

- What does Paul look back on with thanks?
- What changes do we see in our life that we can give thanks for?
- What does Paul look forward to in prayer?
- What will going on with Jesus look like for us (i) this week, (ii) this year?

Preparation for next study:

- Read Colossians 1:1-23 and reread 1:11-23 twice
- Identify all the repeated words, phrases and ideas in verses 15-20
- How would you summarise in a couple of sentences what 1:11-23 is all about?
- Spend some time in prayer responding to Jesus about what you see in these verses

# COLOSSIANS FOUNDATIONS

## STUDY 1: COLOSSIANS 1:1-12 LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD

Preparation:

- Read the book of Colossians twice (it takes 15 minutes to read straight through)
- Each time note down anything that stands out to you
- Read 1:1-12 and pray for each person in the group based on what Paul and Timothy pray for their readers

Start by praying for your study

Feedback from Preparation:

- What stood out for you as you read through Colossians?
- How did you find praying for the group based on verses 1:1-12?

Read the following passage in the group:

Colossians 1:1-12 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,<sup>2</sup> To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.<sup>3</sup> In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>4</sup> for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints,<sup>5</sup> because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel<sup>6</sup> that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God.<sup>7</sup> This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,<sup>8</sup> and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit.<sup>9</sup> For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,<sup>10</sup> so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God.<sup>11</sup> May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully<sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light.

What stands out to you from these verses?

#### LOOKING BACK WITH THANKS 1:1-5A

<sup>1</sup> Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,<sup>2</sup> To the saints and faithful brothers and sisters in Christ in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.<sup>3</sup> In our prayers for you we always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,<sup>4</sup> for we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints,<sup>5</sup> because of the hope laid up for you in heaven.

How did Paul know that the Colossians had really met Jesus?  
Where can you see these things in your life?

Take a moment to thank God for something he's done in your life

#### THE GOSPEL THAT IS GOING EVERYWHERE 1:5b-8

You have heard of this hope before in the word of the truth, the gospel<sup>6</sup> that has come to you. Just as it is bearing fruit and growing in the whole world, so it has been bearing fruit among yourselves from the day you heard it and truly comprehended the grace of God.

What do we learn about the gospel in these verses?  
What is needed for people to meet Jesus?

<sup>7</sup> This you learned from Epaphras, our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,<sup>8</sup> and he has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

How did the gospel come to each of us?

#### LOOKING FORWARD WITH PRAYER 1:9-12

<sup>9</sup> For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,<sup>10</sup> so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God.<sup>11</sup> May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully<sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light.

What does Paul want for those who've started to follow Jesus?  
How does this help us to pray for each other?  
What words and themes does Paul repeat here from verses 3-8?

## THE CONTEXT OF THE PASSAGE: STANDING FIRM 1:23

...<sup>23</sup> provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard...

- What specific threats do you see to you going on with Jesus?
- How does the passage we've studied address those threats?
- How does this study build on what we worked through in the last study?

## SUMMARY

<i>He has brought us into his kingdom (13-14)</i>	He created the world He rescued the world He is the Lord of all (15-20)	<i>He has reconciled us to the king (21-22)</i>
---	---	---

### Preparation for next study:

- Read Colossians 1:1-2:7 and reread 1:23-2:7 twice
- Identify the repeated words, phrases and ideas in 1:23-2:7
- How would you summarise in a couple of sentences what this section is all about?
- Spend some time in prayer responding to Jesus about what you see in these verses

# COLOSSIANS FOUNDATIONS

## STUDY 2: COLOSSIANS 1:11-23 JESUS CHRIST IS LORD

Start by praying for your study

Feedback from Preparation:

- What did identify as the repeated words, phrases and ideas in verses 15-20?
- How did you summarise what today's passage is all about?

Read the following passage in the group:

Colossians 1:11-23 May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully<sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light.<sup>13</sup> He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son,<sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;<sup>16</sup> for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers, all things have been created through him and for him.<sup>17</sup> He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.<sup>18</sup> He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.<sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,<sup>20</sup> and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things...

...whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.<sup>21</sup> And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,<sup>22</sup> he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him,<sup>23</sup> provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel.

What stands out to you from these verses?

THE CONTEXT OF THE PASSAGE: ENDURING 1:11-12A

May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully<sup>12</sup> giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light.

What does Paul want for the Colossians and what does he pray for?

JESUS HAS RESCUED US 1:13-14

<sup>13</sup> He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son,<sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

How would you describe in your own words what Jesus has done for us in these verses?

If this is true, what does this mean for our lives?

What's been your experience of these two kingdoms?

the power of darkness (13)	<i>He has rescued us ... and transferred us ... in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins (13-14)</i>	the kingdom of his beloved Son (13)
----------------------------	---	-------------------------------------

JESUS IS LORD 1:15-20

<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation;<sup>16</sup> for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers, all things have been created through him and for him.<sup>17</sup> He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together.<sup>18</sup> He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything.<sup>19</sup> For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell,<sup>20</sup> and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross.

What do these verses tell us about Jesus?

What has Jesus done in these verses?

What do we learn about God's ultimate purposes?

What are the implications for our daily life?

JESUS HAS RECONCILED US 1:21-22

<sup>21</sup> And you who were once estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,<sup>22</sup> he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death, so as to present you holy and blameless and irreproachable before him

How would you describe in your own words what has Jesus done for us in these verses?

If this is true, what does this mean for our lives?

How has being reconciled to God changed your life?

estranged and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, (21)	<i>he has now reconciled in his fleshly body through death (22a)</i>	holy and blameless and irreproachable (22b)
---	--	---

## PAUL'S MESSAGE 1:26-27, 2:3B

<sup>26</sup> ...the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. <sup>27</sup> To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ... <sup>2b</sup> and have the knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ himself, <sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

What two summaries of the mystery does Paul give in these verses?

How would you put this in your own words?

How can we explain what's so unique about Jesus to those who don't yet know him?

## THE CONTEXT OF THE PASSAGE: GOING ON AS YOU STARTED 2:4-7

<sup>4</sup> I am saying this so that no one may deceive you with plausible arguments. <sup>5</sup> For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, and I rejoice to see your morale and the firmness of your faith in Christ. <sup>6</sup> As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Why is Paul concerned and his desire for the Colossians?

How do these verses challenge our own situation?

Review the summary of this section we considered above

How practically can we follow Paul's example?

Who can we pray for and share with before the next study?

Preparation for next study:

- Read Colossians 1:1-2:23 and reread 2:6-23 twice
- What does Paul see as the danger and the solution in 2:6-23?
- How does 2:6-23 build on what Paul has already said in the letter?
- Spend some time in prayer responding to Jesus about what you see
- in these verses

# COLOSSIANS FOUNDATIONS

## STUDY 3: COLOSSIANS 1:23 – 2:7 TELLING THE WORLD

Start by praying for your study

Feedback from Preparation:

What did you identify as the repeated words, phrases and ideas in 1:23-2:7?

How did you summarise what today's passage is all about?

Read the following passage in the group:

Colossians 1:23 – 2:7 ...provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel. <sup>24</sup> I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church. <sup>25</sup> I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known, <sup>26</sup> the mystery that has been hidden throughout the ages and generations but has now been revealed to his saints. <sup>27</sup> To them God chose to make known how great among the Gentiles are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. <sup>28</sup> It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ. <sup>29</sup> For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me <sup>2:1</sup> For I want you to know how much I am struggling for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for all who have not seen me face to face...

<sup>2</sup> I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding and have the knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ himself, <sup>3</sup> in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. <sup>4</sup> I am saying this so that no one may deceive you with plausible arguments. <sup>5</sup> For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, and I rejoice to see your morale and the firmness of your faith in Christ. <sup>6</sup> As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

What stands out to you from these verses?

In this passage Paul talks about his ministry. In the first half of the passage he talks about what was involved in bringing the gospel message to the Colossians. In the second half he goes on to talk about how he wants to help people go on following Jesus. The second half of the passage repeats the same structure as the first half. We could summarise the passage as follows:

1:23a ...continue securely established and steadfast ... without shifting from the hope...	
1:23b ...the gospel ...which has been proclaimed to every creature	1:28 It is he whom we <i>proclaim</i> , warn- ing everyone and teaching everyone...
1:24 I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake ...	2:1 I want you to know how much I am <i>struggling</i> for you...
1:25-27a ... to make the word of God <i>fully</i> known, the <i>mystery</i> ...now... revealed	2:2a ...that they may have the knowledge of God's <i>mystery</i>
1:27b <i>Christ in you,</i> the hope of glory	2:2b-3 <i>Christ himself, in whom</i> are hidden all the treasures
2:4-7 As you ... received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him...	

THE CONTEXT OF THE PASSAGE: GOING ON AS YOU STARTED 1:23

<sup>23</sup> ...provided that you continue securely established and steadfast in the faith, without shifting from the hope promised by the gospel that you heard...

What's Paul's concern for the Colossians?

PAUL'S WORK 1:23B, 28

<sup>23b</sup> ... the gospel that you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. I, Paul, became a servant of this gospel... <sup>28</sup> It is he whom we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone in all wisdom, so that we may present everyone mature in Christ.

What does Paul want to see? What is he doing about it?  
How can we be involved in these things?

PAUL'S SACRIFICE 1:24, 1:29-2:1

<sup>24</sup> I am now rejoicing in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am completing what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church... <sup>29</sup> For this I toil and struggle with all the energy that he powerfully inspires within me. <sup>2:1</sup> For I want you to know how much I am struggling for you, and for those in Laodicea, and for all who have not seen me face to face.

What's Paul's experience in these verses and how does it reflect Jesus' life?  
What do we learn about Paul's motivation and power?  
How might we struggle and suffer in serving Christ and how can we keep going?

PAUL'S COMMISSION 1:25, 2:2

<sup>25</sup> I became its servant according to God's commission that was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known... <sup>2:1</sup> want their hearts to be encouraged and united in love, so that they may have all the riches of assured understanding...

What was Paul's job description?  
What's needed to move from hearing to assured understanding?  
Why do you think this is the case?  
What will this require of us if we are (i) to understand and (ii) to share the word of God?

List in your own words what has been done for us in verses 11-14?  
What are the implications for us? How does this challenge our experience?

#### CHRIST'S TRIUMPH 2:15-17

<sup>15</sup> He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it. <sup>16</sup> Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. <sup>17</sup> These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

What things no longer matter and why are they no longer relevant?  
Where do we need to experience Christ's victory in our lives?

#### GROWING IN JESUS 2:18-20

<sup>18</sup> Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, <sup>19</sup> and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God. <sup>20</sup> If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world?

What are the marks of false spirituality in these verses?

In 1:18 Paul explained how the head and the body is another way of speaking of the relationship between Christ and the church.

How do we remain in Christ and what will happen if we do?

#### SUMMARY

How can we put into practice what we've learned?

What fruit can we expect to see grow in our life?

Preparation for next study:

- Read 2:4-3:4 and then reread 2:20-3:4 twice
- Pick out the words connected with life and death. What does Paul associate with life and death?
- How do these verses build on the previous study?

# COLOSSIANS FOUNDATIONS

## STUDY 4: COLOSSIANS 2:6 – 2:20 POWER TO CHANGE

Start by praying for your study

Feedback from Preparation:

What did you understand to be the danger and the solution in 2:6-23?  
How does this passage build on what Paul has already said in the letter?

Read the following passage in the group:

Colossians 2:6-7 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. <sup>8</sup> See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. <sup>9</sup> For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, <sup>10</sup> and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. <sup>11</sup> In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; <sup>12</sup> when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup> And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup> erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. <sup>15</sup> He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it.

<sup>16</sup> Therefore do not let anyone condemn you in matters of food and drink or of observing festivals, new moons, or sabbaths. <sup>17</sup> These are only a shadow of what is to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. <sup>18</sup> Do not let anyone disqualify you, insisting on selfabasement and worship of angels, dwelling on visions, puffed up without cause by a human way of thinking, <sup>19</sup> and not holding fast to the head, from whom the whole body, nourished and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows with a growth that is from God. <sup>20</sup> If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world?

What stands out to you from these verses?

This is a complicated and deep passage. We could summarise it as follows:

**Go on with Jesus, don't get caught in empty philosophy (6-8)**

Fullness and freedom is found in Jesus (9-10)

We have died and been raised with Jesus (11-14)

Jesus is the substance of which religion is the shadow (15-17)

Religion is dead, we only grow in Jesus (18-20)

**CONTINUING IN JESUS 2:6-8**

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. <sup>8</sup> See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ.

The term “elemental spirits of the universe” means the basic way the world is put together and works. The elements could include laws, mindsets, conventions, habits, cultural practices and so on. These basic mental, spiritual and social structures shape our life and, when distorted by evil, enslave us.

What does Paul see as threats to the Colossians continuing to live in Jesus?

What does Paul want for the Colossians?

What might stop us continuing to follow Jesus?

**FULLNESS IN CHRIST 2:9-10**

<sup>9</sup> For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, <sup>10</sup> and you have come to fullness in him, who is the head of every ruler and authority.

What do we learn about Jesus?

What do we learn about us and what does this mean for us?

**WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US IN CHRIST 2:11-14**

<sup>11</sup> In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; <sup>12</sup> when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup> And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup> erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross.

In verse 11 Paul tells us that Jesus fulfils an ancient promise. Before Jesus, God's people were marked by circumcision. God promised through Moses that a day would come when God's people would be marked in a new way. Deuteronomy 30:6 “...Moreover, the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, so that you will love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live.”

According to Moses, what would be the new mark of God's people?

When someone decides to follow Jesus and is baptised (see verse 12) it's a picture of their old life being buried in the water and then being raised to a new life. It echoes the ancient story of God's people being led out of slavery in Egypt through the Red sea and into a new life (as in 1:13-14).

How does Paul apply this to us?

In the time of Colossians, if you couldn't repay a debt you would be imprisoned and the record of the debt would be nailed to the door of your cell. You wouldn't be let out until the debt had been repaid. That is the image that Paul is alluding to in verse 14.

How has Jesus paid our debt?

## SUMMARY

How would you summarise in your own words the old and new ways of living in these verses?

How have you experienced these two different ways of living?

How can this passage help us to follow Jesus this week?

### Preparation for next study:

- Read 2:6-3:17 and then reread 3:1-17 twice
- How does what we learned in the last study affect how we read this passage?
- What's been your experience of community?

# COLOSSIANS FOUNDATIONS

## STUDY 5: COLOSSIANS 2:20 – 3:4 RULES VERSUS GRACE

Start by praying for your study

Feedback from Preparation:

What does Paul connect with life and death in today's verses?

How do these verses build on the previous study?

Read the following passage in the group:

Colossians 2:20-3:4 If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations,<sup>21</sup> “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch”?<sup>22</sup> All these regulations refer to things that perish with use; they are simply human commands and teachings.<sup>23</sup> These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-imposed piety, humility, and severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in checking self-indulgence.<sup>3:1</sup> So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.<sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth,<sup>3</sup> for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.<sup>4</sup> When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

What stands out to you from this passage?

## DYING TO EMPTY RELIGION 2:20-21

<sup>20</sup> If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe, why do you live as if you still belonged to the world? Why do you submit to regulations, <sup>21</sup> “Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch”?

Why is Paul concerned for the Colossians?

How have you experienced pressure to conform to rules?

What does it mean for us to have died with Christ

(see also 1:13-14, 1:22, 2:11-16)?

## RULE KEEPING IS USELESS 2:22-23

<sup>22</sup> All these regulations refer to things that perish with use; they are simply human commands and teachings. <sup>23</sup> These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-imposed piety, humility, and severe treatment of the body, but they are of no value in checking self-indulgence.

Why doesn't living by rules work?

Why might rules and regulations be attractive to us?

What would happen in our lives if we didn't live by rules and regulations?

## NEW LIFE, NEW PERSPECTIVE 3:1

<sup>1</sup> So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

If we've died to the old life of rules and regulations, what's the new life we've been raised to?

How is seeking different from submitting?

Paul speaks of Christ being seated at the right hand of God as a short hand summary of 2:15

## NEW HOPE, NEW MIND 3:2-4

<sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, <sup>3</sup> for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

What's true of us in these verses?

How do we set our minds on things above (see also 1:9-10, 1:25-28, 2:2-3)?

How does what has happened in the past and will happen in the future shape our present?

## SUMMARY:

What appeals to you most about this vision of the renewed life?

What challenges you most about the new life?

What do you need to do this week to put this into practice?

### Preparation for next study:

- Read 3:6-4:6 and then reread 3:17-4:6 twice
- What excites and upsets you in these verses?
- What principles do these instructions make practical?

# COLOSSIANS FOUNDATIONS

## STUDY 6: COLOSSIANS 3:5 – 3:17 GETTING CHANGED

Start by praying for your study

Feedback from Preparation:

How does the last study shape how we read this passage?

What's been your experience of community?

Read the following passage in the group:

Colossians 3:5 - 3:17 Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry).<sup>6</sup> On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient.<sup>7</sup> These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life.<sup>8</sup> But now you must get rid of all such things: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth.<sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices<sup>10</sup> and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.<sup>11</sup> In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!<sup>12</sup> As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.<sup>13</sup> Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive...

<sup>14</sup> Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

What stands out to you from this passage?

#### TAKING OFF THE OLD LIFE 3:5-10

<sup>5</sup> Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). <sup>6</sup> On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. <sup>7</sup> These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. <sup>8</sup> But now you must get rid of all such things: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.

How do these verses flow out of 3:1-4? How is this different from 2:20-23?  
What has happened and what needs to happen in these verses?  
What specific things most challenge you?  
How and to what end are we being renewed in verse 10  
(see also 1:9-10 and 1:15)?

#### PUTTING ON THE NEW LIFE 3:11-14

<sup>11</sup> In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all! <sup>12</sup> As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. <sup>13</sup> Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. <sup>14</sup> Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

What are the marks of the community of people who follow Jesus?  
What specific things in this challenge you?  
Is there anyone you need to forgive?

#### LETTING JESUS RULE 3:15-17

<sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

In what three ways does Jesus shape our daily lives in these verses?  
Why does Paul instruct us to be thankful in each of these verses?  
How can you practice these three things and thankfulness this week?

## SUMMARY:

What changes do you want to make in light of this study?  
Are there questions or issues that you need to work through further?

### Preparation for next study:

- Read 4:2-18 twice
- What do we learn about Paul's heart from this passage?

# COLOSSIANS FOUNDATIONS

## STUDY 7: COLOSSIANS 3:18 – 4:1 JESUS AND DAILY LIFE

Start by praying for your study

Feedback from Preparation:

What excites and upsets you in these verses?

What principles do these instructions make practical?

Read the following passage in the group:

Colossians 3:18-4:6 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. <sup>19</sup> Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly. <sup>20</sup> Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is your acceptable duty in the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children, or they may lose heart. <sup>22</sup> Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only while being watched and in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. <sup>23</sup> Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, <sup>24</sup> since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ. <sup>25</sup> For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no partiality. <sup>4:1</sup> Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, for you know that you also have a Master in heaven. <sup>2</sup> Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving...

<sup>3</sup> At the same time pray for us as well that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison, <sup>4</sup> so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should. <sup>5</sup> Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. <sup>6</sup> Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone.

What stood out to you from this passage?

#### JESUS AT HOME 3:18-21

<sup>18</sup> Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. <sup>19</sup> Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly. <sup>20</sup> Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is your acceptable duty in the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children, or they may lose heart.

How do these verses rest on the foundation on what we looked at in the last session?

Where does Paul's model of family life challenge our cultural values?

How do the pairs of commands balance each other?

Where do these verses challenge your family life?

#### JESUS AT WORK 3:22-4:1

<sup>22</sup> Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything, not only while being watched and in order to please them, but wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. <sup>23</sup> Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters, <sup>24</sup> since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ. <sup>25</sup> For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong has been done, and there is no partiality. <sup>4:1</sup> Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, for you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

How do these verses relate to our work today?

What are the encouragements and warnings?

How do these verses challenge our attitudes and practice in our work?

#### JESUS IN THE WORLD 4:2-6

<sup>2</sup> Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving. <sup>3</sup> At the same time pray for us as well that God will open to us a door for the word, that we may declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am in prison, <sup>4</sup> so that I may reveal it clearly, as I should. <sup>5</sup> Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. <sup>6</sup> Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer everyone.

To what end is Paul giving us instruction about our prayer, conduct and speech?

How can these verses shape the way we pray?

In what ways can we be wise towards outsiders?

How have you experienced people being gracious yet provocative with you?

# COLOSSIANS FOUNDATIONS

## STUDY 8: COLOSSIANS 4:7-18 BUILDING YOUR TEAM

Start by praying for your study

Feedback from Preparation:

What did we learn about Paul's heart from this passage?

Read the following passage in the group:

Colossians 4:7-18 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me; he is a beloved brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow servant in the Lord.<sup>8</sup> I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts;<sup>9</sup> he is coming with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you about everything here.<sup>10</sup> Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, as does Mark the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions, if he comes to you, welcome him.<sup>11</sup> And Jesus who is called Justus greets you. These are the only ones of the circumcision among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.<sup>12</sup> Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you. He is always wrestling in his prayers on your behalf, so that you may stand mature and fully assured in everything that God wills...

<sup>13</sup> For I testify for him that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. <sup>14</sup> Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you. <sup>15</sup> Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. <sup>16</sup> And when this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you read also the letter from Laodicea. <sup>17</sup> And say to Archippus, “See that you complete the task that you have received in the Lord.” <sup>18</sup> I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

What stood out to you from this passage?

#### KEEPING CONNECTED 4:7-9

<sup>7</sup> Tychicus will tell you all the news about me; he is a beloved brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow servant in the Lord. <sup>8</sup> I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts; <sup>9</sup> he is coming with Onesimus, the faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you about everything here.

What do we learn about Paul’s relationship to the Colossians?  
What does Paul particularly value in those he works with?

#### PAUL’S MISSION TEAM 4:10-18

<sup>10</sup> Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, as does Mark the cousin of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions, if he comes to you, welcome him. <sup>11</sup> And Jesus who is called Justus greets you. These are the only ones of the circumcision among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. <sup>12</sup> Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you. He is always wrestling in his prayers on your behalf, so that you may stand mature and fully assured in everything that God wills. <sup>13</sup> For I testify for him that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis. <sup>14</sup> Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you. <sup>15</sup> Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. <sup>16</sup> And when this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you read also the letter from Laodicea. <sup>17</sup> And say to Archippus, “See that you complete the task that you have received in the Lord.” <sup>18</sup> I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

Here we see Paul’s mission team working together to strengthen the believers and to reach the world.

Who do you see regularly who already knows Jesus?  
How can you strengthen each other in your faith?  
Who together can you pray for and seek to introduce to Jesus?  
How can you do that?

#### CONCLUSION:

What are the key things you have learned from studying Colossians?  
How can you pass on what you’ve received to others?  
What might be the next steps for us as we learn to follow Jesus and introduce others to him?