

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. *Enjoy discovering more about Him!*

## "JESUS+NOTHING=EVERYTHING" | COLOSSIANS 2:1-15 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

### WARM-UP QUESTION:

- **What is an example of when someone adds something that wasn't necessary and even made things worse?**

### *"Paul's Prayer: Be Encouraged and United and Stay Rooted" Colossians 2: 1-7*

Paul desires for the people to have courage and be united in love. That comes from receiving Christ, walking and rooted with Him.

- **Why does more confidence in Christ lead to more unity among His people?**
- **What helps someone to be rooted and built up in Jesus?**

### *"Be Aware of Empty Counterfeits" Colossians 2: 8*

Believers are warned not to be kidnapped by lies and philosophies from human traditions that are false.

- **Why are people tempted to add rules, secrets or experiences in addition to Jesus?**
- **What is a common counterfeit god or Jesus-substitute seen in our area?**

### *"Christ is Completely Sufficient" Colossians 2: 9-10*

Paul reminds believers that Jesus is fully God and they are fully complete in Him.

- **What would it mean if more Christians truly believed Jesus was enough?**

### *"Christ is Completely Sufficient and Victory Over Evil" Colossians 2: 9-10*

Jesus' death gives everyone the ability to be forgiven all which means they have a new heart and life. It's His victory over evil.

- **What does it mean to you to have everything forgiven and being made new in Jesus?**
- **Why is it important to remember Jesus shamed Satan and his demons and has victory over them?**

### REFLECTION AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Christ followers have everything they need in Him. Trusting that they have forgiveness, new life and victory in Him allows them to live courageously, united in love, in full confidence in freedom.

- **When are you most tempted to seek something to add to Jesus?**
- **Have you been struggling lately with having confidence in what Jesus has done? Why or why not?**
- **Pray that God would guard your heart and mind from seeking things to add to Jesus.**

## Jesus + Nothing = Everything

### I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those watching online 10am.
- B. Slide1-4 Lar: Fellowship. REAL. Camps. Men's Breakfast.
- C. Slide5 Missions Prayer: Today, 1:30pm, Agape Room.
- D. Slide6 Church Prayer: Join us next Sunday, 1:30pm, Agape Room.
- E. Slide7 Prayer: Bro Lawrence said, Holiness is not found in *extraordinary acts* but in *ordinary faithfulness*. (faithful in the small things). May we be Enchanted by Christ this morning.

### II. Slide8 Intro: Jesus + Nothing = Everything

- A. I think this passage may be **the theological heart** of Colossians. (Cam)
  - 1. Paul is preparing the church for the *false teaching* he'll address in vs 16-23 *next Sunday* (but before he warns them about what is false, he reminds them of **Who Christ is** and **What they already possess in Him**)
  - 2. A phrase repeated throughout the passage is **in Him** (7x's) *That's the key!*
    - a) Paul *isn't* merely teaching doctrine; he's teaching **union with Christ**.  
Everything the believer needs is found **in Jesus**.
- B. Illustration - Imagine you inherit 10 million dollars **but never** learn about the inheritance. You continue living paycheck to paycheck, worried about every bill, unaware that everything you need has already been provided.
  - 1. *Spiritually*, many Christians live that way. They are constantly looking for something more: *another experience, another book, another conference, another secret, another formula*.
  - 2. Paul says, *You already possess everything because you possess Christ*.

### III. Slide9a 1 PAUL'S PRAYER: BE ENCOURAGED AND UNITED (1-3)

A. 1 For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh, 2 that their hearts may be **encouraged**, being **knit together in love**, and attaining to all riches of the **full assurance** of understanding, to the **knowledge** of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of **Christ**, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

B. Intro: Paul has never met many of these believers. Yet notice his language.

I want you to know what a great **struggle**/conflict I have for you.

1. The word **struggle**/conflict (*agon* - where we get our word **agony**). **Paul is wrestling in prayer.** (see same word in last vs in ch.1)

C. **Slide9b Paul Prays for 4 things:**

1. **Encouraged hearts.** (Christian courage comes from knowing Christ, not from circumstances).

2. **Knit together in love.** (*false teaching* often divides, **truth** produces unity. Healthy churches **don't** merely *agree doctrinally*, they genuinely *love one another*).

3. **Full assurance.** (Paul wants believers to have **confidence**, **not uncertainty**. Christianity **isn't** a *guessing game*).

4. **Knowing Christ.** (notice the climax: *Not knowing secrets. Not knowing mysteries. **Knowing Christ** ... In whom are hidden **all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge***).

a) **The false teachers** claimed *secret wisdom*. Paul says umm, *You already have the treasure*.

D. **Illustration:** Imagine searching your entire house for your car keys. Finally, you realize - they were in your pocket/purse all the time. **You had possession of them.** That's Paul's message! Stop searching everywhere, everything you **need** you already have **in Christ**.

IV. **Slide10 2 STAY ROOTED (4-7)**

A. **4** Now this I say lest anyone should deceive you with persuasive words. **5** For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. **6** As you therefore have **received Christ** Jesus the Lord, **so walk in Him**, **7 rooted and built up** in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

B. Paul now gives **4 pictures**:

1. **Receive Christ** - Christianity begins with *receiving a Person*, **not** merely *agreeing with ideas*.
2. **Walk in Him** - The same Christ who **saves us** **also leads us**. The Christian life **isn't** about graduating *beyond* Jesus, it's walking with Jesus.
3. **Rooted** - Like a tree. **Roots go deeper** before fruit grows higher. **Storms/Trials don't create** faith, they **reveal** faith.
4. **Built up** - Now Paul changes pictures. (from agriculture - to architecture). Christians aren't merely *planted*, they're being constructed. God is **building something**. [think, *you are living stones that God is building into His spiritual temple*. 1 Pet.2:5]

C. **Established** - your faith becomes stable, **not** tossed around by every *new idea*.

D. **Overflowing with gratitude** - One of the healthiest signs of maturity is *thankfulness*. **Growing** Christians become increasingly grateful.

## V. Slide11a **3 BEWARE OF EMPTY COUNTERFEITS (8)**

A. **8** See to it that no one takes you captive (the picture is kidnapping, being carried away) by **philosophy** and **empty deceit**, according to **human tradition**, according to the **elemental spirits** of the world, and not according to Christ.

B. Paul lists **4 dangers**: Philosophy apart from Christ. Empty deception. Human tradition. And the Elemental spirits/principles of the world.

1. **Philosophy apart from Christ** - *philosoPHia* literally means **love of wisdom**. Philosophy originated in Greece (6th cent bc) as *the systematic and logical investigation of a subject*. By the 1st century, philosophy broadly referred to *“any moral or religious belief system”*.

- a) So the problem isn't **philosophy** itself. The problem is any worldview that *leaves Christ out*.
- b) The flesh loves to be religious, so long as that religion *doesn't have a cross to crucify the flesh*.

C. The false teachers in Colossae were essentially saying, “*Jesus is good but He's not enough*.” Paul answers: **No. Jesus is enough!** & every substitute today still whispers that same lie.

1. **Slide11b Counterfeits Then: Legalism/Gnosticism/Mysticism.**

**Rules** (Legalism). **Secrets** (Gnosticism/*spiritual elites who possessed hidden knowledge*). **Experiences** (Mysticism).

2. **Slide12 Counterfeits Now ...**

D. **Every generation offers substitutes. Every culture has its own version of Jesus +.**

- 1. **Jesus + Performance = Legalism** (If I just: *read more, pray more, never miss church, stop smoking, or if my kids turn out well - then* God will accept me). **No, believer you are *accepted already***.
- 2. **Jesus + Experience = Mysticism** (you don't need another spiritual experience. Another conference. Another emotional worship high. Another prophetic word. Another vision. Another sign. Or Another miracle). **No, Christ is enough.**
- 3. **Jesus + Secret Knowledge = Modern Gnosticism** (shhh, I've discovered what nobody else knows: *secret Bible codes, hidden end-times conspiracies, obscure teachings that “the church has missed for 2,000 years, internet teachers claiming exclusive revelation* - Like the Ethiopian Bible 81-88 books). **No, Healthy Christianity isn't built on secrets, it's built on the *publicly revealed* Word of God.**
- 4. **Jesus + Self = Self-Help Spirituality** (our culture constantly preaches: *Believe in yourself. Trust yourself. Follow your heart. Find your truth*). **No, We are not just looking for a better version of yourself. Follow Christ. Trust Christ. Deny yourself. Become more like Jesus.**

5. **Jesus + Success = Prosperity** (If God is pleased with me, my life should always go well. If hardship comes something must be wrong). **No**, Paul wrote Colossians from prison. Enough said.
  6. **Jesus + Politics** (Some Christians view Jesus primarily through a political lens. **As if His kingdom** is identified with **a party**). **No**, stop asking what does my side say, **but** what does Scripture say. Our first citizenship is the Kingdom of God.
  7. **Jesus + Identity** (Culture increasingly encourages people to anchor their identity in: *career, sexuality, ethnicity, achievements, relationships, political tribe, or personal preferences*). **No**, Paul says, *Your life is hidden with Christ in God*, Col.3:3. Our deepest identity is **not** found in **what we do**, it is found in **whose we are**.
  8. **Jesus + Materialism** (Consumer culture constantly whispers: If you buy one more thing you'll finally be satisfied! Newest phone. Bigger house. Next vacation. **Or** your next promotion. **No**, Jesus alone satisfies the deepest hunger of the human soul.
  9. **Jesus + Busyness** (This may be America's **favorite idol**. I'm important because I'm busy). **No**, don't be so busy *working for* Jesus that you have little time simply **being with** Jesus. **Activity** can become an easy substitute for **intimacy**.
  10. **Jesus + Moralism** (Perhaps the most subtle substitute, being a "good person." Many Americans believe: "*I try to be kind, pay my taxes, love my family, so surely God accepts me.*" **No**, good morals have never saved anyone. Only Christ saves.
- E. **So**, False teachers say *Jesus is a good start* - Paul says, *Jesus is the whole story*.
1. **Jesus + Nothing for salvation = Everything.**
  2. **Jesus + Anything for salvation = a different gospel.**
    - a) If **Christ** is enough, **then** anything added to Him *for salvation* says, **He isn't enough** ;(

## VI.Slide13 4 CHRIST IS COMPLETELY SUFFICIENT (9-10)

A. 9 For **in him** the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, 10 **and you** have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

1. These 2 verses summarize Colossians.

B. Jesus isn't *partly* God, He's **fully** God. Everything **God** is, **Jesus** is.

C. Then Paul adds: *And you are filled/complete in Him*. [*filled* = complete, filled full, or generously supplied w/. There is *nothing lacking. Nothing missing. Nothing to add*]

D. **Illustration** - Imagine buying a brand-new smartphone. Everything needed is already installed. Someone comes along selling a "*special upgrade*" that actually removes essential features. [False teaching works that way, it *promises more* - while *giving less*].

## VII.Slide14a 5 WHAT CHRIST HAS ALREADY DONE (11-14)

A. 11 In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, 12 having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. 13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us **all** our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

B. **Slide14b** Watch Paul piles up verbs. God acted. We received.

1. **New heart** (11-12) Circumcision becomes a picture, **not** outward, **inward**. The heart has been changed.
2. **New life** (13) Dead people don't improve, they must be *made alive*. That's exactly what Christ has done.
3. **Forgiveness** (13) Every sin. Not most. **All!** The record has been erased.
4. **Debt canceled** (14) The *record of debt*. Imagine a mortgage stamped, **14c PAID IN FULL**. That's the cross. Jesus **didn't ignore** our debt, He **satisfied** it.

C. **John Lennox** made the point in “*the diary of a CEO podcast*”, hosted by Steven Bartlett, that the race to “solve death” is 2,000 years too late! That many of the world’s brightest technologists are investing billions to solve death and live longer through *AI, genetics, longevity research, or mind uploading*. Then Lennox says, in essence: “*The problem of human death was solved 20 centuries ago when God raised Jesus Christ from the dead.*” *And you, who were dead in your trespasses... God made alive together with Him.* (13) (Oxford Mathematician) Hosted by Steven Bartlett.

## VIII. Slide 15 6 VICTORY OVER EVIL (15)

- A. 15 **He** disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him/in it/or in the cross.
- B. The cross looked like defeat, yet it became **Christ's** greatest victory.
1. Roman generals would parade defeated enemies publicly. Paul borrows that image. **Jesus** made a public spectacle of Satan and every demonic power. The empty tomb proves the Victory.
- C. Here is another example of where *Eugene Peterson* nailed it in his Message Bible. *He stripped all the spiritual tyrants in the universe of their sham authority at the Cross and marched them naked through the streets.*

## IX. CHRIST CONNECTION

- A. This entire passage centers on **Jesus**. He is: *the treasure of wisdom, the fullness of God, the One who makes us complete, the One who forgives, the One who cancels our debt, the victorious King.*
1. The Christian life is not about finding something **beyond** Christ. It is about discovering more of Christ.
- B. **Wrap Up:** That’s what makes Colossians so relevant today. Every generation invents new substitutes, but the answer never changes: **Christ** is not merely **sufficient** to begin the Christian life - He is **sufficient** to sustain, mature, & satisfy it.

1. Slide 16 Every counterfeit **promises more while *delivering less***.  
**Christ alone *promises everything and *delivers Himself****.

C. Keywords: Jesus, rooted, counterfeits.

D. \*\*\*Chaplain **Jason Hohnberger** *Lieutenant Colonel*, is Speaking this Wed night!  
Have you ever realized you were **aiming** at the wrong thing? The Bible has a word for that - *hamartia* - usually translated **sin**, but literally meaning “to miss the mark.”

1. He will be sharing **practical lessons in servant leadership** learned in combat and everyday life through a simple framework called **On Target Ministry**.  
Come out for an *interactive evening* of biblical insight and practical tools to help keep your **life and leadership** on target.