

Lesson One
Colossians 1:1-11
A Growing Church

Imagine opening your mailbox and discovering a letter from a good friend – one who could be counted on to offer the right encouragement at the right time. You would be so excited as you poured over their words! Such was the kind of letter that the church at Colosse received from the Apostle Paul. Paul’s letters were always full of encouraging words, but he made sure that each one centered around the person of Jesus Christ.

The Colossian believers possessed a growing faith reflected in their concern, care, and love for one another. In this opening section of Paul’s letter, we see a glimpse of their life – the same kind of life to which Jesus calls us.

As you go forward in your study of the book of Colossians, the question we urge you to ask continually is, “In light of what I’m studying, now respond to Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior?”

Day One —A Growing Church is Faithful
Read Colossians 1:1-11

1. The opening verses of Colossians introduce us to a church that had some admirable qualities. What do you learn from verses 1-8?

a. Which of these qualities would you like to be known for? Why?

2. Look up the word faith using a dictionary or concordance. Write in your own words what this means.

3. The Colossian's faith expressed itself through love. Use the following verses to see how this might have looked.

James 2:14-17

1 Peter 1:22

1 John 3:16-18

a. How can you have a more effective witness of faith and love to those around you?

4. Spiritual fruit marked the lives of the Colossians. In John 15:1-6, Jesus gives a clear picture of how this is possible. Give some practical examples of how you can apply these verses to your life.

5. Which of these words best describe the fruitfulness in your life: abundant, flavorful, under-ripe, available for others to enjoy, small, but maturing?

a. Take some time now to reflect on today's lesson and write a prayer below as you seek to be more like Him in these areas.

"It is what we are, not what we say, that gives the best testimony to others of the reality of our Christianity." W.H. Griffith Thomas

Day Two — A Growing Church Prays
Read Colossians 1:9-11

1. Paul's prayer for the Colossians models two key characteristics of spiritual growth: intercession and perseverance. Use a dictionary or concordance to define these two important aspects of the Christian life.

Intercession

Perseverance:

2. Write out the phrase from Colossians 1:9 that shows Paul's perseverance.

a. Why do you think perseverance in prayer is important?

3. How do the following verses support this pattern of prayer?

Psalm 55:17

Ephesians 6:18

4. Despite his own difficult circumstances, Paul was faithful to pray for all of the saints at Colosse, even those he didn't know. Why should we follow this pattern?

a. How would you describe your prayer life?

b. Colossians 1:9-11 is a detailed and loving prayer. How can you use it to expand the way you pray for others?

5. Take this opportunity to commit to praying for someone you typically do not pray for; begin by journaling your prayer below.

“To make intercession for men is the most powerful way in which we can express our love for them.” Quoted from an early church reformer

Day Three — The Marks of a Growing Church **Read Colossians 1:9-11**

1. Paul prayed that the Colossian believers would bear the marks of maturing Christians. Write as many “marks” as you can find from these verses.

2. Steady spiritual growth begins with the knowledge of God’s will. How does Romans 12:2 say that we can discover His will?

a. Which of these steps do you need to take to put this command into action? Give one way to make this a daily reality.

3. What should be our attitude toward God's will according to Luke 22:42?

a. Why is it difficult to say this, mean it, and then live it?

4. In addition to knowledge of God's will, believers are to possess all spiritual wisdom and understanding and there is a discernable difference between godly wisdom and the world's wisdom. Use 1 Corinthians 3:19-20 along with James 3:13-18 to show the differences between the two.

Godly Wisdom	Worldly Wisdom

5. We often make foolish mistakes because we rely on our own understanding. What practical measures can we take to gain godly wisdom and understanding? Personalize your answers.

Proverbs 2:1-6

Proverbs 3:5-6

James 1:5

a. In which of these verses did the Holy Spirit speak to you personally? Write a prayer asking the Lord to strengthen you in this area.

Day Four — The Walk of a Growing Church

Read Colossians 1:10-11

1. There can be a gap between theory and practice in our Christianity. It is possible to be knowledgeable about God but not walk with Him. What does the word walk imply?

2. In Colossians 1:10, Paul speaks of having a walk *worthy* of the Lord. According to the Wuest Word Studies in the Greek, the word worthy “means having the weight of another thing, of like value, worth as much”; other definitions include commendable, excellence or merit. As you consider these definitions, explain what this means for your daily walk.

a. How are we able to walk worthy of the Lord?

Romans 13:12-14

Galatians 5:16

b. Do you know someone whose walk with the Lord models this? If so, how would you describe their life?

c. In what way(s) would you like to be like them?

3. What characteristics should be evident in a walk that is fully pleasing to the Lord? (See Colossians 1:10)

4. Fruitfulness in every good work is a natural outcome of a God-pleasing life. Why is this important according to Matthew 5:16?

a. Paul was confident that a strong and steady walk with God produces qualities needed in daily life through His power in us. Read Colossians 1:11 and Galatians 5:22-23 and record the type of qualities and fruit that is to be evident in our lives.

5. Amos 3:3 asks, "Can two walk together unless they are agreed?" How would you explain the answer to this question?

a. What do you think it means to walk in agreement with the Lord?

b. Are there areas or situations that are difficult for you to agree with God? Why or why not?

c. What have you learned in this lesson that will help you to walk with Him? Journal your thoughts below.

“And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.” 1 John 3:22

