and power. He is the embodiment of the Godhead. 1:15-2:15
1. Christ as **The Lord**. 1:15-19.
 2. Christ as God's **reconciler**. 1:20-23.
 3. In Christ dwells all **wisdom** and knowledge. Col 2:3
 4. In his death and resurrection **all powers** of the cosmos are defeated and subjected to him. Col 2:9-10,15

Application: What are the implications to you personally of Christ being the highest authority and power? Because Christ is my highest power and authority.....

- c. Any teaching which detracts from the centrality of Christ under the **pretense** of leading men to maturity and perfection is a perversion that threatens the very essence of the Christian faith. 2:8-3:4
1. There is no substitute; Christ is our sole **sufficiency**. 2:8-15.
 2. Warning against the Colossians' practices which are a **vain substitute** for Christ and a denial of Christ's lordship. 2:16-19.
 3. The Colossians' practices represent a contradiction of their new life in Christ and they are reminded to set their hearts **on things above** rather than earthly practices. 2:20-3:4.
 4. **Resurrection** with Christ demands a new world and life view. 3:1-4.

Application: What are some earthly practices that "Christians" engage in that could be considered a vain substitute for Christ?

- d. The Christian imperative: **Actualize** individually the 'in Christ' reality. 3:5-17.
1. The character of the former life is to be **put off**. 3:5-9.
 2. The character of the Christ in you is to be **put on**. 3:10-14.

Application: What prerequisites must be met if you are to "actualize" your in Christ reality?

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e. Special precepts. 3:15-4:6.

1. The word of Christ and His **peace** are to rule in the Christian home and in our relationships in general. 3:15
2. **Gratitude** to God should characterize the mental outlook of the believer and should be manifest with songs and hymns that reflect what He has done on our behalf. 3:16-17
3. A willingness to submit to others should characterize Christian relationships because we are first and foremost **servants of Christ**. 3:18-4:1
4. Paul requests **prayer** for his ministry. 4:2-4.
5. Paul says that relationships and communication with non-Christians should reflect the **graciousness** of their “in Christ” position that others would see Christ in them. 4:5-6.

Application: Servanthood is a prominent theme throughout the New Testament. What works against us as we attempt to live out that part of our “in Christness” in relationships with others?

f. Conclusion. 4:7-18.

1. Commendation of the **bearers** of the letter. 4:7-9.
2. Greetings from Paul's **co-workers**. 4:10-14.
3. The apostle's **greetings** and blessings. 4:15-16.
4. His admonition to **Archippus** to take heed to his ministry. 4:17
5. **Personal** greeting and close. 4:18

Application: Paul frequently mentions others who assist him in his ministry as a way of acknowledging their support and contribution. Who is there in your life that you should acknowledge?

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