

LET US FIX OUR EYES ON JESUS

Thanksgiving and Prayer

Colossians 1:1–14

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Hebrews 12:2,3

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. Colossians 3:16

Day 1: Read Colossians 1:1, 2.

1. Paul writes this letter in the style of the day: his name up front instead of at the end. Note the ten words he uses to identify himself in verse 1.
 - A. What insight does this give you into how Paul sees himself (i.e., his “self-image”)?
 - B. How do you honestly view yourself in the most fundamental terms?
2. “Christian” was first a derogatory term originating in Antioch. There were three principle designations by which the earliest believers knew themselves: “saints”; “the faithful”; “brethren”. Which of these are found in verse 2? How do they sum up the believer in relation to God—and to other believers?
3. In wishing “grace” and “peace” to his readers (vs. 2b), Paul combines a known Greek form of greeting (“grace”) with a Hebrew one (“peace”).
 - A. Though these words were commonly used in the greetings of secular letters too, how does Paul elevate them to a new spiritual dimension? (Consider Romans 3:23, 24; 5:1; John 14:27)
 - B. How does this greeting hint at the universal scope of God’s salvation plan?

Day 2: Read Colossians 1:3–8.

4. Although Paul will address some serious challenges to the true gospel in this letter to the Colossians, what is his first and overarching thought or attitude in vss. 3ff?
5. What is it that Paul is thankful for regarding the Colossians? (vss. 3–6)

- 6 Astute Bible readers over the centuries have noticed that “faith”, “love”, and “hope” are often linked in the same passage throughout the New Testament, as here in verse 5 (See also Romans 5:2–5; 1 Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 5:5, 6; 1 Thessalonians 1:3; 5:8; Hebrews 10:22–24). What do you make of that?

Day 3: Read Colossians 1:9, 10.

7. This week’s passage is for the most part a peek into Paul’s prayer life.
- A. What are the kinds of things he prays for (his “wish list” for you)?

 - B. What are the kinds of things you pray for (your own “wish list”)?

 - C. Are the two lists similar?

8. What does Paul ask God to fill you with in verse 9?

9. To what end or purpose does Paul make this request in verse 9? (vs. 10)

10. Based on your reading of verses 9 and 10, what is the purpose, or proper use, of any gift you have been given by God? (See also 1 Peter 4:10; Romans 14:7; 15:1,2)

Day 4: Read Colossians 1:11–14.

11. A main request in Paul’s prayer is for your “endurance” (vs. 11). What does this tell you about what to expect (and what not to expect) in the course of your life?
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12. See how Paul emphasizes thankfulness or gratitude throughout his letter (1:3, 12; 2:7; 3:15; 4:2). How can you cultivate an abiding attitude of thankfulness even in a life where much “endurance” is needed? (Consider vss. 5, 12–14)

Day 5: Read Colossians 1:1–14.

13. Paul borrows images from agriculture to describe the mysterious working of the spiritual world (vss. 6, 10). How is the progress of grace in the world (and in your own life) very much like the way seeds and plants grow?

14. Every person alive belongs to one of two kingdoms. Find them in verse 13.

15. Pick out words or phrases that characterize citizens of Satan's "dominion of darkness". (Ephesians 2:1-3)
What words characterize citizens of the Son's "kingdom of light"? (vs. 14)

16. What "qualifies" you to share in the inheritance of the kingdom of light? (vs. 12)