

**Colossians:
'rooted and built up in the faith'**

Booklet 2:
Colossians 3-4

**Study 1:
Colossians 3:1-11**

Paul has spent the previous section expanding on the reasons why the sufficiency of the Lordship of Jesus means that the false teaching in Colossae must be rejected. There is no need to add anything else to what Jesus has done—his Lordship is enough! Now, in 3:1-11, Paul begins to look at what life under that Lordship looks like.

1. Read Colossians 3:1-4.

Paul gives two commands in verses 1 and 2. What are they?

What is the reason give for each command?

Where is the life of the Colossians—and any other—believer?

What is the contrast, then, in the life of the believer? (vs.2)

Paul summarises this in verse 3—what does he say?

What is the hope in verse 4?

Christians have been united with Jesus in his death—his death is their death. Thus, they are united—by faith—in his resurrection: what he has done has given them a new identity, which is safe in heaven. Thus, their present is different and their future is assured. Their priority is living in line with the Lordship of Jesus and the life he has for them, now.

2. Read Colossians 3:5-11.

What is the command, then, in verse 5?

What reason(s) does Paul give for this? (vs.6-7)

Because of the change in their life, what is the command in verse 8?

What is the command in verse 9? Why?

What is happening to this 'new man'? (vs.10)

What do you think the 'here' at the start of verse 11 refers to?

What is now the identity of Christians? (vs.11)

The Lordship of Jesus in these people has produced a fundamental change. There is an old and a new. And, the turning point is the Lordship of Jesus. His life is now their life, and they must get used to it! In fact, God is working in them continually so that they will be renewed.

3. How do verses 9-10 (and verses 1-2) help you understand sanctification (the word that describes how you are made holy)?

4. How would you respond to the accusation that Christians walk around with their heads in the clouds, separate from reality?

5. What comment does verse 11 make on racism within the church and our chief identity?

Study 2:
Colossians 3:12-17

This is the partner passage to the one that preceded—just as the old way was ‘put off’ in the previous verses, so here the new way of life is ‘put on’.

1. Read Colossians 3:12-15.

What is the first command in verse 12?

Why must they do this? (vs.12)

How must they relate to each other? (vs.13)

What is the unifying characteristic that is to overlay all this? (vs.14)

What do you think this means, and why?

What is the command in verse 15?

How do verses 12 and 15 explain each other?

What is the second command in verse 15?

2. Read Colossians 3:16-17.

What is the command in verse 16?

What is this command the foundation of?

Is there anything you find surprising about this? Why?

What is the overwhelming motivation here?

What are the Colossians to do in verse 17?

3. Love, forgiveness, peace, unity and thankfulness—how hard are these things to display within God's people? Why?
4. What is 'unity', and what is this unity established in?
5. How does verse 16 affect the meeting of the people of God?
6. How does verse 17 affect all of life?

Study 3: Colossians 3:18-4:1

Having closed off the previous section with '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', Paul and Timothy now turn to the 'everything' we all face (the Colossian Christians, too) in everyday life! This 'household list' section brings the 'rooted and built up in the faith' into our loungerooms!

1. Read Colossians 3:18-4:1.

Scan through the list... does it look/sound familiar?

2. Let's work out way through verse by verse, group by group...

- (i) In verse 18, who is addressed and what is the command?

Looking at Genesis 2: 18 and 3:16, Luke 2:51, and Ephesians 5:21, how do we understand the reason given for this command?

- (ii) In verse 19, who is addressed and what is the command?

Why do you think this command is given, in light of Genesis 2:18?

- (iii) In verse 20, who is addressed and what is the command?

Why do you think this reason is given?
(cf. Deuteronomy 6:1-9)

(iv) In verse 21, who is addressed and what is the command?

Why is this reason given? (cf. Deuteronomy 6:1-9)

(v) In verses 22-25, who is addressed, and what are the commands?

What is the reason, and why might this be liberating?

(vi) In 4:1, who is addressed and what is the command?

What is the reason, and how might this be constricting?

3. What does this household list tell you about the make-up of the gathering of God's people in Colossae (remember that this letter was read IN the gathering of God's people)?
4. What does this household list tell you about the place of Jesus in the lives of his people?

What does this household list tell you about the way, and where, God's people can display the Lordship of Jesus?

5. Spend some time in private/personal prayer, considering your place in the household list and what it means for you to live this way, saying Jesus is enough...

Study 4: Colossians 4:2-6

Paul and Timothy start the end of their letter with what seem to be a series of pithy commands and wisdom advice. However, these commands and pieces of wisdom are all focused on making sure that Jesus is presented to those around them, in life.

1. Read Colossians 4:2-6

There are two commands in verse 2. What are they? What do they display? Who are they for?

2. In verse 3, we learn a little of Paul's predicament—what is it?

What does that tell you about his prayer request? What is surprising from our perspective about it?

How does verse 4 help us understand Paul's approach to evangelism?

3. What is the next command in verse 5?

What do you think 'make the most of the time' means?

What is the link between these two parts of the verse?

4. What is the final piece of wisdom, in verse 6?

What do you think 'seasoned with salt' means?

How can speech be 'gracious'?

How does gracious and salty speech help you know 'how you should answer each person'?

5. Looking back over these pieces of command/wisdom, what strikes you?

How is all of our life focussed, if we have Jesus as Lord?

**Study 5:
Colossians 4:7-18**

Paul and Timothy close this letter with a long farewell—a list of greetings, information and names that is striking. It captures, in many ways, the community of Christ's body, across space and time.

1. Read Colossians 4:7-18.
2. Who do we meet in verses 7-9?

Looking at Eph.6:21-22 and Philemon 12, how might we reconstruct the delivery of these letters?

3. In verses 10-15, there are a number of 'greetings'. Who do we meet, where do you think they fit in the scheme of the work of the 'servants of the Gospel', and what else do we learn about that work?
4. What do we learn in verse 16?
5. What do we learn in verse 17?
6. How does Paul finish this letter?
7. As this letter closes, what insight does this final section give us into:
 - (i) 2:6-7?
 - (ii) 1:28-29?

