

A Practical Study of COLOSSIANS

How Christians Grow

“Christ is All and in All”

Key verse 3:11b —“*Christ is all and in all.*”

Study Number One – Christ Changed My Life – Colossians 1:1-8

Father, thank You. We ask that You bless this time and that You'll use Your Word in a very special way in all of our lives. Thank You that every time we look in the text there's something more that's beautiful for us to behold and Colossians is certainly a rich book for that. Thank You for this opportunity. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Christ *IS* ALL and *IN* ALL—Colossians 3:11.

The key to the whole book is Colossians 3:11—“Christ is all and in all.” You'll understand why that's the key verse in just a little bit.

In study #1 we're going to look at the first 8 verses of Colossians chapter 1. Then there will always be a verse or two that's the key verse to that study.

In the study guide we have Colossians 1:1-8 and the key verses are verses 4 and 5.

When you get to STAGE #1 in How a Christian has a relationship with His Lord, it has to start with CHRIST CHANGING YOUR LIFE.

Reflect on that experience.

Daily we are to grow and mature in our faith, in our maturity, in the fruit of the Spirit being born in our lives—those beautiful manifestations in Galatians 5.

Is there something wrong with the way you started? Or have you gotten sidetracked? Have you gotten caught up in delay when there isn't much time left to grow and to mature in Christ?

God designed the plan to be—once we enter the RELATIONSHIP—it's a daily task and process to mature in that faith.

The other thing to understand about the book of Colossians is that Jesus is under attack. It's almost like Galatians when we realized that the Judaizing teachers followed the apostle Paul and introduced the Law in addition to receiving Christ in order to have a right relationship with God.

It's a little different. These guys are Gnostics.

Now the word *gnosis* or Gnosticism is a Greek word for “knowledge.” They felt like they had a superior knowledge and

it did not include Christ, other than a created being.

It took away His deity. It took away the credentials of the Cross and everything about Him.

These folks were arrogant and confident that they had all the answers. Paul goes back to the Cross. He goes back to Jesus. That's why everybody loves Colossians. It's a beautiful picture of Christ.

Christ is ALL that a man needs and He's IN ALL that a man does.

So if you have Jesus Christ in your life, you have the credentials to grow and to mature in Christ.

Stage #1: Christ Changed My Life.

Isn't it interesting that the man who is the author of this book, under divine inspiration, is the greatest illustration of a changed life?

He was on the road to Damascus to wipe out the Christians and all of a sudden he's confronted with the Lord Jesus Christ. He's never the same. It's beautiful to see the apostle Paul as the one that God used in this.

When was this book written? Probably around 62 A.D.

If you'll get in your mind that Paul was executed in Rome in

the spring of 67 A.D.—he’s got 5 years left. This is the end of his first Roman imprisonment.

He was there two times. This time he was delivered from prison. But while he was there he wrote **THREE LETTERS**.

He wrote **EPHESIANS**,

PHILEMON, and

COLOSSIANS.

Now, he writes Ephesians to the Ephesian saints but that letter was also given to the church at Laodicea to be read there.

Philemon lived in Colosse. Philemon heard that there was a Bible teacher that was giving classes in Ephesus and it was almost a 100 mile trip.

The apostle Paul was teaching that class because he was also teaching for three years in a seminary or school—Tyranus—in order to help people understand and to grow and mature in their faith.

There Philemon received Christ as Savior. He goes back home to Colosse and he leads his wife Apphia to the Lord and his son Archippus. In fact, Archippus really fell out of Sunday School and into church and became part of the ministry there.

Philemon had this church in his home in the beginning formation of it. That is the reason this letter's been written.

Now the other reason, he had a slave by the name of Onesimus. That slave stole everything he could from the Lycus Valley and headed for Rome because there were 50 million slaves at that time and he thought he was going to be safe there.

He got picked up on a drug charge and his prison sentence involved being right next door to the apostle Paul—which is a “God thing.”

He came to know Christ. In fact, Paul uses the word Onesimus which means “useful” and he tells Philemon in the recommendation letter, “You know, he was once useless to you but now he is living up to his name. He is useful both to you and to me. I hesitated in sending him back because he's been so helpful to me while I've been serving this prison sentence.”

We don't know that Philemon accepted him back but he probably did because he was one of the inspirational leaders in the local church to whom this letter's written.

Now one other person—Epaphras. Epaphras was called to that valley to minister to those three churches. There's Hierapolis, Laodicea and Colosse. It's kind of a mountainous community. The Lycus River flows right through it and Colosse's on the far end about 11 miles from Laodicea. So these cities are clustered in the Lycus Valley.

They called Epaphras to be their pastor to the city of Colosse. He started the ministry there but the Gnostics give him a fit. He got so concerned about what they were teaching that he subsidized himself to go to Rome to visit with the apostle directly.

He bore the burden of his heart for the congregation. When he finished, Paul sat down and wrote this letter to help Epaphras continue the ministry in the Lycus Valley.

Paul's never been here. He's never met these people. Isn't it wonderful how the Gospel of Christ spreads and keeps on going and going and going. And the network just keeps on getting bigger and bigger and bigger.

John Calvin, from the Reformation, said:

“In writing to the Colossians Paul teaches that all parts of our salvation are to be found in Christ and Christ alone...”
(source unknown)

This series of studies is called:

Stages in My Relationship to Christ.

The way it starts is:

1. Christ has Changed My Life (1:1-18)

The simple principle, once you become a child of God, it's not a terminal experience.

God demands growth and maturity by daily taking in the Word of God and praying and seeking His face so that you mature in your faith.

2 Peter 3:18

but grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity.

What a way to wrap up his ministry and his epistles.

Gnosticism means “knowledge.” Just think of super knowledge when we run into some of these teachings.

1. Christ Has Changed My Life—Colossians 1:1-8

Why is it so important that we talk about the first basic principle?

If you're witnessing to somebody what do they usually say? Especially if they're a happy pagan?

“Well I don't believe in the existence of God.” Right? That's where they say “You know you just don't need to waste any time with me. I don't believe in the existence of God.”

Then they'll say secondly: "I don't believe in the deity of Jesus Christ. I think he was just another good human being." You might hear that.

And then they might say: "The Bible is really not what it says it is. It's just another book—a collection of ancient writings."

So they dispute you on the inspiration and authority of scripture, don't they? If you've had any kind of dialogue with your family or people in general, you're going to find those three things.

But there's one argument that is a killer and we forget it every time by trying to be intellectual and to prove a point. And that is, your own personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

There is a powerful argument that no one can answer—the dramatic change in your life when Christ came in. And you tell that story.

It's amazing. There's just no argument for that. You've been there, you've done that, you know the quality of life and what Christ has done in your heart and life and therefore it's a great witness.

He changed HATRED into LOVE.

He changed ISOLATION into FELLOWSHIP.

He changed LONELINESS into COMMUNION.

He changed ANXIETY into TRUST.

He changed FEAR into FAITH

He changed SELFISHNESS into SERVICE to and for others.

Those are the things that we want to focus on as we see that Christ has not only changed our lives but He is progressively changing it on a daily basis.

Here are a few verses:

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creation; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Jesus told Nicodemus, this religious man:

John 3:7

...You must [DIVINE IMPERATIVE] be born again.

Spiritual growth is that which follows the experience of receiving Christ.

Peter says it well:

1 Peter 2:2-3

as newborn babies desire the sincere milk of the word, that you may grow thereby...

And then he ends with 2 Peter 3:18, which is a great answer to the whole deal.

2 Peter 3:18

but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

So now we're ready to dig into the verse-by-verse exposition.

v. 1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints in Colosse, even the faithful brethren in Christ.

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints in Colosse, even the faithful brethren in Christ.”

“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ...”

The only time he ever uses that title is not to brag or to flaunt it. It's to let you know he's got the authority from heaven itself to speak to issues that are controversial.

In Galatians he was speaking to those legalistic Jews who wanted to add circumcision and the Law. He's dealing with

some people who have a philosophical orientation, primarily from the Greek culture, and think they are super saints because they have the super knowledge that everybody else desires to have. And it has nothing to do with Christ really.

“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus...”

How was he “an apostle?”

“through the will of God,”

Are you in the will of God? Do you know you’re in the will of God?

“through the will of God,”

He told the Romans:

Romans 12:2

be not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

When you ask that question it’s easy to say yes especially if you’re meeting with Him every day because you’re checking in for signals to see if there are any changes.

Because my thoughts are not His thoughts. My ways are not His ways. His ways are higher than my ways and His

thoughts are higher than my thoughts. (ref. Isaiah 55:8-9)

So we've got to be a person who is leadable and flexible and allow God do the leading.

It's not hard when you just surrender and the peace that comes from that surrender. The sweetness of all that.

Paul is already there.

“through the will of God, and Timothy our brother”

He's not his “brother” in a physical sense. Timothy grew up with his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, and daddy forsook the family. He was evidently a pagan Greek.

So Timothy never had a father figure. Paul became that father figure to him. They had such a close intimate relationship that these people in Colosse already know about Timothy and he speaks of him as “our brother.”

When we come to Christ we are brothers and sisters in God's wonderful family.

Here's the man who's going to write this letter and he's gone along with him—Timothy, his brother, who's helped and served with him. It was Timothy that Paul called for and wrote that last letter and said, “try to get to Rome before I die.” (2 Timothy) He knew that he was going to be executed and we don't know if Timothy made it but he certainly tried.

“through the will of God,”

“Paul, an apostle” brings Timothy with him “to the saints in Colosse, even the faithful brethren in Christ.”

Why did he say that?

“to the saints in Colosse,”

That’s where you live but you’re “in Christ.” That’s your spiritual dwelling.

But then why does he say at the end of that “even the faithful brethren in Christ”?

It’s because there are some people that are in that church that are not faithful brethren in Christ. They’ve gotten deceived by Gnosticism and so he has to let them know that the people in that flock that he’s really addressing are people who are “faithful brethren.”

Wouldn’t you love to have that title? You’re a faithful sister or you’re a faithful brother in Christ? What a delight to the heart of God!

“even the faithful brethren in Christ.”

So he doesn’t waste a word.

What does God want for my life?

He wants FRUIT,

He wants FAITHFULNESS that I'm going to show up every day, and

He wants FELLOWSHIP

God is always faithful. None of those are issues with Him. He's always there, ready to meet and supply our needs.

v. 2 Grace to you and peace from God, our Father.

“Grace to you and peace from God, our Father.”

“GRACE” must come first before “PEACE.”

The GRACE of God is our experience of what Christ has done for us on the Cross.

The result of that is PEACE and we know in our heart that we have an adequate relationship with the Father that will take us on into eternity.

Lewis Smedes made this statement:

Grace? It is shorthand for everything that God is and does for us in our tired and sinful broken lives.

(source unknown)

Two precious gifts from the Lord at the time of your salvation—GRACE and PEACE.

When we start verse 3, we only have one more sentence to go. Can you believe that?

It starts in verse 3 and the period is at the end of verse 8. So you have to watch for conjunctions and prepositions and connections here in order for this to come alive for you.

ONE SENTENCE and it is a long one.

v. 3 We are giving thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying for you at all times,

“We are giving thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying for you at all times,”

Right away you have the first two things that are manifested in a genuine Christian experience.

You wake up with an ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE. You thank God for His faithfulness the day before and through the night of sleep and you thank Him for the new opportunity that the day gives you.

You start with gratitude.

“We are giving thanks”—PRESENT TENSE—“to God, the

Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,”

The second thing that is true of you, if you’ve had a genuine experience with Christ, is you are praying person.

“praying for you at all times,”

Two definite indications in verse 3:

THANKSGIVING and PRAYER.

How important is thanksgiving? It’s not just a season of the year is it?

What did the Lord say to those 9 lepers that didn’t come back? What was the question? One guy came back, “Where are the other 9?” (ref. Luke 17:17)

God expects that once we come to know Him as Savior, we are overwhelmed with gratitude for the Cross of Christ providing eternal salvation in the Lord Jesus. We just never can get over it and we have to be those who are continually thankful and praying.

It’s interesting that these two things are put together in the commands in 1 Thessalonians chapter 5.

1 Thessalonians 5:17-18

Always keep on praying. No matter what happens, always be

thankful, for this is God’s will for you who belong to Jesus Christ.

The two things are there again as manifestations of a healthy relationship with the Lord Jesus.

David Jeremiah said:

(Signs of Life: Back to the Basics of Authentic Christianity by David Jeremiah)

Genuine prayer—offered with open hands—is saying, “Your will be done.”

p. 89

(Choosing Gratitude: Your Journey to Joy by Nancy Leigh DeMoss with Lawrence Kimbrough)

*When thou hast thanked thy God
For every blessing sent,
What time will then remain
For murmurs or lament?*

R. C. TRENCH

p. 111

(199 Treasures of Wisdom on Talking with God compiled from the writings of Andrew Murray)

My times in prayer are meant to lead me closer to God’s heart.

(Quote 119)

Key verses—here they are—verses 4 and 5.

We’re looking for three things here. It’s going to be easy because they are the three things that Paul uses over and over again.

To give you a clue, it ends 1 Corinthians 13.

1 Corinthians 13:13

Now abides faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.

The only thing is, they’re going to be switched around. He’s putting it in proper perspective in the way he’s going to use the three words.

v. 4 having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you are having for all the saints.

“having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus”—number one—
“and the love which you are having for all the saints.”—
number two.

The “hope that is laid up” for us is going to be in our second key verse—number 5. So we have the trilogy.

1. “faith” and

2. “love” in verse 4, and

3. “hope” in verse 5.

“having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus.”

He starts right out with the way a person’s life is changed.

Single condition—“faith in Christ Jesus.”

He has “heard” of their faith.

What does that tell you? He’s focusing on the PAST.

He speaks of that experience. Evidently Epaphras took the message from Paul, went to the Lycus Valley and established these three churches in that area. He has found out from him, when he came to Rome, that a lot of them have come to know Christ. Paul is adopting them.

Secondly he says: “and the love which you are having for all the saints.”

There’s a word in there that you wish we could take out. We cannot edit the text for our own personal comfort.

What is the word?

“all”

Don't you have a hard time with that? In relationships with people, we still have our old natures. For something like this from the apostle not to make any exceptions for those kind of things. We just pass over the word "all." Circle it so you won't forget it.

When you come to a verse like this we want to ask: "Lord, is it alright if I love at a distance?" or "Is it okay Lord if I love without involvement?"

Maybe you've been so hurt in a situation you just don't think it's possible for that kind of reconciliation where you can be buddies like you were at the beginning when you were on the same page.

We don't see that in the text. We do see something that we confuse. That is the business of FORGIVENESS with the manifestation of love.

"which you are having for all the saints."

Now let's get to the third one.

v. 5 Because of the hope that is laid up for you in heaven, which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, that has come to you,

"Because of the hope that is laid up for you in heaven, which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, that

has come to you,”

Epaphras has been trained. He’s bought “the truth of the gospel.” They are being deceived by the lies of the Gnostics.

The phrase “faithful in Christ Jesus” in verse 1 was there because there were people who were in the congregation that were diverted and distracted away from the truth of the Gospel.

We have three wonderful things:

1. “faith” in the PAST when you’ve had a genuine relationship with Christ,
2. “love” in the PRESENT as the Spirit of God produces the fruit of the spirit which is love, and
3. “hope” for the FUTURE. You have a hope that is reserved and laid up for you.

1 Peter 1:4

And God has reserved for his children the priceless gift of eternal life; it is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and (or) decay.

1 Corinthians 15:19

If being a Christian is of value only in this life, we are the

most miserable of creatures.

There are some commentators like him that you can take a paragraph of what they say and and it summarizes what we've just studied. Here's a good example.

(The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus and to Philemon by R. C. Lenski)

We love each other with intelligent and purposeful love that comes from faith because we are headed for the same great hope in heaven, for the same inheritance of glory, for the same blessed goal. . . . Faith is the soil from which the fruit of love springs, and hope is the sunshine which ripens this fruit of love.

p. 23

Isn't that beautiful?

THREE THINGS to test your faith:

1. "faith in Christ"—you can remember that from the PAST,
2. "love for all the saints"—ask the Lord to warm your heart, and
3. "hope...laid up for you in heaven."

We respond in "faith,"

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We reveal “love,” and

We speak of “hope” for the future as we give our testimony for Him.

“the hope that is laid up for you in heaven.”

Those are the TWO KEY VERSES.

Has God changed your life? Do you affirm that with the Spirit your life has been changed? Have you received Him by faith and experienced the total adequacy of Christ?

You don't have to look anywhere else or try to get any more. You have everything you need. When you receive Christ, He is ALL and IN ALL that a man needs and does. He's there for us.

This hymn is so appropriate at this point:

*What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought
Since Jesus came into my heart!
I have light in my soul for which long I have sought,
Since Jesus came into my heart!*

(“Since Jesus Came Into My Heart” by Charles H. Gabriel. © 1914 by Charles H. Gabriel. © Copyright renewed 1942 (extended), The Rodeheaver Co., owner. #430)

Remember it's all one sentence so you have to hang it together.

v. 6 even as it is also in all the world bearing fruit and increasing, just as also in you from the day you heard it and came to know completely the grace of God in truth;

“even as it is also in all the world bearing fruit and increasing, just as also in you from the day you heard it and came to know completely the grace of God in truth;”

Everything he says has to do with the fact that some have departed from truth again.

What are the two phrases we want to get out of that verse?

1. “bearing fruit” and
2. “increasing.”

That should be what's happening in the progressive change in our lives.

We ought to be:

“bearing fruit”—the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5 and the fruit of others coming to know Christ.

“increasing”—that means growing. We are flourishing in the

study of the Word and we're becoming more like Christ.

“just as also”— then he uses them as a witness—“just as also in you from the day you heard it.”

The moment you were born you were making progress and you were growing and maturing. You couldn't get enough of it.

“and [you] came to know completely the grace of God in truth;”

v. 7 even as you learned from Epaphras, the beloved, our fellow bond-slave, who is faithful on your behalf as a servant of Christ,

“even as you learned from Epaphras,”

Now here's the pastor in the Lycus Valley that made the trip to Rome to visit with Paul. He's given Paul an update on the ministry there and the condition of things.

There are FOUR THINGS that are going to really make an impact on somebody when they realize that these are true of our life.

“Epaphras”:

1. “the beloved,”
2. “our fellow bond-slave,”

3. “who is faithful on your behalf” and
4. He is “a servant of Christ.”

What a tribute!

When it says “Epaphras, the beloved” that means you are **IN THE BELOVED**.

Ephesians 1 says that when you come to know Christ you are accepted into the Beloved. (ref. Ephesians 1:6)

It’s your brothers and sisters and your relationship to Him—
“Beloved.”

And then he has answered the call to be a “servant.” He is a “bond-slave” of Jesus Christ. He’s doing only what the Lord would want him to do. He’s “faithful on your behalf.” He’s here as a minister on your behalf and he is “a servant of Christ.”

Wouldn’t you love to have somebody be able to say that as characteristics of our lives, that these things are likewise evidences of a changed life?

v. 8 who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

“who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.”

He’s saying “I have learned that you folks love me even though you’ve never met me and that Epaphras has brought

this message to you.”

So the end of Stage 1—has Christ changed your life? Has there been a work of faith that has manifested itself in love for the saints? And are you looking forward with the hope that is yours in Christ?

Paul told the Thessalonians:

1 Thessalonians 1:2, 3

I thank God for the work of faith and I thank God for your labor of love and I thank God for your patient endurance of hope.

That’s another way he uses these three words.

But he saw Epaphras as a beloved brother, fellow bond-slave, and one who’s faithful, a servant of Jesus Christ.

We have fourteen lessons in this study.

LESSON #1: You don’t realize that Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have.

LESSON #2: Christ is all you need. It is Christ plus nothing.

LESSON #3: The greatest argument for the validity of the Christian experience is that Jesus Christ changes lives. He changes hatred into love, isolation into fellowship, loneliness

into communion, anxiety into trust, fear into faith, and selfishness into service.

LESSON #4: Spiritual growth is a progressive change into Christlikeness by the believer.

LESSON #5: Are you presently in the center of God's will?

LESSON #6: How would God characterize your life? Faithful or unfaithful?

LESSON #7: Truly the unhappiest people in the world are not unbelievers but Christians who are resisting the will of God for their lives.

LESSON #8: God's greatest desire is fruit and faithfulness that comes from fellowship.

LESSON #9: Thanksgiving is the expression of the submissive heart.

LESSON #10: When I came to know Jesus Christ three wonderful things happened: (1) I put my faith in the Lord Jesus; (2) I had a deep love for others; and (3) I now have a hope laid up for me in heaven.

LESSON #11: The true Gospel bears fruit in the lives of others and it grows. Or you could say that it is fruitful and it spreads.

LESSON #12: What is your love level at this time?

LESSON #13: The single condition of salvation is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

LESSON #14: Are you growing in this relationship with the Lord Jesus?

Let's conclude the study with an illustration that is an example of a changed life.

(Outlive Your Life: You Were Made to Make a Difference by Max Lucado)

My favorite Ananias-type story [Do you understand who Ananias was? He was the guy that had to go and confront Saul of Tarsus in his blindness and see what God has done.] involves a couple of college roommates. The Ananias of the pair was a tolerant soul. He tolerated his friend's late-night drunkenness, midnight throw-ups, and all day sleep-ins. He didn't complain when his friend disappeared for the weekend or smoked cigarettes in the car. He could have requested a roommate who went to church more or cursed less or cared about something other than impressing girls.

But he hung with his personal Saul, seeming to think that something good could happen if the guy could pull his life together. So he kept cleaning up the mess, inviting his roommate to church, and covering his back.

I don't remember a bright light or a loud voice. I've never traveled a desert road to Damascus. But I distinctly remember

Jesus knocking me off my perch and flipping on the light. It took four semesters, but Steve's example and Jesus' message finally got through.

So if this book lifts your spirit, you might thank God for my Ananias, Steve Green. Even more, you might listen to that voice in your heart and look on your map for a street called Straight.

pp. 138-39

Father, we almost feel like singing with John Newton "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost and now I'm found, was blind but now I see." Thank You for the miracle of the new birth and thank You that You can bring clarification to us that the new birth is just a beginning point. It's the opening stage of birth. There's growth and maturity, productivity, fruitfulness, and faithfulness and willingness to be a servant that followed these things. We ask Your Holy Spirit to impress these fourteen lessons upon our lives. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

A Practical Study of EPHESIANS

HEAVEN'S PLAN for Life on Earth

“What It’s Like Living According to God’s Plan”

Key verse 3:11b — *“Christ is all and in all.”*

STUDY NUMBER ONE – CHRIST CHANGED MY LIFE – COLOSSIANS 1:1-8

KEY VERSES 1:4, 5

v. 1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints in Colosse, even the faithful brethren in Christ.

v. 2 Grace to you and peace from God, our Father.

v. 3 We are giving thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying for you at all times,

v. 4 having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you are having for all the saints.

v. 5 Because of the hope that is laid up for you in heaven, which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, that has come to you,

v. 6 even as it is also in all the world bearing fruit and increasing, just as also in you from the day you heard it and came to know completely the grace of God in truth;

v. 7 even as you learned from Epaphras, the beloved, our fellow bond-slave, who is faithful on your behalf as a servant of Christ,

v. 8 who also declared to us your love in the Spirit.

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Colossians 1:1-8 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What two things is Paul doing for these Christians in Colosse, according to verse 3?

3. How are these Colossian Christians described in verses 4 & 5?

4. What do you suppose Paul means by the phrase “the hope that is laid up for you in heaven” in verse 5?

5. What is this message about Jesus Christ doing in the rest of the world, according to verse 6?

6. Explain the phrase “bearing fruit and increasing” in verse 6.

7. How is Epaphras described in verse 7?

8. Explain what Paul means by the phrase “love in the Spirit” in verse 8.

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: You don't realize that Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have.

LESSON #2: Christ is all you need. It is Christ plus nothing.

LESSON #3: The greatest argument for the validity of the Christian experience is that Jesus Christ changes lives. He changes hatred into love, isolation into fellowship, loneliness into communion, anxiety into trust, fear into faith, and selfishness into service.

LESSON #4: Spiritual growth is a progressive change into Christlikeness by the believer.

LESSON #5: Are you presently in the center of God's will?

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LESSON #6: How would God characterize your life? Faithful or unfaithful?

LESSON #7: Truly the unhappiest people in the world are not unbelievers but Christians who are resisting the will of God for their lives.

LESSON #8: God's greatest desire is fruit and faithfulness that comes from fellowship.

LESSON #9: Thanksgiving is the expression of the submissive heart.

LESSON #10: When I came to know Jesus Christ three wonderful things happened: (1) I put my faith in the Lord Jesus; (2) I had a deep love for others; and (3) I now have a hope laid up for me in heaven.

LESSON #11: The true Gospel bears fruit in the lives of others and it grows. Or you could say that it is fruitful and it spreads.

LESSON #12: What is your love level at this time?

LESSON #13: The single condition of salvation is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

LESSON #14: Are you growing in this relationship with the Lord Jesus?