

valueFUL

letter to the Colossians

Series Overview and Guides

2026 ANNUAL VISION | SERIES 2

JANUARY - APRIL

Objective

what we hope to see God accomplish in us through this study

We create value in keeping with our position in Jesus.

STATEMENTS OF THE OBJECTIVE

"Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

—Colossians 3:17 NASB

"Paul rounds off his letter exalting the value of living out the Christian life alongside others, so that we too can keep our eyes on the biggest picture of all: Christ...Whatever shape your family, church, and local communities take, Paul's community crescendo reminds us that, just as Christ gave his life for us, so too we're made to give ourselves to others."

—Sarah Dargue
Bumps, Babies, and the Gospel

STATEMENTS OF THE THEME

Value runs through the thought of Colossians:

- The believer in Jesus has value (Colossians 1:13)
- The Christian should live by God's values (Colossians 1:9-12)
- The Christian creates value in society (Colossians 3:23)

Premise

why we are studying this

Deconstruction is a massive problem that influences the world in which modern Christians operate. The sad reality is that those who establish no value – the deconstructionists – are on the rise.

When I began speaking about this problem twenty years ago, the outlook seemed troubled but not dire. Things have deteriorated so badly that believers in Jesus who try to live valuably are now regularly denounced. We are beset by both right- and left-wing versions of anti-value and must find a way to follow God's call in an environment that views positive construction as an attack.

STATEMENTS OF THE PREMISE

"For I may be absent in body, but I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see how well ordered you are and the strength of your faith in Christ.

So then, just as you have received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to walk in him, being rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing with gratitude.

Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elements of the world, rather than Christ."

—Colossians 2:5-8



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Theme

what the study is about

Paul's letter is a response to news he received from Epaphras regarding the churches of the Lycus Valley. Much of the report was encouraging, but some aspects were troubling. Apparently, the Colossians were making up their own religion, which included redefinitions of sin coupled with mysticism and asceticism. The answer to all this mess is Jesus and only Jesus. Paul expects Christians to daily live out the fullness of our direct connection to the God-Man, Jesus. This will lead to peace, holiness, respect for godly authority, tender hearts toward other believers, and production of value.

STATEMENTS OF THE THEME

"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. He is always wrestling for you in his prayers, so that you can stand mature and fully assured in everything God wills. For I testify about him that he works hard for you, for those in Laodicea, and for those in Hierapolis. Luke, the dearly loved physician, and Demas send you greetings. Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her home. After this letter has been read at your gathering, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. And tell Archippus, 'Pay attention to the ministry you have received in the Lord, so that you can accomplish it.'"

—Colossians 4:12-17

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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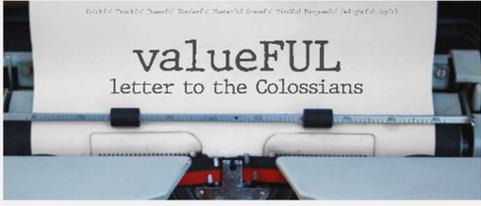
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SERIES 2 | SESSION 1

GROUP DISCUSSION



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VALUE

SCRIPTURE READING

Colossians 1:1-2

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Paul introduces himself, Timothy, and massively important concepts including apostleship, sainthood, the Triune God, fruitfulness, grace, and service to Christ.

LIFE-CHANGE OBJECTIVE

We are faithful servants of the Messiah.

GOD'S GRACE

"Here, right at the outset of the letter, is the whole doctrine of grace. A man is not what he has made himself, but what God has made him. There is no such thing as a self-made man; there are only men whom God has made, and men who have refused to allow God to make them."

—William Barclay
The Letter to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians.

FAITH

"Faith is not the absence of doubt, but the decision to trust God despite it."

—Timothy Keller
The Reason for God

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we remain faithful to the truth.

Session 1: Faithful

1. Read Colossians 1:1-2.
 - By what or whose authority does Paul claim to be an apostle?
 - Based on Paul's background, what does this tell us about God's grace? (See also 1 Timothy 1:12-15)
 - What words does Paul use to address the Colossian believers?

2. Read Colossians 2:5-8. Paul rejoices in the well-ordered—or disciplined—faith of the Colossians.
 - What does it mean to be "established in your faith?" (v 7)
 - What is Paul's warning to the Colossians (v 8)?
 - How easy is it for even a faithful believer to be taken captive by false philosophy and tradition?

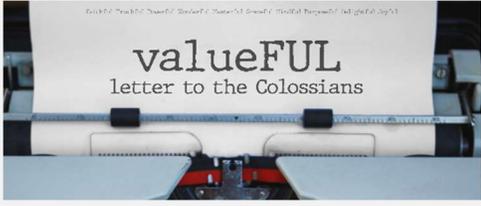
3. "Deconstruction" movements aim to tear down what has value; they defy objective truth and any construct that defines reality.
 - How does this philosophy contrast with the Colossians' well-ordered faith?
 - Have you noticed this or other philosophies and traditions infecting the church today?
 - How can believers remain faithful and holy in the midst of these deceptions?

4. Paul often uses the phrase "Grace and Peace to you".
 - Why do you think he does this?
 - What is the relationship between grace and peace?
 - How does understanding grace inform our sense of peace?
 - Discuss the importance of a clear understanding of these two concepts in the life of the believer.



SERIES 2 | SESSION 2

GROUP DISCUSSION



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VALUE

SCRIPTURE READING

Colossians 1:3-8

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Paul deftly uses the Colossians' own experience, scripture, and Epaphras' life to launch the discussion. This is a kind-hearted way to establish the lesson on solid truth [Alethia], setting a conversational yet inspiring tone that leads the Christian to embrace biblical service.

LIFE-CHANGE OBJECTIVE

We serve Christ.

THE WORD OF TRUTH

"[The word of truth] means that it came from God and can be trusted. 'Thy word is truth' (John 17:17). There are many messages and ideas that can be called true, but only God's Word can be called truth. Satan is the liar; to believe his lies is to be led astray into death (John 8:44). Jesus is the Truth (John 14:6); when we trust Him, we experience life. Men have tried to destroy God's truth, but they have failed. The Word of truth still stands!"

—Warren W. Wiersbe
Be Complete: Becoming the Whole Person God Intends You to Be

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we serve in the spirit of truth.

Session 2: Truthful

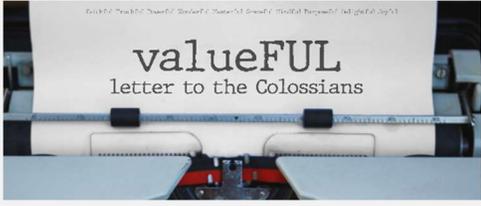
1. Read Colossians 1:3-6, Psalm 25:4-10, and 1 Corinthians 13:12-13.
 - What is the relationship between truth, faith, hope, and love?
2. Read Colossians 1:5-6, Deuteronomy 32:4, Psalm 119:160, John 1:17, and John 14:6.
 - Why do we consider the Gospel to be absolute truth?
3. Read Colossians 1:9-14.
 - What signs are an indication that we are living by God's values?
4. Read Colossians 3:23.
 - How should we approach anything that we do?
 - How might this perspective help to create value in our spheres of influence and in society at large?
5. Read Colossians 1:7-8, 4:12-13 and Philemon 23.
 - What example did Epaphras set of serving Christ?
 - Do we serve Jesus well?
 - What are some practical ways that we could serve Him more?



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GROUP DISCUSSION



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VALUE

SCRIPTURE READING

Colossians 1:9-14

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Paul relates an amazingly rich prayer, begging God to grant the wisdom and power so badly needed in Colossae. Most especially, he prays for them – and all of us – to remember the truth of who we are in Christ.

LIFE-CHANGE OBJECTIVE

We walk wisely and powerfully.

REVERENCE

“We are very good at teaching compassion and belonging, less good at teaching reverence. We train children to manage their emotions, but not always to recognize mystery. We have social-emotional learning, but no metaphysical literacy...

A generation ago, we taught rules without warmth and drove children to rebellion. Now we teach warmth without weight and risk raising souls unable to bow. If we want faith to endure, we must recover the weight of the One before whom we stand, for children need more than affirmation. They need a world that can command their attention.”

—Adam Eilath
The Grammar of Reverence

PRAYER

Pray for each other, that we stand in awe of God and His rich blessings.

Session 3: Powerful

1. Read Colossians 1:9-14
 - Discuss the passion Paul brings to this prayer.

2. Read 2 Chronicles 7:13-14 and Luke 11:1-4.
 - In what ways do these passages emphasize the power of prayer?

 - Discuss the difficulties of maintaining a vigorous prayer life.

3. Read Micah 6:8, Galatians 5:16, and 1 John 1:7.
 - How does walking in a way that is “worthy of the Lord” affect your life?

 - How does it affect the lives of the people around you?

4. Read 2 Corinthians 12:6-9 and 2 Timothy 1:7.
 - What do we gain by patiently enduring trials?

 - Please share any testimonies that you have of feeling the Lord’s power and nearness in a time when you felt weak and needy.

5. Read again Colossians 1:9-14.
 - Identify five truths in this passage that describe who we are in Christ, and for which we can be especially thankful.

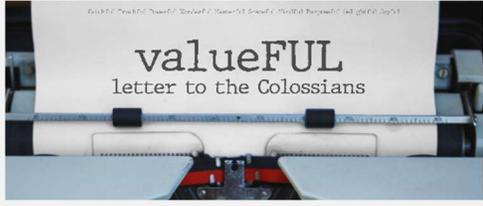
 - What difference does having a heart of gratitude make in your life?



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SERIES 2 | SESSION 4

GROUP DISCUSSION



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VALUE

SCRIPTURE READING

Colossians 1:15-23

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Paul shows us the answer to any heresy, trial, or daily need – Jesus. Jesus is wonderful in every sense of the idea, and Paul presents Jesus in poetry crafted to inspire awe in His Person.

LIFE-CHANGE OBJECTIVE

We keep the main thing the main thing.

WONDER

“Awareness of the divine begins with wonder... As civilization advances, the sense of wonder declines. Such decline is an alarming symptom of our state of mind. Mankind will not perish for want of information, but only for want of appreciation. The beginning of our happiness lies in the understanding that life without wonder is not worth living. What we lack is not a will to believe but a will to wonder.”

—Abraham J. Heschel
God in Search of Man

“The essence of all religion is the feeling of wonder, of awe, of admiration, of reverence for what is higher than man.”

—Thomas Carlyle
Heros and Hero Worship

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that the knowledge of Jesus fills us with wonder.

Session 4: Wonderful

1. Read Colossians 1:15 and Genesis 1:26-27.
 - What does it mean that Jesus is the “Firstborn” of all creation?

2. Read Colossians 1:16-19 and Psalm 103:20-22.
 - Discuss the deity of the Son as revealed in this short passage. What are the implications for understanding all of scripture?

3. The study of science is meant to propel us to wonder; God intricately designed the universe, down to each individual atom that is held together by an invisible, gravitational force.
 - How has scientific study influenced your faith?

4. Read Colossians 1: 20-22.
 - What does it mean that God has reconciled all things to Himself through the death and resurrection of Jesus?
 - Discuss the implications of your salvation individually, and your personal relationship with the Father through the Son in light of God’s larger plan (see also Ephesians 1:4).

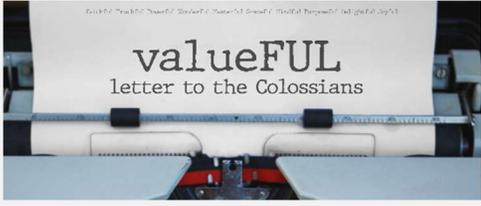
5. Read Colossians 1: 23.
 - Since we know from many other passages that our salvation is secure, what does Paul mean by his statements in verse 23?
 - Why does he address his audience in this way? Why do you think he uses the word ‘if’?



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SERIES 2 | SESSION 5

GROUP DISCUSSION



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VALUE

SCRIPTURE READING

Colossians 1:24-29

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Paul speaks in a brilliant chiasm, exposing his Hebraic-based message for his mostly Gentile audience. The big idea is in the middle – the *mysterion*. This rich Old Testament idea was being abandoned for mystery religion nonsense, so Paul re-establishes the right meaning for the term. The ancient and rich truth is that Gentiles are also chosen for glory. Paul also describes his goal of spiritual maturity and his willingness to suffer and fight in God’s strength so that people grow up well in Christ.

OBJECTIVE

We labor for the truth.

THE MYSTERY

“The mystery was not that Gentiles would be saved but how they could be ‘fellow-heirs’ (Eph. 3:6), on the same level with Jews, with no middle wall of partition between them.”

—Norman L. Geisler
“Beware of Philosophy”, *JETS*

“The beauty of the mystery unveiled is that our relationship with God is radically defined by His grace. This understanding liberates us, emboldening us to share the good news with others.”

—Rick Warren

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we boldly share the good news.

Session 5: Meaningful

Read Colossians 1:24-29 and discuss the following questions:

1. In verse 24, Paul states that he is “completing in my flesh what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for his body, that is, the church.”
 - Since Christ’s atoning work was completed in His death and resurrection, what do you think Paul is referring to?

2. What is the significance of Paul’s revelation that the mystery to which he refers is the inclusion of the Gentiles in God’s plan? (See also Deuteronomy 7:1-11 and Ephesians 3:8-10.)

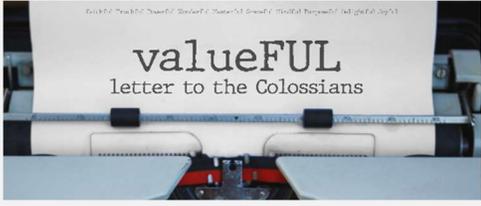
3. Why did Paul emphasize the importance of his mission to the Gentiles? (See also Genesis 18:18 and Ephesians 1:3-14.)

4. As we seek to emulate Paul’s efforts to make disciples and help each other grow to spiritual maturity, how do Colossians 1:29 and 1 Corinthians 15:10 inform us?



SERIES 2 | SESSION 6

GROUP DISCUSSION



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VALUE

SCRIPTURE READING

Colossians 2:1-10

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Before he gets into the teeth of the theological absurdities currently influential in Colossae, Paul lays forth the answer: Jesus. He is the answer to everything. Knowing He is present with us changes everything about how we live.

OBJECTIVE

We live like people who know the answer.

COMPLETE IN CHRIST

“Believers are spiritually complete because they know the truth about ultimate reality. To maintain, as the Colossian false teachers did, that those who were in Christ still lacked anything is absurd. All true believers are complete in Christ and do not need the teachings of any cult or false teacher.

Everyone has a choice, whether to follow human wisdom or to come to Christ. To follow human wisdom is to be kidnapped by the emissaries of Satan and his false system, which leaves a person spiritually incomplete. To come to Christ is to come to the One who alone offers completeness.”

—John MacArthur
Colossians and Philemon

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we know and follow Christ alone.

Session 6: Masterful

1. Read Colossians 2:1-3 and discuss the following questions:
 - Why does Paul feel bonded with his audience if he had never visited Colossae before this letter was written?
 - How should this inform our bond to other believers worldwide?

2. Read Colossians 2:4-5.
 - What are some of the arguments that may ‘sound reasonable’ in contrast with the Gospel (verse 4)?
 - How is Paul preparing the Colossians to resist those?

3. Read Colossians 2:6-7.
 - What does it mean to:
 - Walk in Christ?
 - Be rooted in Christ?
 - Be built up in Christ?
 - Being established in the Faith requires teaching. How are you pursuing discipleship in your life? For yourself? and for others?

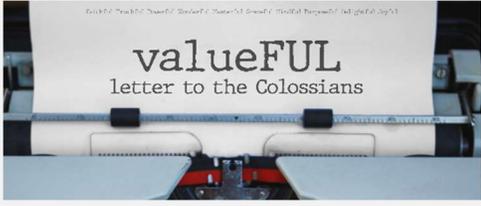
4. Read Colossians 2:8-10.
 - Human traditions may seem harmless on the surface, but what does Paul mean by ‘philosophies’ and ‘empty deceit’?
 - What does it mean that these are based on the ‘elements of the world?’ How can we guard against these things when they attempt to infiltrate the church?

5. Discuss any personal experiences you have had with false doctrines or dangerous teachings.



SERIES 2 | SESSION 7

GROUP DISCUSSION



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VALUE

SCRIPTURE READING

Colossians 2:11-23

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Paul examines the three big aspects of the Colossian heresy as it was practically experienced in asceticism, mysticism, and legalism. He shows that the Godhead is greater than each and that reliance on Jesus is eroded by each. Further, eternal rewards are lost when we settle for attractive-looking additions that promise “fuller” Christianity than what Jesus provides.

OBJECTIVE

We find our life in Christ alone.

CHRIST IS THE SUBSTANCE

“The Old Testament Law (including the Sabbath) was only a shadow of the things that were to come. The reality or ‘substance’ (sōma, lit., *body*), however, is to be found in Christ. What the Old Testament foreshadowed, Christ fulfilled. A ‘shadow’ (skia) is only an image cast by an object which represents its form. Once one finds Christ, he no longer needs to follow the old shadow.”

—Norman L. Geisler
“Colossians” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that we trust in Christ alone and avoid attractive additions.

Session 7: Graceful

1. Read Colossians 2:14-17 and Ephesians 2:8-9.

- Given the context, discuss the contrast between shadow and substance.

2. Read Colossians 2:18-19 and Ephesians 4:16.

False teachers in the church claimed to have a “fuller” experience of God, whether through mysticism, asceticism, or the worship of angels.

- According to Paul in verse 19, what were these men lacking?

3. Read Colossians 2:20-23 and 2:8.

Asceticism was a popular practice among the philosophers in Colossae.

- From this passage, describe some of the regulations that were being imposed on the church.

- How did this stoic religion fall short of God’s design for the church?

4. Read Colossians 2:23 again.

Legalism, mysticism, and asceticism are all about controlling behavior.

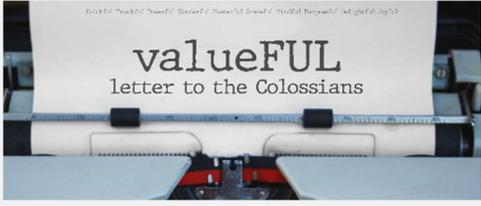
- Contrast these practices with worshipping Jesus as the Head and relying on the Holy Spirit.



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SERIES 2 | SESSION 8

GROUP DISCUSSION



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VALUE

SCRIPTURE READING

Colossians 3:1-4

KEY IDEAS

THEME

Many call this paragraph the height of all Christian thought. This introduction to the “practical” section of the book contains a beautiful and powerful call to be mindful. Paul wants our minds trained in the right direction so that our living naturally follows that path.

OBJECTIVE

We set our minds on things above.

THE BACKDROP OF ETERNITY

“Paul...is not pleading for an other-worldliness in which the Christian withdraws himself...and does nothing but contemplate eternity... But there will be this difference – from now on the Christian will view everything against the background of eternity and no longer live as if this world was all that mattered.”

—William Barclay
Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians

SEEK AND THINK HEAVEN

“You must not only *seek* heaven; you must also *think* heaven.”

—J.B. Lightfoot
St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon

PRAYER

Pray for each other this week, that our minds are trained toward Jesus.

Session 8: Mindful

1. Read Colossians 3:1-2. The word ‘if’ in verse 1 can be translated ‘since’.
 - According to this passage, what should be the object of our thoughts?
 - What is the difference between ‘seeking’ and ‘setting our minds on’ the things above?
 - Why does the object of our attention matter, and how should this impact our daily lives?

2. Read Colossians 3:3. Because we identify with Christ in His death, God wants us to consider ourselves as having died with Him.
 - What does Paul mean when he says. “You have died...”?
 - What does it mean that our lives are “hidden” in Christ?
 - Does it mean that God has fully accomplished His mission and that our role is somewhat passive?

3. Read Colossians 3:4, Psalm 24:7-10, Matthew 25:31-32, and Revelation 20:4.
 - How does Christ’s future appearing affect how we live now?
 - What is invisible now in the spiritual realm that will one day be fully manifested?

4. What are some practical habits—such as Bible reading, prayer, fellowship, serving—that help you keep your mind on things above?
 - If possible, share some specific examples from your life.
 - How can we encourage one another this week to keep our minds on Christ?



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