Greater Than >

Experiencing Christ in Colossians

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Week 3 | [Colossians 1:24–2:5](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.24-2.5)

## Memory Verse for the week:

My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Colossians 2:2–3)

# Day 1

## Read

### [Colossians 1:24–25](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.24) (NIV)

24Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. 25I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—

## 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/%3Ab%3A/g/personal/lscheffler_cfhome_org/EaSveBbbczVNu7Q19c31QnoBysbRgAGXNqQgDy9LE67tCw?e=CKOShz)*.)*

* Paul speaks of his suffering. Read [2 Corinthians 11:23–28](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/2Co11.23). What does Paul ultimately endure as a servant of Christ and his church?
* Paul’s statement that he is filling up “what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions” is a tough one to interpret. Read what the [Faithlife Study Bible](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.24) note for 1:24 says and compare it to this explanation from scholar N.T. Wright.

“In verses 24 and 25, Paul sees his own sufferings as part of what he calls ‘the king’s afflictions’. He is drawing on an ancient Jewish belief according to which a time of great suffering would form the dark valley through which Israel and the world must pass to reach the **age to come**. This suffering would be the prelude to the age of the Messiah, the age of the king.

For Paul, the Messiah himself had already passed through the suffering, and had brought the age to come into being. But because this new age is still struggling in tension with the ‘**present age**’, there is still suffering to be undergone. This is not to be seen as an *addition* to the king’s own suffering; rather, it is to be seen as an *extension* of it.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

## Think about

* What insight can you gain about the presence of hardship in this world from the explanations you read in the Study section?
* How do you handle hard times? How can you face the trials of life with greater faith because of what you’ve learned from Colossians so far? How can Paul be a model for you?

## Pray

For Paul, the glory of Christ shone brightly even in the darkest suffering. Paul found a way to rejoice even as he endured unthinkable hardship. I want that kind of faith, how about you? Spend some time in prayer asking the Spirit to grow your faith. Be honest with him about where you’re at. Then pray that you could find joy even in hard times

## 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/%3Ab%3A/g/personal/lscheffler_cfhome_org/EYNh8cUxJRxClFV-Wt6QNe0BtkK34MHJDqeHamAwxlGmbQ?e=RL3RSh)*.)*

* Paul saw himself as a servant of the church. Discuss what you think he meant by that. Then talk about some practical ways we can serve our own church families.

# Day 2

## Read

### [Colossians 1:25–27](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.25) (NIV)

25I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—26the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord’s people. 27To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

## Study

* The NIV gives us a cross reference to Romans to help us further understand what Paul means by “mystery.” Read [Romans 16:25](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Ro16.25). According to both Colossians 1:27 and Romans 16:25, what is the “mystery” that has been revealed?

## Think about

Through the Jewish people the Messiah had come, not to establish the earthly kingdom of Israel, but to inaugurate his eternal reign over all the earth. Jesus Christ is the Savior of all people. God would build his eternal family from every nation, tribe, and tongue.

In Christ, God’s people would find unity not in ethnic tradition, family bloodline, or shared language, but in Jesus Christ, their Lord. God had fulfilled his promise to Abraham, the father of the Jewish people, that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed ([Genesis 22:18](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Ge22.18)) mystery of how God would bring peace, justice and wholeness to a rebellious humanity had been revealed in Christ.

How can understanding this “mystery” give us both assurance in our individual salvation and hope for unity in the diverse family of God? Could that hope help us ease tensions in the body of Christ now? How so?

## Pray

Our union with Christ — that we are in Christ (Col 1:2) and Christ is in us (Col 1:27) — is worth pondering and praying over. Through Christ, our faithful God has accomplished exactly what he set out to do when he created humanity — dwell with, in, and among his people. One day we will experience that union in full. But for now, praise God for *the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.*

## Talk about

Name people you know who would be encouraged by hearing about this “mystery.” Together, pray that the Spirit will lead you to have meaningful conversations about the gospel.

# Day 3

## Read

### [Colossians 1:28–29](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.28) (NIV)

28He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. 29To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

## Study

* Once again, we see Paul focusing on wisdom. It’s the second time this word (Greek, *sophia*) has appeared in Colossians. Let’s see where else this term is going to appear in this letter.

[Stepbible.org](https://us.stepbible.org/) is another free resource that allows you to do all kinds of searches within the Bible. Look at [this search](https://us.stepbible.org/?q=version=NIV|reference=Col|strong=G4678&options=VHNUG) for the Greek word “sophia” (wisdom) inside Colossians. Make note of what each verse says about wisdom or being wise.

* Paul desires to present everyone as “fully mature in Christ.” The word translated as “mature” is “*teleios*” and it “connotes the quality of being so wholehearted in one’s devotion to the Lord that one is “complete and undivided” in their orientation toward Christ.[[2]](#footnote-2) How does this explanation expand your understanding of “fully mature” in verse 28?

## Think about

* From briefly looking at the use of the word for “wisdom” and in Colossians, what do you notice about the emphasis on gaining wisdom? Who is the source of wisdom? According to these verses, how should Christ’s wisdom affect the way Christians think and act?
* How can we move toward “full maturity” as Christians? What would it look like for you to live fully devoted to the Lord? What would change?

## Pray

Too many of us are living fragmented lives where the gospel we profess to believe is, to one degree or another, out of sync with the lives we live. Pray for a more integrated life — a life of wisdom, maturity, and devotion — where you are growing more and more to be like Christ. That is what Paul wanted for the Colossians and what we should want for ourselves and our fellow believers.

## Talk about

Exchange some ideas about how you can each grow in wisdom and maturity. What habits do you need to cultivate? What thoughts or behaviors do you need to change?

# 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/%2Bhg732gk) or on the Apple podcast app.

## Read

### [Colossians 2:1–3 (NIV)](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col2)

I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. 2My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, 3in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

## Study

* Go to [Biblia.com](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col2) and look up verses 2–3 in several different translations (ESV, NLT, KJV, etc.) What differences do you notice?
* The [Faithlife Study Bible](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col2) says this about Colossians 2:1–3: “Jewish traditions prized wisdom and mystery cults valued knowledge. Paul affirms Christ as the true source of both. Since the believers of Colossae have Christ ([1:27](https://biblia.com/reference/Col1.27)), they have no need for the wisdom and knowledge offered by false teachers.”

## Think about

The Colossians were experiencing pressure from all sides. False teachers from the Jewish tradition wanted them to follow the Jewish law. They didn’t see Christ as sufficient. Other teachers were promoting mystical experiences that they claimed could bring secret knowledge. They didn’t see Christ as sufficient either.

In our modern world, what ideas or philosophies question Christ’s sufficiency. How can Paul’s reminder that in Christ “*are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”* help us as well?

## Pray

Paul’s goal is that the believers would be encouraged in heart and knit together in love. In a world where even Christians are experiencing uncertainty and conflict, we should pray for the same. Pray that you can encourage others and be a binding force for unity in your community of believers.

## Talk about

* How can believers work toward greater unity so that they are knit together in love? How can authentic, meaningful conversations help? What about practical acts of service? And earnest prayers for one another? Brainstorm some ideas and hold each other accountable. What will you do this week to knit yourself closer to a fellow believer in love?

# Day 5

## Read

### [Colossians 2:4–5](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col2.4)

4I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. 5For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

## Study

* We’ve come to another “so that.” What do you think it indicates in verse 4?

## Think about

In verse 4, Paul explicitly states a reason for so carefully laying out the case for the supremacy of Christ in the first part of the letter. He doesn’t want the Colossians to be deceived by “fine-sounding arguments.” He wants them to be disciplined and firm in their faith. He wants them to know the truth about who Jesus is and what he has done. Paul has gone to great lengths to proclaim the gospel and disciple Christ’s followers.

Consider Paul’s example from what we’ve read this week ([Colossians 1:24–2:5](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.24)). He toiled, struggled, and worked hard as a servant of the church. How are you challenged and encouraged by Paul’s example?

## Pray

What’s the secret to success? Prosperity? Happiness? It actually isn’t a secret. God revealed this mystery and Paul proclaimed it everywhere he went.

The answer is Jesus and he changes everything. He redefines success, prosperity, and happiness and then gives us more than we could ever ask or imagine. Pray that you will come to know him more and more.

## Talk about

Talk about what you’re learning so far in Colossians. How is the Spirit using this letter to teach you about who God is and what he has done for you? How are you being shaped and formed by greater knowledge of Christ?

1. Tom Wright, [*Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon*](https://ref.ly/logosres/evryprisep?ref=Bible.Col1.24-29&off=4160&ctx=+in+each+paragraph.%0a~First%2c+in+verses+24+) (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 159. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Douglas J. Moo, [*The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntccolphm?ref=Bible.Col1.28&off=6363&ctx=eizer+puts+it+well:+~to+be+teleios+is+the), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2008), 161. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)