Greater Than >

Experiencing Christ in Colossians

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Week 2 | [Colossians 1:15–23](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.15)

## Memory Verse for the week:

For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. (Colossians 1:19–20)

# Day 1

## Read

### [Colossians 1:15­–17](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.15) (NIV)

15The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. 17He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

## Study

*Throughout this study, we will be pointing you to* [*Biblia.com*](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.15) *and the free Faithlife Study Bible as a resource to help you go deeper into Colossians. For full instructions on how to sign up for an account,* [*click here*](https://cfhome-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/lscheffler_cfhome_org/EaSveBbbczVNu7Q19c31QnoBysbRgAGXNqQgDy9LE67tCw?e=CKOShz)*.)*

A helpful Bible study technique is to look up cross references. Verses with related people, places, or ideas can help interpret one another. The New International Version of the Bible that we’re using on [Biblica.com](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.15) gives cross references to other related Bible passages. If you click on the little superscript letters above certain words, you’ll see the cross references listed.

In verse 16 you’ll notice that a key cross reference is John 1:3. [Read John 1:1-4](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Jn1.1). What parallels do you see between John’s Gospel and Colossians 1:15­–17? What point are both John and Paul making about Jesus?

## Think about

* Scholar N.T. Wright says, “It’s by looking at Jesus that we discover who God is. He is ‘the image of God, the invisible one’. Nobody has ever seen God, but in Jesus he has come near to us and become one of us.”[[1]](#footnote-1) What does it mean to you that Jesus became one of us? How could reflecting on Christ’s nearness strengthen your faith?
* Ponder what it means to you that Jesus is over ALL creation, including you. How should that affect the choices you make?

## Pray

Every verse we will read this week calls us to praise! Our passage last week ended with “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins” (Colossians 1:13­–14). This passage gives us greater insight into who our Savior is. Jesus Christ, the one in whom, through whom, and for whom all things were created. He is the One who loves you and died for you. He left behind the glory of heaven to be with us and one of us. Rejoice in that today!

## Talk about

*Have a meaningful conversation about this passage with one of your CF Encouragers, a friend, or join us virtually in the Faithlife Community. (Search groups for Engage God Daily. For full instructions,* [*click here*](https://cfhome-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/lscheffler_cfhome_org/EYNh8cUxJRxClFV-Wt6QNe0BtkK34MHJDqeHamAwxlGmbQ?e=RL3RSh)*.)*

* If someone asked you “Who is this Jesus that you follow?” how would the verses we looked at today shape your answer? How would you describe Jesus?

# Day 2

## Read

### [Colossians 1:17–18](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.17) (NIV)

17He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy.

## Study

* Make a list of what verses 17 and 18 say are true of Christ.
* What do you think it means that Christ is “the firstborn from among the dead”? Compare your thoughts with the [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.18) note for 1:18. (If you haven’t already, you will need to sign up for a free Faithlife account at [Biblia.com](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.15) to access the *Faithlife Study Bible*.

## Think about

A little bit later in Paul’s letter to the Colossians, we’ll discover that Paul is concerned about harmful philosophies that have crept into the church. Believers in Colossae were turning to beliefs and practices apart from the gospel they’d first received. They were not trusting in the sufficiency of Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension.

They didn’t have a big enough view of Christ! In our passage for this week, Paul is directly confronting their empty philosophies by using beautiful and poetic language to exalt the supremacy of Jesus Christ and the sufficiency of what he has done for humanity.

Think about your own view of Christ. Not just what you *believe* about Jesus, but how you *live out* your view of Jesus. In what ways can you demonstrate your trust in Jesus as supreme and sufficient? What changes do you need to make to show that you recognize his absolute authority over your life?

## Pray

Knowing that Christ has all authority and in him all things hold together gives us tremendous comfort and strength in a world that seems frightening and chaotic. As you bring your worries and concerns before the Lord today, thank him for his supremacy in all things. Praise him for the hope you have that one day he will make all things right and that you will experience resurrection at the end of the age.

## Talk about

* Have each person share a concern they have in life. How can rejoicing in Christ’s supremacy combat anxiety? Commit to praying for one another.

# Day 3

## Read

### [Colossians 1:19–20 (NIV)](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.19)

19For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

## Study

* The [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.18) gives us a helpful definition for “reconcile.” In the note for 1:20, it says, “The Greek word used here, *apokatallassō*, refers to the act of restoring a relationship to harmony.” What has Jesus reconciled according to this verse? How?

## Think about

* Scholar N.T. Wright notes that in this poetic passage, Paul starts with creation, and ends with the hope of new creation. He says, “The Jesus through whom the world was made in the first place is the same Jesus through whom the world has now been redeemed. He is the firstborn of all creation, *and* the firstborn from the dead.”[[2]](#footnote-2) What connection do you see between this passage and the hope for the future that Paul emphasizes in [Colossians 1:4–14?](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.4) How do these verses give *you* hope?

## Pray

Apart from Christ, we would stand before God guilty and condemned. In Christ, we have peace with God. Whereas sin and death separated us from God, Christ’s sacrifice on the cross has reconciled us to him. We have harmony with our Creator. In your prayer time today, rejoice in that harmony. Confess your sins, accept God’s forgiveness, and know peace.

## Talk about

Together, go back and read [Colossians 15­–20](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.15) aloud. Discuss the truth about Jesus that means the most to you right now in your present circumstances. Encourage one another with those truths?

# Day 4

Have you checked out the new Pastors Pregame Podcast with Bruce, Jaime, Mark, and Lisa? New episodes every Thursday! It’s available at [cfhome.org/pregame](https://subsplash.com/christfellowship-tx/lb/ms/+hg732gk) or on the Apple podcast app.

## Read

### [Colossians 1:21–22](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.21) (NIV)

21Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—

## Study

* Notice the contrast set up by “but now” at the beginning of verse 22. What is Paul contrasting?
* Paul makes a point to say that God has reconciled believers through Christ’s physical body. Go to [Biblia.com](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.21) and read the note on 1:22 in *the* [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.22). Why might Paul have emphasized this point? (If you have not already done so, you’ll need to sign up for a free Faithlife account.)

## Think about

* Paul is reminding the Colossians of the amazing truth at the heart of the gospel message. Most of these believers came out of pagan religions that practiced idolatry. They’d trusted that the sacrifices they made to false gods would give them security. They’d been living in rebellion and violating God’s design for humanity. Now they not only knew of the one, true God, but they could be reconciled to him through Christ. They had the opportunity to live as God intended.

What do people in our modern world trust in to find peace and wholeness? What do they sacrifice to? How can we show our trust in the sufficiency and supremacy of Christ?

## Pray

In your prayer time, thank Jesus for enduring the agony of cross so that you could be reconciled to God. Spend some time with God in worship — through music, by taking a prayer walk outside, or whatever works for you.

## Talk about

* [2 Corinthians 5:18–21](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/2Co5.18) reminds us that not only have we been reconciled to God through Christ, but “he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors.” We get to share with other people the good news that they can be reconciled to God. Discuss what it means to be an ambassador who represents Christ and shares his message through meaningful conversations. What does that look like in practical terms?

# Day 5

## Read

### [Colossians 1: 22–23](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.23) (NIV)

22But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—23if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

## Study

* What do you sense in Paul’s tone in 1:23? What does he appear to be concerned about in the Colossian church?
* In the [*Faithlife Study Bible*](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.23), look at the notes on 1:22 and 1:23 for insight into Paul’s use of “holy” and their explanation of verse 23.

## Think about

What makes it difficult for you to “continue in your faith, established and firm” and “not move from the hope” of the gospel? What distracts you? Causes you to doubt? Tempts you?

## Pray

Pray about your answer to the “Think about” question. Talk to God about your concerns, doubts, and temptations. He loves you and wants to empower you to walk according to his will. Enjoy your time with the Father in prayer!

## Talk about

Discuss what have you learned or been reminded of so far in your study of Colossians. How is the Spirit speaking to you through the Word of God? How will you live out this knowledge?

1. Tom Wright, [*Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon*](https://ref.ly/logosres/evryprisep?ref=Bible.Col1.15-20&off=4857&ctx=in+and+through+him.%0a~First%2c+it%E2%80%99s+by+looki) (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 151. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Tom Wright, [*Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon*](https://ref.ly/logosres/evryprisep?ref=Bible.Col1.15-20&off=7658&ctx=in+the+first+place.+~This+is+the+point+of) (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 152. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)