

LESSON 1 COLOSSIANS

As we begin a study in a new area of Scripture, two things are important to consider. The first is the purpose of our study. Our purpose in searching the Scriptures is to know Jesus and to grow to maturity in Him. That is, to be becoming more and more like Him. Colossians is another excellent letter to assist us in pursuing this goal. Paul writes to help these believers to know more fully who Jesus is and to know all He has accomplished for them. And for us.

In Colossians 1:13 Paul contrasts two domains or kingdoms: the kingdom of darkness and the Kingdom of God's beloved Son, Jesus. Those who by faith follow Him now live in His Kingdom. This is not merely theoretical knowledge, for throughout Colossians Paul also explains the new code of living as the new believers (and we) follow King Jesus. Things have changed dramatically for them and for us, and Paul is helping us learn how to relate to others in Kingdom Love and how to respond to our circumstances with Kingdom Values. Not only can the letter of Colossians motivate us to Kingdom Living but this letter also emphasizes the resources God provides as we are growing into the likeness of His Son.

Our second consideration is to thoughtfully search the Scriptures to see what they really say. One way to know what a letter says is to read it all the way through, paying careful attention to the way the writer uses words. Basically we want to know what the text says, what it means and what it means to each of us today. We can rely on the Holy Spirit to be our teacher as we ask Him to open our hearts and minds to His truth. We are not on our own as we study.

Let's begin with anticipation that God will teach us His truth and use it in our lives. Let's begin by knowing that the principles we discover through our study will be tailor-made to fit the demands of today and tomorrow. Let's begin by telling God we believe He will help us to know Him better as we study Colossians. Let's acknowledge to Him and thank Him that He desires intimacy with us even more than we desire it with Him. Truly, this is good news!

I am thanking God for each of you and praying for you as I write.

Carolyn Roper

1. From the introduction above, what is our purpose for this study?

2. Read Colossians all the way through at one sitting, writing down key words or ideas.

3. Read Colossians at least two more times, adding to your list of key words and ideas from question 2. (Do one reading a day, if you wish.)

Read Colossians 1:1-8 carefully.

<p>The will of God for each individual is to grow to become more like Jesus. Paul explains this is the goal of his labors, that each one might be complete (mature) in Christ (Colossians 1:28, 29 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3). At the same time, God calls each of us to certain roles and unique circumstances. He starts with the circumstances we find ourselves in currently and desires we grow to become like Him in our thoughts, actions and responses right where we are today. Right here. Right now.</p>

4. Who wrote the letter and to whom was it written?

5. Paul mentions that he is an apostle “by the will of God.” What are *you* by the will of God, and how should that affect your attitude toward what you are? (Some examples might be neighbor, friend, teacher, etc.)

6. What about these verses (1-8) would have been an encouragement to the folks and why?

7. Paul evidently had never seen the Colossians (2:1). How did they learn the truth of the gospel? Does this process have any application to you?

8. What is the connection between the hope laid up (or stored) in heaven (verse 5) and their faith in Christ and love for others (verse 4)?

9. How would you describe what is happening with the gospel from verse 6?

10. What is the most important principle you see for life from verses 1-8?

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