**SO THAT YOU MAY BEAR FRUIT AND GROW**

Colossians 1:1-14

Key Verse 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,”

**Introduction**



 When the Apostle Paul was imprisoned in Rome, Epaphras who pioneered the Colossian church, visited him and told him how the church was suffering from false teachings, and he asked Paul's help. For this reason Paul wrote Colossians to protect Christianity from false teachings and to reveal who Jesus is. Although Paul did not meet them in person, he prayed that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding and may know the mystery of God, namely Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The key verse of the Colossian letter is 1:18, “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.” So the theme of this letter is the supremacy of Christ. Paul wanted to make it clear that Christ alone is fully sufficient for every believer. We need nothing and no one else. We need to meditate deeply on who Christ really is. Even many Christian young people in our times become confused, wondering if Jesus really is the only way of salvation. It seems too boring only to believe in Jesus. People want to be entertained. But Colossians proclaims that all the fullness of God dwells in Jesus. We can gain everything in him. We can receive love, joy, peace, and happiness, and all the things we really want. It is a great mystery. Through this study we pray that we may have a new desire to really know Christ until we are fully satisfied in him and be eager to share about Jesus Christ in this long summer time. We may fan into flame campus fishing and Bible studies more and more! Amen.

1. Read verses 1-8. Who are the author(s) and recipients of this letter? (1-2) What are Paul’s thanks topics for the Colossian believers? (3-5a) What is the outcome of hearing the true message of the gospel? (5b-8)

1-1, Read verses 1-8.

 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. **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[[d](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+1&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29473d)] behalf, **8** and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

 1-2, Who are the author(s) and recipients of this letter? (1-2)

 ***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.***

* Paul and Timothy are the authors according to verse 1. The recipients are the Colossian church members.
* Paul said that he was an apostle of Christ Jesus, not by his qualifications or achievements, but by the will of God.
* Paul included Timothy. Though Timothy was like his spiritual son, Paul honored him as a coworker.
* Paul called the Colossians “God's holy people.” Even though they were sinful, they became holy through the blood of Jesus.
* Paul referred to Timothy and the Colossians as brothers and sisters in Christ. God is our Father, and we Christians are all brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus who share joy and suffering together, and who are destined for eternal glory.
* As Paul shared in this letter, we receive grace and peace from our Father God.

1-3, What are Paul’s thanks topics for the Colossian believers? (3-5a)

 ***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***

* Paul was very thankful for the spiritual blessings God had given the Colossians, which are the essentials of Christian faith. He did not mention about physical blessings.
* Paul mentioned faith in Christ Jesus. Without faith we cannot have hope and love. Faith in Christ Jesus is not just believing a doctrine, but meeting Jesus personally and putting our trust in him.
* Faith in Jesus means to accept what Jesus has done for us, to love him, to trust in him, and to grow in relationship with him more and more.
* Paul then mentioned love for all God’s people. True faith produces true love. Galatians 5:6b says, “The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.”
* But after having faith in Jesus, they see God’s people as most noble and wonderful. They want to be around God’s people and to be like them.
* We cannot love others with our own strength. We only love ourselves and those who are lovable. God’s love alone enables us to truly love all of God’s people. God’s love is amazing, for such love is contagious to those who believe Him.
* Paul now mentions hope stored up in heaven. We may misunderstand that faith and love come from hope. Rather, it simply says that because of hope in heaven we can live by faith in Christ and love God’s people.
* Hope in heaven is the source of power for our lives. People can endure all kinds of trials and hardships when they have hope.
* Worldly hopes cannot be our ultimate hope for they are all perishing, spoiling and fading away. Our physical body is very weak and vulnerable to diseases.
* But hope in heaven is eternal. This is our lasting hope. With this living hope in our hearts, we can give ourselves fully to God and serve God’s people with sacrificial love. This hope is like an anchor for our soul.

1-4, What is the outcome of hearing the true message of the gospel? (5b-8)

***about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel***

* Faith, love and hope came from hearing the true message of the gospel. Here, “the true message of the gospel” means “the word of truth.”
* In this way Paul contrasted the gospel with the deception of false teachings. Faith, love and hope stemmed from hearing the truth of the gospel. This shows how great the power of the gospel is.

***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.***

* The gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world. Here we can learn the character of the gospel. The gospel is the truth. The gospel is not a bit of good news among many others, but it is the good news.
* The gospel is not “a gospel,” but “the gospel.” The gospel bears fruit and grows. It is because the gospel has life in it like a seed.
* We were dead in our sins. But when we hear the gospel it gives us new life and changes us into a new creation. The gospel changes families, communities, and the world through changed people.
* The gospel begins like a mustard seed, which is the smallest seed. But it grows until it becomes a large plant. Furthermore, the gospel is universal. The gospel is not limited to special persons or nations, but it is for all peoples on earth.

***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.***

* This same gospel came to the Colossians through Epaphras. He was a faithful minister of Christ and also Paul's fellow servant.
* He heard the gospel from Paul, most likely during his ministry in Ephesus. Then Epaphras shared the gospel message with the people of Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis. This kind of work of God is still going on in our times. Praise Jesus!

2. Read verses 9-12. What is Paul's prayer for them? (9) What is the purpose of his prayer? (10a) How can they reach the goal? (10b-12)

2-1, Read verses 9-12.

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.

2-2, What is Paul's prayer for them? (9)

***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,***

* Paul prayed for them persistently, for when they heard the gospel, false teachers came and presented fine-sounding arguments. Then the Colossians were confused by many human ideas which could lead them astray.
* Paul prayed for them to grow well despite Satan’s attack. His first prayer topic was that God would fill them with the knowledge of his will.
* Paul did not pray that God would remove all the false teachings from the Colossian church. Rather, he prayed for them to be filled with the knowledge of God’s will through all wisdom and understanding.
* When we know God’s will, we can discern right and wrong, good and evil. Then we can make right decisions and do the things that please God. We are not saved by our own efforts.

2-3, What is the purpose of his prayer? (10a)

***10 so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way:***

* We are saved only by God’s grace. But based on this grace, we should live to please God in our daily lives.
* Pleasing God is the purpose of life. When we please God, God pleases us and blesses us.
* When children please their parents, parents want to please their children fully, not as a duty, but as an expression of love.

2-4, How can they reach the goal? (10b-12)

 ***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.***

* We can find four things here in order to reach our goal to please God.
* We can please God by bearing fruit in every good work, such as sharing the word of God and praying for others, visiting the sick, counseling the distressed, and caring for needy people.
* We can please God by growing in the knowledge of God. We cannot master knowing God through a few Bible studies. The knowledge of God is so profound and transcendent that it takes a lifetime to grasp.
* We can please God by being strengthened with his power to resist evil and persevere in doing good. Our struggle is against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. We cannot fight this battle in our own strength but only in the strength God provides.
* Then we can please God by giving joyful thanks to him. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, “...give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.”

3. Read verses 12-14. Why should we give joyful thanks to God? (12) What has God done for us in Jesus Christ? (13-14)

3-1, Read verses 12-14.

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.

3-2, Why should we give joyful thanks to God? (12)

***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.***

* No matter our circumstances, we have no reason to complain. But we have a clear reason to give joyful thanks to the Father.
* It is because He has qualified us to share the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.
* The word “qualified” implies that there is a standard. To enter the kingdom of light we need the right qualification.
* Actually, we were alienated from God and had no part with him or claim on his promises. We were objects of God's wrath, living by our own desires and plans. We were by nature deserving of his wrath.
* But God, because of his great love for us, made us his children. Not only did he make us his children, but also he made us heirs of his kingdom. We have many thanksgiving topics.
* But none of them is greater than that his grace qualifies us to become his children and heirs of his kingdom.
* Sometimes we complain to God, saying, “You did not give me what I want!” But we have to overcome such complaint but should give thanks to God always.

3-3, What has God done for us in Jesus Christ? (13-14)

***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.***

* In this verse the verbs “rescued” and “brought” are very meaningful. God did not sit down in a high place in heaven and save us by words alone.
* God took the initiative to act first for us. God made promises to save mankind and sent his one and only Son Jesus to us.
* In this way he rescued us from the dominion of darkness. “Dominion” implies power. No one can escape from the dominion of darkness by their own power.
* Sinners must be redeemed by paying ransom. The wages of sin is death. That means we must die because of our sins.
* But Jesus died for our sins in our place. Jesus paid the full price of sin by shedding his blood.
* In this way he forgave all our sins. It was costly to Jesus to make us children of God and heirs of his kingdom. But Jesus offers it to us free of charge. Through Jesus’ great sacrifice this blessing came to us. Thank you Jesus!

**Conclusion**

 Praise God who rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son! Praise Jesus who redeemed us from slavery to sin by forgiving all our sins. Please help us to share the true message of Jesus Christ so that the message may grow and bear much fruit through us and our Bible students. Amen.

**One word: So that you may bear fruit and grow!**