

Lesson Five
Colossians 2:1-5
A Church Possessed by Christ

The Apostle Paul loved Jesus above all else and we see this passion reflected in his encouragement and pastoral concern in his letter to the Colossian believers. Alarmed by the rise of Gnosticism within the church, Paul could not bear the thought of heretical teachers leading these saints astray. His burden for the church was so intense that the Greek word he chose to use in Colossians 2:1, *conflict*, is where we get our English word, *agony*.

Deception remains a problem within the church today with spiritual babes falling prey to false teachers' slick programs and smooth words. Any time doctrinal error arises within a body, it is divisive and weakens its witness of Christ. But when believers arm themselves with scriptural truth regarding Jesus Christ, they become fortified against any foe of Christianity!

Day One – Encouragement in Christ

Read Colossians 2:1-2

1. Paul's heartfelt concern for the saints is apparent in Colossians chapter 2. Record what you learn from verse 2 about his desire for all believers.

2. The word encouraged means comforted or confirmed. In what ways do people search for comfort or encouragement?

3. How does the Bible say that we can receive comfort?

Romans 15:4

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

4. When Christians are knit together, they become united and strengthened as one in God's love. How are we commanded to show unity through His love?

Psalm 15:2-3

Philippians 2:2-4

1 Peter 3:8-9

1 John 4:7-11

- a. How can you apply one of these verses to a current situation or relationship in your life?
- b. What changes must you make to be obedient to this command?

5. Paul wanted all believers to experience the same confidence that he had in the Lord. Read 1 Corinthians 2:12-14 and express in your own words what Paul meant by the phrase *full assurance of understanding* found in Colossians 2:2.

- a. What does having the assurance of being able to understand spiritual things mean to you?
- b. What steps are necessary to attain understanding? See Proverbs 2:1-6.

Day Two – Treasures in Christ
Read Colossians 2:1-3

The pursuit of knowledge is a good one, but not when it leads a person away from God. The false teachers of Gnosticism believed in acquiring special, mystical knowledge as the means for salvation. Paul counters their self-proclaimed wisdom by pointing believers to the highest knowledge that man can gain.

1. Paul refers to the *mystery of God* in Colossians 2:2. From the following verses, write what you learn about the mystery of God.

Ephesians 1:5-10

Ephesians 3:8-11

2. Colossians 2:3 reveals the mystery of God to us. Fill in the blanks below to complete the verse and carefully consider the power behind each word.

“IN WHOM are _____ ALL the _____ of _____ and _____.”

3. God alone possesses all wisdom and knowledge. How does Proverbs 9:10 say that you can acquire these treasures as well?

a. How does God's way of gaining wisdom and knowledge compare to worldly methods?

4. Miners rarely find precious gems or gold above ground; they must carefully dig for the treasure buried beneath. Share about a time when you dug into the Bible and discovered wisdom from it.

5. Those who are content in only scratching the surface of God's Word will never find the hidden treasures He has for His people. As you end today's lesson, prayerfully answer the question: how diligently are you seeking the treasure that the Lord is offering you? Journal your thoughts below.

"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" Romans 11:33a

Day Three – The Answer is Christ

Read Colossians 2:4-5

1. False teaching is seldom irrational or unreasonable – if it were, it would have little effect. It is easy to influence others with attractive sounding words, half-truths, and scriptures taken out of context. What is Paul's warning in verse 4?

2. To help you understand Paul's concern, use a dictionary or concordance to define the following words.

Deceive:

Persuasive:

3. Satan is ultimately behind all deception. What do you see as his goal according to these verses?

2 Corinthians 11:3

Revelation 12:9

Note: Satan's hatred toward God is tremendous, but his only opportunity to strike back at Him is to deceive mankind, destroying the hope found in John 3:16.

4. The warning given to the Colossians is as needful and relevant for believers today. Give some examples – good and bad – of what draws people to follow a particular Bible teacher or religious leader.

a. What kinds of pastors or teachers are you drawn to? Why?

Day Four – Steadfast in Christ

Read Colossians 2:4-5

Some people have a way with words. They know how to use them to influence others. If we're to avoid being moved by their seduction, we need to have a firm grasp of the truth.

1. Are you easily persuaded by what others say? What insights can you glean from the following verses that will help you wisely choose whom you should and should not listen to?

Romans 16:17-18

1 Corinthians 2:4-5

1 Timothy 6:3-5

a. What ways do these warnings and exhortations challenge you?

2. How can following the example given in Acts 17:11 strengthen your discernment?

3. Although troubled by the situation at Colosse, Paul also heard good things about the church. What strengths does he rejoice over in Colossians 2:5?

4. The behavior of these saints is expressed in the original Greek language using military metaphors that describe troops who are under attack yet remain in solid formation. Spiritual battles are inevitable for the Christian. What insights and commands do you receive from Ephesians 6:10-18 that will help you remain in good order and steadfast in your faith?

5. The exhortations that we have studied apply to everyone, not just a select few. All believers are encouraged to "*hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in all faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.*" 2 Timothy 1:13

Write a prayer below asking the Lord to enable you to hold fast to the truth you have learned.

Now, pray for your pastor. Pray that he will have a clear understanding of the scriptures and a fresh filling of the Holy Spirit as he prepares to teach the congregation. Pray for those listening, to hold fast to the treasures hidden in Jesus. Make sure to add these requests to your prayer list if you aren't already praying in this way.

