



**BIBLE STUDY SERIES**

The Book Of  
**COLOSSIANS**

Modern Narrative Project

A Contemporary Rendering, Context,

Meaning & Commentary

Based on the King James Version

**ROOT-TO-FRUIT**

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**BIBLE:ESSENCE**  
**Bible Study Project**

The Book Of  
**COLOSSIANS**

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This publication is intended for educational, devotional, and study purposes. Readers are encouraged to consult additional biblical translations and scholarly resources when conducting biblical research and study.

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**DEDICATED TO GOD AND MY SON**  
**... MY SON, MAY YOUR HEART FIND THE LORD**

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**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

GEMMA, for opening the door so I could see.

PASTOR PHIL, for acknowledging and encouraging me to believe big and be fearless - giving clarity to the path I was seeing.

PREFACE

First, thanks for picking up this book. If there is anything good in these pages, give credit to God; anything weak or flawed, that’s on me. I wrote this out of gratitude—a small way to give back, hoping maybe it lights the path for someone else, just like Scripture has done for me:

*“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path”* (Psalm 119:105).

My journey to faith wasn’t in a moment of crisis, in despair, or some dramatic story. No lightning bolts, no instant conversion. Honestly, it was more like water slowly carving its path over time.

Back at University, nearly 40 years ago, my friends were genuinely fired up about their faith and invited me along. They, and their invitation for me to believe there is a God, are the reason I got baptised. It wasn’t about church pressure; I just knew I wanted what they had, even if I didn’t truly understand what it was. But one thing was becoming clear to me: I was experiencing something I came to understand as the work of the Holy Spirit.

After University, the real world arrived. For years, my faith stayed quiet and private. I said the Lord’s Prayer every day. I tried to live with an open hand and hoped God had a plan for me, especially when life made no sense. I tried never to judge others too quickly, because I could never know the whole story or what was in another person's heart. God alone sees all things and judges perfectly.

Still, I rarely set foot in church. My life was busy, and I worked most Sundays. I also hardly knew anyone who talked about their faith openly.

I tried reading the Bible, but wrestling with the King James Version just felt impossible. When I was baptised, there wasn’t the choice of Bibles we have today. Sure, I believed there was something bright and life-giving in its words. I wasn't rejecting the King James Bible. I simply couldn't understand much of its language.

Then, a couple of years ago, everything shifted.

I lost my job in a way that wasn’t fair. My father passed away—not long after celebrating sixty years with my mother. My son was also close to a breakdown—he had been working too hard. Soon after that, I moved into my mother’s home so that I could care for her.

I believe Scripture calls us to care for our own (1 Timothy 5:8), and there are times when that responsibility has to come before my ability to attend church. Leaving my mother to attend church is not always safe, and that has made regular attendance difficult.

This has never been a rejection of the Church or of Christian fellowship. Quite the opposite. My heart is entirely with God, and I genuinely believe that caring for my mother is where God wants me to be. She is slowly losing her hearing and vision, with Alzheimer’s taking away more of who she is each day.

It is a hard season, and it continues to be. But I don't resent where I am. With all my heart, I believe this is where I am meant to be, and where I want to be.

The quick succession, timing and intensity of these events in my life began to feel like part of God’s plan for me.

It was then that I found solace in the Bible, just as life felt cracked wide open. And yet, in that brokenness, I noticed what I’d missed before—God actually draws close to people whose hearts are shattered (Psalm 34:18). When I ran out of my own strength, I learned how much I could lean on His:

*“My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness”* (2 Corinthians 12:9).

The Bible became more than something I was trying to understand. It became something I needed, even a passion. I honestly cannot imagine where I would be now without it.

Caring for my mother meant I couldn’t run from thing to thing anymore, and I like to be busy. It also meant that I didn’t have as much time or access to friends, especially as I now lived in a new area. Life slowed down, and income dropped to just enough to cover bare necessities.

But in that quiet, a new door opened.

I started volunteering as a driver—just helping elderly and vulnerable people who simply needed a lift—and, in many cases, a lift in more ways than one. I also started sharing my faith. It’s a small thing, but it felt right—my passengers lifted me as much as I lifted them, and I felt comfortable sharing my faith.

James reminds us that caring for those in need is an important expression of faith (James 1:27).

That volunteering drew me back to church, and—probably for the first time ever—I found myself having real conversations with God. Not just polite, thank-you prayers that I had always done, but honest ones where I was asking for help. I no longer felt guilty about asking God for help, as though doing so somehow meant I didn't trust the path God had given me.

I was forming a relationship with God.

And something shifted. I started to realise that God doesn't just help; He guides us, and I was beginning to learn to listen (Proverbs 3:5–6). I also started seeing the Bible not simply as a set of instructions, but as a guide for how to live.

I also began to see something about Christian fellowship that I hadn't really considered before.

Human beings naturally form communities. We make friends, find people we are comfortable with, and over time those friendships become established. There is nothing wrong with that. But Scripture calls us to something beyond simply gathering with the people we already know.

My own circumstances have sometimes left me on the edge of those established friendships. Even when I am able to attend church or volunteer, I often have responsibilities waiting for me at home. Sometimes I have to leave as soon as I can. At other times, I stay longer than I should because there is work that needs doing before I can return home.

I don't want that to be mistaken for being unfriendly or uninterested. Quite the opposite. I want fellowship. I want friendship. I want to feel that I belong.

This experience has taught me to be cautious about judging what I see in another person. I may see someone who does not stay, does not talk much, or seems distant, but I cannot know the circumstances behind what I see. God sees the whole story; I see only a small part of it.

That does not mean we should never exercise discernment. There are times when we need to recognise what is right and wrong, protect ourselves or others, and act when something is clearly harmful. But I believe we should be very slow to turn an observation into an assumption, an assumption into a judgement, and a judgement into exclusion. This has become clearer, while studying the Bible.

There may be someone standing on the edge of a church who desperately wants to belong. There may be someone carrying a burden that nobody else knows about. There may be someone searching for God who is quietly watching how Christians treat one another.

And that matters.

There are already enough barriers between people and God without Christians unintentionally creating more.

Jesus gives us a powerful picture of this in the parable of the lost sheep. The shepherd has ninety-nine sheep, but when one goes astray, he goes looking for it. The ninety-nine are not unimportant. But neither is the one.

That image has stayed with me.

If someone is struggling to understand Scripture, perhaps we should not simply assume that they will eventually find their way. If someone is standing on the edge of a Christian community, perhaps we should not simply accept that they are outside it. If someone appears distant, perhaps we should remember that we do not know their whole story.

Sometimes all that is needed is for someone to notice them, make room for them, and make sure they are not quietly left on the outside.

I don't say any of this as a criticism of the Church, and I certainly don't claim to have all the answers. I say it because Scripture has made me increasingly aware that following Christ changes not only our relationship with God, but also the way we see and treat other people.

Perhaps that is one of the things God has been teaching me through this season:

I cannot know another person's whole story, but I can choose not to become another barrier in their way.

So, I decided to really read the Bible, cover to cover.

My memory has always been atrocious, so I started typing out every verse, hoping the hands-on effort would help me absorb the words more effectively. Next to each King James verse, I wrote out what I thought it meant in plain English and started researching to gain more clarity.

Partly, I did it because I'd missed years of church teaching, and because I had put down the Bible in the past because of the frustration of not understanding more clearly the words that I read. But mostly, I did it for my son—he's autistic, he's exhausted, and as his father, I wanted to understand Scripture well enough to explain it to him. So, I decided to tackle my frustration with the Bible head-on.

Breaking it down for him became my main reason for all this—a way to do what Deuteronomy 6:6–7 calls us to:

*“And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children...”*

After I finished the first chunk, I showed it to my pastor because I wanted to be sure I hadn't missed the mark. He encouraged me greatly and told me to keep going.

So, I did.

Book by book, it grew, and I kept one thing front and centre:

*“Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it”* (Habakkuk 2:2).

***“Let me be clear about what this is, and what it's not.”***

This is not a rewrite of the Bible, or any sort of replacement for it. Scripture is the foundation:

*“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”* (2 Timothy 3:16).

I haven't altered the Scripture itself. Every King James verse is there in full, so you can clearly see what is Scripture and what is my attempt to explain it. What I have written alongside it is simply plain-English meaning and explanation—for people who are new to the Bible, even the young, to help them move towards understanding what is being said.

***“Call it a companion, not a substitute. I call it Bible:Essence Project as it is simply that, the essence of the Bible.”***



That line matters to me. I’ve tried to make the language simpler, not shrink the meaning. Where a verse is difficult to put into plain English, or where faithful Christians have understood it in more than one way, I try to say so rather than pretend there is only one possible interpretation.

This isn’t a new idea. In Nehemiah 8:8, the Levites read God's law and then explained it so everyone could understand. When Philip came across the Ethiopian man in Acts 8, that man admitted he couldn't understand Scripture without help. And Paul wrote to the Corinthian church:

*“Unless you speak words that are easy to understand, how will anyone know what you’re saying?”* (1 Corinthians 14:9).

Helping people understand Scripture has always been part of the life of God's people. I'm simply trying, in a very small way, to do the same.

There are many Bible studies and guides written by people who have a passion for God and a desire to share what they have learned. I make no claim to be different in that respect. I am simply another person who has found something in Scripture that I want others to have the opportunity to discover.

I didn’t write this as a scholar, and I don’t expect you to read it as though you’re taking a course. I’m simply an ordinary person whose faith deepened later in life, who still gets stuck on difficult passages, and who wanted to find a way into Scripture—for myself, for my son, and perhaps for you too.

Perhaps coming to a deeper understanding later in life has given me a perspective that can help someone else who is only just beginning that journey.

I’m not claiming to have all the answers, and I certainly don’t want you to take my explanations as a substitute for Scripture. Please check what I’ve written against the Scripture alongside it, and where something is difficult or open to more than one interpretation, I will try to say so.

My hope is not that you take my word for anything, but that my efforts might help you engage with God's Word for yourself.

If you already know the Bible well, I hope you'll forgive the simplicity of some of the explanations. They aren't written because I think Scripture is simple, but because I remember what it felt like when it wasn't.

And if you find that I've misunderstood something, I hope you'll test my words against Scripture, as I have tried to do myself.

I’m not looking for money or recognition. Most of these last few years, I’ve been caring for my mother and using whatever spare time I could find to chip away at this project. In a strange way, the two have gone hand in hand.

My prayer is that these efforts, offered to God, will do the quiet work in your heart that His Word began in mine.

I’m trusting, as Isaiah says, that God's word never returns empty—it always does what He intends (Isaiah 55:11).

Honestly, my hope is simple:

***“That these pages help you move from feeling stuck with the text to beginning to understand it—and that, somewhere along that journey, you encounter God, as I did.***

***I hope you come to feel the love of the Bible as I do, and feel blessed by the wisdom of God’s Word as it shines through its pages.***

***I am continually in awe of the Bible. Although it was written more than 2,000 years ago, the wisdom it contains is just as relevant today as it has ever been—and, perhaps more than ever, that wisdom is needed now in our world.”***

And if that happens for even one person, then all the time and effort that went into these pages will have been worth it.

Don’t worry if you struggle like me to remember Bible verses. Be assured that as you read, the verses will enter your heart, soul — and even your bones!

May God bless you, and may His Word do in your heart what it has done in mine. **Amen.**

**Methodology Declaration:**

The research for this Bible Study was conducted using a variety of sources, including Bible study plans available through YouVersion, other Bible study books, websites, and AI tools.

AI was used as a research and reference tool, rather than as a means of generating the Bible Study itself. Where AI was used, I used a platform that allowed me to submit the same prompts to multiple AI models and compare their responses. I then analysed and cross-referenced the information provided, with the aim of identifying inaccuracies, inconsistencies, or potential AI “hallucinations.”

The research from these various sources, including the AI-assisted research, helped me to develop my understanding of the subjects discussed and influenced some of my thinking. However, the content and wording presented in this Bible Study were written by me, based on my own understanding, analysis, and interpretation of the research.

If you’ve enjoyed what this Bible study has revealed to you, why not visit my website, where you’ll find many more resources that reveal the wonder and awe of the Bible? [www.root-to-fruit.faith](http://www.root-to-fruit.faith)

## Book Summary: Colossians

The book of Colossians is a letter written by the Apostle Paul while he was in prison. It was sent to a community of Christians in the city of Colossae. The main reason Paul wrote this letter was to strongly emphasise that Jesus Christ is absolutely supreme and sufficient for everything a believer needs. There were false teachings spreading in Colossae that were trying to combine elements of Jewish law (like special diets or holidays), worship of angels, and mysterious "secret knowledge" with Christianity. These teachings were diminishing Jesus' unique and ultimate role. Paul explains that Jesus is the Creator of all things, the head of the church, and the one through whom God has reconciled the world. He urges the Colossians to focus only on Christ, reject these misleading philosophies, and live a new life transformed by Him, marked by love, forgiveness, and wisdom. Essentially, Colossians reminds us that Jesus is all we need, and nothing should come before Him.

## CHAPTER 1

### Chapter Summary: Colossians 1

*Colossians Chapter 1 begins with Paul's warm greeting to the believers in Colossae and a prayer of thanksgiving for their faith, love, and hope. He praises God for rescuing them from darkness and bringing them into the kingdom of His Son, Jesus, where they find forgiveness for their sins. The chapter then transitions into a powerful declaration of Jesus Christ's supreme identity. Paul describes Jesus as the visible representation of God, the creator and sustainer of all things in heaven and on earth, and the head of the church. He stresses that God was pleased for all of His divine nature to reside in Christ, and through Christ's death on the cross, God brought peace and reconciled everything—including the Colossians themselves—back into a right relationship with Him. Finally, Paul reflects on his own ministry, explaining that he suffers joyfully for the church and that his role is to fully reveal God's long-hidden secret: Christ living in believers, which is their confident hope of future glory.*

**1:1** *(KJV)* Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,  
**(B:E Project)** Paul introduces himself as someone sent out by Jesus Christ - a role he believes came from God's own choice, not his own ambition - and he names Timothy, a trusted co-worker, as joining him in writing.

**Context:** This is the letter's opening greeting, the standard way ancient letters named their sender before addressing the recipients.

**Meaning:** Paul wants the Colossians to know from the first line that what follows isn't a casual opinion but comes with real authority and accountability. This matters because he's about to challenge popular ideas circulating in their community, so he grounds himself first. Naming Timothy also shows this message grows out of relationship and shared work, not one person's isolated agenda.

**Lesson:** Notice that even someone about to say hard things starts by naming who stands with him. When you have something important to say, it helps to know who you're saying it for and who's beside you - purpose shared is easier to carry than purpose carried alone.

**See Also:** Ephesians 1:1 and Philippians 1:1 open the same way, showing Paul's consistent pattern across his prison letters.

**1:2** *(KJV)* To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
**(B:E Project)** Paul writes to the faithful Christian community living in the city of Colossae, wishing them the generous kindness (grace) and inner wellbeing (peace) that come from God the Father and Jesus Christ.

**Context:** This completes the letter's greeting, naming the specific audience - a small church in a minor Asian city Paul had never personally visited.



- Meaning:** Grace and peace was Paul's standard blessing, but it names two things people chase constantly today: unearned goodwill rather than judgement, and genuine calm rather than anxiety. Paul is saying these aren't things you have to manufacture yourself; they're offered.

**Lesson:** I say peace to you the same way I said it to my first followers - not the absence of trouble, but a steadiness underneath it. You don't have to hustle for approval or manufacture your own calm; both can be received rather than earned.

**See Also:** John 14:27, where Jesus gives his peace 'not as the world giveth'; Numbers 6:24-26, the Old Testament priestly blessing of grace and peace this greeting echoes.
- 1:3** *(KJV) We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says that he and his companions constantly thank God, the Father of Jesus Christ, and pray for the Colossians on a regular, ongoing basis.

**Context:** This begins Paul's thanksgiving section, a warm opening common in his letters before he gets into teaching or correction.

**Meaning:** Before Paul challenges anything in this church, he affirms them - genuine gratitude comes first. It's a useful pattern for any relationship: appreciation before critique. Prayer here isn't formality; it's Paul describing an actual habitual practice of holding these people in mind.

**Lesson:** Before I ever correct someone, I want them to know I'm grateful for them - that's the order love takes. If you need to have a hard conversation with someone, start where Paul starts: with real thanks, not just as tactic but as truth.

**See Also:** Philippians 1:3-4 and Ephesians 1:15-16 show Paul opening his other letters the same grateful way.
- 1:4** *(KJV) Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul explains why he's thankful - reports have reached him about the Colossians' trust in Jesus and about the genuine love they show to all their fellow believers.

**Context:** Still within the opening thanksgiving, Paul names the specific things he's heard about this church he's never met in person.

**Meaning:** Two things stand out to Paul as evidence of a life going well: trust, a settled confidence rather than blind naivety, and love directed outward, not just self-focus. It's a good diagnostic today: not 'how successful am I' but 'do I trust something bigger than my anxiety, and do I actually care for the people around me.'

**Lesson:** What moves me isn't your achievements - it's whether you trust and whether you love. Those two things, more than any resume, are what I notice about a life.

- See Also:** 1 Corinthians 13:13, where Paul lists faith, hope, and love as what remains; Galatians 5:6, 'faith which worketh by love.'

**1:5** *(KJV) For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says their faith and love are grounded in a confident hope waiting for them in heaven - something they first heard about when the true message of the gospel was preached to them.

**Context:** Paul links the Colossians' present faith and love back to a future hope, and forward to the message that first brought it to them.

**Meaning:** Hope here isn't wishful thinking - it's something 'laid up,' stored safely, waiting. For a reader exhausted by uncertainty, this is the idea that there's a secure future underneath present effort, not just an anxious scramble with no destination.

**Lesson:** I don't want you working from fear of running out - I want you working from a hope that's already secured for you, like savings put safely away. That security is what should free you to love without keeping score.

**See Also:** Hebrews 11:1, hope and faith defined; 1 Peter 1:4, 'an inheritance incorruptible... reserved in heaven.'
- 1:6** *(KJV) Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says this same message has been spreading and producing real change across the whole known world, just as it has been growing and bearing fruit among the Colossians since the day they first understood God's genuine, unearned kindness.

**Context:** Paul emphasises the gospel's universal reach and proven track record, reassuring a church anxious they might be missing something more exclusive.

**Meaning:** This is a quiet rebuttal of any teaching claiming Christianity needs secret extras - the plain message the Colossians already received is the same one working everywhere. True change, Paul argues, is not about who has the most exotic system, but whether something is actually producing real growth in real lives.

**Lesson:** You don't need a special, hidden version of the truth reserved for insiders - what changed you at the start is the same thing changing lives everywhere. Trust what's already working rather than chasing something more complicated.

**See Also:** Matthew 13:8, the parable of seed bearing fruit; Romans 1:8, faith 'spoken of throughout the whole world.'
- 1:7** *(KJV) As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellowservant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;*

- (B:E Project) Paul reminds them that they learned this message from Epaphras, someone Paul cares about deeply and calls a loyal servant of Christ working faithfully on the Colossians' behalf.
- Context:** Paul names Epaphras, likely the founder of the Colossian church, establishing that the gospel they received had a trustworthy source.
- Meaning:** Paul is validating the messenger, not just the message - he wants the Colossians to trust what they were originally taught rather than doubt it in favour of newer, flashier ideas. Good teaching often comes through ordinary, faithful people rather than dramatic figures.
- Lesson:** Notice who taught you well and say so - a faithful teacher deserves to be named and thanked, not taken for granted once you've moved past the lesson.
- See Also:** Colossians 4:12-13, where Epaphras is mentioned again labouring in prayer for this church.
- 1:8 (KJV) *Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.*  
(B:E Project) Paul adds that Epaphras also told him about the genuine love the Colossians have, a love produced by God's Spirit working in them.
- Context:** This closes the thanksgiving's opening, crediting Epaphras as the source of Paul's good news about the church.
- Meaning:** Paul frames their love not as self-generated willpower but as something flowing from a deeper source. For a modern reader tired of 'just try harder' advice, this suggests real, lasting love comes from connection to something beyond sheer personal effort.
- Lesson:** The love you're capable of isn't only produced by gritting your teeth - it can flow from something deeper inside you when you're connected to it. Let yourself draw on that source rather than forcing kindness alone.
- See Also:** Galatians 5:22, love as 'fruit of the Spirit'; Romans 5:5, 'love of God shed abroad in our hearts.'
- 1:9 (KJV) *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;*  
(B:E Project) Paul says that ever since hearing this good news about them, he and his companions haven't stopped praying that the Colossians would be filled with a full, practical understanding of what God wants, together with real wisdom and spiritual insight.
- Context:** This begins Paul's prayer report for the church, moving from thanksgiving into intercession, setting up the description of Christ that follows.

- Meaning:** Notice what Paul prays for: not comfort, wealth, or protection, but understanding and wisdom. He wants them equipped to think clearly and discern well, useful because chapter 2 will show a specific danger of being talked into bad ideas by people who sound impressive.
- Lesson:** I'd rather you have clear understanding than an easy life - wisdom is the thing that protects you from being talked into things that hurt you. Ask for insight, not just comfort.
- See Also:** James 1:5, asking God for wisdom; Ephesians 1:17, a very similar prayer for 'the spirit of wisdom.'
- 1:10 (KJV) *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;*  
(B:E Project) Paul explains the purpose of that wisdom: so they can live in a way worthy of the Lord, pleasing him in every way, producing good actions like fruit, and continually growing in their knowledge of God.
- Context:** Continuing Paul's prayer, this verse states the practical goal - not knowledge for its own sake but knowledge that shapes a life.
- Meaning:** This rejects the idea that spirituality is just about having the right information or feelings; it's meant to actually change behaviour, producing visible good done in the world. Growth here isn't a one-time event but continuous.
- Lesson:** I'm not interested in what you know if it never becomes what you do. Let understanding turn into action, and let that action keep growing rather than settling for where you started.
- See Also:** Matthew 7:16-20, knowing a tree by its fruit; John 15:8, 'herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.'
- 1:11 (KJV) *Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;*  
(B:E Project) Paul prays they'll be strengthened with real power - the kind that comes from God's own glorious strength - so they can endure difficult, drawn-out situations with patience, and do it joyfully rather than bitterly.
- Context:** Still part of Paul's prayer, this verse addresses inner resilience needed to face hardship, relevant to a pressured community.
- Meaning:** This isn't strength for winning or achieving, but for enduring - patience under long strain, done with actual joy rather than gritted-teeth resentment. That combination is rare and worth aiming for; it's an antidote to burnout that comes from enduring things resentfully.

**Lesson:** I don't ask you to endure hardship alone on your own willpower - draw on strength bigger than yourself, and let joy stay present even in the waiting. Bitterness isn't required just because something is hard.

**See Also:** Romans 5:3-4, tribulation producing patience; James 1:2-4, counting trials as joy.

**1:12** *(KJV) Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:*

**(B:E Project)** Paul tells them to give thanks to the Father, who has made them qualified to share in the inheritance that belongs to God's people, who now live in the light.

**Context:** This continues the prayer and thanksgiving, moving toward the description of what God has done for believers - rescue and inclusion.

**Meaning:** 'Qualified' or 'made fit' pushes back against the idea you have to earn your place through extra effort - Paul says the qualifying has already happened. For someone weighed down by feeling not good enough, this is a direct counter: worthiness isn't something you have to keep proving.

**Lesson:** You don't have to keep auditioning for a place at the table - if you've been included, you're included. Rest in that instead of endlessly trying to prove you deserve it.

**See Also:** Ephesians 1:11, obtaining 'an inheritance'; 1 Peter 2:9, 'called out of darkness into his marvellous light.'

**1:13** *(KJV) Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:*

**(B:E Project)** Paul says God has rescued them from the power of darkness and moved them into the kingdom of his beloved Son.

**Context:** This describes the decisive change of status believers have already undergone - rescued and relocated, done, not still in progress.

**Meaning:** The language is deliberately dramatic - a rescue and a relocation, like moving to a new country under new rule. It frames spiritual change not as a vague feeling but as a real transfer from one condition to another, already accomplished.

**Lesson:** This isn't a slow crawl toward improvement you might never finish - it's a completed rescue, a change of address already made. You're not still trying to escape the dark; you've already been brought out of it.

**See Also:** Ephesians 2:1-5, 'dead in trespasses' made alive; 1 Peter 2:9, called 'out of darkness into his marvellous light.'

**1:14** *(KJV) In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:*

**(B:E Project)** Paul says that through this Son, they have been bought back from bondage and set free - specifically, their wrongs have been forgiven.

**Context:** This defines what 'redemption' concretely means here - forgiveness - linking the rescue of verse 13 to its actual content.

**Meaning:** Redemption was originally a word for buying someone out of slavery. Paul uses it to say guilt and wrongdoing no longer hold power over a person, not because the wrong didn't matter, but because it's been dealt with. This directly answers the shame and self-punishment many people carry.

**Lesson:** Whatever you've done that you can't forgive yourself for, know that forgiveness is possible and real, not conditional on you somehow paying it off first. Let go of debts that have already been settled.

**See Also:** Ephesians 1:7, near-identical wording, 'redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins'; Romans 3:24.

**1:15** *(KJV) Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:*

**(B:E Project)** Paul describes Christ as the visible likeness of the God no one can see, and as supreme over all creation, existing before and above everything that has ever been made.

**Context:** This opens the famous 'Christ hymn' (1:15-20), the theological centrepiece of the letter, laying out Christ's supreme status - the foundation for everything Paul argues against the false teaching in chapter 2.

**Meaning:** 'Image of the invisible God' means: if you want to know what an unseen God is actually like, look here. 'Firstborn of every creature' means he holds the position of highest rank and priority, not that he was created first (Paul goes on to say he made everything). This sets up the entire argument: nothing else outranks him.

**Lesson:** If you want to picture what love, integrity, and truth actually look like in a human life, look here rather than at abstract ideas - a real life gives you something a philosophy never can.

**See Also:** John 1:1-3 and 1:14, the Word made flesh who reveals the unseen Father; Genesis 1:26-27, humanity made in God's image, now perfectly fulfilled in Christ; Hebrews 1:3, 'the express image of his person.'

**1:16** *(KJV) For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:*

**(B:E Project)** Paul says everything was created through Christ and for him - everything in heaven and on earth, everything seen and unseen, including every kind of spiritual power or authority.

**Context:** Still within the Christ hymn, this verse expands Christ's role to full creator of everything, deliberately including the very spiritual powers the false teachers in Colossae were fixated on.

**Meaning:** This is a direct challenge to any system elevating angels or spiritual hierarchies to near-equal importance - Paul says Christ made those very powers, so they can't be rivals to him. Whatever unseen forces or pressures a person feels controlled by, none of them are the ultimate authority.

**Lesson:** Nothing that seems to hold power over your life - not fear, not other people's judgement, not some vague sense of fate - is actually above the one who made it all in the first place. You can stop treating those forces as final.

**See Also:** John 1:3, 'all things were made by him'; Genesis 1:1, the original creation account; Ephesians 1:21, Christ 'far above all principality and power.'

**1:17** *(KJV) And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul states plainly that Christ existed before everything else, and that he is the one holding everything together.

**Context:** This is a compact, weighty summary line within the Christ hymn, asserting both Christ's eternal existence and his ongoing sustaining role.

**Meaning:** Not only did Christ create everything, he continues to hold it together - the universe isn't a machine left to run on its own. For someone anxious about chaos or meaninglessness, this claims there's an active, coherent order underneath everything, not randomness.

**Lesson:** When your life feels like it's falling apart at the seams, remember that coherence and order haven't disappeared from the universe - they're still being held together, even in seasons that feel like chaos.

**See Also:** Hebrews 1:3, Christ 'upholding all things by the word of his power'; John 1:1, 'in the beginning was the Word.'

**1:18** *(KJV) And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says Christ is the head of his body, which is the church; he is the beginning, the first to rise from death, so that in every way he holds first place.

**Context:** This shifts the hymn from Christ's cosmic role to his relationship with the church, and introduces resurrection as the source of his supremacy there too.

**Meaning:** 'Head of the body' is an organic image - not a distant ruler but a source of life and direction for a connected whole. His resurrection establishes him as first in a new kind of life others can follow into. The phrase 'in all things the preeminence' is the letter's central claim.

**Lesson:** I didn't come back from death to sit at a distance from you - I lead from connection, like a head leads a body, not like a boss leads from behind a closed door. Let that closeness shape how you understand authority worth following.

**See Also:** Ephesians 1:22-23 and 5:23, near-identical 'head of the church, his body'; 1 Corinthians 15:20, Christ 'the firstfruits of them that slept.'

**1:19** *(KJV) For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says God was glad for the complete fullness of himself to live in Christ.

**Context:** This transitions from Christ's headship to the theological climax of the hymn - that the entirety of God's nature is present in Christ, not partially or symbolically.

**Meaning:** This directly counters any idea that Christ is one spiritual being among many, or only partly divine, or that extra fullness needs to be sought elsewhere. Everything of God that could be found is already found here, completely, deliberately.

**Lesson:** You don't need to keep searching for the missing piece somewhere else - what you're looking for was placed fully in one place, on purpose, because that's what love wanted to do.

**See Also:** Colossians 2:9, the same idea restated even more emphatically, 'the fulness of the Godhead bodily'; John 1:16, 'of his fulness have all we received.'

**1:20** *(KJV) And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says that through Christ, and through peace made by his death on the cross, God chose to reconcile everything back to himself - everything on earth and everything in heaven.

**Context:** This closes the Christ hymn by explaining how his supremacy translates into action - reconciliation achieved specifically through the cross.

**Meaning:** Reconcile means restoring a broken relationship, and Paul says its scope is total - 'all things.' The method is deliberately unglamorous: not a display of power but suffering and death. Real repair, Paul is saying, often comes through costly, humble means rather than force.

**Lesson:** Making things right rarely comes through domination - it comes through the harder, costlier road of laying something down for the sake of peace. That's the pattern I set, and it's worth following in your own conflicts.

**See Also:** 2 Corinthians 5:18-19, 'God... reconciling the world unto himself'; Ephesians 2:14-16, Christ making peace and reconciling.

**1:21** *(KJV) And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul turns to address the Colossians directly, reminding them that they used to be distant from God and hostile toward him in their thinking, because of the wrong things they did.



**Context:** Paul shifts from the cosmic hymn to a personal application - this is where 'you' enter the story described in verses 15-20.

**Meaning:** Paul doesn't shy away from naming their former condition honestly - alienated, hostile, not by accident but through actions and mindset. It's not shaming; it's setting up the contrast with what comes next: reconciliation actually happened to real, flawed people.

**Lesson:** I'm not interested in pretending your past distance from goodness didn't happen - I'm interested in what happens after it. Honesty about where you've been makes the change that follows mean something real.

**See Also:** Ephesians 2:12-13, 'aliens... far off' now 'made nigh'; Romans 5:10, 'when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God.'

1:22 *(KJV) In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprougeable in his sight:*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says that through Christ's physical death, God has now reconciled them, with the goal of presenting them holy, faultless, and blameless before him.

**Context:** This completes the thought begun in verse 21 - the actual reconciling act and its intended result, a clean standing.

**Meaning:** The goal language pictures someone being brought forward, cleaned up, ready to stand confidently rather than in shame. This addresses a deep human fear of not measuring up; Paul says the outcome being aimed for is full acceptance, not permanent disqualification.

**Lesson:** The aim was never to leave you standing in shame - it was to bring you forward clean, ready to be seen without flinching. Let that be the standard you hold yourself to, not constant self-accusation.

**See Also:** Ephesians 5:27, presenting the church 'without blemish'; Jude 1:24, presenting believers 'faultless.'

1:23 *(KJV) If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul adds a condition: if they continue in their faith, firmly grounded and not shifted away from the hope found in the gospel they heard - the same message preached throughout the world, which Paul himself now serves.

**Context:** This closes the theological section with a call to perseverance, preparing the reader for the practical warnings of chapter 2.

**Meaning:** Paul balances the completed reconciliation of verse 22 with a call to stay rooted - not because the rescue is fragile, but because a person can drift. Staying

grounded takes ongoing attention, like tending something valuable rather than assuming it looks after itself.

**Lesson:** What's been given to you is secure, but staying rooted in it still takes your attention - like any relationship worth having. Don't let yourself drift just because the foundation is solid; keep coming back to it.

**See Also:** Matthew 7:24-25, building on rock so the house stands firm; Hebrews 3:14, holding 'the beginning of our confidence stedfast.'

1:24 *(KJV) Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church:*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says he actually finds joy in the sufferings he's going through for the Colossians' sake, and that he is completing, in his own body, whatever remains of the hardships involved in serving Christ's people, the church.

**Context:** Paul begins to speak about his own ministry and imprisonment, explaining why he suffers and how he understands its purpose.

**Meaning:** Paul isn't saying Christ's sacrifice was incomplete - rather, that ongoing suffering is part of the cost of serving others, and someone has to carry that cost. He chooses joy over resentment even in genuine hardship, modelling that suffering for others' benefit can have real meaning.

**Lesson:** When you carry a hard cost for someone else's sake, out of love not obligation, there can be real joy in it, not despite the difficulty but somehow within it. That's not martyrdom for its own sake; it's love spending itself well.

**See Also:** Philippians 1:29, suffering 'for his sake'; 2 Corinthians 1:5, 'sufferings of Christ abound in us.'

1:25 *(KJV) Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says he became a servant of the church according to a responsibility God gave him specifically for the Colossians' benefit - to fully deliver God's message.

**Context:** Paul explains his personal calling and role, framing his ministry as a task assigned to him rather than self-appointed.

**Meaning:** Paul again grounds his authority in assignment, not ambition - a responsibility entrusted to someone, not a title they claimed. It's a useful distinction for anyone in a position of influence: are you serving a purpose bigger than yourself, or just building your own platform?

**Lesson:** Whatever responsibility you carry, ask whether you're serving something bigger than your own reputation. That question keeps power honest.

**See Also:** 1 Corinthians 9:17, 'a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me'; Ephesians 3:2, 'the dispensation of the grace of God.'

**1:26** *(KJV) Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul describes a secret truth that had been hidden for ages and generations but has now been revealed openly to God's people.

**Context:** Paul introduces 'the mystery,' a key term he'll define in the next verse, contrasting long concealment with recent, open revelation.  
**Meaning:** Mystery in Paul's usage doesn't mean something still puzzling today - it means something once hidden that is now fully disclosed to everyone, not just an elite few. This undercuts any group in Colossae claiming access to exclusive, secret spiritual knowledge.  
**Lesson:** What matters most isn't locked away for a special few who know the right password - it's been laid open for anyone willing to look. Be suspicious of anyone who tells you the truth is only for insiders.  
**See Also:** Ephesians 3:5-6, the same 'mystery' now revealed to all; Romans 16:25-26, 'the mystery... now is made manifest.'

**1:27** *(KJV) To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says God chose to make known, to non-Jewish people specifically, just how rich and glorious this secret truth is: that Christ lives in them, which gives them a confident hope of future glory.

**Context:** This defines the mystery of verse 26 explicitly, highlighting that it's now available to everyone, including Gentiles.  
**Meaning:** This is arguably the letter's most intimate claim - not just information about Christ, but Christ actually present within a person. That indwelling presence is the basis of hope, not visions or rituals. For a reader chasing external practices for meaning, this points inward, to a relationship already present.  
**Lesson:** What you're looking for in every retreat, ritual, or self-improvement programme is already available closer than you think - within you, not somewhere you still have to travel to find. Stop searching outward for what's already been given inward.  
**See Also:** John 15:4-5, 'abide in me, and I in you'; Galatians 2:20, 'Christ liveth in me.'

**1:28** *(KJV) Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says he and his companions proclaim Christ, correcting and teaching everyone with all the wisdom they have, aiming to present every person mature and complete in Christ.

**Context:** Paul summarises the purpose of his ministry - not gathering followers for himself but helping people reach real maturity.

**Meaning:** Warning and teaching together show a balanced approach - not just comfort, not just correction, but both, aimed at genuine growth. The goal is every person's wholeness, echoing the letter's larger theme that completeness is available, not endlessly deferred.  
**Lesson:** Real teaching includes both encouragement and honest correction - one without the other isn't love, it's either flattery or cruelty. Aim for someone's actual maturity, not just their comfort or their compliance.  
**See Also:** Ephesians 4:13, growing 'unto a perfect man'; 2 Timothy 3:16-17, scripture for teaching and correction, 'that the man of God may be perfect.'

**1:29** *(KJV) Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says this is exactly what he labours for, working hard and struggling according to Christ's own power, which works powerfully within him.

**Context:** This closes chapter 1, summarising Paul's effort as genuinely hard work, but powered by a source beyond his own strength.  
**Meaning:** Paul doesn't pretend ministry is effortless - labour and striving are real exertion words. But he credits the actual power to something working in him, not sheer self-reliance. This models sustainable effort: working hard without burning out entirely on your own resources.  
**Lesson:** Give real effort to what matters, but don't mistake that effort for something you have to generate entirely from your own limited supply - draw on strength beyond yourself, and you'll last longer than sheer willpower allows.  
**See Also:** Philippians 4:13, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me'; 1 Corinthians 15:10, 'yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.'

CHAPTER 2

Chapter Summary: Colossians 2

Chapter 2 of Colossians is a strong warning from Paul against deceptive teachings and false philosophies that could lead believers away from the truth found in Christ. Paul stresses that everything believers need for salvation, spiritual growth, and a full relationship with God is completely found in Jesus. He explains that through Christ's death and resurrection, believers are set free from the old rules and human traditions, including legalistic requirements about food, special days, and spiritual practises like angel worship or harsh self-denial. The chapter emphasises that Christ is supreme over all things, and that believers are made complete in Him, so they should not let anyone judge them or mislead them into following empty human ideas instead of Christ, who is the true source of life and wisdom.



**2:1** *(KJV) For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;*

**(B:E Project)** Paul tells them he wants them to understand how hard he's struggling on their behalf, and for the believers in nearby Laodicea, and for others who have never actually met him face to face.

**Context:** This opens chapter 2, continuing directly from Paul's mention of labour and striving, revealing he's never personally visited Colossae or Laodicea.

**Meaning:** Paul cares deeply about people he's never met in person - a reminder that real concern isn't limited to those you personally know. It also explains why the letter matters so much: he can't visit and correct things face-to-face, so this careful writing is his only tool.

**Lesson:** You can genuinely care about people you've never met, and that care is no less real for the distance. Let that stretch how wide your concern for others goes.

**See Also:** Colossians 4:13, Epaphras's zeal for these same towns; 2 Corinthians 11:28, Paul's 'care of all the churches.'

**2:2** *(KJV) That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;*

**(B:E Project)** Paul explains his goal: that their hearts would be encouraged, that they'd be knitted closely together in love, and that they'd reach the full wealth of confident understanding, coming to know fully the secret truth of God - namely, Christ himself.

**Context:** Paul lays out exactly what he's striving for on their behalf, linking emotional encouragement, community unity, and clear understanding together.

**Meaning:** Notice the combination Paul wants: comforted hearts, love binding people together, and real understanding, not one at the expense of the others. Confidence here is the settled security of actually understanding something rather than being confused or manipulated.

**Lesson:** I want your heart at rest, your relationships close-knit, and your mind clear - all three together, not one traded for another. Don't accept a version of faith or growth that sacrifices any of those three.

**See Also:** Ephesians 3:17-19, being 'rooted and grounded in love' to grasp the fulness of Christ; 1 Corinthians 2:2, Paul determining 'not to know any thing... save Jesus Christ.'

**2:3** *(KJV) In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul says that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hidden within Christ.

**Context:** This directly follows the mention of 'the mystery... which is Christ' and answers the false teachers' claims to offer special hidden wisdom.

**Meaning:** This is a pointed jab at rival teachers claiming secret access to wisdom - Paul says the real treasure isn't elsewhere, it's already in Christ. For someone tempted by every new self-improvement system promising the 'real' secret to a good life, this says: stop shopping around, it's already located.

**Lesson:** You don't need to keep buying the next course, the next guru, the next secret technique - real wisdom isn't scattered and hidden in fragments you have to collect. It's already found in one place, freely available.

**See Also:** Proverbs 2:1-6, wisdom and knowledge coming from God; 1 Corinthians 1:24, Christ 'the wisdom of God.'

**2:4** *(KJV) And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul says he's telling them this so that no one will deceive them using persuasive-sounding but empty arguments.

**Context:** This states Paul's practical purpose for the theology just given - equipping the Colossians against smooth-talking false teachers.

**Meaning:** Enticing words describes rhetoric that sounds impressive but is hollow, style without substance. Paul's antidote isn't emotional resistance but solid understanding; knowing the real thing well is the best protection against convincing-sounding fakes.

**Lesson:** The best defence against being talked into something harmful isn't suspicion of everyone - it's actually knowing what's true well enough that a smooth talker can't easily fool you. Build real understanding, not just wariness.

**See Also:** Romans 16:18, deceiving 'by good words and fair speeches'; Ephesians 4:14, no longer 'tossed to and fro... by the sleight of men.'

**2:5** *(KJV) For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul says that even though he's physically absent, he's with them in spirit, and he's glad to see - even from a distance - their orderly conduct and the firmness of their faith in Christ.

**Context:** Paul briefly reassures the church of his ongoing connection and commends their current stability, before launching into his main warning.

**Meaning:** Paul balances warning with genuine praise - he's not writing because everything's already gone wrong, but preventatively, because things are currently good and he wants them to stay that way. It's a useful model: address problems while affirming what's actually working.

**Lesson:** I notice what's going right in you before I ever point out what needs to change - don't assume correction means everything about you is wrong. Most of the time, it's about protecting something good, not fixing something broken.

- See Also:** 1 Thessalonians 2:17, being 'absent in body, not in heart'; 1 Corinthians 5:3, similarly 'absent in body... present in spirit.'
- 2:6

*(KJV) As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul tells them that just as they originally received Christ Jesus as Lord, they should continue living their lives rooted in him.

**Context:** This transitions from praise into the chapter's central instruction, setting up the extended warning that follows.

**Meaning:** The way you started is the way to continue; don't switch methods partway through. This challenges the false teachers' implicit claim that the Colossians needed something more advanced now - Paul says no, keep walking the same way you began.

**Lesson:** Whatever brought you real change at the start is usually still what you need now - don't assume you've outgrown the simple thing that actually worked, in favour of something more complicated that promises more.

**See Also:** Galatians 3:3, 'having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?'; 1 John 2:24, 'let that... abide in you.'
- 2:7

*(KJV) Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul describes what that continued walk looks like: rooted and built up in Christ, established firmly in the faith as they were taught, and overflowing with gratitude.

**Context:** This expands on verse 6 with agricultural and architectural imagery, describing stability and growth together.

**Meaning:** Roots (organic, ongoing nourishment) and building (structural, deliberate construction) are combined - growth isn't passive, but it's also not anxious strain; it's steady development from a secure base. Thanksgiving as overflow suggests gratitude is the natural result of being well-grounded.

**Lesson:** Growth doesn't have to be frantic - let it be more like a tree putting down roots or a building going up level by level, steady and secure. And when you're genuinely grounded, gratitude tends to show up on its own.

**See Also:** Ephesians 3:17, 'rooted and grounded in love'; Matthew 7:24-25, the wise builder on rock.
- 2:8

*(KJV) Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul warns them to watch out, so that no one traps them through philosophy and empty deception, based on human tradition and the basic principles of this world, rather than on Christ.

- Context:** This is the chapter's key warning verse, naming directly the danger threatening the Colossian church - persuasive philosophical systems competing with Christ.

**Meaning:** Paul isn't condemning careful thinking generally - he's warning against systems that sound deep but are actually hollow, built on human custom rather than something real. 'Spoil you' means take you captive, like plunder. This is directly relevant to modern spiritual-consumer culture: not everything marketed as deep wisdom actually delivers.

**Lesson:** Be careful what you let capture your thinking - not everything dressed up as profound is actually true, and not everything old or traditional is automatically wise. Test ideas against what you already know is solid, and don't let anything take you hostage.

**See Also:** 1 Timothy 6:20, avoiding 'oppositions of science falsely so called'; 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, being 'corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.'
- 2:9

*(KJV) For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul states plainly that the entire fullness of God, in bodily form, lives in Christ.

**Context:** This restates and intensifies 1:19, now stressing 'bodily' - a physical, complete, embodied fullness - directly answering the false teachers.

**Meaning:** This is one of the strongest statements in the New Testament for the full, embodied divinity of Christ - not partial, not symbolic, not distributed among lesser spiritual beings, but entirely present in one actual person. It closes off any argument that Christ is insufficient and something else is needed alongside him.

**Lesson:** What you're looking for isn't spread thin across a hundred different practices - it's found whole, in one place, embodied and real, not abstract or partial. Stop dividing your attention among fragments when the whole thing is already available.

**See Also:** Colossians 1:19, the same claim stated earlier; John 1:14, 'the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.'
- 2:10

*(KJV) And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul tells them that they are made complete in Christ, who is head over every ruler and authority.

**Context:** This draws the direct, practical conclusion from verse 9 - because Christ is fully complete, so are those united with him, and he outranks every rival power the false teachers might invoke.

**Meaning:** Complete is the letter's central word for this audience: you already have everything you need, you're not missing a piece. This is a direct answer to spiritual-consumer culture's implicit message that you're always one course, one product away from being enough. Paul says: no, you already are.

- Lesson:** You are not a project still missing its final piece - you are already whole in what matters most. Stop treating your worth as something perpetually under construction and start living from the completeness that's already yours.

**See Also:** Ephesians 1:22-23, Christ head over all things; John 1:16, 'of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.'
- 2:11** *(KJV) In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says that in Christ, they've undergone a spiritual circumcision not performed by human hands - the stripping away of the sinful nature - accomplished through what Christ did.

**Context:** Paul begins to unpack the practical consequences of union with Christ, using the loaded Jewish ritual of circumcision as a metaphor for inner transformation.

**Meaning:** Circumcision was the ancient marker of belonging to God's covenant people, a physical, external ritual. Paul says the real thing believers need is an internal removal, done by Christ, not by any human rite. This undercuts any argument that a specific physical practice is required for full belonging.

**Lesson:** What actually needs cutting away in you is inward - old habits, old patterns, old ways of relating - not something achieved by an external ritual or performance. Real change happens beneath the surface, not on it.

**See Also:** Deuteronomy 30:6, 'circumcise thine heart'; Romans 2:29, 'circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit.'
- 2:12** *(KJV) Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says they were buried with Christ through baptism, and in that same act, they were raised with him, through faith in the power of God who raised Christ from the dead.

**Context:** Paul connects baptism symbolically to death and resurrection, continuing the theme of union with Christ's own experience.

**Meaning:** Baptism here pictures a complete cycle - going under water like burial, coming up like resurrection - a physical enactment of an internal reality: the old life ending, a new one beginning. It's driven by faith in God's demonstrated power, not by the ritual's mechanics alone.

**Lesson:** Endings and new beginnings can genuinely coexist - something in you can die while something else rises, and that's not loss, it's transformation. Trust that the same power that overcomes death can bring something new out of your own hard endings.

**See Also:** Romans 6:3-4, baptism into Christ's death and resurrection; Galatians 3:27, being 'baptized into Christ' and clothed with him.

- 2:13** *(KJV) And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says that even though they were spiritually dead because of their sins, God made them alive together with Christ, forgiving them all their wrongdoing.

**Context:** This applies the death-and-resurrection imagery personally, describing the actual change that happened in the Colossians' own lives.

**Meaning:** Dead in sins is a strong diagnosis - not just flawed, but lifeless in a spiritual sense. The remedy is total: made alive together, with complete forgiveness, not partial pardon. This directly counters any lingering sense that some sins are unforgivable or require extra penance.

**Lesson:** There's no wrongdoing so complete that it's beyond being forgiven entirely - not partially, not conditionally, but all of it. Let yourself actually receive that rather than continuing to serve a sentence that's already been cancelled.

**See Also:** Ephesians 2:1, 'dead in trespasses and sins'; Ephesians 2:5, 'quickened us together with Christ.'
- 2:14** *(KJV) Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says God cancelled the written record of debts and legal demands that stood against them, removing it completely by nailing it to Christ's cross.

**Context:** This continues describing what happened at the cross, using the image of a cancelled legal document to describe forgiveness.

**Meaning:** The image is of a debt certificate, publicly torn up and destroyed, not hidden or ignored. Nailing it to his cross pictures the debt itself being put to death along with Christ. This is powerful for anyone who feels permanently in debt to their own past mistakes - the record itself has been destroyed, not merely overlooked.

**Lesson:** The record you keep replaying against yourself has already been torn up - not filed away for later use against you, but destroyed. Stop checking a ledger that no longer exists.

**See Also:** Psalm 103:12, 'as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions'; Ephesians 2:15, abolishing 'the law of commandments contained in ordinances.'
- 2:15** *(KJV) And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says that Christ disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities, publicly exposing them and triumphing over them through the cross.



**Context:** This continues the cross imagery, now describing it as a victory scene - Christ defeating hostile spiritual powers, likely a direct counter to the false teachers' preoccupation with such powers.

**Meaning:** Paul pictures the cross, which looked like defeat, as actually a triumphal procession, the ancient image of a victorious general parading defeated enemies. Whatever spiritual or unseen forces the Colossians feared, Paul says they've already been publicly beaten and stripped of authority.

**Lesson:** Whatever unseen forces you fear have power over you - old fears, superstitions, the sense that something dark still has a claim on you - have already been defeated and exposed, not by hiding from them but by facing them directly. You don't need to keep appeasing what's already been overcome.

**See Also:** 1 John 3:8, the Son of God destroying 'the works of the devil'; Hebrews 2:14-15, Christ destroying the one who held the power of death.

**2:16** *(KJV) Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul tells them not to let anyone judge or criticise them over what they eat or drink, or over religious festivals, new moon celebrations, or sabbath observances.

**Context:** This begins Paul's direct, practical application of everything he's just argued - specific religious rules the false teachers were pressuring the Colossians to follow.

**Meaning:** These were genuine Old Testament and cultural religious practices, but Paul says none of them can be used to judge someone's standing, because they were never the real substance - they pointed toward something else. This speaks directly to modern readers pressured by rigid rules presented as prerequisites for being spiritually or morally sound.

**Lesson:** Don't let anyone convince you that your worth depends on following a specific set of rules about food, calendars, or rituals - those things were never the actual point. Refuse to be judged by standards that were only ever meant as signposts, not destinations.

**See Also:** Romans 14:5-6, differing views on days and food, each convinced in their own mind; Galatians 4:9-10, warning against returning to observing 'days, and months, and times, and years.'

**2:17** *(KJV) Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul explains why: these practices were only a shadow of things that were coming - the substance, the reality itself, belongs to Christ.

**Context:** This gives the reasoning behind verse 16 - the rules were never the point, only a preview pointing toward Christ.

**Meaning:** A shadow shows the shape of something real without being the thing itself. Paul says the Old Testament rules functioned that way, useful as pointers, but now that the real substance has arrived, clinging to the shadow instead misses the point entirely.

**Lesson:** Don't mistake the pointer for the destination - rules and rituals can be useful signposts, but if you're still staring at the sign after you've arrived, you've missed what it was pointing to. Focus on the substance, not the shadow.

**See Also:** Hebrews 10:1, the law having 'a shadow of good things to come'; John 1:17, 'the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.'

**2:18** *(KJV) Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul warns them not to let anyone disqualify them by insisting on false humility and the worship of angels, going into elaborate detail about visions they claim to have seen, inflated with pride by their own unspiritual thinking.

**Context:** Paul directly names the mystical practices circulating in Colossae - angel worship and visionary experiences - warning they can disqualify a person from the real prize.

**Meaning:** Paul exposes a paradox: practices that look humble on the surface can actually be driven by pride. Claiming special visions as proof of superior status is a trap, not a sign of genuine depth. It's a sharp warning against spiritual one-upmanship - performing humility while actually seeking status.

**Lesson:** Watch out for spiritual practices that look humble but are secretly about proving how advanced or special you are - that's pride wearing humility's clothes. Genuine humility doesn't need an audience or a claim to secret experiences to validate it.

**See Also:** Romans 16:18, deceiving 'by good words and fair speeches'; 1 Timothy 4:1-3, seducing spirits and doctrines demanding strict rules.

**2:19** *(KJV) And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says such a person isn't holding on to the Head - Christ - from whom the whole body is nourished, joined together by its joints and ligaments, and grows with the growth that comes from God.

**Context:** This diagnoses the underlying problem with the false teaching from verse 18 - it disconnects a person from Christ, the actual life-source, even while looking spiritual.

**Meaning:** Paul returns to the body imagery from 1:18 - real growth and nourishment come from staying connected to the head, not from elaborate side practices. A hand that stops attending to the body's actual coordinating centre, however busy it looks, will actually weaken, not strengthen.

- Lesson:** Real growth comes from staying connected to what actually gives you life, not from adding more impressive-looking activity on the side. Check what you're actually attached to, not just how busy or advanced your practice looks.

**See Also:** Ephesians 4:15-16, the body 'fitly joined together' and growing from the Head; John 15:4-5, 'abide in me... without me ye can do nothing.'
- 2:20

*(KJV) Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,*

**(B:E Project)** Paul asks: if they died with Christ to the basic, elemental rules of this world, why are they still submitting to regulations as though they still belonged to that old system?

**Context:** Paul returns to the death-with-Christ theme already established in 2:12-13 to argue against continuing to live under old religious regulations.

**Meaning:** Paul's logic is: if you've already died to something, acting like you're still bound by it is inconsistent, even absurd - like someone who's moved countries still obeying the old country's laws out of habit. This challenges anyone still living under the weight of old obligations they've genuinely already been freed from.

**Lesson:** If something no longer has real authority over you, stop living as though it still does - check whether the rules you're following out of habit are actually still binding, or whether you're just carrying old chains you're free to put down.

**See Also:** Galatians 4:9-10, 'how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements'; Romans 6:2, 'how shall we... live any longer therein?'
- 2:21

*(KJV) (Touch not; taste not; handle not;*

**(B:E Project)** Paul quotes the kind of rules being imposed: 'Don't touch, don't taste, don't handle.'

**Context:** Paul gives a direct sample of the harsh, restrictive slogans the false teachers were using, likely about food or physical objects deemed impure.

**Meaning:** These are blunt, negative commands with no explanation given, just prohibition for its own sake. Paul is showing how petty and joyless this system had become, a caricature of rule-based religion stripped of any real purpose.

**Lesson:** Be wary of any system of living that's just a list of don'ts with no real reason behind it - restriction for its own sake tends to shrink a life rather than free it.

**See Also:** 1 Timothy 4:3-4, forbidding foods God created to be received with thanksgiving; Mark 7:15, nothing entering a person from outside can defile them.
- 2:22

*(KJV) Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?*

- (B:E Project)** Paul points out these rules concern things that are used up and perish anyway, and they're really based on human commands and human teaching.

**Context:** Paul dismisses the substance of these regulations, noting both their triviality and their source - mere human invention, not divine command.

**Meaning:** Paul deflates the seriousness of these rules on two fronts: the objects themselves are temporary and unimportant, and the rules didn't even come from God, just from people. It's a reminder to check the actual source and stakes of any rule someone insists you must follow with total seriousness.

**Lesson:** Before you let a rule control your life, ask where it actually came from and how much it really matters - not every serious-sounding restriction carries real weight, and some are just human invention dressed up as sacred.

**See Also:** Mark 7:7-8, 'teaching for doctrines the commandments of men'; Isaiah 29:13, worship that is merely 'the precept of men.'
- 2:23

*(KJV) Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul concludes that these rules have a surface appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed religious devotion, false humility, and harsh treatment of the body, but they hold no real power to restrain sinful indulgence.

**Context:** This is Paul's summary verdict on the entire system he's been dismantling since verse 16, closing chapter 2 with a decisive critique.

**Meaning:** This is the chapter's key insight for a modern reader: strict, visibly impressive self-discipline can look wise and admirable, yet accomplish nothing against actual inner desires. Willpower-based severity toward yourself doesn't actually fix the deeper problem it's aimed at. Real change, per chapter 3, comes from a different source entirely.

**Lesson:** Punishing yourself harshly rarely fixes what's actually wrong inside you - it just looks impressive from the outside while leaving the real issue untouched. Don't confuse severity with strength, or self-denial with genuine transformation.

**See Also:** 1 Timothy 4:8, 'bodily exercise profiteth little'; Galatians 5:16-18, walking in the Spirit as the actual answer to fleshly desire, not law.

CHAPTER 3

Chapter Summary: Colossians 3

Colossians Chapter 3 instructs believers on how to live out their new identity in Christ. Having been spiritually raised with Jesus, they are called to shift their focus from earthly desires and sinful behaviours to heavenly, spiritual matters. The chapter emphasises actively "removing" the "old self" with its vices—like immorality, anger, greed, and lying—and "putting on" the "new self,"



*characterised by virtues such as compassion, kindness, humility, patience, forgiveness, and love. It highlights unity in Christ, where traditional social distinctions lose their importance. Finally, it provides practical guidance for Christian conduct within households, advising wives, husbands, children, fathers, and workers to act with sincerity and dedication, always remembering that their actions are ultimately for the Lord.*

**3:1**     *(KJV) If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul says that since they've been raised with Christ, they should set their sights on the things above, where Christ sits at God's right hand.

**Context:** This opens chapter 3, pivoting from the critical material of chapter 2 into direct, practical instruction for daily living, building on the established resurrection-with-Christ theme.

**Meaning:** Seek those things above isn't about ignoring ordinary life, but about reorienting priorities, looking past what's immediately in front of you toward a bigger perspective. It's a call to keep the main things the main things.

**Lesson:** When daily pressures narrow your focus down to what's right in front of you, pull your view back up to what actually matters most. A wider perspective changes how the small stuff looks.

**See Also:** Matthew 6:33, 'seek ye first the kingdom of God'; Philippians 3:20, 'our conversation is in heaven.'

**3:2**     *(KJV) Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul tells them to focus their thoughts and desires on things above, not on earthly things.

**Context:** This restates and reinforces verse 1's instruction, emphasising the internal, mental dimension of where a person's attention lands.

**Meaning:** This isn't about despising the physical world, but about where attention habitually lands. What you keep thinking about and wanting shapes your character - Paul is urging deliberate redirection of attention toward what actually lasts.

**Lesson:** What you keep dwelling on shapes who you become - so choose deliberately what gets your attention and longing, rather than letting whatever's loudest or nearest claim it by default.

**See Also:** Philippians 4:8, 'think on these things'; Matthew 6:19-21, 'where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'

**3:3**     *(KJV) For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul says that, in a sense, they have died, and their true life is now hidden together with Christ in God.

**Context:** This gives the theological basis for verses 1-2 - a life reoriented is possible because the old life has genuinely ended and a new one, though currently unseen, is secure.

**Meaning:** Hidden suggests something valuable and safe, not lost or absent, like treasure kept securely rather than exposed and vulnerable. For someone who feels their real self or worth isn't visible or recognised right now, this says it's safe and real even when unseen.

**Lesson:** Your real worth doesn't depend on being visible or recognised right now - it can be genuinely secure even while hidden from view. Don't measure your value only by what's currently on display.

**See Also:** 2 Corinthians 5:17, 'if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature'; Galatians 2:20, 'I am crucified with Christ... yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.'

**3:4**     *(KJV) When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul says that when Christ, who is their true life, appears again, they too will appear together with him in glory.

**Context:** This looks forward to a future, public revealing - what's currently hidden will eventually be made visible and glorious.

**Meaning:** Paul balances the present hiddenness of verse 3 with a future promise - what's unseen now won't stay unseen forever. It's a hope-filled counterbalance to any present sense of being overlooked or undervalued.

**Lesson:** What feels overlooked or unrecognised now isn't the final word - there's a future where what's true about you becomes fully visible. Hold on to that patiently rather than demanding recognition now.

**See Also:** 1 John 3:2, 'when he shall appear, we shall be like him'; Romans 8:19, creation waiting for 'the manifestation of the sons of God.'

**3:5**     *(KJV) Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:*

**(B:E Project)** Paul tells them to actively put to death whatever in them is oriented toward earthly, harmful desires: sexual immorality, impurity, uncontrolled passion, evil desire, and greed, which he calls a form of idolatry.

**Context:** Paul begins the practical vice list, instructing decisive, active elimination of destructive patterns, starting with self-focused, appetite-driven behaviours.

**Meaning:** Mortify is strong, deliberate language - not gradual fading but active killing, like uprooting something that would otherwise keep growing. Naming greed as idolatry

- identifies wanting more and more as worshipping something other than what actually matters, a sharp critique of consumer culture's endless craving.
- Lesson:** Some habits need to be actively ended, not just gently managed - be honest and decisive about what's genuinely harming you, especially the quiet greed that convinces you that more is always the answer. That craving is worth naming honestly.
- See Also:** Ephesians 5:3-5, near-identical vice list, calling covetousness idolatry; Romans 8:13, 'mortify the deeds of the body.'
- 3:6** *(KJV) For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul warns that because of these things, God's judgement comes upon those who are disobedient.
- Context:** This gives the seriousness behind the instruction of verse 5 - these aren't neutral lifestyle choices but things with real consequence.
- Meaning:** Paul isn't being arbitrary; he's saying these patterns of behaviour have genuine weight and consequence, not just personal preference. It's a reminder that choices matter, without needing to dwell on fear as the primary motivator.
- Lesson:** What you do has real weight and consequence - not to frighten you into compliance, but because genuine choices genuinely matter. Take that seriously without living in anxious dread.
- See Also:** Romans 1:18, 'the wrath of God is revealed... against all ungodliness'; Ephesians 5:6, similar warning against 'vain words.'
- 3:7** *(KJV) In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul reminds them that this is how they used to live, back when they were caught up in those same patterns.
- Context:** Paul acknowledges their past honestly, setting up the contrast with their new identity described in the following verses.
- Meaning:** There's no shaming tone here, just honest acknowledgment. It normalises the fact that everyone has a past shaped by destructive patterns, while making clear that past isn't the final identity.
- Lesson:** Whatever you used to be caught up in doesn't have to define who you are now - a genuinely different way of living is possible, and your past doesn't disqualify you from it.
- See Also:** 1 Corinthians 6:11, 'such were some of you: but ye are washed'; Ephesians 2:2-3, 'in time past ye walked.'
- 3:8** *(KJV) But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.*

- (B:E Project)** Paul now tells them to get rid of all of these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and abusive language from their mouths.
- Context:** This continues the 'put off' list, shifting from self-indulgent desires to relational, interpersonal sins - anger and harmful speech.
- Meaning:** These are all about how a person treats others in conflict or frustration - not just feeling angry, which can be legitimate, but letting it curdle into ongoing rage, ill-will, and destructive speech. It's a call to actively discard these rather than tolerating them as unavoidable.
- Lesson:** You can put down anger, spite, and cutting words the same way you'd put down something you're holding - deliberately, on purpose. They're not permanent parts of your character; they're things you can choose to release.
- See Also:** Ephesians 4:31, nearly identical list of relational vices to put away; James 1:19-20, being 'slow to wrath.'
- 3:9** *(KJV) Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul tells them not to lie to one another, since they have taken off the old self along with its old ways of behaving.
- Context:** This continues the 'put off' instructions, naming dishonesty specifically and linking the whole list back to the 'old self' already shed.
- Meaning:** The clothing metaphor suggests something removable, not permanently attached - dishonesty is treated as an old garment already discarded. Truthfulness between people is foundational to real community, which Colossians is building toward.
- Lesson:** Lying to each other corrodes exactly the kind of trust real relationships need - and since you've already set that old pattern aside, there's no need to pick it back up. Choose honesty as your default, not your exception.
- See Also:** Ephesians 4:25, 'putting away lying, speak every man truth'; Zechariah 8:16, 'speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour.'
- 3:10** *(KJV) And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says they have instead put on the new self, which is being continually renewed in knowledge, formed after the image of the one who created it.
- Context:** This introduces the positive counterpart to putting off - the 'new self,' described as ongoing renewal shaped after God's own image.
- Meaning:** This links back to Genesis - being remade after the image of the creator echoes humanity's original design. Renewal is presented as ongoing, not a one-time event - growth is a continual process, not a finish line reached once.

- Lesson:** You're not just trying to erase old habits - you're being actively remade into something with real, growing understanding, shaped after the very source that made you in the first place. That's a process worth staying patient with.

**See Also:** Genesis 1:27, humanity made 'in the image of God'; Ephesians 4:24, 'put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness.'
- 3:11** *(KJV) Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul says that in this new life, there's no longer any distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free - Christ is everything, and is in everyone.

**Context:** This declares the radical social levelling that comes from the 'new self' - all the major ethnic, cultural, and social divisions of the ancient world are dissolved in this new identity.

**Meaning:** This list covers essentially every major social division of Paul's world - ethnicity, religious status, perceived civilisation level (Scythians were seen as the most extreme outsiders), and social class. Paul says none of that hierarchy holds any weight - a genuinely radical claim for its time, still radical in principle today.

**Lesson:** I don't rank people by nationality, class, background, or status - none of the labels the world uses to sort people into better and lesser mean anything to me. Let that shape how completely you refuse to look down on anyone.

**See Also:** Galatians 3:28, 'neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free... all one in Christ Jesus'; Acts 10:34, 'God is no respecter of persons.'
- 3:12** *(KJV) Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;*

**(B:E Project)** Paul tells them, as people chosen by God, holy and dearly loved, to clothe themselves with genuine compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

**Context:** This begins the positive 'put on' list of virtues, paralleling the earlier vice list, grounding the instruction in their identity as chosen and loved.

**Meaning:** Paul again uses clothing imagery - these virtues are things to deliberately put on, an active daily choice rather than a fixed personality trait. Notice the instruction is grounded first in identity - the motivation is being loved, not earning love through virtue.

**Lesson:** These qualities aren't things you either naturally have or don't - you can choose to put them on each day like clothing, deliberately. And you do it not to earn love but because you're already loved; let that security be the source, not the goal.

**See Also:** Ephesians 4:32, 'be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted'; Galatians 5:22-23, the 'fruit of the Spirit.'

- 3:13** *(KJV) Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul tells them to bear with one another and forgive each other if anyone has a complaint against another, forgiving just as Christ forgave them.

**Context:** This continues the virtue list, focusing specifically on handling interpersonal conflict and grievance through patience and forgiveness.

**Meaning:** Forbearing means tolerating ongoing friction with patience, while forgiving addresses actual grievances. The standard set is high - as Christ forgave you - meaning the model for forgiveness isn't proportional fairness but the generous, complete forgiveness they themselves received.

**Lesson:** Forgive the way you've been forgiven - fully, not grudgingly, not keeping score of how much the other person deserves it. Holding a grudge costs you more than it costs them; let it go the way I let go of what was against you.

**See Also:** Matthew 18:21-22, forgiving 'seventy times seven'; Ephesians 4:32, 'forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.'
- 3:14** *(KJV) And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul says that above all these things, they should put on love, which binds everything together in perfect unity.

**Context:** This crowns the virtue list, naming love as the supreme, unifying quality that holds all the others together.

**Meaning:** Bond of perfectness pictures love as the connective tissue holding all the other virtues into a coherent, complete whole - without it, the other qualities could exist in fragments but not function as a unified character. It's the letter's answer to what actually makes a person, or a community, whole.

**Lesson:** Of everything I ask of you, love is what actually holds the rest together - kindness without love is empty, patience without love is just endurance. Make love the thread that ties every other effort together.

**See Also:** 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, without love, everything else amounts to nothing; John 13:34-35, 'by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.'
- 3:15** *(KJV) And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul tells them to let the peace of God govern their hearts, since as one body, they were called to that peace, and to be thankful.

**Context:** This shifts focus from interpersonal virtues to inner governance, describing peace as something that should actively rule internal life and community.

**Meaning:** Rule, like an umpire making a call, suggests peace should be the deciding factor when there's internal conflict or uncertainty, a practical guide for decision-making. Being called in one body ties individual peace to communal unity - not just private calm but shared peace.

**Lesson:** When you're torn about a decision or an inner conflict, let peace be the tiebreaker - not fear, not pride, not the loudest voice in your head. And remember that peace, done right, isn't just private; it belongs to the whole community you're part of.

**See Also:** Philippians 4:7, 'the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts'; John 14:27, Jesus giving his peace.

**3:16** *(KJV) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul tells them to let the message of Christ live richly within them, teaching and encouraging one another with all wisdom, through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with genuine gratitude in their hearts to God.

**Context:** This describes how the community should nurture itself internally, through shared teaching, mutual encouragement, and communal singing.

**Meaning:** Dwell in you richly suggests abundance, not scarcity, not a bare minimum of religious content but something that fills a person generously. This teaching happens through mutual relationship and through music - a reminder that meaningful growth often happens communally and creatively, not just through solitary study.

**Lesson:** Let what matters most actually take up real space in you, not just a token corner, and don't try to grow entirely alone. Teach each other, encourage each other, and let shared creativity - music, honest conversation - carry as much weight as formal instruction.

**See Also:** Ephesians 5:19, near-identical instruction about psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; Psalm 100:2, 'come before his presence with singing.'

**3:17** *(KJV) And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul says that whatever they do, in word or action, they should do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

**Context:** This summarises and generalises everything said so far, a single guiding principle for all of life, closing the section before the household instructions begin.

**Meaning:** This is a sweeping, all-encompassing principle: every word, every action, done consciously in Christ's name, with gratitude. It doesn't compartmentalise life into spiritual and ordinary categories - everything is included, given a unifying purpose and thankful attitude.

**Lesson:** There's no part of your life too small or too ordinary to matter - every word and action can carry real meaning and gratitude if you let it, rather than dividing your life into important and unimportant categories.

**See Also:** 1 Corinthians 10:31, 'whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God'; Colossians 3:23, the same principle applied specifically to work.

**3:18** *(KJV) Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul tells wives to submit to their own husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord.

**Context:** This opens the household code, a common ancient literary form addressing roles within the family, here reframed within a Christian context.

**Meaning:** This instruction sits within a specific ancient household structure and needs to be read alongside 3:19, where husbands are told to love, not rule harshly, and 3:11's radical equality - the letter is reframing existing social structures with mutual, Christ-centred obligation rather than simply endorsing raw hierarchy.

**Lesson:** Whatever your role in a relationship, hold it in a way shaped by love and respect, not domination - and note that in the very next line I ask husbands for love, not obedience. Read these instructions as a pair, never one without the other.

**See Also:** Ephesians 5:21-22, mutual submission preceding the wife's submission; Ephesians 5:33, the parallel passage.

**3:19** *(KJV) Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul tells husbands to love their wives and not be harsh or bitter toward them.

**Context:** This directly balances verse 18, addressing husbands with the corresponding obligation of active love and the specific warning against bitterness.

**Meaning:** The instruction to husbands is arguably the harder ask in context - not passive tolerance but active love, with a specific warning against a real relational danger: accumulated bitterness. Paired with verse 18, the household code asks for mutual, reciprocal responsibility, not one-sided control.

**Lesson:** If you're in a position of authority or influence over someone close to you, use it to love them well, not to harden against them - bitterness quietly poisons a relationship long before it's ever spoken aloud, so watch for it early.

**See Also:** Ephesians 5:25, 'husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church'; 1 Peter 3:7, husbands living with their wives 'according to knowledge.'

**3:20** *(KJV) Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul tells children to obey their parents in everything, because this pleases the Lord.



**Context:** This continues the household code, addressing children directly, immediately followed by a warning to fathers not to discourage them.

**Meaning:** Obedience here is framed positively, something pleasing, not merely required out of fear. It's immediately balanced by a corresponding limit on parental behaviour, showing the household code asks for mutual responsibility rather than one-sided power.

**Lesson:** Respecting those who care for you is a good and pleasing thing - not because obedience earns love, but because it reflects the same trust and respect that should flow both ways in any healthy relationship.

**See Also:** Ephesians 6:1, 'children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right'; Exodus 20:12, 'honour thy father and thy mother.'

**3:21** *(KJV) Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul tells fathers not to provoke their children to anger or resentment, so they don't become discouraged.

**Context:** This immediately balances verse 20, limiting parental authority by warning against behaviour that damages a child emotionally.

**Meaning:** This is a striking limit on parental power for its time - fathers are directly warned against discouraging their children through provocation. It shows the household code isn't simply reinforcing hierarchy but expects those with more power to use it responsibly and gently.

**Lesson:** If you have authority over someone younger or more vulnerable than you, watch carefully that you're not crushing their spirit through harshness or constant criticism - encouragement builds a person up; provocation tears them down, often for a long time.

**See Also:** Ephesians 6:4, 'provoke not your children to wrath... bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.'

**3:22** *(KJV) Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul tells servants to obey their earthly masters in everything, not just when being watched, trying to impress people, but with sincere hearts, out of reverence for God.

**Context:** This begins the section addressing slaves and masters, a real and difficult social institution of the time, reframed with an internal, God-oriented motivation rather than mere compliance.

**Meaning:** The key phrase is 'not with eyeservice' - Paul contrasts performative compliance with genuine integrity that holds up regardless of who's observing. This isn't

an endorsement of slavery itself, but a call to bring real character to whatever situation a person is currently in, doing right because it's right, not because someone's checking.

**Lesson:** Do what's right whether or not anyone's watching - that consistency, doing the same whether you're seen or unseen, is what real integrity looks like. Let your motivation come from something deeper than the fear of being caught out.

**See Also:** Ephesians 6:5-8, the parallel passage on servants and masters; Galatians 3:28, 'there is neither bond nor free... all one in Christ Jesus,' which relativises this social structure.

**3:23** *(KJV) And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul tells them that whatever work they do, they should do it wholeheartedly, as if working for the Lord rather than for other people.

**Context:** This is the practical heart of the household code, giving the underlying principle for all the instructions to servants, and by extension anyone's daily labour - full effort regardless of who's watching or how menial the task seems.

**Meaning:** This is one of the letter's most quoted verses for good reason: it takes ordinary, even unglamorous work and reframes it as inherently meaningful, done heartily - literally, from the soul - rather than grudgingly. For a modern reader stuck in unremarkable jobs or dull daily tasks, this is a genuinely liberating idea - meaning doesn't require an impressive job, only wholehearted effort and the right orientation toward it.

**Lesson:** Whatever you're doing today, even something small or unnoticed, put your whole self into it - not to impress anyone, but because it genuinely matters when done with real heart. That kind of wholehearted effort dignifies even the most ordinary task.

**See Also:** Ecclesiastes 9:10, 'whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might'; Ephesians 6:7, 'with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.'

**3:24** *(KJV) Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul reminds them that they will receive their reward, an inheritance, from the Lord, because it is actually Christ they are serving.

**Context:** This gives the motivation behind verse 23 - a promised reward from God, reframing whatever earthly work or master they serve as ultimately service to Christ.

**Meaning:** For people with little social power in this original context, Paul offers genuine dignity and hope: their true reward doesn't depend on an unjust human master's recognition, but on God's own promise. It reframes the deepest motivation for effort - not fear of a boss, but the security of a promised inheritance.

**Lesson:** Your real reward was never dependent on whether the people around you notice or reward your effort fairly - it's secured somewhere far more certain. Let that free you from working purely for other people's approval.

**See Also:** Colossians 1:12, the 'inheritance of the saints'; 1 Peter 1:4, 'an inheritance incorruptible... reserved in heaven.'

**3:25** *(KJV) But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul warns that whoever does wrong will be repaid for the wrong they've done, and that there is no favouritism.

**Context:** This closes the household code section with a warning of accountability, applying equally regardless of social status - a rebuke likely aimed partly at unjust masters as well as disobedient servants.

**Meaning:** No respect of persons means impartial judgement - status, wealth, or power doesn't buy exemption from accountability. This closes the household code with a note of fairness cutting both ways: everyone, regardless of position, is accountable for how they treat others.

**Lesson:** No one gets a free pass because of their status, wealth, or power - real accountability applies equally to everyone, and that's actually good news if you've ever been treated unfairly by someone more powerful than you.

**See Also:** Romans 2:11, 'there is no respect of persons with God'; Ephesians 6:9, masters warned that 'there is no respect of persons with him.'

CHAPTER 4

Chapter Summary: Colossians 4

*Colossians Chapter 4 concludes Paul's letter with a mix of practical advice, specific prayer requests, and personal greetings. Paul starts by urging believers who are employers to treat their workers fairly, remembering their own ultimate Master in heaven. He then emphasises the importance of consistent prayer, especially for him and his companions, so they can clearly share the message of Christ even while he is imprisoned. Paul advises believers to live wisely and speak kindly to non-believers, making the most of every opportunity. The chapter then transitions into a series of greetings from Paul's companions and instructions for the Colossians, including sharing the letter with the church in Laodicea and a specific message for Archippus to fulfil his ministry. The chapter (and typically the letter) ends with a final blessing.*

**4:1** *(KJV) Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul tells masters to give their servants what is fair and right, remembering that they themselves have a Master in heaven.

**Context:** This directly follows and completes the household code, addressing masters with the corresponding obligation of justice, mirroring the pattern of mutual responsibility throughout chapter 3.

**Meaning:** Paul places masters under the same accountability just described in 3:25 - fairness isn't optional generosity, it's owed. Reminding them of their own heavenly Master relativises all human power - however much authority someone holds over others, they too answer to someone above them.

**Lesson:** However much power or authority you hold over others, remember you answer to someone too - let that keep you fair rather than self-serving, treating people the way you'd want to be treated by whoever you answer to.

**See Also:** Ephesians 6:9, the parallel instruction to masters; Matthew 7:12, the golden rule.

**4:2** *(KJV) Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul tells them to keep devoting themselves to prayer, staying alert in it, and doing so with gratitude.

**Context:** This shifts from household instructions to closing exhortations about prayer and conduct, beginning the letter's final practical section.

**Meaning:** Continue suggests ongoing persistence rather than occasional effort, watch suggests alertness rather than going through the motions, and thankfulness again appears as the accompanying attitude. Together, this describes prayer as an active, sustained practice, not a passive ritual.

**Lesson:** Don't let prayer become background noise you barely notice - stay genuinely present in it, alert rather than half-asleep, and let gratitude run through it rather than only requests.

**See Also:** 1 Thessalonians 5:17-18, 'pray without ceasing... in every thing give thanks'; Luke 18:1, the need to 'pray, and not to faint.'

**4:3** *(KJV) Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds:*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul asks them to also pray specifically for him and his companions, that God would open a door for their message, so they can speak about the mystery of Christ, the very thing for which Paul is currently imprisoned.

**Context:** Paul makes a specific, personal prayer request, revealing his own vulnerable situation - imprisoned, dependent on others' prayers for opportunity to keep working.

**Meaning:** Even the letter's author, so confident and authoritative throughout, admits he needs others' prayer support and depends on circumstances outside his control. It's a humbling admission that even strong leaders need others' support, a sign of genuine interdependence, not weakness.

**Lesson:** Even the most capable, confident people need others' support and prayer - asking for help isn't a failure, it's honest interdependence. Don't be too proud to ask others to hold you up when you need it.

- See Also:** Ephesians 6:19-20, an almost identical prayer request for 'utterance' while 'in bonds'; Acts 16:26, doors literally opening for Paul in prison.
- 4:4**     *(KJV) That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul asks that he would make the message clear, speaking it in the way he ought to.
- Context:** This continues the prayer request of verse 3, focusing specifically on clarity of communication.
- Meaning:** Paul isn't just asking for opportunity, but for the skill to communicate well when the opportunity comes - clarity matters as much as access. It's a reminder that good communication is itself worth praying and working for, not assumed automatic.
- Lesson:** Having something important to say isn't enough - ask for the clarity to actually say it well, so it lands the way it's meant to. Communication is a skill worth caring about, not an afterthought.
- See Also:** Ephesians 6:20, 'that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.'
- 4:5**     *(KJV) Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul tells them to conduct themselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of every opportunity.
- Context:** This turns attention outward, addressing how believers should behave toward people outside their own community.
- Meaning:** Them that are without means people outside the faith community - Paul cares how they're treated and perceived, not just internal community behaviour. Redeeming the time suggests using limited opportunities well rather than wasting them, a practical call to thoughtful, intentional living in relation to the wider world.
- Lesson:** How you treat people outside your own circle matters just as much as how you treat those inside it - be thoughtful and wise with the limited time and opportunities you have with everyone you meet.
- See Also:** Ephesians 5:15-16, near-identical wording on walking wisely and redeeming the time; Matthew 5:16, letting your light shine before others.
- 4:6**     *(KJV) Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul tells them to let their speech always be full of grace, seasoned with salt, so they'll know how to answer everyone appropriately.
- Context:** This continues the instruction about outward conduct, focusing specifically on how they speak to those outside the community.

- Meaning:** Grace suggests kindness and generosity in speech; salt suggests something with genuine flavour and preserving quality, not bland, not corrosive, but engaging and thoughtful. The goal is being equipped to respond well to different people and situations, not a rigid script.
- Lesson:** Speak kindly, but don't let kindness mean blandness - let your words have real substance and interest, not just polite emptiness. Learn to read each person and situation so your response actually fits them.
- See Also:** Proverbs 15:1, 'a soft answer turneth away wrath'; Ephesians 4:29, letting speech be for 'the use of edifying.'
- 4:7**     *(KJV) All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellowservant in the Lord:*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says Tychicus, a dear brother, faithful helper, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell them everything about how Paul is doing.
- Context:** This begins the letter's closing section of personal news and greetings, naming Tychicus as the messenger who will deliver both this letter and personal updates.
- Meaning:** Even in a letter dealing with weighty theology, Paul takes time to genuinely name and appreciate a colleague, showing personal relationships matter alongside doctrine. It's a small but real reminder that faith isn't only abstract ideas - it's lived through actual named people and relationships.
- Lesson:** Don't let big ideas crowd out attention to actual people - take time to name and appreciate those who serve faithfully alongside you, even in ordinary, unglamorous roles like carrying a message.
- See Also:** Ephesians 6:21, Tychicus named again in almost identical terms; 2 Timothy 4:12, Tychicus sent to Ephesus.
- 4:8**     *(KJV) Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul says he sent Tychicus for this very purpose - so he could learn how the Colossians are doing and encourage their hearts.
- Context:** This continues explaining Tychicus's mission, emphasising mutual care - Paul wants news of them just as much as he wants them to have news of him.
- Meaning:** The purpose isn't just information transfer but emotional connection - comfort your hearts shows Paul's concern for their wellbeing, not just their doctrine. Sending a trusted person for relational purposes, not just message delivery, models genuine pastoral care.
- Lesson:** Checking in on someone's actual wellbeing, not just their beliefs or performance, is a real act of care - don't underestimate the value of simply wanting to know how someone's heart is doing.

- See Also:** Ephesians 6:22, virtually identical wording about Tychicus's mission to 'comfort your hearts.'
- 4:9

*(KJV) With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul says he's sending Tychicus along with Onesimus, a faithful and dear brother who is one of their own, and together they will inform the Colossians of everything happening with Paul.

**Context:** This introduces Onesimus, the runaway slave at the centre of Paul's letter to Philemon, now travelling back to Colossae as a faithful brother rather than a fugitive.

**Meaning:** Onesimus's inclusion here is quietly remarkable - a formerly enslaved runaway is now described in the same terms as any respected church member. It's a real-life demonstration of chapter 3:11's claim that old social categories don't determine a person's worth or standing.

**Lesson:** People can genuinely become something different from what their past defined them as - a runaway can become a trusted brother. Don't let anyone's past label be the last word on who they are now.

**See Also:** Philemon 1:10-17, Paul's direct appeal for Onesimus as 'a brother beloved'; Colossians 3:11, the claim that in Christ there's 'neither bond nor free.'
- 4:10

*(KJV) Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)*

**(B:E Project)** Paul sends greetings from Aristarchus, his fellow prisoner, and from Mark, Barnabas's cousin, about whom the Colossians had already received instructions - if he comes, they should welcome him.

**Context:** Paul continues the list of personal greetings from his companions, including brief practical instructions about receiving Mark.

**Meaning:** This is a small but meaningful detail: Mark had previously had a serious falling-out with Paul severe enough to split up Paul and Barnabas's partnership, yet here Paul commends him warmly and asks for him to be welcomed. It's a real-life example of reconciliation after genuine conflict.

**Lesson:** If someone has let you down badly in the past, reconciliation is still possible - people change, and relationships can be genuinely rebuilt rather than permanently written off. Welcome people back rather than holding old failures against them forever.

**See Also:** Acts 15:37-39, the original sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas over Mark; 2 Timothy 4:11, Paul later calling Mark 'profitable to me for the ministry.'
- 4:11

*(KJV) And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.*

- (B:E Project)** Paul also sends greetings from Jesus, known as Justus - these, along with the others named, are his only Jewish co-workers for God's kingdom, and they've been a genuine comfort to him.

**Context:** Paul continues the greeting list, noting which of his companions are Jewish believers, and expressing personal gratitude for their companionship during imprisonment.

**Meaning:** Paul's honest admission that only a few Jewish believers remain actively working alongside him shows real personal disappointment or loneliness beneath the surface, alongside genuine gratitude for those who did stay faithful. It's an authentic glimpse of how much personal companionship matters even to someone doing significant work.

**Lesson:** It's honest, not weak, to acknowledge when few people have stayed by your side - and it's right to be genuinely grateful for the ones who have. Don't dismiss the comfort of loyal companionship as unimportant just because your work is significant.

**See Also:** 2 Timothy 4:16, Paul noting 'no man stood with me, but all men forsook me' at his defence, a similar honest admission of isolation.
- 4:12

*(KJV) Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul sends greetings from Epaphras, one of their own and a servant of Christ, who is always labouring earnestly for them in prayer, that they may stand mature and fully confident in everything God wants.

**Context:** Paul returns to Epaphras, the likely founder of the Colossian church, highlighting his continued dedicated prayer for the congregation.

**Meaning:** Labouring fervently in prayer suggests genuine effort, not passive wishing - prayer here is treated as real work. The goal Epaphras prays for, standing perfect and complete, directly echoes the letter's central theme, showing this wasn't just Paul's personal emphasis but shared by their own founding pastor.

**Lesson:** Praying earnestly for someone else's wholeness is real labour, not a lesser substitute for practical help - don't underestimate how much it matters to genuinely, persistently want someone else's flourishing.

**See Also:** Colossians 1:7-8, Epaphras introduced earlier as a faithful minister; Philemon 1:23, Epaphras again named as Paul's 'fellowprisoner.'
- 4:13

*(KJV) For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul testifies that Epaphras works hard and cares deeply for the Colossians, and also for the believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis.



**Context:** This continues commending Epaphras, extending his concern to two neighbouring towns, part of the same regional network of churches.

**Meaning:** Paul personally vouches for Epaphras's genuine effort and care, a real character reference. It also reveals the wider regional context - these churches were closely connected, sharing pastoral concern across town lines.

**Lesson:** It's worth publicly vouching for people whose quiet, hard work might otherwise go unnoticed - genuine effort deserves genuine recognition, especially when it isn't seeking the spotlight.

**See Also:** Colossians 2:1, Paul's own concern extended to Laodicea; Colossians 4:16, the letter meant to also be read there.

**4:14** *(KJV) Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul sends greetings from Luke, the beloved physician, and from Demas.

**Context:** This continues the greeting list with two more companions, mentioned briefly here without further comment.

**Meaning:** This is a brief but historically significant mention - Luke, traditionally understood as the author of the Gospel of Luke and Acts, appears here simply as a valued friend and doctor. The pairing with Demas is quietly poignant in hindsight, since Demas is later recorded as having abandoned Paul, loving this present world.

**Lesson:** Not every relationship stays faithful to the end, and that's a real and painful part of life - but it shouldn't stop you from valuing genuine companionship while it lasts, or from continuing to love people even knowing some will eventually walk away.

**See Also:** 2 Timothy 4:10-11, Demas later deserting Paul while Luke remains; Philemon 1:24, both Luke and Demas listed together again there.

**4:15** *(KJV) Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul tells them to greet the believers in Laodicea, and specifically Nymphas, and the church that meets in his house.

**Context:** Paul continues distributing greetings, asking the Colossians to pass them along to a neighbouring congregation.

**Meaning:** This reflects the reality of the earliest churches - small groups meeting in ordinary homes, named after the person who hosted them, rather than dedicated buildings. It's a glimpse of how modest and personal the earliest Christian communities actually were.

**Lesson:** Meaningful community doesn't need impressive buildings or scale - it can happen, and often happens best, in an ordinary home opened up to others. Don't wait for something grand before valuing small, real gatherings.

**See Also:** Romans 16:5, the church that met in the house of Priscilla and Aquila; 1 Corinthians 16:19, another house church greeting.

**4:16** *(KJV) And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul instructs that once this letter has been read among them, they should also have it read in the church of Laodicea, and that they in turn should read the letter coming to them from Laodicea.

**Context:** Paul gives practical instructions for circulating this letter, revealing that another letter, now lost, was also meant to be shared between the two churches.

**Meaning:** This shows Paul intended his letters to be shared resources for multiple congregations, not private mail to one church alone, an early example of communal, cross-community sharing of teaching. The epistle from Laodicea is a genuine historical mystery, since no such letter survives under that name.

**Lesson:** Good teaching isn't meant to be hoarded by one group - share what helps you with others who could benefit too, rather than treating wisdom as private property.

**See Also:** 1 Thessalonians 5:27, Paul similarly charging that his letter be read to 'all the holy brethren'; Colossians 2:1, Laodicea mentioned earlier as another church Paul cares about deeply.

**4:17** *(KJV) And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.*  
**(B:E Project)** Paul instructs them to tell Archippus to pay attention to the ministry he has received in the Lord, and to make sure he fulfils it.

**Context:** Paul closes the personal instructions with a direct, public message meant for one specific individual, delivered through the whole congregation rather than privately.

**Meaning:** This public nudge to one person, possibly someone who needed encouragement or accountability to follow through on a responsibility, shows how a community can support an individual's calling through gentle, public reminder rather than private nagging alone. It also implies real accountability among believers, holding each other to commitments made.

**Lesson:** Sometimes people need a gentle, public reminder to follow through on something meaningful they've committed to - not shame, but encouragement to finish what they started. Don't be afraid to lovingly hold someone accountable to their own calling.

**See Also:** Philemon 1:2, Archippus also greeted there, likely part of the same household as Philemon; 2 Timothy 4:5, Paul urging Timothy similarly to 'fulfil thy ministry.'

**4:18** *(KJV) The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.*

**(B:E Project)** Paul closes the letter in his own handwriting: 'This greeting is by my own hand, Paul. Remember my chains. May grace be with you. Amen.'

**Context:** This is the letter's final verse - Paul's personal, handwritten signature, closing with a final reminder of his imprisonment and a blessing.

**Meaning:** Ancient letters were often dictated, with the author adding a personal note at the end to authenticate it - Paul does that here, and his final request is simple: remember his chains. It's a quiet, humanising close to a letter that soared through cosmic theology - the writer is a real, physically imprisoned man asking simply to be remembered, then blessing his readers one last time with grace.

**Lesson:** Even after everything grand that's been said, what I ask you to remember at the end is simple: don't forget the real cost someone paid to bring you truth, and carry grace with you as you go. Let both compassion for others' sacrifice and generosity toward others be your lasting takeaway.

**See Also:** 1 Corinthians 16:21, Paul's similar personal handwritten close, 'the salutation of me Paul with mine own hand'; Galatians 6:11, Paul noting he wrote 'with mine own hand'; Philemon 1:9-10, Paul writing from the same imprisonment, mentioning his 'bonds.'

