

Reading Together
Year Long New Testament Bible Reading
January 25 - 31

January 25 – Colossians 1: 1- 23

Colossians is a letter that Paul wrote to the church in the city of Colossae. At the time, Paul was in prison, most likely in Rome (Colossians 4: 18). This church had started to become influenced by false teachings, and Paul was concerned that turn from the true gospel to a false watered down version of the gospel. In this letter Paul stresses that Christ is God and is supreme over all things, and as Christians their life was now in him.

Paul begins his letter, as he does most of his letters, telling the church in Colossae that he is thankful for them, their ministry and what God is doing in their lives. He also reminds them that he is praying for their spiritual well-being on a regular basis, so that they might walk in a manner worthy of the Lord (10).

Starting in verse 15 Paul begins to lay out the case for the supremacy of Christ. Pay careful attention to how Paul describes Jesus, not just as the Son of God, but as the image of God, the creator and sustainer of all things. What is Paul saying here? Jesus is God! Finally, Paul closes this section by making a point of how Christ has come so that we can have peace with God. One final note, look how Paul describes us in verse 21, “enemies in our own minds.” God is only our enemy because we make him an enemy in our minds. The proof that God loves us and wants the best for us is in the fact that He has given us His son, so we can be His.

January 26 – Colossians 1: 24 – 2: 5

As you read these verses notice the reason why Paul is laboring so hard, and is so willing to suffer. It is for the gospel. The gospel is the mystery that Paul is referring to in

verse 26. Why does Paul call it a mystery? There is a hint as to why in verse 26. Think about the Old Testament. We can look back and see the gospel clearly in the pages of the Old Testament, but for people actually living then it was a mystery. There were clues, but the gospel was very much a mystery for those living during the time of the old Testament.

Paul ministry of the gospel to the Colossians was so they can be perfect in Christ, and know the mystery of Christ. The perfection that Paul talks about here doesn't mean that we are sinless, but it means that we understand that Christ's perfection has become our perfection. That is the true Gospel that Paul is laboring so hard to proclaim.

January 27 – Colossians 2: 6 – 23

Verse 6 is so important to understand. Look what Paul says in this verse. We are to live in Christ the same way that we receive Christ. How do we receive Christ? We receive Christ through faith (believing Jesus has lived the perfect life we couldn't live and then died the death we deserve to die), and repentance (turning from our sin to Jesus—trusting him as our savior). This is not just how we become a Christian; it is how we live as Christians. We don't try harder—we turn to Jesus. So many times people want to add things that they think are necessary to be a Christian. Those are the hollow and deceptive philosophies Paul talks about in these verses. Paul reminds us of everything Jesus has done for us in verses 9 – 15. At the cross Jesus triumphed over everything and because of the cross we no longer should have a guilty conscience or let people judge us because we don't do the things they think we ought to do. Being a Christian isn't about what we do—it's about trusting Jesus every day of our lives.

January 28 – Colossians 3: 1 – 17

In Chapter 3, Paul tells people what it means to live each day of your life in Christ. Our minds and our hearts are united to

Christ (heavenly things). This doesn't mean that our minds are so much on heaven that they are no earthly good. It means that the way we think and live comes from the throne room of heaven. Notice how this happens. It involves participation on our part—putting of the old way of living and thinking (verse 8) and, putting on a new way of living and thinking (verses 13-14). How do we do this? Look at verse 16. It is by letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly, by teaching each other, singing songs, and having a thankful heart. It is through personal Bible study and interacting with other believers. It is good for you to be reading through your Bible with us, but to grow in Christ, we also need to be interacting with other believers.

January 29 – Colossians 3: 18 – 4: 1

The words in these verses aren't very popular words in the society we live in—wives submitting to husbands, children obeying parents, slaves obeying masters. We want to think all of these things are outdated, but they are not. We have to remember that at the center of everything we do and all of our relationships is the love of Christ, and that should permeate all of our lives. If a husband loves his wife the way Jesus loves us, submission becomes a lot easier; if parents love their children and masters (employers) love their slaves (employees) the way Jesus loves us, obedience becomes a lot easier. Think why this is so important; each of these are a picture of our relationship to Christ. The relationship of husbands and wives (Ephesians 5) is a picture of Christ and his Church. The parent child relationship and the master servant relationships are pictures of our relationship to God as our Father and Christ as our King (master).

January 30 – Colossians 4: 2 – 18

Paul finishes his letter with some final instructions and greetings. Pay careful attention to verses 2 – 6. Look how important prayer is to the proclamation of the Gospel. Take

time to think about the opportunities God gives you as you live your life to show others the love of Christ. Think about the opportunities you have and the things you say to spread the love of Christ.

January 31 – John 1: 1 - 18

John's Gospel is very different from the other three Gospels. There are fewer stories about Jesus' miracles and very few parables of Jesus included in this Gospel. John even makes a point to tell us in John 21: 25 that if he included everything that Jesus did the whole world wouldn't have room for all the books it would take to do so. John chooses to include other material to make sure we have a very clear picture of who Jesus is. In John 20: 31 John tells us that he wrote his Gospel so that "we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing we may have life in his name."

As you look at today's passage, notice in these verses the word "Word" is capitalized. It is capitalized because it is referring to Jesus. So notice what John tells us about Jesus in these first 18 verses. He was with God in the beginning, and he created everything. He came to bring light and life to the world, but the world rejected him. Look at verse 12, John tells us that by believing in Jesus we gain the rights to become sons of God. Notice also verse 18 that by becoming flesh Jesus has made God known to us. Jesus came to reveal God to us. He is God's Word made flesh. He came so that we could be adopted into the family, so that his Father could become our Father.