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Introduction and Purpose

This inductive Bible study has been developed as a discipleship tool to be used to equip the body at Westside Fellowship.

The overall goal of the Inductive Bible Study Workbook series at Westside Fellowship is to teach people how to read and understand the Bible. At Westside, we value Biblical Literacy. As a local church, we want to train disciples who know their Bible. Why? Because we believe the Bible is the inerrant and inspired Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16). We believe God's Word is living and active (Heb. 4:12). It is our source of truth (John 17:17). It is profitable for training us in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:17). And it is a light that guides us in our daily lives (Psalm 119:105).

Why should I use this resource?

As part of our Discipleship initiative, we created this Inductive Bible Study Workbook as a tool for LifeGroups, D-Groups, or individual study. It is designed to help the people of God learn how to read and understand the Word of God so they can grow to become more like Christ.

A second purpose of this resource is to help with the Sunday morning teaching. It provides an opportunity to study more deeply and supports discipleship through the preaching and teaching ministry at Westside Fellowship.

What is inductive Bible Study?¹

Inductive Bible study is a method of studying the Bible that allows you to discover for yourself what Scripture says, what it means, and how to apply its truths to your life. The goal of an inductive Bible study is to drive you into personal interaction with the Bible and thus with the God of the Bible! By knowing God through knowing His Word—and living by the truths the Holy Spirit reveals to you through Scripture—your life will radically change.

Inductive Bible study uses the Bible as its primary source of information about the Bible, so taking time to dig deeper into the passage of Scripture you're reading—by looking at cross references, doing word studies, and letting Scripture interpret Scripture—will take your personal study of the Bible to the next level. Not only will you know what the passage meant to its original audience, but you'll know how to apply it to your own circumstances.

¹ <https://www.precept.org/2023/02/what-is-inductive-bible-study/>

How does this particular study work?

Like any other inductive Bible study, this workbook will guide you by asking four basic questions: “What do I See?” (Observation), “What does it mean?” (Interpretation), “How does it work?” (Application), “How will I live it out? (Implementation).

We have adapted this Bible study method into an acronym to help us remember the process as we walk through it. At Westside, and throughout this study, we call this the **R.E.A.D.** method of Bible study. Together, we are learning to **R.E.A.D.** our Bible. In each lesson, you will be provided with a four-step Bible study method.”.

Read It	(What do I see)
Explain It	(What does it mean?)
Apply It	(How does it work)
Do It	(In what ways will it change my life?)

Throughout each lesson, you will be guided in how to use the R.E.A.D. method of Bible study. You will also be encouraged to try the method on your own. Our goal is not only to provide you with an inductive study of the book of Colossians, but also to help you learn how to use the R.E.A.D. Bible study method in your daily Bible study.

Each question is designed to guide you through the process of using the Bible to better understand the Bible and apply it to your everyday life. Please remember that the questions in this study journal do not cover everything. They are simply meant to help you interact with God’s Word in a deeper way. They can help you get the most out of the Sunday morning teaching and the LifeGroup discipleship sessions. Because of this, we encourage you to spend as much time as possible reading and interacting with the Scripture itself—not just answering these questions. These questions are designed to get you thinking, but only the Word of God has the power to transform your heart and change your life.

At the end of each lesson, we have included a “**Share It**” section. This section encourages you to share what you have learned with others in your circles of influence. **Parents**, you will find discussion questions to help you have discipleship conversations at home. **Life Group Leaders**, you will find discussion questions to help guide your Life Group sessions.

We pray that God will use this study in a mighty way to broaden your understanding of his Word and deepen your love for Him!

Background:

(Background information has been compiled from The Bible Knowledge Commentary (Victor Books, 1985), Talk Thru the Bible (Thomas Nelson, 2002), and The MacArthur Study Bible (Thomas Nelson, 2006).

Who wrote Colossians?

The Book of Colossians was written by the Apostle Paul around A.D. 60–62 while he was in prison in Rome. There is a lot of evidence, both inside and outside the book, that supports Paul as the author of Colossians. In the book, Paul refers to himself three times (1:1; 1:23; 4:18). He also mentions many of his coworkers and friends, including Tychicus (4:7), Onesimus (4:9), Aristarchus (4:10), Mark (4:10), Justus (4:11), Epaphras (4:12), Luke (4:14), Demas (4:14), and Archippus (4:17). The writing style and content of Colossians are similar to Ephesians. Ephesians was written around the same time and was probably the book called “the letter from Laodicea” in Colossians 4:16.

The outside evidence that Paul wrote Colossians is strong. Some people argue that Paul did not write it because the false teaching it fights is second-century Gnosticism. However, there is good reason to believe that this false teaching, at least in its early form, had already appeared during Paul’s lifetime. Paul also dealt with other false teachings in books that are clearly his (see 1 Cor. 15; Gal. 1–2; 2 Thes. 2). Because of this, it seems clear that Paul wrote Colossians. One of the strongest pieces of evidence that Colossians was written by Paul in the first century is its close connection to the Book of Philemon. Almost no one questions that Philemon was truly written by Paul.

To Whom was Colossians Written?

Colossians was written “to the saints and faithful brothers (and sisters) in Christ at Colossae” (1:2). Colossians is named after the city of Colossae. Colossae was in the Lycus Valley, about 100 miles east of Ephesus in Asia Minor. This is the same region where the seven Asian churches in Revelation 1–3 were located.

Colossae was once a busy center for trade and was famous for its shiny black wool. By Paul’s day, however, the main road had been moved so that it went through nearby Laodicea instead. Because the road no longer went through Colossae, the city began to decline and began to be overshadowed by the nearby cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis.

The church in Colossae began during Paul’s three years of ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19). Paul did not start the church and had never been there (2:1). Epaphras was apparently saved while visiting Ephesus and likely started the church in Colossae when he returned home.

Although most of the people in Colossae were Gentiles, there was a large Jewish community that had been there since the time of Antiochus the Great (223–187 B.C.). Because Colossae had both Jews and Gentiles, the church included people from both groups. This mix also showed up in the

false teaching that troubled the church. The false teaching included ideas from both Jewish legalism and pagan mysticism.

When Was Colossians Written?

Colossians was written from Rome while Paul was in prison there for the first time, as recorded in Acts 28:30. Paul also wrote Ephesians and Philemon around the same time (about A.D. 60–62). Since the record of Acts ends around A.D. 60–62, Colossians was probably written during this two-year imprisonment. Therefore, Colossians is one of the four books known as the **Prison Epistles**. The other three being: Ephesians, Philemon, and Philippians.

What Prompted The Letter?

It appears that Paul wrote this letter to the Colossians because of Epaphras' visit and his report about what was happening in Colossae. Several years after the Colossian church was founded, a dangerous false teaching seems to have arisen. This teaching threatened the Colossian church, which was made up mostly of Gentiles. This specific false teaching cannot be clearly identified with any known historical system. However, it does seem to be connected to the early beginnings of what later developed into Gnosticism in the second century. Because of this, we might call the false teaching addressed in Colossians a form of **proto-Gnosticism**, or an early form of Gnosticism.

Apparently, this heresy had several characteristics. It seems to have been a religious system that combined ideas from Greek speculation, Jewish legalism, and Oriental mysticism. It had a low view of the body and placed importance on having special or deeper knowledge (gnosis). It also stressed the need to follow Old Testament (OT) laws and ceremonies, included the worship of angels, and denied the deity of Jesus.

Why Paul Wrote This Letter:

Epaphras was so concerned about this false teaching that he made the long journey from Colossae to Rome (4:12, 13), where Paul was a prisoner. Paul had never met the believers in Colossae in person. However, after hearing Epaphras' report, Paul wrote to them to explain these issues clearly. He also encouraged them to stay away from false teachings and remain faithful to the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul seems to have had three main purposes for writing Colossians. First, he sought to show the deity and supremacy of Christ in the face of the Colossian heresy (1:18; 2:9). Second, he wanted to lead believers into spiritual maturity (1:28; 2:6–7). Third, he wanted to inform them about his state of affairs and elicited their prayers on his behalf (4:2–8). All in all, this letter provides one of the most definitive statements on the deity, the preeminence, and the sufficiency of Christ.

Lesson 1 — Book Survey & Colossians 1:1-2

Read It: What Does it Say?

A. Pray

Since any study of the Word of God is a spiritual exercise, the primary and most important thing that we must do to prepare our heart is to pray.

Psalm 119:18 — *Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.*

John 16:13 — *When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.*

Fun Fact:

When asked how to study the Scriptures most profitably, George Mueller remarked that he had two rules of thumb. First, prayerfully seek God's Spirit as primary teacher. Second, let the Holy Spirit teach at the appropriate time. That is to say, if an answer does not come immediately, keep seeking the Spirit's help.

B. Memory Verse:

In each lesson, you will be encouraged to memorize a verse or short passage. If you are working through this study in a Westside LifeGroup, perhaps your group leader will give you time to practice reciting the memory verse each week. Write it out to get your memorization started.

Colossians 1:1-2 —

C. Read the Passage:

For this first week, our goal is simple: **read the whole book of Colossians in one sitting**. Colossians only has four chapters, so it will not take very long. Reading the whole letter at once will also help you understand the big picture of what Paul is saying.

☐ Check this box after reading the entire letter.

D. Examine the Passage:

Remember that when Paul wrote this letter, he was writing to an original audience at an original time in history. Thus, when they received his letter, they would have opened it and read it, in its entirety, in one sitting. Therefore, we are encouraged to try to do the same thing.

1. As you were reading the entire letter of Colossians: Did any important words or phrases stand out to you? If so, write them in the space below.

Helpful Hint: Do you have a hard time staying focused while you read? Or do you learn better by listening? Try using the free [YouVersion Bible App](#) on your phone. Open the book of Colossians, press play on the audio Bible, and follow along as it reads the words out loud. Give it a try! You may be surprised by how much you understand and remember when you **listen** and **read** at the **same time**.

2. What are 2–3 main ideas you see in the passage?

Why do you think Paul wanted his readers to understand these ideas?

E. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

As this Bible study is designed to help you learn how to **R.E.A.D.** the Bible on your own. The questions in this workbook are designed to guide you through four simple steps: **Read, Explain, Apply, and Do.**

Note: Our goal is not for you to simply answer questions in a workbook. We want to help you learn how to study God's Word for yourself. That is why, at the end of each section, we are giving you a chance to practice the inductive Bible study method on your own.

For Lesson one, let's start with the "**R**" in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **RECORD** one verse or phrase that stood out to you as you read the passage. You will do this in every lesson.

Don't just think of a verse, actually write it down. You will come back to this verse in the next section to study it more closely.

Explain It: What Does it Mean?

The **Explain It** sections of this workbook will help you understand what the Bible means. **Remember, all Scripture was written for us, but not all Scripture was written directly to us.** God used real people to write the Bible. These people lived in real places, during real times in history, and in cultures that were different from ours. So, to understand what a passage means, we first need to understand what it meant to the people who first received it.

A good rule of thumb when studying the Bible is to always start by asking: “What did this passage mean to the original audience?” When we understand what the passage meant then, we will be better prepared to understand and apply its truth today.

Thought Bubble:

Think about who wrote it, who they wrote it to, why they wrote it, when and where they lived, and how the words were used according to the normal rules of human language.

A. Book Survey

Because lesson 1 is a survey of the entire book, we will use this section to create our own Book Digest Survey Table. This table will help us get a better grasp on the flow of the letter as a whole.

Complete the table below for each chapter in Colossians:

Chapter	In your own words, summarize each chapter in 1 sentence.	Note any Key Words
Colossians 1		
Colossians 2		
Colossians 3		
Colossians 4		

B. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the “E” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **EXPLAIN** the verse that you recorded in the previous section. Remember all Scripture has a single meaning, with various applications. **The goal is NOT to explain what this particular verse means “to you,” rather the goal is to explain what this verse means.**

Hint: A few things to consider might be: immediate context, meaning of words, sentence structure, how the same author has used similar words in other places, historical background, how this passage connects to other biblical truths, how this passage fits into the storyline of the Bible, etc..)

Apply It: How Does it work?

The **Apply It** sections in this workbook will encourage you to reflect on the truths, principles, and instructions that we have discovered throughout our study thus far, and consider how those truths apply in everyday life in our contemporary setting.

A. Reflect On It

1. In Colossians 1:1-2, Paul calls the Colossians “faithful brothers in Christ.” Imagine how encouraging that must have been to hear!

Who has encouraged you to stay faithful to Jesus?

How did their words help you keep following Him?

2. As you learned in the background study, Paul had probably never met the believers in Colossae. Even so, he cared about them and wanted to encourage them.

What does this show you about Paul's heart for gospel missions?

How might you be more missionally minded in your daily life?

3. In chapter 4, Paul tells the Colossians about several people who care about them and are praying for them.

Why do you think Paul wanted the Colossians to know about these people?

Has anyone ever told you they were praying for you? How meaningful was that to you?

Who are you praying for today?

B. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the “**A**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **APPLY** the verse that you recorded in the previous section.

Hint: In seeking to apply this verse to your life, consider the following questions about your selected verse/ passage:

Does this verse teach a promise to hold on to?

Does this verse teach a truth to trust?

Does this verse provide an instruction to obey?

Does this verse share a principle to adopt?

Does this verse model an example to imitate?

Does this verse show a pattern to avoid?

Does this verse address an attitude that needs to be changed?

Does this verse highlight a sin in your life that needs to be confessed?

Does this verse emphasize how your desires can be better aligned with God's desires?

Do It: How will I let it change my life?

The **Do It** sections in this workbook are designed to help you put what you have learned into action.

Continuing with the “**D**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, In the space below, write down the most important truth or lesson you learned from this study. Then, think of one way that you can be intentional to allow this truth to change your daily life in each of your three main relational spheres.



Main Truth: What is one Truth, Principle, or Promise from God’s Word that I have learned from this lesson?

James 1:22

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.



Home: How can I live out this truth at home this week?



Work: How can I live out this truth at work this week?



Social: How can I live out this truth in my community/mission field this week?

Share It: Who will I invest it in?

A. Group Guide: Week 1

Love One Another:

Spend time in fellowship with one another (choose from these)

1. Have your group share one or two highlights from the summer.
2. Have 1-2 of your group members share a brief version of their testimony.
 - Consider asking them ahead of time to give them time to prepare. You may want to model it for them the first week to help people feel more comfortable. [Click here for some tips on sharing your testimony. \(https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/sharing-your-testimony/\)](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/sharing-your-testimony/)

Live out Biblical Truth:

Discuss how this applies to your lives

Missions Prayer Point: Pray through the missions prayer point for this week.

Read Colossians 1:1-2

1. Discuss why Paul was writing this book to the church in Colossae.
2. Discuss 1-2 questions from the “Apply it” section.
3. How has the book of Colossians already challenged you in your walk with Jesus?

Long for God:

Respond to God’s word in prayer together

1. Pray for God to use this study to transform the lives of your group this fall.
2. Break out into groups of 2-3 and pray for one another.

List prayer requests here:

B. Student and Family Devotional Guide: Lesson 1

(any of the age groups can use any of these questions)

Read Colossians 1:1-2. Pick a couple of the questions below to discuss as a family.

Preschool – 5th grade

All ages:

- Who wrote this letter?
- Who was with Paul?
- Who were they writing to?
- What does Paul call them?
- Who do they belong to?
- What two things does Paul wish for them?
- Who gives us grace and peace?
- What does it mean to belong to Jesus?
- How can we show that we love Jesus?

1st-2nd grade specific:

- What does faithful mean?
- What does grace mean?
- What does peace mean?
- Why do you think Paul reminds them that they belong to Jesus?
- What is one way you be faithful to Jesus this week?

3rd-5th grade: specific

- What does Paul call himself in v.1?
- What is an apostle?
- Who is Timothy?
- What does it mean to be in Christ?
- What would being a faithful follower of Jesus look like at school? At home? With friends?

Middle School and High School specific:

- What does “by the will of God” tell us about Paul’s authority?
- Why does Paul call the Colossians “saints”? What does it mean to be a “saint”?
- What does it mean to be faithful in Christ? What does it mean to be “in Christ”?
- What is grace? Who needs God’s grace? Why?
- What is Biblical peace?
- If your identity is “in Christ” what should that change about the way you view yourself?
- What is one area of your life where knowing who Jesus is should change the way you live?

Lesson 2 — Colossians 1:3-8

Read It: What Does it Say?

A. Pray

Since any study of the Word of God is a spiritual exercise, the primary and most important thing that we must do to prepare our heart is to pray.

B. Memory Verse:

In each lesson, you will be encouraged to memorize a verse or short passage.

Colossians 1:3-4 —

C. Read the Passage:

For this lesson, our passage is: **Colossians 1:3-8**. Read the passage at least two times. If you are able, try reading the passage out loud at least one of the two times. Underline or highlight any key words or phrases that you observe.

☐ Check this box after reading Col 1:3-8

D. Examine the Passage:

1. Paul begins with thanksgiving rather than immediately addressing problems in the church. What does this reveal about Christ's position in Paul's life?
2. Paul wrote that he thanks God when "we pray for you" and bases his thanksgiving on the hearing of their faith, hope, and love. What does this reveal about the connection between his prayer life and his gratitude toward the Colossians?

E. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

As with the previous lessons, this is your chance to try the inductive bible study method on your own!

Keeping with our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, **RECORD** a verse or phrase that stands out to you from this passage.

Explain It: What Does it Mean?

The **Explain It** sections of this workbook will help you understand what the Bible means.

Remember, since all Scripture was written for us, but not all Scripture was written directly to us, a good rule of thumb is to start by asking: "What did this passage mean to the original audience?"

A. Think About It

1. In Col 1:4-5 Paul describes the gospel as simultaneously bearing fruit and increasing globally and locally among the Colossians. What does this parallel between the gospel's global impact and its impact in the Colossian community (locally) suggest about the nature and power of the gospel message for our world today?

2. Paul says he is thankful because of the hope "laid up for you in heaven". What does it mean that their hope is stored in heaven rather than found in their present circumstances?

B. Understand it:

1. The Colossians “learned” the gospel from Epaphras. The word translated as “learned” is a word that is connected to discipleship in Greek. This reveals that discipleship is not a one-time conversion event, but a lifelong journey. Epaphras did not simply lead the Colossians to Christ and then abandon them, he taught them the Word and helped to establish their faith. In chapter 4 Paul would show through the fervent prayer of Ephaphras that true discipleship extends far beyond initial conversion, but it requires ongoing prayer, instruction, and investment throughout a believer’s life.

How does this passage speak to the process of making disciples?

Cross reference the word “learned” in Colossians 1:7 with the following passages:
Matthew 11:29 - Titus 3:14. How is this word used to instruct the church?

2. The good news of the gospel is the proclaimed message of Christ’s completed work on the cross through His death, burial, and resurrection. According to Colossians 1:5-8, when they heard the gospel, they trusted by faith in Christ’s finished work on the cross and entered into a right relationship with God.

Was it through the faithfulness of another person that you heard the message of the gospel, and have you taken the opportunity to share the life transforming gospel with others?

C. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the “**E**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **EXPLAIN** the verse that you recorded in the previous section. Remember The goal is NOT to explain what this particular verse means “to you,” rather the goal is to explain what this verse means.

Apply It: How Does it work?

The **Apply It** sections in this workbook will encourage you to reflect on the truths, principles, and instructions that we have discovered throughout our study thus far, and consider how those truths apply in everyday life in our contemporary setting.

A. Reflect On It

1. One thing that we have learned thus far is that thanksgiving and prayer are deeply connected. What the Lord had already accomplished through the Colossian believers was the foundation for Paul’s gratitude.

In what way is our gratitude for the Lord’s past work and continued working in our lives fuel for our gratitude in prayer?

2. Faith, Love, and hope: Paul gives thanks for the Colossians' faith in Jesus, their love for all the saints, and their hope laid up in heaven. Which of these 3 is the weakest in your life right now, and what can you do to strengthen that area of your life?

3. The gospel came to the Colossian believers through Ephaphras and was "bearing fruit and increasing" among them. In what way is the gospel producing spiritual fruit in your life and are you actively sharing the gospel message with others? If not why, and how can you start?

B. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the "**A**" in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **APPLY** the verse that you recorded in the previous section.

Do It: How will I let it change my life?

The **Do It** sections in this workbook are designed to help you put what you have learned into action.

Continuing with the “**D**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, In the space below, write down the most important truth or lesson you learned from this study. Then, think of one way that you can be intentional to allow this truth to change your daily life in each of your 4 main relational spheres.



Main Truth: What is one Truth, Principle, or Promise from God’s Word that I have learned from this lesson?

James 1:22

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.



Home: How can I live out this truth at home this week?



Work: How can I live out this truth at work this week?



Social: How can I live out this truth in my community/mission field this week?

Share It: Who Will I Invest It In?

A. Group Guide: Week 2

Love One Another:

Spend time in fellowship with one another (choose from these)

1. Share something that you are celebrating or something that disappointed you this week.
2. How were you able to put God's word into practice this week?
3. Have a group member share why they prioritize biblical community in their life.

Live out Biblical Truth:

Discuss how this applies to your lives

Missions Prayer Point: Pray through the missions prayer point for this week.

Read Colossians 1:3-8

1. What stood out to you or challenged you from this week's study?
2. What does it mean for our hope to be laid up in heaven?
3. Discuss 1-2 questions from the "Apply it" section.

Long for God:

Respond to God's word in prayer together

1. Give thanks to God for the gospel and pray for him to help you be a faithful minister of it where you live, work, and play.
2. Break out into groups of 2-3 and pray for one another.

List prayer requests here:

B. Student and Family Devotional Guide: Lesson 2

(any of the age groups can use any of these questions)

Read Colossians 1:3-8. Pick a couple of the questions below to discuss as a family.

Preschool – 5th grade

All ages:

- Who is Paul thankful to God for?
- Who are the people Paul is writing to?
- What did the Colossians believe in?
- Who did they trust?
- What did the Colossians show to other Christians?
- What good news had they heard?
- Who told them about the Gospel?
- How can we show love to someone this week?
- Can you tell me something you're thankful for?

1st-2nd

- What is faith?
- What is love?
- What is hope?
- What is the gospel?
- What happens when people believe the gospel?

3rd-5th

- What is Christian hope?
- What does the gospel produce when it is truly believed?
- What do you think v.6 means? (what does it mean that it is bearing fruit and increasing)
- What does Epaphras' role teach us about telling other about Jesus?
- How should our faith in Jesus affect the way we treat other people?

Middle School – High School

- Can someone claim to follow Jesus without their life changing? What should we look for?
- Why do think Paul begins by thanking God rather than congratulating the Colossians?
- What kind of fruit should the gospel produce in a person's life?
- Who has helped your understand the gospel better?
- Who might God be giving you an opportunity to encourage or share the gospel with?
- If someone watched your life for a week, what evidence would they see that you have faith in Christ?
- Where do you most need the gospel to produce fruit in your life right now?

Lesson 3 — Colossians 1:9-14

Read it: What Does it Say?

A. Pray

Pray that the Lord would guide you during this time of Bible study. Pray that He would increase your knowledge of Him, but that it would effect heart change. Pray that your attitude, your speech, your thoughts, your whole life would be affected by God's Word.

B. Memory Verse

In each lesson, you will be encouraged to memorize a verse or short passage.

Colossians 1:10 —

C. Read the Passage

For this lesson, our passage is: **Colossians 1:9-14**. Read this passage at least two times. If you are able, try reading the passage out loud at least one of the two times. Underline or highlight any key words or phrases that you observe

☐ Check this box after reading Col 1:9 - 14

D. Examine the Passage

1. Based on your observations, what appears to be the main thing that Paul wants the church in Colossae to know?
2. After reading the passage a couple times, write down any key words or phrases that Paul used repeatedly in this passage.

E. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

As with the previous lessons, this is your chance to try the inductive Bible study method on your own and continue with the R.E.A.D method.

Keeping with our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, **RECORD** a verse or phrase that stands out to you from this passage.

Explain It: What Does it Mean?

The **Explain It** sections of this workbook will help you understand what the Bible means.

Remember, since all Scripture was written for us, but not all Scripture was written directly to us, a good rule of thumb is to start by asking: "What did this passage mean to the original audience?"

A. Think About It

How does this prayer reveal what Paul considers most important for a Christian's spiritual growth?

B. Understand it

1. Who is Paul praying for in this passage?

What does Paul say he has been doing for the Colossians since he heard about them?

What specifically does Paul ask God to give the Colossians?

How does Paul describe the kind of wisdom and understanding he is praying they would have? How is this wisdom different from earthly wisdom?

2. According to v. 10 what is the purpose or result of being filled with the knowledge of God's will?

3. What does Paul say believers are strengthened for?

What attitude is connected with endurance and patience?

Why is "strength" necessary for "endurance and patience"? What does this tell us about the Christian life?

4. What does Paul say believers should give thanks to the Father for?

What has the Father qualified the believers to receive?

Identify the different things God has done for believers in vv. 12-14

What is the significance of the contrast between “the domain of darkness” and “the kingdom of his beloved Son”?

C. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the “**E**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **EXPLAIN** the verse that you recorded in the previous section. Remember The goal is NOT to explain what this particular verse means “to you,” rather the goal is to explain what this verse means.

Apply It: How Does it work?

The **Apply It** sections in this workbook will encourage you to reflect on the truths, principles, and instructions that we have discovered throughout our study thus far, and consider how those truths apply in everyday life in our contemporary setting.

A. Reflect On It

1. If someone examined your life, what evidence would show that you are “walking in a manner worthy of the Lord”?
2. Are there areas where you know God’s will but struggle to live accordingly? What makes obedience difficult in those areas?
3. What are some practical ways you can grow “in the knowledge of God” this week?

B. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the “**A**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the Space below **APPLY** the verse that you recorded in the previous section.

Do It: How will I let it change my life?

The **Do It** sections in this workbook are designed to help you put what you have learned into action.

Continuing with the “**D**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, In the space below, write down the most important truth or lesson you learned from this study. Then, think of one way that you can be intentional to allow this truth to change your daily life in each of your 4 main relational spheres.



Main Truth: What is one Truth, Principle, or Promise from God’s Word that I have learned from this lesson?

James 1:22

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.



Home: How can I live out this truth at home this week?



Work: How can I live out this truth at work this week?



Social: How can I live out this truth in my community/mission field this week?

Share It: Who Will I Invest It In?

A. Group Guide: Week 3

Love One Another:

Spend time in fellowship with one another (choose from these)

1. What is something that you are looking forward to this fall?
2. Who is someone that you have been sharing the gospel with or need to share the gospel with? Pray for them as a group.

Live out Biblical Truth:

Discuss how this applies to your lives

Missions Prayer Point: Pray through the missions prayer point for this week.

Read Colossians 1:9-14

1. According to vs. 10 what is the purpose or result of being filled with the knowledge of God's will?
2. Discuss 1-2 questions from the "Apply it" section.
3. How has the prayer from this passage encouraged you this week?

Long for God:

Respond to God's word in prayer together

1. Pray through verses 9-14 together as a group.
2. Break out into groups of 2-3 and pray for one another.

List prayer requests here:

B. Student and Family Devotional Guide: Lesson 3

(any of the age groups can use any of these questions)

Read Colossians 1:9-14. Pick a couple of the questions below to discuss as a family.

Preschool – 5th grade

All ages (Preschool – Kindergarten):

- What was Paul praying for the Colossians?
- What does it mean to please God?
- Can we grow in knowing Jesus?
- What are some good things God wants us to do?
- What should we do God does something good for us?
- Who rescues us from darkness?
- Who brings us into His kingdom?

1st-2nd:

- What did Paul want the Colossians to know?
- How can we learn what God wants us to do?
- What does it mean to be thankful?
- What has God rescued us from?
- What did Jesus do so that we can be forgiven?

3rd-5th:

- How can we grow in our knowledge of God?
- What does Paul mean by “bearing fruit in every good work”?
- Why do we need God’s strength for endurance and patience?
- What does it mean to have joy while being patient?

Middle School-High school

- Why did Paul begin this section with a prayer?
- What does it mean to know God’s will?
- How is knowing God’s will different from knowing a list of rules?
- What does life that is “worthy of the Lord” look like?
- What does this passage teach about God’s role in our spiritual growth?
- What does being delivered from the “domain of darkness mean? What does it mean to be transferred into Christ’s Kingdom?
- How should knowing what Christ has done for you change the way you live today?

Lesson 4 — Colossians 1:15-23

Read It: What Does it Say?

A. Pray

Since any study of the Word of God is a spiritual exercise, the primary and most important thing that we must do to prepare our heart is to pray.

Pray through:

Psalms 95:3-7— *For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. 4 In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. 5 The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. 6 Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! 7 For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.*

B. Memory Verse:

In each lesson, you will be encouraged to memorize a verse or short passage. If you are working through this study in a Westside LifeGroup, perhaps your group leader will give you time to practice reciting the memory verse each week. Write it out to get your memorization started.

Colossians 1:18 —

C. Read the Passage:

For this lesson, our passage is: **Colossians 1:15-23**. Read this passage at least two times. If you are able, try reading the passage out loud at least one of the two times. Underline or highlight any key words or phrases that you observe.

☐ Check this box after reading Colossians 1:15-23.

D. Examine the Passage:

1. This passage describes Christ's position over creation and redemption. Write out all of the ways that it describes who Jesus is and what He has done.

2. Contrast that with how this passage describes who the Colossians were and what they had done. What is Paul wanting the church to understand from this passage?

E. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

As with the previous lessons, this is your chance to try the inductive bible study method on your own!

Keeping with our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, **RECORD** a verse or phrase that stands out to you from this passage.

Explain It: What Does it Mean?

The **Explain It** sections of this workbook will help you understand what the Bible means.

Remember, since all Scripture was written for us, but not all Scripture was written directly to us, a good rule of thumb is to start by asking: “What did this passage mean to the original audience?”

A. Think About It

1. How many times do you notice the use of “all”, “each”, or “every”?

Why does this passage use these terms to describe who Jesus is?

2. What does this passage teach us about Jesus’ authority over creation? (vss. 15-17)

3. What does this passage teach us about Jesus’ authority over the church? (vs. 18)

4. What do you notice about Jesus' work of reconciliation? (vss. 19-23)

B. Understand It:

There are two phrases in this passage that declare Christ as the representation and revelation of God to creation. "Image of the invisible God" and "firstborn of all creation." Both of these phrases have been misinterpreted to reject Jesus' deity and say that Jesus is a part of creation. We will look at these two phrases closely to better understand what this passage is teaching us about Jesus' true authority and nature.

DIGGING DEEPER:

"Image of the invisible God"

The word image comes from the Greek word *eikōn*, which means to represent something or someone. In this case Paul declares that Jesus is the visible representative of God. As in other passages, this suggests that Jesus is the direct revelation of God to humanity. Genesis says that man was created in God's image, which means that we represent God on earth. Genesis declares humans as created but here Paul declares Jesus as the visible representation of the invisible God.

"Firstborn of all creation"

This term describes Jesus' relationship with and position in creation. It is not describing Jesus as the first created thing but rather describing Jesus' authority over creation. It is used in terms of rank not sequence. It is used this way in Psalm 89:27 where David was considered the firstborn in terms of kingly status, even though he had older brothers. See also Ex. 4:22 in reference to Israel. The CSB translates this phrase "firstborn over creation." Jesus holds authority over all of creation.

1. What other descriptions of Jesus from this passage help drive home the truth that Jesus is fully God and has authority over creation?

2. Look at how the term “firstborn” is used throughout the book of Colossians and throughout the Bible. (Col. 1:15 & 18; Luke 2:7; Hebrews 11:28, 12:22-23; Ps. 89:27; and Rom. 8:29)

How do these passages help us understand the use of that phrase in this passage?

3. The idea of God being triune (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and the idea that God could become a man were and still are hard for people to accept. However, this is exactly what Paul is trying to communicate to the Colossian church.

Why would it have been important for the church to understand this about Jesus?

4. According to this passage what brought peace and reconciliation between God and creation?

What will be the result of Jesus’ work in reconciling creation to Himself?

C. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the “**E**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **EXPLAIN** the verse that you recorded in the previous section. Remember the goal is NOT to explain what this particular verse means “to you,” rather the goal is to explain what this verse means.

Hint: A few things to consider might be: immediate context, meaning of words, sentence structure, how same author has used similar words in other places, historical background, how this passage connects to other biblical truths, how this passage fits into the storyline of the Bible, etc..)

Apply It: How Does it work?

The **Apply It** sections in this workbook will encourage you to reflect on the truths, principles, and instructions that we have discovered throughout our study thus far, and consider how those truths apply in everyday life in our contemporary setting.

A. Reflect On It

1. These verses direct our hearts to worship Jesus for who He is and what He has done. Why is the worship of Jesus alone so important for us as believers?

How are you tempted to put good things in your life (job, family, money, pleasure, friends, future) at the center of your worship?

2. As you learned in the background study, Paul wrote this book to combat heretical teaching during that time. How does this passage encourage you to stand firm in your belief of Jesus as God and king of all creation?

What heretical beliefs in our culture does this passage push against?

Paul encourages the church to “continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel.” What biblical disciplines can you focus on in your life to help you continue in the faith?

3. Verse 23 states that Paul became a minister of the gospel that was preached in Colossae and in all creation. What is one way that you can share in getting the gospel to every tribe, tongue, and nation?

How does the message of the gospel compel you to better know the truth and share it with those around you?

B. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the “**A**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **APPLY** the verse that you recorded in the previous section.

Hint: In seeking to apply this verse to your life, consider the following questions about your selected verse/passage:

Does this verse teach a promise to hold on to?

Does this verse teach a truth to trust?

Does this verse provide an instruction to obey?

Does this verse share a principle to adopt?

Does this verse model an example to imitate?

Does this verse show a pattern to avoid?

Does this verse address an attitude that needs to be changed?

Does this verse highlight a sin in your life that needs to be confessed?

Does this verse emphasize how your desires can be better aligned with God's desires?

Do It: How will I let it change my life?

The **Do It** sections in this workbook are designed to help you put what you have learned into action.

Continuing with the “**D**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, In the space below, write down the most important truth or lesson you learned from this study. Then, think of one way that you can be intentional to allow this truth to change your daily life in each of your three main relational spheres.



Main Truth: What is one Truth, Principle, or Promise from God’s Word that I have learned from this lesson?

James 1:22

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.



Home: How can I live out this truth at home this week?



Work: How can I live out this truth at work this week?



Social: How can I live out this truth in my community/mission field this week?

Share It: Who Will I Invest It In?

A. Group Guide: Week 4

Love One Another:

Spend time in fellowship with one another (choose from these)

1. How have you seen God work in your life this week?
2. What is one way that you challenged yourself this week?
3. Take some time to work on the 3 Circles gospel sharing tool. Check it out here. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSOKry3F3bc)

Live out Biblical Truth:

Discuss how this applies to your lives

Missions Prayer Point: Pray through the missions prayer point for this week.

Read Colossians 1:15-23

1. What stood out to you or challenged you from this week's study?
2. Discuss 1-2 questions from the "Apply it" section.
3. Who can you share this truth with this week?

Long for God:

Respond to God's word in prayer together

1. Pray that Jesus would be at the center of your worship and life this week.
2. Break out into groups of 2-3 and pray for one another.

List prayer requests here:

B. Student and Family Devotional Guide: Lesson 4

(any of the age groups can use any of these questions)

Read Colossians 1:15-23. Pick a couple of the questions below to discuss as a family.

Preschool – 5th grade

Preschool – Kinder (all ages)

- Who made everything?
- Who is Jesus?
- Did Jesus make anything?
- What does it mean to have peace with God?

1st-2nd

- What does it mean that Jesus is before all things?
- Who holds everything together?
- Who is the head of the church?
- Why is Jesus more important than everything else?
- Why should we trust Jesus?

3rd-5th

- What does visible and invisible mean?
- What does it mean that all things were created through and for Jesus?
- What does it mean that Jesus is the head of the church?
- Why is Jesus called the firstborn of the dead?
- What does it mean to be reconciled to God?

Middle school – High school

- What does “image of the invisible God” mean?
- What does it mean that everything was created for him?
- What does reconciliation mean?
- How does this passage challenge the idea that Jesus was merely a good teacher?
- What does “firstborn of all creation” mean in context?
- How does vv. 15-17 help explain that phrase?
- What does this passage teach about Christ’s relationship to creation?
- What does it mean that “in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell?”
- What does reconciliation tell us about the problem of sin?
- If Jesus truly has first place in everything, what areas of your life should look different?

Lesson 5 — Colossians 1:24 - 2:5

Read It: What Does it Say?

A. Pray

Since any study of the Word of God is a spiritual exercise, the primary and most important thing that we must do to prepare our heart is to pray.

B. Memory Verse:

In each lesson, you will be encouraged to memorize a verse or short passage.

Colossians 1:27 —

C. Read the Passage:

For this lesson, our passage is: **Colossians 1:24 - 2:5**. Read this passage at least two times. If you are able, try reading the passage out loud at least one of the two times. Underline or highlight any key words or phrases that you observe.

☐

Check this box after reading Col 1:24 - 2:5

D. Examine the Passage:

1. Based on your observations, what appears to be the main thing that Paul wants the church in Colossae to understand about his personal ministry calling to the nations?

2. After reading the passage a couple times, write down any key words or phrases that Paul used repeatedly in this passage.

E. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

As with the previous lessons, this is your chance to try the inductive bible study method on your own!

Keeping with our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, **RECORD** a verse or phrase that stands out to you from this passage.

Explain It: What Does it Mean?

The **Explain It** sections of this workbook will help you understand what the Bible means.

Remember, since all Scripture was written for us, but not all Scripture was written directly to us, a good rule of thumb is to start by asking: "What did this passage mean to the original audience?"

A. Think About It

1. Looking at Col 2:1-3 consider the following:

According to v1, has Paul ever met these believers in Colossae?

According to v1, what other local church does Paul mention?

According to what you know about history, geography, and Paul's ministry, do you think these local churches were primarily composed of Jewish believers or Gentile believers? Why do you think that?

According to Col 2:2-3, what is it that Paul wants these local churches to have assurance of?

According to Col 2:4-5, why does Paul want these believers to have such assurance?

B. Understand it:

WORD STUDY:

In the Greek NT, the word *mystery* (μυστήριον) does not mean the same thing as the word *mystery* in modern English. Today, we use the word *mystery* to describe something that is hard to understand (for example, a *mysterious* detective novel). However, in the culture of the NT, the word *mystery* describes something that was *previously hidden but has now been revealed*.

In Romans 16:25–26, Paul helps us understand what he means by the word *mystery* by connecting it to its definition.

Romans 16:25-26 — 25 Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the **mystery** *that was kept secret for long ages 26 but has now been disclosed* and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith—

We find something very similar in Colossians 1:26, where Paul once again connects the word *mystery* to its definition

Colossians 1:26 — 26 the **mystery** *hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints*

1. To strengthen your understanding of this brief word study, please finish the sentence below using the Biblical definition of *mystery*

In the Bible, Paul uses the word *mystery* (gk: μυστήριον) to describe

2. Now that you understand how Paul uses this key word, take a few moments to look at other places where Paul uses the same word. Beside each Scripture reference, write down what Paul describes as a “mystery” (something that was not known before, but has now been revealed).”

Ephesians 1:9	
Ephesians 3:6	
Romans 11:25	
1 Corinthians 15:51	
1 Timothy 3:16	

3. Now that you have a better understanding of the Biblical meaning of *mystery* — and have read a few other places where Paul uses this same word — look again at how Paul uses *mystery* in Colossians 1:24–29. Then answer the following questions:

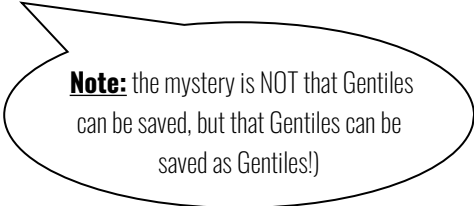
What does Paul mean in Colossians 1:25–26 when he says God gave him the “stewardship” responsibility to make God’s word fully known, especially ‘the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now revealed to his saints’?”

What specifically is the mystery that Paul describes in Colossians 1:27?

What similarities do you notice between the *mystery* that Paul describes in Colossians 1:27 and the *mystery* that Paul describes in Ephesians 3:6? What does this teach you about Paul's ministry focus?

4. Looking back at Colossians 1:27, Paul says that God chose to make known among the Gentiles the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Although it is difficult to notice this in English, in the original language, the pronoun "you" is actually plural — Christ in Y'ALL — referring back to the plural word "Gentiles".

As you are beginning to connect all the dots, why do you think that Paul would describe the gospel message of Christ in Y'All (Gentiles) as a *mystery* (something previously hidden but now revealed)?



Note: the mystery is NOT that Gentiles can be saved, but that Gentiles can be saved as Gentiles!)

Given what you know about Paul's mission to the Gentiles, why do you think he was so laser focussed to share this message with all Gentile believers — even the ones whom he had never met in person (such as those in Colossae)?

C. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the “**E**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **EXPLAIN** the verse that you recorded in the previous section. Remember The goal is NOT to explain what this particular verse means “to you,” rather the goal is to explain what this verse means.

Hint: A few things to consider might be: immediate context, meaning of words, sentence structure, how same author has used similar words in other places, historical background, how this passage connects to other biblical truths, how this passage fits into the storyline of the Bible, etc..)

Apply It: How Does it work?

The **Apply It** sections in this workbook will encourage you to reflect on the truths, principles, and instructions that we have discovered throughout our study thus far, and consider how those truths apply in everyday life in our contemporary setting.

A. Reflect On It

1. One of the main truths that we have learned in this lesson is that through faith in Christ, Gentiles can be reconciled back to God *AS GENTILES*. This means they no longer have to go through Israel to be reconciled to God.

How does this truth impact you as a follower of Christ today?

2. In Colossians 1:28, Paul says that he proclaims, warns, and teaches with the goal of presenting everyone mature in Christ. Why do you think Paul cared so much about helping others grow in maturity as they followed Jesus? In what ways are you intentional about helping others grow in maturity as they follow Christ?

3. In Colossians 2:1–2, Paul says that he has never met the believers in Colossae and Laodicea. Even though he has never met them, he is working hard for them so that they will be encouraged and grow to be more like Christ.

Do you ever stop and pray for believers in other local churches, other states, or other countries—even if you have never met them? Why don't you stop what you're doing and pray for them right now?

B. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the “**A**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **APPLY** the verse that you recorded in the previous section.

Hint: In seeking to apply this verse to your life, consider the following questions about your selected verse/passage:

Does this verse teach a promise to hold on to?

Does this verse teach a truth to trust?

Does this verse provide an instruction to obey?

Does this verse share a principle to adopt?

Does this verse model an example to imitate?

Does this verse show a pattern to avoid?

Does this verse address an attitude that needs to be changed?

Does this verse highlight a sin in your life that needs to be confessed?

Does this verse emphasize how your desires can be better aligned with God's desires?

Do It: How will I let it change my life?

The **Do It** sections in this workbook are designed to help you put what you have learned into action.

Continuing with the “**D**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, In the space below, write down the most important truth or lesson you learned from this study. Then, think of one way that you can be intentional to allow this truth to change your daily life in each of your three main relational spheres.



Main Truth: What is one Truth, Principle, or Promise from God’s Word that I have learned from this lesson?

James 1:22

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.



Home: How can I live out this truth at home this week?



Work: How can I live out this truth at work this week?



Social: How can I live out this truth in my community/mission field this week?

Share It: Who Will I Invest It In?

A. Group Guide: Week 5

Love One Another:

Spend time in fellowship with one another (choose from these)

1. Share a high and/or low from this past week?
2. Have 1-2 of your group members share a brief version of their testimony.
 - Click here for some tips on sharing your testimony. (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/sharing-your-testimony/>)

Live out Biblical Truth:

Discuss how this applies to your lives

Missions Prayer Point: Pray through the missions prayer point for this week.

Read Colossians 1:24-2:5

1. What is the mystery that Paul is revealing to the church in Colossae?
2. Discuss 1-2 questions from the “Apply it” section.
3. How have you seen suffering in your life put the gospel on display to those around you?

Long for God:

Respond to God's word in prayer together

1. Praise God for revealing the mystery of Christ in us and pray for strength in the midst of suffering.
2. Break out into groups of 2-3 and pray for one another.

List prayer requests here:

B. Student and Family Devotional Guide: Lesson 5

(any of the age groups can use any of these questions)

Read Colossians 1:24-2:5. Pick a couple of the questions below to discuss as a family.

Preschool – 5th grade

All ages (Preschool – Kindergarten):

- Who does Paul want people to know?
- Did Paul have an easy job?
- Did Paul keep telling people about Jesus even when it was hard?
- Who is the mystery Paul is talking about?

1st-2nd:

- Why did Paul work so hard to tell people about Jesus?
- What does it mean to become mature in Christ?
- Why is it important to keep learning about Jesus?
- How can we help other people know Jesus?

3rd-5th:

- Why was Paul willing to suffer for the Gospel?
- What does it mean to be mature in Christ?
- What is the mystery that has been revealed?
- What does Paul want the Colossians to have according to this passage?
- How can we help other Christians grow?

Middle school – High School

- Why would Paul consider suffering for the Gospel worthwhile?
- What is the mystery that was hidden but has now been revealed? What does that mean?
- What does spiritual maturity look like?
- What role does Christian community play in spiritual growth?
- Why is knowledge of Christ described as a treasure? Do you treat it as a treasure? Why or why not? If yes, how?
- What would it look like for you to pursue maturity in Christ rather than simply trying to know more about Christianity?

Lesson 6 — Colossians 2:6-15

Read It: What Does it Say?

A. Pray

Since any study of the Word of God is a spiritual exercise, the primary and most important thing that we must do to prepare our heart is to pray.

B. Memory Verse:

In each lesson, you will be encouraged to memorize a verse or short passage.

Colossians 2:9 —

C. Read the Passage:

For this lesson, our passage is: **Colossians 2:6-15**. Read this passage at least two times. If you are able, try reading the passage out loud at least one of the two times. Underline or highlight any key words or phrases that you observe.

☐ Check this box after reading Col 2:6-15

D. Examine the Passage:

1. When studying the Bible, whenever you see the word **‘therefore,’** it is important to read the verses around it to understand what it is there for. Based on what you observe, how does the word **‘therefore’** connect Paul’s train of thought from Colossians 2:1–5 to Colossians 2:6–7?

2. Make a list of the different ways Paul uses the phrases **‘in him’** or **‘with him.’** What do these phrases show you about the **power of the gospel** in a believer’s life and about a believer’s **identity in Christ?**”

E. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

As with the previous lessons, this is your chance to try the inductive bible study method on your own!

Keeping with our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, **RECORD** a verse or phrase that stands out to you from this passage.

Explain It: What Does it Mean?

The **Explain It** sections of this workbook will help you understand what the Bible means.

Remember, since all Scripture was written for us, but not all Scripture was written directly to us, a good rule of thumb is to start by asking: "What did this passage mean to the original audience?"

A. Think About It

1. Colossians 2:9 is the clearest statement about the deity of Christ in the entire New Testament. In this verse, Paul makes it clear that Jesus is God in the flesh. Jesus is 100% God and 100% man at the same time. In Greek philosophy at that time, people believed that physical matter was evil and spirit was good. Because of this, they could not imagine that God would ever take on a human body.

Read Colossians 2:8–9 together. Then briefly explain why you think Paul believed it was so important to make clear and emphasize that the fullness of deity dwelt bodily in Jesus Christ?

B. Understand it:

2. Cross reference Col 2:9 with the following passages:

Colossians 1:19-20 — John 1:14 — Philippians 2:5-11 — John 8:58 — John 5:18

Based on what you have seen in these verses, answer the following questions:

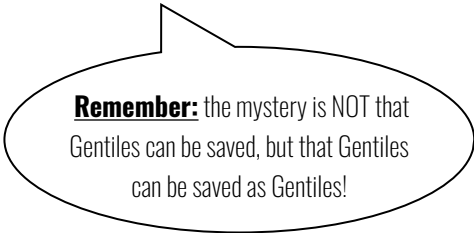
Did Jesus claim to be God?

Does the Bible clearly teach that Jesus is God in the flesh?

According to John 5:18, why were the Jews seeking to kill Jesus?

Why do you think that it is so important for Christians to understand that Jesus was fully God and fully man at the same time?

3. In Colossians 2:11, Paul talks about circumcision. Once again, he is teaching that Gentile believers in Christ did not need to follow Jewish rules and regulations in order to be saved. How does this truth connect with what Paul said about the mystery of Christ in y'all in Colossians 1:27?



Remember: the mystery is NOT that Gentiles can be saved, but that Gentiles can be saved as Gentiles!

4. Compare Colossians 2:13-15 with Ephesians 2:11-22. Record the similarities in the chart below:

Colossians 2:13-15	Ephesians 2:11-22

5. Looking again at Colossians 2:13–14, Paul uses phrases like “**were dead**” → “**made alive**” and “**record of debt**” → “**set aside, nailing it to the cross.**” What do these words show us about the incredible gift of salvation that God offers us by grace through faith in Jesus Christ? (*See also Ephesians 2:1–10.*)

In the Space below, explain the gospel of Jesus Christ. Be sure to talk about this question in your LifeGroup.

C. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the “**E**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **EXPLAIN** the verse that you recorded in the previous section. Remember The goal is NOT to explain what this particular verse means “to you.” rather the goal is to explain what this verse means.

Hint: A few things to consider might be: immediate context, meaning of words, sentence structure, how same author has used similar words in other places, historical background, how this passage connects to other biblical truths, how this passage fits into the storyline of the Bible, etc..)

Apply It: How Does it work?

The **Apply It** sections in this workbook will encourage you to reflect on the truths, principles, and instructions that we have discovered throughout our study thus far, and consider how those truths apply in everyday life in our contemporary setting.

A. Reflect On It

1. Since every other religion in the world denies that Jesus Christ is God, what is one thing you learned this week about the deity of Christ that has better prepared you to talk with someone about what sets Biblical Christianity apart from every other world religion?
2. How does Colossians 2:6–7 encourage you to be more intentional about living out your faith in Christ in your everyday life?
3. Do you, or someone you know, ever struggle with doubts about salvation? In what way does the truth of Colossians 2:13–14 encourage you, and give you confidence that Christ’s work on the cross was complete, and that it is enough for you?”

B. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the “**A**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **APPLY** the verse that you recorded in the previous section.

Do It: How will I let it change my life?

The **Do It** sections in this workbook are designed to help you put what you have learned into action.

Continuing with the “**D**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, In the space below, write down the most important truth or lesson you learned from this study. Then, think of one way that you can be intentional to allow this truth to change your daily life in each of your 4 main relational spheres.



Main Truth: What is one Truth, Principle, or Promise from God’s Word that I have learned from this lesson?

James 1:22

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.



Home: How can I live out this truth at home this week?



Work: How can I live out this truth at work this week?



Social: How can I live out this truth in my community/mission field this week?

Share It: Who Will I Invest It In?

A. Group Guide: Week 6

Love One Another:

Spend time in fellowship with one another (choose from these)

1. How have you seen God work in your life this week?
2. How has God used you to share the gospel this week?
3. Have a group member share why they prioritize biblical community in their life.

Live out Biblical Truth:

Discuss how this applies to your lives

Missions Prayer Point: Pray through the missions prayer point for this week.

Read Colossians 2:6-15

1. Have your group explain what the gospel is. (reference question 5 in the “understand it” section)
2. Discuss 1-2 questions from the “Apply it” section.
3. Have you ever been held captive by worldly philosophies? How did you fight against them?

Long for God:

Respond to God's word in prayer together

1. Pray that God would give you assurance of who He is and his salvation for you.
2. Break out into groups of 2-3 and pray for one another.

List prayer requests here:

B. Student and Family Devotional Guide: Lesson 6

(any of the age groups can use any of these questions)

Read Colossians 2:6-15. Pick a couple of the questions below to discuss as a family.

Preschool – 5th grade

All ages (Preschool – Kindergarten):

- What does it mean to walk with Jesus
- Can Jesus forgive our sins?
- What did Jesus do for us?
- Who makes us alive with Christ?

1st-2nd

- What does Paul tell believers to do after receiving Christ?
- What does it mean to be rooted in Christ?
- What happens when a tree has weak roots? What happens when it has strong roots?
- What has Jesus forgiven?
- Why should we thank Jesus?

3rd-5th

- What does it mean to walk in Christ?
- Why is it important to be established in the faith?
- What does Paul warn the Colossians not to be captured by?
- What does it mean for something to be “according to human tradition”?
- What does it mean that believers are “complete” in Christ?
- Why does Christ’s victory give us confidence?

Middle School – High school

- What do “rooted”, “built up”, and “established” communicate about Christian growth?
- What kind of ideas can “take us captive” today?
- Why does it matter that the fullness of deity dwells in Christ?
- What did Jesus accomplish through the cross?
- Why don’t we need to add something to Christ to make salvation complete?
- What does it practically look like to “walk in Him”?
- What does v. 8 warn us against? How can philosophy or human tradition become dangerous when they replace Christ?
- How does baptism picture our union with Christ?
- What does Paul mean by being “raised through faith”?
- What does the cross accomplish according to vv. 13-15?
- What does it look like to believe that Christ is sufficient rather than trying to add our own accomplishments to Him?

Lesson 7 — Colossians 2:16-23

Read It: What Does it Say?

A. Pray

Since any study of the Word of God is a spiritual exercise, the primary and most important thing that we must do to prepare our heart is to pray.

B. Memory Verse:

In each lesson, you will be encouraged to memorize a verse or short passage.

Colossians 2:17 —

C. Read the Passage:

For this lesson, our passage is: **Colossians 2:16-23**. Read this passage at least two times. If you are able, try reading the passage out loud at least one of the two times. Underline or highlight any key words or phrases that you observe.

☐ Check this box after reading Colossians 2:16-23.

D. Examine the Passage:

1. In verse 16 Paul transitions with the word “therefore.” What is he pointing back to as he begins to instruct the believers to stay away from heretical teachings and practices?

2. List out the examples that Paul gives of the false teachings that the church was facing.

E. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

As with the previous lessons, this is your chance to try the inductive bible study method on your own!

Keeping with our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, **RECORD** a verse or phrase that stands out to you from this passage.

Explain It: What Does it Mean?

The **Explain It** sections of this workbook will help you understand what the Bible means.

Remember, since all Scripture was written for us, but not all Scripture was written directly to us, a good rule of thumb is to start by asking: "What did this passage mean to the original audience?"

A. Think About It

1. In what ways do you see Paul contrast godly spiritual growth from false spiritual growth?
2. What do you notice about Paul's tone in addressing false teaching in the church? What clues help you understand his attitude toward the people that are bringing this teaching into the church?
3. How was the false teaching that Paul is addressing directing the church's worship?

B. Understand It:

1. In verses 16-17 , Paul lists some practices that allude to Old Testament laws and Jewish holy days. How has Christ's death on the cross changed the New Testament believer's relationship to the Old Testament laws and festivals (see Romans 7:6 and 10:4)?

Why was there a need for a change (see Deuteronomy 5:29 and Galatians 3:21)?

How does the contrast between "shadow" and "substance" in verse 17 help to clarify Paul's point?

2. What would make asceticism (self-denial), worship of angels, and spiritual visions so appealing to a believer during that time?

How are these teachings similar and how are they different from the teachings that we find in the Bible?

3. What does Paul encourage the church to focus on in their fight against this false teaching?

How did the work of Christ on the cross set them free from the burden of false religious practices?

4. What is the difference between asceticism, or self-denial for the sake of self-denial, and Christlike self-denial (see Galatians 3:1-3; Philippians 3:1-8)?

Why are the decrees of verse 21 of no value against indulgence of the flesh?

C. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the “**E**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **EXPLAIN** the verse that you recorded in the previous section. Remember the goal is NOT to explain what this particular verse means “to you,” rather the goal is to explain what this verse means.

Apply It: How Does it work?

The **Apply It** sections in this workbook will encourage you to reflect on the truths, principles, and instructions that we have discovered throughout our study thus far, and consider how those truths apply in everyday life in our contemporary setting.

A. Reflect On It

1. How are the false teachings that Paul is addressing to the church in Colossae similar to teachings that we face in our culture and churches today?

How do you fight against self-made religion and spirituality in your life?

2. Paul explains that self-made religion and practices have no power in stopping the indulgence of the flesh. How have you experienced the power of the gospel in helping you fight against sin?

How can you diligently practice biblical spiritual disciplines like Bible reading and memorization, prayer, and fasting without falling into the same error that the Colossians faced?

3. Are there people in your life that are living under the weight of burdensome religious practices? Will you commit to pray for them this week?

B. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the “**A**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **APPLY** the verse that you recorded in the previous section.

Hint: In seeking to apply this verse to your life, consider the following questions about your selected verse/passage:

Does this verse teach a promise to hold on to?

Does this verse teach a truth to trust?

Does this verse provide an instruction to obey?

Does this verse share a principle to adopt?

Does this verse model an example to imitate?

Does this verse show a pattern to avoid?

Does this verse address an attitude that needs to be changed?

Does this verse highlight a sin in your life that needs to be confessed?

Does this verse emphasize how your desires can be better aligned with God's desires?

Do It: How will I let it change my life?

The **Do It** sections in this workbook are designed to help you put what you have learned into action.

Continuing with the “**D**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, In the space below, write down the most important truth or lesson you learned from this study. Then, think of one way that you can be intentional to allow this truth to change your daily life in each of your three main relational spheres.



Main Truth: What is one Truth, Principle, or Promise from God’s Word that I have learned from this lesson?

James 1:22

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.



Home: How can I live out this truth at home this week?



Work: How can I live out this truth at work this week?



Social: How can I live out this truth in my community/mission field this week?

Share It: Who Will I Invest It In?

A. Group Guide: Week 7

Love One Another:

Spend time in fellowship with one another (choose from these)

1. How did you put God's word into practice this week?
2. Who is someone that you have been sharing the gospel with or need to share the gospel with? Pray for them as a group.

Live out Biblical Truth:

Discuss how this applies to your lives

Missions Prayer Point: Pray through the missions prayer point for this week.

Read Colossians 2:16-23

1. In what ways does Paul contrast godly spiritual growth with false spiritual growth?
2. Discuss 1-2 questions from the "Apply it" section.
3. What role does guilt play in how you live and make decisions? How can the gospel set you free?

Long for God:

Respond to God's word in prayer together

1. Pray that God would set you free from the hold that false religion has on your life.
2. Break out into groups of 2-3 and pray for one another.

List prayer requests here:

B. Student and Family Devotional Guide: Lesson 7

(any of the age groups can use any of these questions)

Read Colossians 2:16-23. Pick a couple of the questions below to discuss as a family.

Preschool – 5th grade

All ages (Preschool – Kindergarten):

- Who should be our leader?
- Do rules make us good enough for God?
- Can we earn God's love?
- Should we listen to God's Word?
- Why should Jesus be more important than rules?

1st-2nd:

- Can following a bunch of rules save us?
- Who saves us?
- Why is Jesus more important than religious rules?
- What should we do when someone teaches something that doesn't agree with God's Word?

3rd-5th:

- What kinds of rules were some people trying to impose on the Colossians?
- Why does Paul tell them not to let others judge them?
- Why are human rules not enough to make someone holy?
- What's the difference between obeying God and making up extra rules?
- Why does Paul say these practices have "no value" in stopping sinful desires?
- How does being connected to Christ actually help us grow?

Middle School and High School:

- What is legalism? Why is it dangerous?
- Can a list of rules actually transform the heart?
- What does this passage teach about the limits of human effort in overcoming sin?
- How can someone appear spiritually mature while actually becoming more dependent on rules than on Christ?
- Where is the line between biblical obedience and adding requirements God has not given?

Lesson 8 — Colossians 3:1-4

Read it: What Does it Say?

A. Pray

Pray that the Lord would guide you during this time of Bible study. Pray that you would be reminded of your who you are in Christ this week and grow in your ability to seek the things above. Pray that your attitude, your speech, your thoughts, your whole life would be affected by God's Word.

B. Memory Verse

In each lesson, you will be encouraged to memorize a verse or short passage.

Colossians 3:1 —

C. Read the Passage

For this lesson, our passage is: **Colossians 3:1-4**. Read this passage at least two times. If you are able, try reading the passage out loud at least one of the two times. Underline or highlight any key words or phrases that you observe.

☐ Check this box after reading Col 3:1-4

D. Examine the Passage:

1. Based on your observations, what appears to be the main thing that Paul wants the church in Colossae to know?
2. After reading the passage a couple times, write down any key words or phrases that Paul used repeatedly in this passage.

E. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

As with the previous lessons, this is your chance to try the inductive Bible study method on your own and continue with the R.E.A.D method.

In the space below **RECORD** one verse or phrase that stood out to you as you read the passage.

Explain It: What Does it Mean?

The **Explain It** sections of this workbook will help you understand what the Bible means.

Remember, since all Scripture was written for us, but not all Scripture was written directly to us, a good rule of thumb is to start by asking: "What did this passage mean to the original audience?"

A. Think about it

1. What does this passage teach about the identity of the one who has been raised with Christ?

B. Understand it:

1. What happened to those who are "raised with Christ"?
2. How is one raised with Christ and what does it mean to be raised with Christ? (Read: Col. 2:12, Eph. 2:4-10, Rom. 6:1-4)

3. What does Paul command believers to “seek”?

What does Paul tell believers to “set their minds on”?

What does Paul contrast with “things that are above”? How can one practically set their minds on these things and seek these things?

4. What reasons does Paul give for setting our minds on things above?

How many times does Paul refer to Christ or things connected to Christ in these verses?
What does this repetition reveal about the focus of the passage?

5. What does it mean that the believer's life is "hidden with Christ in God"?

How does v. 4 give hope to believers even though their full glory has not yet been revealed?

6. Why do you think Paul begins his instructions about Christian living in chapter 3 by reminding believers of their identity in Christ?

C. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the "**E**" in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **EXPLAIN** the verse that you recorded in the previous section. Remember The goal is NOT to explain what this particular verse means "to you," rather the goal is to explain what this verse means.

Apply It: How Does it work?

The **Apply It** sections in this workbook will encourage you to reflect on the truths, principles, and instructions that we have discovered throughout our study thus far, and consider how those truths apply in everyday life in our contemporary setting

A. Reflect On It

1. What tends to occupy your mind most often? What does that reveal about what you are seeking?
2. What are some practical ways you can “seek the things that are above” in your everyday life?
3. How should knowing that your life is “hidden with Christ in God” affect the way you view your identity and worth?

4. How should the promise that we will “also appear with him in glory” affect the way we live today?

5. Is there an area of your life where you need to intentionally redirect your thoughts and desires towards Christ? What would that look like practically this week?

B. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the “**A**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **APPLY** the verse that you recorded in the previous section.

Do It: How will I let it change my life?

The **Do It** sections in this workbook are designed to help you put what you have learned into action.

Continuing with the “**D**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, In the space below, write down the most important truth or lesson you learned from this study. Then, think of one way that you can be intentional to allow this truth to change your daily life in each of your 4 main relational spheres.



Main Truth: What is one Truth, Principle, or Promise from God’s Word that I have learned from this lesson?

James 1:22

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.



Home: How can I live out this truth at home this week?



Work: How can I live out this truth at work this week?



Social: How can I live out this truth in my community/mission field this week?

Share It: Who Will I Invest It In?

A. Group Guide: Week 8

Love One Another:

Spend time in fellowship with one another (choose from these)

1. What is your favorite part of the fall season?
2. Take some time to work on the 3 Circles gospel sharing tool. Check it out here. (www.youtube.com/watch?v=nSOKry3F3bc) — Ask one of your group members to share it with the group.

Live out Biblical Truth:

Discuss how this applies to your lives

Missions Prayer Point: Pray through the missions prayer point for this week.

Read Colossians 3:1-4

1. What does this passage teach us about the identity of the one who has been raised with Christ?
2. Discuss 1-2 questions from the “Apply it” section.
3. Who can you share these truths with this week?

Long for God:

Respond to God's word in prayer together

1. Pray that God would give you a heavenly mindset.
2. Break out into groups of 2-3 and pray for one another.

List prayer requests here:

B. Student and Family Devotional Guide: Lesson 8

(any of the age groups can use any of these questions)

Read Colossians 3:1-4. Pick a couple of the questions below to discuss as a family.

Preschool – 5th grade

All ages (Preschool – Kindergarten):

- Where is Jesus?
- What does it mean to think about things that please Jesus?
- What are some good things Jesus wants us to think about?
- Is Jesus coming back?

1st-2nd:

- What does Paul tell believers to seek?
- What does “things above” mean?
- Why should we think about Jesus?
- What does it mean to have our minds set on something?
- How can what we think about affect what we do?
- What are some things that we should focus on instead of selfish things?

3rd-5th

- What does it mean to seek things above?
- Does this mean that we shouldn’t care about life on earth?
- What does Paul say about the old life?
- What hope does v. 4 give Christians?

Middle school and High school

- What does being raised with Christ mean?
- What does it practically look like to seek the things that are above? Does this mean ignoring responsibilities on earth? Why or why not?
- How does a Christians heavenly identity affect earthly behavior?
- Why does Paul address the mind before specific behaviors?
- What does v.4 teach about the future hope of Christians?
- How should the return of Christ affect our priorities?
- What does what you give your attention to reveal about what you value?

Lesson 9 — Colossians 3:5-17

Read It: What Does it Say?

A. Pray

Since any study of the Word of God is a spiritual exercise, the primary and most important thing that we must do to prepare our heart is to pray.

B. Memory Verse:

In each lesson, you will be encouraged to memorize a verse or short passage. If you are working through this study in a Westside LifeGroup, perhaps your group leader will give you time to practice reciting the memory verse each week. Write it out to get your memorization started.

Colossians 3:11

C. Read the Passage:

For this lesson our passage is: **Colossians 3:5-17**. Read the passage at least two times, if you are able, try reading the passage out loud at least one of the two times. Underline or highlight any key words or phrases that you observe.

☐ Check this box after reading Col 3:5-17

D. Examine the Passage:

1. In this passage Paul commands believers to “put to death” or to “mortify” sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, connecting covetousness as idolatry. Why does Paul connect covetousness specifically to idolatry? Also, what does this reveal about the nature of sinful desires?

Read Ephesians 5:3-8 and note the comparisons.

2. After Paul instructs the believers to put off the old self and put on the new self, Paul writes that in Christ “there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all and in all.”

How does this challenge the way you think about people who have different cultural, ethnic, and social backgrounds?

Does this change the way you view your community (where you live, work, and play)?

Read Galatians 3:28 and note the comparisons.

E. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

As with the previous lessons, this is your chance to try the inductive bible study method on your own!

Keeping with our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, **RECORD** a verse or phrase that stands out to you from this passage.

Explain It: What Does it Mean?

The **Explain It** sections of this workbook will help you understand what the Bible means.

Remember, since all Scripture was written for us, but not all Scripture was written directly to us, a good rule of thumb is to start by asking: "What did this passage mean to the original audience?"

A. Think About It

1. Imagine you are living in the first century and you have been taught your entire life that certain people are simply better than others. That your ethnicity, your job status, your economic status or religious background determines your worth (sounds a lot like the American culture today!). A Jewish believer would have been raised to see Gentiles as defiled or second class citizens.

How radical and controversial would Paul's declaration in Colossians 3:11 have been to believers in Colossae?

Contrast Colossians 3:11 with Ephesians 3:6. What similarities do you see?

2. Paul uses the metaphor of changing clothes to describe spiritual transformation in Colossians 3:9-14. Believers must put off the old self and its practices and put on the new self "which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator."

Read 2 Corinthians 5:17. How does this verse support the imagery that Paul is trying to convey?

B. Understand It:

1. Paul commands believers to “put on love”, which binds everything together in perfect harmony Colossians 3:14-15. What does it mean for love to “bind” the characteristics mentioned in verse 12? Compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.....

2. In Colossians 3:16 Paul writes “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom....” This suggests that spiritual growth and discipleship is a community responsibility in the body of Christ.

How does this challenge the assumption that discipleship is the responsibility of the pastoral staff or leadership in the church only?

Does this change the way you view who is responsible for the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20? In what ways?

C. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the “**E**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **EXPLAIN** the verse that you recorded in the previous section. Remember The goal is NOT to explain what this particular verse means “to you.” rather the goal is to explain what this verse means.

Apply It: How Does it work?

The **Apply It** sections in this workbook will encourage you to reflect on the truths, principles, and instructions that we have discovered throughout our study thus far, and consider how those truths apply in everyday life in our contemporary setting.

A. Reflect On It

1. Paul commands believers to “put to death” the early behaviors that corrupt our lives. Paul describes the behaviors of the “old self” in Colossians 3:5-9. This is not a suggestion, but a command that requires immediate action.

What areas of your life need to be “put to death” right now, this week....?

Do you have another believer in your life that can hold you accountable and help you walk through those things that are pulling you away from Christ? (Read Psalm 139:23-24)

2. Paul instructs believers to put on compassionate hearts, kindness, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving as the Lord has forgiven them, and above all to put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (Col 3:12-4) Our good works should cause others to give glory to God (Matt 5:14-16).

Does your “Christian walk” cause unbelievers to want to glorify God or become curious about Christ?

Read 1 Peter 3:15. Are you living a life that causes people to ask you why you have hope?

3. Paul charges the Colossian believers with this principle: everything they do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. This principle encompasses everything you say or do.

How would the three areas of your life: live, work, and play change if you understood that that you are representing Christ in those spaces?

Name one specific action or interaction that you'll approach differently this week with this awareness?

B. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the **"A"** in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **APPLY** the verse that you recorded in the previous section.

Do It: How will I let it change my life?

The **Do It** sections in this workbook are designed to help you put what you have learned into action.

Continuing with the “**D**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, In the space below, write down the most important truth or lesson you learned from this study. Then, think of one way that you can be intentional to allow this truth to change your daily life in each of your three main relational spheres.



Main Truth: What is one Truth, Principle, or Promise from God’s Word that I have learned from this lesson?

James 1:22

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.



Home: How can I live out this truth at home this week?



Work: How can I live out this truth at work this week?



Social: How can I live out this truth in my community/mission field this week?

Share It: Who Will I Invest It In?

A. Group Guide: Week 9

Love One Another:

Spend time in fellowship with one another (choose from these)

1. How has God encouraged you to live more boldly recently?
2. Have 1-2 of your group members share a brief version of their testimony.
 - [Click here for some tips on sharing your testimony. \(https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/sharing-your-testimony/\)](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/sharing-your-testimony/)

Live out Biblical Truth:

Discuss how this applies to your lives

Missions Prayer Point: Pray through the missions prayer point for this week.

Read Colossians 3:5-17

1. Look at Col. 3:16. How does this verse challenge the view that making disciples is for pastors and church staff only?
2. Discuss 1-2 questions from the “Apply it” section.
3. What verse challenged you the most from this lesson?

Long for God:

Respond to God’s word in prayer together

1. Pray for God’s strength to put off the old self and put on the new self.
2. Break out into groups of 2-3 and pray for one another.

List prayer requests here:

B. Student and Family Devotional Guide: Lesson 9

(any of the age groups can use any of these questions)

Read Colossians 3:5-17.. Pick a couple of the questions below to discuss as a family.

Preschool – 5th grade

All ages (Preschool – Kindergarten):

- What are some things that God wants us to stop doing?
- Should we do instead of being mean?
- Who should we let teach us?
- What should we do in everything?

1st-2nd:

- What does Paul tell Christians to “put to death”?
- Why should Christians stop lying?
- What does it mean to forgive someone?
- What does Paul tell Christians to “put on”?
- Why is love so important?
- How can God’s Word help us?
- What does it mean to do everything in Jesus’ name?
- Why should we be thankful?

3rd-5th

- What does Paul mean by “put to death” sinful behavior?
- What does Paul mean by “putting on” compassion, kindness, humility etc.
- Why does forgiveness matter?
- What does Paul mean when he says love “binds everything together”?
- How should God’s word affect the way we live?
- How often does Paul tell us to be thankful?

Middle school and high school

- What does the “old self” and “new self” language teach about Christian identity?
- Why does Paul begin with putting things to death before discussing what to put on?
- How does the Gospel provide the motivation for changing out behavior?
- Why does Paul specifically address sexual immorality, greed, anger, lying, and other sins?
- How does the gospel break down distinctions between people?
- What does it mean for the peace of Christ to “rule” in your heart?
- What is one “old self” behavior you need to put off and one Christlike quality you need to put on?

Lesson 10 — Colossians 3:18-4:6

Read It: What Does it Say?

A. Pray

Since any study of the Word of God is a spiritual exercise, the primary and most important thing that we must do to prepare our heart is to pray.

B. Memory Verse:

In each lesson, you will be encouraged to memorize a verse or short passage. If you are working through this study in a Westside LifeGroup, perhaps your group leader will give you time to practice reciting the memory verse each week. Write it out to get your memorization started.

Colossians 3:23 —

C. Read the Passage:

For this lesson, our passage is: **Colossians 3:18-4:6**. Read this passage at least two times. If you are able, try reading the passage out loud at least one of the two times. Underline or highlight any key words or phrases that you observe.

☐ Check this box after reading Colossians 3:18-4:6.

D. Examine the Passage:

1. What groups of people does Paul address in 3:18-4:1?
2. What is the underlying motivation for gospel living given to each group of people that Paul is addressing?

E. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

As with the previous lessons, this is your chance to try the inductive bible study method on your own!

Keeping with our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, **RECORD** a verse or phrase that stands out to you from this passage.

Explain It: What Does it Mean?

The **Explain It** sections of this workbook will help you understand what the Bible means.

Remember, since all Scripture was written for us, but not all Scripture was written directly to us, a good rule of thumb is to start by asking: "What did this passage mean to the original audience?"

A. Think About It

1. Why does Paul focus on the specific groups of people that he addresses in 3:18-4:1?
2. What role does prayer have in our lives as believers?
3. How does 4:5-6 describe the relationship between believers and those who are not believers?

B. Understand It:

1. The gospel transforms the relationships in our families and homes. Use the chart below to explore God’s design for the family.

	How does Colossians 3:18-21 describe each role in the household?	How does Ephesians 5:22-6:4 describe each role in the household?
Husbands		
Wives		
Children		
Parents		

2. Paul addresses bondservants and masters in 3:22-4:1. In the Roman world people of any background could be enslaved or free. Many were born into it or entered slavery because of economic hardship. It was not permanent and people could be freed. Our society is set up differently than first century Roman society but what Paul says to this group of people correlates in many ways to the way that employers and employees relate.

How does the gospel transform the way we view those that we work for or those that work for us?

How does the gospel transform the way that we view our work and the motivation behind our work?

3. How does 3:18-4:1 speak to the value of human life?

What do the instructions given in this passage show about God's care for each individual?
(Reference what Paul says in Col. 3:11)

4. Explain the instructions that Paul gives to the church in 4:2-6. How do these instructions speak to the mission that God has for His church?

C. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the “E” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **EXPLAIN** the verse that you recorded in the previous section. Remember the goal is NOT to explain what this particular verse means “to you.” rather the goal is to explain what this verse means.

Apply It: How Does it work?

The **Apply It** sections in this workbook will encourage you to reflect on the truths, principles, and instructions that we have discovered throughout our study thus far, and consider how those truths apply in everyday life in our contemporary setting.

A. Reflect On It

1. What is one way that this passage has challenged the way that you view and live out your role in the family?

How can you begin to interact differently with your family this week?

2. How can your work and the relationships you have with those you work with reflect the gospel more this week?

3. Why is it such a struggle to remain devoted and alert in prayer?

Do your prayers tend toward self-interest or gospel proclamation?

What practical steps can you take to grow in prayer for others and the lost?

B. Learning to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

Continuing with the “**A**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym. In the space below, **APPLY** the verse that you recorded in the previous section.

Hint: In seeking to apply this verse to your life, consider the following questions about your selected verse/ passage:

- Does this verse teach a promise to hold on to?
- Does this verse teach a truth to trust?
- Does this verse provide an instruction to obey?
- Does this verse share a principle to adopt?
- Does this verse model an example to imitate?
- Does this verse show a pattern to avoid?
- Does this verse address an attitude that needs to be changed?
- Does this verse highlight a sin in your life that needs to be confessed?
- Does this verse emphasize how your desires can be better aligned with God's desires?

Do It: How will I let it change my life?

The **Do It** sections in this workbook are designed to help you put what you have learned into action.

Continuing with the “**D**” in our **R.E.A.D.** acronym, In the space below, write down the most important truth or lesson you learned from this study. Then, think of one way that you can be intentional to allow this truth to change your daily life in each of your three main relational spheres.



Main Truth: What is one Truth, Principle, or Promise from God’s Word that I have learned from this lesson?

James 1:22

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.



Home: How can I live out this truth at home this week?



Work: How can I live out this truth at work this week?



Social: How can I live out this truth in my community/mission field this week?

Share It: Who Will I Invest It In?

A. Group Guide: Week 10

Love One Another:

Spend time in fellowship with one another (choose from these)

1. Share a high and/or low from this past week?
2. What book are you reading or do you want to start reading?
3. Have a group member share why they prioritize biblical community in their life.

Live out Biblical Truth:

Discuss how this applies to your lives

Missions Prayer Point: Pray through the missions prayer point for this week.

Read Colossians 3:18-4:6

1. What stood out to you or challenged you from this passage?
2. Discuss 1-2 questions from the “Apply it” section.
3. In what ways does your life need to change as you live among “outsiders” or unbelievers.

Long for God:

Respond to God’s word in prayer together

1. Pray for the gospel to transform the way you relate to your family and the outside world.
2. Break out into groups of 2-3 and pray for one another.

List prayer requests here:

B. Student and Family Devotional Guide: Lesson 10

(any of the age groups can use any of these questions)

Read Colossians 3:18 - 4:6. Pick a couple of the questions below to discuss as a family.

Preschool – 5th grade

All ages (Preschool – Kindergarten):

- How should we treat our parents?
- How should husbands and wives treat each other?
- How should families treat one another?
- Should we be kind to other people? How can we be kind to others?

1st-2nd:

- What does God want families to do?
- Why should children obey their parents?
- How should we treat our siblings?
- How should husbands and wives treat each other?
- What does it mean to be fair?
- What does Paul tell Christians to do when talking to people who don't believe in Jesus?

3rd-5th:

- What instructions does Paul give children?
- What instructions does he give husbands and wives?
- What does Paul say about how parents should treat their children?
- What does it mean to treat someone justly and fairly?
- How can our words help people understand Jesus?

Middle school and high school

- How does the Gospel change the relationships Paul addresses in this passage?
- What does “walk in wisdom toward outsiders mean?
- How can you communicate the gospel without compromising truth or becoming hostile?
- If someone only knew Jesus by watching the way you treated your family and friends, what would they think about Him?

Lesson 11 — Colossians 4:7-18 & Putting It All Together

Read It: What Does it Say?

A. Pray

Since any study of the Word of God is a spiritual exercise, the primary and most important thing that we must do to prepare our heart is to pray.

B. Memory Verse:

In each lesson, you will be encouraged to memorize a verse or short passage.

Colossians 4:18 —

C. Read the Passage:

For this lesson, our passage is: **Colossians 4:7-18**. Read this passage at least two times. If you are able, try reading the passage out loud at least one of the two times. Underline or highlight any key words or phrases that you observe.

☐ Check this box after reading Col 4:7-18

D. Examine the Passage:

1. Make a list of the people Paul names at the end of his letter to the Colossians. Do you recognize any of these people from other books of the Bible?

2. Pay attention to Colossians 4:16. What might this verse teach us about how Scripture was shared among the early churches?

Explain It: What Does it Mean?

The **Explain It** sections of this workbook will help you understand what the Bible means.

Remember, since all Scripture was written for us, but not all Scripture was written directly to us, a good rule of thumb is to start by asking: “What did this passage mean to the original audience?”

A. Think About It

1. Some scholars suggest that the “letter from Laodicea” Paul mentions in Colossians 4:16 may be what we call the book of Ephesians today. This suggestion is supported by strong evidence indicating that Ephesians was meant to be a circular letter (a letter passed around and read by several local churches).

If this suggestion is correct, think about some of the ways Ephesians connects to and supports Colossians. Make a list of a few of those connections in the space below.

B. Understand it:

2. In Colossians 4:9, Paul specifically mentions a man named “Onesimus.” Take a few moments to read Paul’s letter to Philemon. Then, in the space below, write a short description of who Onesimus is and why it is so important that Paul is sending him to Colossae with Tychicus.

3. In Colossians 4:17, what does Paul mean when he tells Archippus to “fulfill the ministry” he received from the Lord?

Compare this with what Paul says to Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:5. What similarities do you see? How does Paul’s use of the same phrase in 2 Timothy help you better understand what he is telling Archippus?

C. Putting It All Together

4. Thinking about the whole book of Colossians, how is Paul fulfilling his ministry to make clear the mystery—which is Christ in y’all—by writing this letter?

5. With the whole book of Colossians in mind, list the verses where Paul emphasizes the divine nature of Christ. Why is it so important to have a correct understanding of the deity of Christ?

Apply It: How Does it work?

The **Apply It** sections in this workbook will encourage you to reflect on the truths, principles, and instructions that we have discovered throughout our study thus far, and consider how those truths apply in everyday life in our contemporary setting.

A. My Colossians Overview

1. In the space below, write a brief overview of the entire book of Colossians in your own words. As you do this, pretend as if you are having an elevator conversation with someone who has never read the book of Colossians before. Your task is to give them an overview of what the book is about and why it is important that they read and understand it.

In your overview, be sure to answer questions such as: who wrote the letter, to whom was the letter written, why was the letter written, what are the big ideas discussed throughout the letter, in what ways does this letter contribute to the overall storyline of the Bible, how does this letter help the disciple of Christ today grow in maturity?

B. Theological Truths I Have Learned

2. Create a list of the theological truths that you have either learned for the first time or have been reminded of from your study of Colossians. As an example of a theological truth, you might write: “I was taught that Jesus is 100% God and 100% Man (2:9).” Or you might write: “I was reminded that Gentiles can be saved as Gentiles through faith alone in Christ alone! (1:27)”

C. Life Lessons I Have Learned

3. Create a list of the life lessons that you have either learned for the first time or have been reminded of from your study of Colossians. As an example of a life lesson, you might write: “I was taught that spiritual growth is meant to be pursued in community with other Christians, not just by myself (4:7-18)” Or you might write: “I was reminded that the the gospel impacts every relational circle in my life (3:5-17). ”

D. Connecting the dots to R.E.A.D. the Bible: (Record, Explain, Apply, Do)

As with the previous lessons, this is your chance to try the inductive bible study method on your own!

In the space below, complete a R.E.A.D. Journal entry for any verse or phrase in the book of Colossians. For this R.E.A.D Journal entry you are connecting the dots in each of the lessons throughout this workbook, to practice doing an inductive Bible study on your own.

R: Read the passage and **Record** a verse or phrase that stands out to you.

E: Explain what the passage means in its original context.

A: Apply the passage to your life by considering how the truths, principles, and promises taught in the text can be lived out in our contemporary setting.

D: (DO) Prayerfully decide on specific *action steps* that you will be intentional to take right away to live out the biblical truth in your daily life.

Do It: How will I let it change my life?

The **Do It** sections in this workbook are designed to help you put what you have learned into action.

For this final **Do IT** section, think back on the lessons from this study. Each week, you have been intentional about living out biblical truth in your everyday life. However, for this last week, go back to that truth or principle which was the most challenging for you to live out. The one that stretched you the most as you tried to apply it.

Try it again this week. But first, seek the Lord in prayer. Ask Him to help you live out His truth again this week for the purpose of godliness and maturity.



Main Truth: What is one Truth, Principle, or Promise from God's Word that I have learned from this lesson?

James 1:22

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.



Home: How can I live out this truth at home this week?



Work: How can I live out this truth at work this week?



Social: How can I live out this truth in my community/mission field this week?

Share It: Who Will I Invest It In?

A. Group Guide: Week 11

Love One Another:

Spend time in fellowship with one another (choose from these)

1. What has challenged you or encouraged you the most throughout this Life Group session?
2. Who is someone that you have been sharing the gospel with or need to share the gospel with? Pray for them as a group.

Live out Biblical Truth:

Discuss how this applies to your lives

Missions Prayer Point: Pray through the missions prayer point for this week.

Read Colossians 4:17-18

1. How are you encouraged by Paul's charge to Archippus in Col 4:17?
2. Discuss some of the theological lessons that you have learned from this study.
3. Discuss some of the personal lessons you have learned from this study.

Long for God:

Respond to God's word in prayer together

1. Give God thanks for how He has changed you through this study and pray for His will to be done in your life.
2. Break out into groups of 2-3 and pray for one another.

List prayer requests here:

B. Student and Family Devotional Guide: Lesson 11

(any of the age groups can use any of these questions)

Read Colossians 4:7-18. Pick a couple of the questions below to discuss as a family.

Preschool – 5th grade

All ages (Preschool – Kindergarten):

- Did Paul have people helping him?
- Why is it good to help other Christians?
- Can everyone serve Jesus in some way?
- Who should we tell about Jesus?

1st-2nd:

- Who are some of Paul's friends and helpers?
- What did these people do?
- Why is it important to have Christian friends?
- Can you think of one way you can serve Jesus this week?
- Who could you encourage this week? Who could you pray for this week?

3rd-5th

- What does it mean to be a faithful servant?
- Why does Paul want the Colossians to encourage others?
- Why is prayer so important?
- How can you serve the church even if you're young?

Middle School and high school

- Why does Paul conclude with such a long list of names?
- Why is Christian ministry not meant to be done alone?
- Where might God be calling you to serve, encourage, pray or share Christ with others?

Resources for Further Study

Beale, G. K., *Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Colossians and Philemon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2019).

Harris, Murray, *Exegetical Guide to the Greek New Testament: Colossians and Philemon*, (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2013)

Kostenberger, Kellum, & Quarles, *The Cradle The Cross, and the Crown*, (Brentwood, TN: B&H Academic, 2016)

Pao, David W, *Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: Colossians and Philemon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 2012)

Walvoord, John F. & Zuck Roy B. Eds, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, Volume 2* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985).

Wilkinson, Bruce, & Boa, Kenneth, *Talk Thru The Bible: A Quick Guide to Help you Get More out of the Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002).

Other Helpful Resources

Teach Me The Bible Podcast — (<https://teachmethebible.com/>)

TeachMeTheBible is a nonprofit that helps people understand God's Word. They emphasize that the Bible is not a collection of separate stories or verses, but 66 books that tell one unified story. By understanding this story, believers can see where they fit. The goal of this ministry is to make the Bible accurate, clear, and understandable.

Westside Fellowship Sermon Podcast — (<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/westside-fellowship-sermon-podcast/id1547202717>)

The Westside Fellowship Sermon Podcast provides recordings of the Sunday morning Bible teaching at Westside Fellowship.