

**WEEK 7: PHILIPPIANS
DAY 1: THE BIG SUBJECT**

1. Today we begin to study another letter of Paul. It is a small letter with a big message. We have seen from Ephesians how much these letters can help us.

From Ephesians 5 and 6, what must families do to make the church strong?

From Ephesians 6, what can we do for God as we fight Satan with faith, prayer and the other weapons?

2. Families must follow God's plan for the family. And if we use the weapons of God we can stand for God. If we do these things we will be happy. A happy home is a wonderful place. The letter of Philippians is about being happy. The word "joy" or "rejoice" is written fifteen times in this letter. This is the big subject. Let us learn it this way:

The big subject of Philippians is:
Rejoicing in the Lord.

Take your Bible now and read Philippians 1:3 to 9. Read verse 4 again. With what does Paul make his prayer for the Philippians?

3. He makes his prayer with joy. Look how many times "joy" and "rejoice" are used in this letter. Here is just one verse from each chapter.

Philippians 1:18:

Christ is proclaimed and in that I rejoice

Philippians 2:2

complete my joy by being of the same mind.

Philippians 3:1:

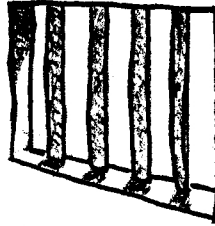
Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.

Philippians 4:10:

I rejoice in the Lord greatly.

Rejoicing in the Lord is the big subject of which New Testament letter?

4. Philippians is the letter of joy. But here is a surprising thing. Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter, yet he could write with great joy. He wanted the Philippians to rejoice with him. He was happy and he wanted others to be happy too.



Do you think it is easy to rejoice in prison? _____

5. Prison is not usually a happy place. Many bad things can happen to a person in prison. But Paul's joy was not in what happened to him. Paul's joy was in something else. Therefore he could rejoice at any time in any place. It did not matter what happened to him.

Philippians 4:4:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

From this verse, in whom was Paul rejoicing? _____

6. Paul's joy was in the Lord. It was in Christ. Many hard things happen to us. All of us have problems. Sometimes there are very hard days. On these days we can turn our thoughts to the Lord. We can read the book of Philippians. We can do as Paul did.

Philippians 2:17:

Even if I am to be poured as a libation (or offering) upon the sacrificial offering of your faith (or be killed), I am glad and rejoice with you all.

What did Paul do in prison? _____

7. Paul rejoiced in prison. We too can rejoice. We can think of Christ. We can pray. We can read his word. Then our joy will not be in the things that happen to us. Our joy will be in the Lord.

Can you remember a time when you rejoiced in the Lord even in hard things?

If you wrote Yes, write when that was. We will hear it in class.

8. It helps us very much when we praise God and thank him. Instead of thinking of the hard things, we think of the Lord. We think of his love for us. We thank him for what he does.

What is the big subject of Philippians? _____

9. The big subject is: Rejoicing in the Lord. In this letter Paul told the people that he was sending someone to help them. The man's name was Epaphroditus. He was Paul's fellow worker. He was faithful to God.

Philippians 2:29:

So receive him in the Lord with all joy.

How should the Philippians receive this man? _____

10. They should receive him with joy. We can have joy in everything we do. This is not easy, but God helps us.

Mrs. Sethole had many problems. Her husband was not a Christian and never went to church with her. She had to work hard for her children and husband. They never thanked her for what she did. Mrs. Sethole complained when things were hard. She scolded her husband for not being a good man. She scolded the children because she had to work so hard.

Then one day she learned that Christians should rejoice. She began to praise God even in hard things. She thanked God that her husband allowed her to go to church. She thanked God for strength to work hard. She thanked him for his promises. Her whole life changed. She became a happy woman. Her husband was surprised.

What made the difference in Mrs. Sethole's life? _____

11. You could say it was rejoicing, or obeying God. This woman began to praise God in hard things. This can make a difference in your life. Remember that God loves you. He allows only things that can help you to come into your life.

What is the big subject of Philippians? _____

12. The big subject is: Rejoicing in the Lord. This is something we can do to help ourselves and the church. When we studied Ephesians we learned about the church. We learned what the church is. We learned that God wants us to live good lives in the church.

What is the big subject of Ephesians? _____

13. The big subject of Ephesians is: The church is the body of Christ.

What is the big subject of Philippians? _____

WEEK 7: PHILIPPIANS

DAY 2: THE AIM - REJOICE WITH PAUL IN PRISON

1. The Philippians loved Paul very much. He had brought them the gospel. When they heard he was in prison, they thought he would be sad.

But what is the big subject of Philippians? _____

2. The big subject is: Rejoicing in the Lord. The Philippians cared what happened to Paul. Paul did not want them to be sad about him. He wrote so they would know he was happy even in prison. Then he told them that they should rejoice with him. This was his aim in writing to them.

Paul wanted the Philippians to rejoice with him even though he was in prison.

Take your Bible now and read Philippians 2:14 to 18.

3. Paul was a happy man. The big subject and the aim of his letter are very much alike. Look at them together.

The big subject: Rejoicing in the Lord.

The aim: That they rejoice with Paul though he was in prison.

Philippians 3:1:

Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.

Which letter has the aim that the people rejoice with Paul in prison?

4. This is the letter to the Philippians. Paul had been called to preach the gospel. But now he could not preach. He could not visit the Philippians. He could have been sad about this. The church could have been sad too. Their leader could not come to them.

Where was Paul when he wrote this letter? _____

5. Paul was in prison. He could not go around preaching. But he saw that the gospel was going forward anyway. This gave him joy.

Philippians 1:12:

I want you to know, brethren, that what has happened to me has really served to advance (or push forward) the gospel.

As Paul rejoiced that the gospel was going forward, what did he want the Philippians to do?

6. He wanted them to rejoice too. He wanted them to do this even though he was in prison. There was another time when Paul was in prison. It was in that same city of the Philippians. We read about this in the book of Acts. No church had yet started in Philippi. Paul had just come to preach there for the first time. His friend, Silas, was with him.

Acts 16:25:

But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

What did Paul and Silas do in prison at that time? _____

7. They prayed and sang. The doors of the prison came open. The end of the story is that the prison keeper and his family became Christians. They with Lydia and other women started the church. This church was started because Paul rejoiced even in prison.

What church was started because Paul rejoiced in prison? _____

8. This was the church in Philippi. This good, strong church started when Paul and Silas rejoiced in the Lord. So we can see why Paul continued to rejoice. We can see why he wanted others to do the same.

Philippians 4:4:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice.

What was Paul's aim in writing to the Philippians? _____

9. His aim was that they rejoice with him. Paul saw that the Philippians loved him. They did what they could to help him when he could not come to them. They were concerned about him. It seems that they sent him a gift. This gave him joy.

Philippians 4:10:

I rejoice in the Lord greatly that now at length you have revived your concern for me; you were indeed concerned for me, but you had no opportunity.

Where was Paul when he wrote this letter? _____

10. Paul was in prison. Sometimes troubles come to us. When we are in trouble we wonder what we have done wrong. We wonder why such things have come upon us. But this is how people of the world think. They try to find the reason for the trouble. They may try to find out who sent the trouble. But this is not what Paul said we should do.

From Philippians, what is the Christian thing to do when we are in trouble?

11. We should rejoice. This seems strange, but it is God's way. Paul is not the only one who wrote about it. Many other Bible writers talked about this.

1 Peter 4:12-13:

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal (or trial) which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in as far as you share Christ's sufferings.

What was Paul's aim in writing Philippians? _____

12. His aim was that they would rejoice with him.

Philippians 2:17-18:

Even if I am to be poured as a libation (or killed) upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

Where was Paul when he wrote this letter? _____

13. Paul was in prison. He knew that he might be killed there. Yet his heart was full of joy and thanksgiving. He set a good example for us. He showed us what can be done in a hard place.

Perhaps you are having something very hard in your life right now. Perhaps you are very sad. Perhaps you are complaining to God about it. God can change your thoughts. He can give you joy. Stop now and ask God to make you like Paul when he was in trouble.

14. What was Paul's aim in writing Philippians? _____

Where was Paul when he wrote this letter? _____

WEEK 7: PHILIPPIANS

DAY 3: PUSH TOWARD THE HIGH CALL IN CHRIST

1. Yesterday we learned Paul's aim in writing Philippians.

What was his aim? _____

Where was he when he wrote this letter? _____

2. His aim was that they would rejoice with him. He was in prison. One reason why Paul could rejoice was that he was always going forward. He wanted all people to hear the gospel. He always did the things which helped with this work. Rejoicing helped him to bring people to Christ. He saw that he was going forward even though he was in prison. He told the Philippians also how to push forward. This is what we will learn today.

- (1) God wants us to forget the past things in our lives.
- (2) He wants us instead to push forward toward the high call in Christ.

Take your Bible now and read Philippians 3:7 to 14. Are you troubled about some bad things which have happened to you in the past?

3. Some people are very much troubled about such things. They keep remembering bad things which have happened. But Paul did not let those things trouble him.

Philippians 3:13:

... forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead ...

From this verse, what did Paul do with the bad things which had happened?

4. He forgot them. He did not let them trouble him. Many bad things had happened to Paul. He had been beaten, put into prison, and stoned. He had been in a ship which sank, and in many other dangers. But he did not try to remember these things. He did not pity himself. He did not fear.

Paul was pushing towards the high call in Christ. He was pushing towards his goal. When we think of pushing towards a goal, we think of a runner. He is in a race. He wants to win. He wants the prize.

Should a runner keep looking back if he wants to win? _____



5. He should not look back. If he looks back he may stumble. He will be delayed. He will not win the prize.

A secondary school was having a sports day. Seventeen runners were in a race. They ran around the big track. One runner was named Mark. Mark looked back to see how far away the next runner was. He wanted to see if he could win. But looking back delayed him for a moment. In that moment, the runner who was behind ran ahead. He won the race. Mark lost because he looked back.

What things must we forget as we push to the high call of Christ?

6. There are the things which are past. They are the bad things which have happened to us. We should not keep these things in our minds. We should forget them. We should lay them aside. A good runner must not look back. He must look ahead. The Christian too must not keep looking back. He must look ahead to his high call.

Philippians 3:13-14:

... forgetting what lies behind and straining (or pushing) toward what lies ahead, I press (or push) on toward the goal for the prize of the upward (or high) call of God in Christ Jesus.

In whom is the high call toward which we push? _____

7. The high call is in Christ. We are called to be like him. God calls us to this high work. This is the call to which we push forward. We are to live high, good lives. We are to look at Christ as our example. When we look at him we can push forward with a happy spirit. Looking back makes us slow down and become discouraged.

What should we do with the bad things that have happened to us in the past?

8. We should forget them. If we look back at the things that have not gone well, it will be hard to go forward. We can become discouraged. Paul could have sat in prison and thought about his beatings and his chains. He could have stopped trying to serve God. But he did not. He looked at Jesus. He pushed forward in the work.

What should we do towards the high call in Christ? _____

9. We should push forward to the high call in Christ. A pastor in Johannesburg traveled on the train every day. He saw that preachers sometimes stood up and preached to those in the train. He knew that this was permitted. It seemed a good thing to do, so one day he got up in the train and began to preach.

But there were some bad men on that train. They started to fight with him. In the end he was put in prison even though he had done nothing wrong. After that he had trouble preaching. Every time he started to prepare a sermon he looked back to that bad experience. After awhile he gave up preaching. He was no longer pushing toward the high call in Christ.

What should the pastor have done with this past thing?

10. He should have forgotten it. Perhaps he could not do this himself. He would have to ask God to help him. By God's help he could stop thinking about it. When we keep looking at past things, we do not keep pushing toward the high call. We are not looking at Christ. To push toward the high call means never to give up. If someone speaks evil of us, we still keep on serving the Lord. If only a few come to church, we come anyway. If it is hard to witness, we do it anyway. If it is hard to find time to read the Bible, we take time anyway. We always push toward the high call in Christ. We do not stop.

To whom did Paul say, "Push toward the high call in Christ"?

11. He said this to the Philippians. He wanted to encourage them. They too were having troubles as Paul was. They were suffering for their faith in Christ. Paul wanted them to push forward.

Philippians 1:29:

For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake.

What high thing should we push towards? _____

12. We should do this towards the high call. Christ calls us to keep on. He calls us to be like himself. He also calls us to heaven. We should not stop going. Paul had a friend who did stop. His name was Demas. Demas worked with Paul, preaching the gospel. But he did not get much money this way. After awhile he got discouraged about this. He stopped working with Paul.

2 Timothy 4:10:

For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me.

Instead of remembering the bad things, what should we do about the high call in Christ?

13. We should push towards it. Paul had another friend who pushed on. His name was Epaphroditus. We have seen how Paul sent him to help the Philippians. This man worked very hard with Paul. There was so much work, it never seemed to get done. But Epaphroditus pushed on even when he was ill. Paul told the Philippians about him. He said that he was so ill he nearly died. Yet Epaphroditus never stopped serving the Lord along with Paul.

Would you like to be like Epaphroditus who pushed on towards the high call in Christ?

14. I would like to be like him. God does not want us to give up in Christian lives. He does not want us to stop living for him. He does not want us to keep thinking of the bad things which have happened.

What does God want us to do for the future? _____

15. He wants us to push on towards the high call in Christ. We should always be going forward. We should be looking at Jesus.

What does God want us to do about the past things in our lives?

16. He wants us to forget them.

Write Yes beside the things we can do to push forward. Write No beside the things that will take us back.

- _____ Go to church every Sunday even when others do not.
- _____ Read the Bible every day even when there is little time.
- _____ Refuse to teach a Sunday School class because someone said you did not teach well.
- _____ Look for a chance to witness every day.
- _____ Rejoice in the Lord even when things are hard.
- _____ Stop praying for a person who is hard to win to Christ.
- _____ Stop being a preacher because it does not pay well.
- _____ Faithfully give one tenth to God, even though it is hard to live with what is left.

17. We will talk about these in class.

From Philippians 3, what does God want us to do about the past things in our lives?

What does he want us to do for the future? _____

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WEEK 7: PHILIPPIANS

DAY 4: THINK OF OTHERS AS BETTER THAN YOURSELF

1 We have learned that Paul did not want the Philippians to stop in their Christian lives. He wanted them to be like runners in a race.

From Philippians 3, what does God want us to do about the past things in our lives?

What does he want us to do for the future? _____

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2. God wants us to forget past things. He wants us to push forward toward the high call in Christ. The Christian life is like a race. As we run this race, others are running with us. All of us Christians run the race together. We must work and win together. If we quarrel we will lose the race. But how can we work and win together? Paul tells us in Philippians. This is what we will learn today.

We can work together as Christians by thinking of others as better than ourselves.

Take your Bible now and read Philippians 2:3 to 10. Read verse 5 again. Whose mind must we have in order to think of others as better than ourselves?

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3. We must have the mind of Christ. What is the mind of Christ? We have read it in these verses.

Philippians 2:6-7:

who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant.

Jesus was God, but he did not try to be great. He did not try to be equal with God. Instead he chose to be a servant. When each of us has in mind to be a servant, we can work together. We have oneness.

Who should have the mind of Christ and think of others as better than themselves?

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4. You can say it is we ourselves, or Christians, or the Philippians. Paul was writing to a church. He wanted the Christians in Philippi to have oneness. We remember that he wrote this to the Ephesians. He told them to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the church. The Philippians also needed this. And we need it too.

Philippians 2:2:

Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

If we have the mind of Christ, whom will we think of as better than ourselves?

5. We will think of others as better than ourselves. This means other Christians. If you have worked in the church for a time, you know this is not easy. It is not always easy to work together. It is not easy to have the mind of Christ. The writer of Philippians knew this too. He told the people a way to work together.

Philippians 2:3:

Do nothing from selfishness or conceit (or pride), but in humility count others better than yourselves.

Who told the Philippians to think of others as better than themselves?

6. Paul did this. He was concerned that some people in Philippi were not working together. In this church there were two faithful women. Their names were Euodia and Syntyche. These two women had worked hard in the church. But one day they had an argument. After that they failed to agree and work together in the church.

Philippians 4:2:

I entreat (or beg) Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. And I ask you also, true yokefellow, help these women, for they have labored side by side with me in the gospel.

Do you think Euodia was thinking of Syntyche as better than herself?

7. These two women were not working well together. They were not thinking of each other as better than themselves. They did not have the mind of Christ.

What do you think happens when you do not think of others as better than yourself?

8. We will talk about this in class. It makes trouble. Many things can happen. We become proud of the things we do . We forget to be humble in everything. We forget to be servants of each other as Christ was to the world.

Philippians 2:8:

And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Jesus was God, but he did not try to be great. We can say that he thought of God as better than himself. He made himself lower. He obeyed the Father.

When Jesus thought this way, what did he do for us in this verse?

9. He died for us. He died on the cross for our sins. Although he was God, he did not try to be great like God. He became a servant. He even acted as if men were better than himself.

Mark 10:45:

For the Son of man also came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom (or payment) for many.

How should we think of others in order to humble ourselves and work well together in the church?

10. We should think of others as better than ourselves. We should love and respect them. We should want to help them. We should try to serve them. We should accept their thoughts and plans for the church. Of course, others in the church should do the same. But that is not our concern. We should be careful about what we do ourselves.

Timothy worked with Paul in the church. Look what Paul said about Timothy.

Philippians 2:20:

I have no one like him, who will be genuinely (or truly) anxious for your welfare (or good).

Do you think Timothy thought of others as better than himself?

11. I think he did. When he worked well with others, he showed that he was thinking in this way. Paul thought in this way too. This is what he once wrote about himself.

I Timothy 1:15:

Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners And I am the foremost (or worst) of sinners.

From Philippians, what will help us work together as Christians? _____

12. We must think of others as better than ourselves. Let us look at the verse again.

Philippians 2:3:

Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves.

Think of a church. Alpheus has much money. Marcus has great power to preach. Philemone has an important position in the town. These men all go to the same church.

Will it be hard or easy for these people to think of the others as better than themselves?

What verse tells us to do this? _____

13. Philippians 2:3 tells us about this. It will be hard to do. But if we honour Christ, it will help us. If the chief of your tribe is greatly honoured, you too feel honoured. And if Christ is honoured, all Christians can feel honoured. Then we can work together with joy.

From Philippians 2:3, what will help us work together as Christians?

14. We must think of others as better than ourselves. We see that the letter of Philippians is full of good things. Now it is time for you to find something for yourself. It is important that we do not always find the good things for you. You must learn to do this. You can find things in the Bible that touch your heart.

Take your Bible now and read Philippians 4:4 to 8. Read these verses until something speaks to you. Think about those words. Pray about them. Write what God is saying to you.

15. Be ready to tell the class what you have found.

From Philippians 2:3, what will help us work together as Christians?

WEEK 7: PHILIPPIANS
DAY 5: REVISION

Today is the time to go over what we have learned. Try to answer every question. Then go back to each week and find the answer. If you have not answered right, cross out your answer. Write the right answer above yours.

Questions from Week 5.

- 1. What is the big subject of Galatians? _____
- 2. What was Paul's aim in writing Galatians ? _____
- 3. How does Galatians say we are made right before God? _____

How does it say we are not made right? _____

- 4. What is the danger of teaching that we are saved by keeping laws?

- 5. Instead of slaves to laws, what are we when we trust Christ?

- 6. From Galatians 5, after we believe in Christ how should we walk?

Instead of the works of the flesh, what will we have in our lives?



Questions from Week 6.

- 7. What is the big subject of Ephesians? _____
- 8. What were Paul's aims in writing to the Ephesians?
 - (1) _____
 - (2) _____

9. Who make up the church?

(1) _____ (2) _____

10. From Ephesians 4:3, what should Christians keep in the church?

11. From Ephesians 4, what should Christians do when they have bad feelings towards others?

12. From Ephesians 5 and 6, what must families do to make the church strong?

13. From Ephesians 6, what can we do for God as we fight Satan with faith, prayer, and the other weapons?

Questions from Week 7.

14. What is the big subject of Philippians? _____

15. What was Paul's aim in writing Philippians? _____

Where was Paul when he wrote this letter? _____

16. From Philippians 3, what does God want us to do about the past things in our lives?

What does he want us to do for the future? _____

17. From Philippians 2:3, what will help us work together as Christians?

When you have finished all these questions, go back to page 96 Cover the answers! Try to answer all the questions.

WEEK 8: COLOSSIANS
DAY 1: THE BIG SUBJECT

1. You are ready to begin the last three weeks of your study. Do each lesson well so you can know and use God's word. Read from Colossians when you have time this week. It is a short book. And remember what we learned from Philipians.

From Philipians 2:3, what will help us work together as Christians?

2. We must think of others as better than ourselves. That is from Philipians. Now we go on to Colossians. In Colossians there is a very big subject. Paul is writing about the fulness of God. God shows himself fully in Christ. This is what Paul wanted to say in his letter. The big subject of Colossians is:

The fulness of God is in Christ.

Take your Bible now and see this big subject. Read Colossians 1:15 to 20. Read verse 6 again. From this verse, whose fulness is in Christ?

3. The fulness of God is in Christ. It is important for people to know this. It was important for the Colossians. We have seen that Paul did not start the church at Colossae. It seems he had not even visited it. But he wanted to help these people. He wanted them to know the truth about Christ.

What did Paul do to help the Colossians see the fulness of God in Christ?

4. He wrote them a letter. The Colossians were being tempted to follow false teaching. The teachers were saying that Christ was not fully God. They were saying that angels and spirits are as good as Christ. Some were saying that angels and spirits can help us more than Christ can. Paul said that this is not true.

In whom did Paul say is the fulness of God? _____

5. The fulness of God is in Christ. It is not in angels or spirits. The old religions of Africa teach much about ancestors. Some people teach that the ancestors are needed to talk to God for us. They believe that God is very far away. He never talks with men on earth. Some people in Bible times believed this too. They needed to know that God came to earth in Christ. He showed himself to men.

Colossians 2:2-3:

That their hearts may be encouraged as they are knit together in love, to have all the riches of assured understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

To what people did Paul write to show that the fulness of God is in Christ?

6. He wrote this to the Colossians. He told them that Christ is the only one to whom we can pray. Christ has something in him which no other person, angel, or spirit has.

Colossians 1:19:

For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell (or live).

What does Christ have in him, which no other person has? _____

7. The fulness of God is in Christ. This is the big subject of Colossians. The people of Colossae were being given false teaching. The teachers said that we should worship angels and spirits.

Did Paul agree with this teaching? _____

8. He did not agree with this. It troubled him to hear about it. Even today some people teach that we do not know God. They say that our ancestors know him. They say that only the ancestors have power to know him. Some say that Christ has power like one of the ancestors.

But what does the big subject of Colossians say about Christ?

9. The fulness of God is in Christ. He is not like one of the ancestors. Christ is God himself. He is God come to earth.

Colossians 1:15:

He (Christ) is the image of the invisible God.

Colossians 2:9:

For in him (Christ) the whole fulness of deity (or being God) dwells bodily.

Does the Bible say that the fulness of God is in any ancestors?

10. It is in Christ only. Some false teachers say that Adam was greater than Christ. He was the first man. But remember that Christ has something which Adam did not have.

What is the big subject of Colossians? _____

11. The big subject is: The fulness of God is in Christ. Paul wanted the Colossians to be strong and true. He wanted them to grow up in their faith. But first they had to be sure about Christ. They had to know who he is. They had to believe that he is God.

Do you think that we give Christ a big enough place in our preaching and in our meetings?

12. We will talk about this together. We may say much about Christ in church, and still not follow him at home. We may pray and sing songs of worship to Christ, but still wear charms to protect ourselves. Christ is all powerful and all knowing. He will not share his glory with others.

What is the big subject of Colossians? _____

13. The big subject is: The fulness of God is in Christ. This means that he is God. This was what the Colossians must understand. Then they could do the things God wanted them to do.

We are now studying Colossians. But do not forget the big subject of Philipians. What is it?

14. The big subject of Philippians is: Rejoicing in the Lord. Preaching these things will help your people grow strong.

What is the big subject of Colossians? _____



WEEK 8: COLOSSIANS
DAY 2: THE AIM - PUT CHRIST FIRST

1. Yesterday we learned that the Colosians needed to be taught.

What is the big subject of Colosians? _____

2. The big subject is: The fulness of God is in Christ. Paul had special aims in writing about this subject. He knew that the Colossians had false teachers. They were tempted to follow the teachings of men instead of Christ. They were thinking that there are other ways to God. These are Paul's aims in writing to the Colossians:

- (1) That they would not follow the religions of men.
- (2) That they would put Christ first.

Take your Bible now and read Colossians 2:1 to 6.

3. From these verses we see that all the wisdom of God is placed in Christ. The Christians at Colossae had received Christ. They needed to be rooted and built up in him. But some false teachers were giving them trouble.

Colossians 2:8:

See to it that no one makes a prey of you (or catches you) by philosophy and empty deceit (or lies), according to human (or man's) tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ.

Read this verse carefully again. Paul said the Colossians should not be caught by whose tradition?

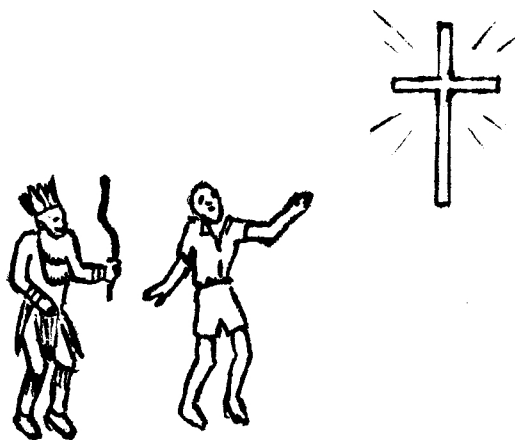
4. They should not be caught by man's tradition. They should not follow the customs or religions of men. When the Colossians received Christ, he was first in their lives. They followed only him. Now they were thinking of following other men's beliefs.

Colossians 2:6-7:

As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught.

Who wrote to the Colossians so they would not follow the religions of men?

5. Paul wrote to them. He was concerned about them. Today too there are many religions of men around us. Some who follow them have a little understanding of God. But it is not enough to bring them to Christ. Instead of lifting up Christ, they lift up some secret words. Or they have special clothes to wear. Or they use a secret sign to show which are their members. One group in South Africa uses the secret words, "Well of the mother of pigs." If you say those words, you may enter their meetings.



For whom did Paul have the aim that they would not follow the religions of men?

6. Paul had this aim for the Colossians. Some of the religions of men are very strange. Some say you must not tell others what you see in their meetings. This is far from the way of Christ. Some religions say you must punish yourself for your sins. Others say you must worship angels. Others say you must have visions. Others say you must keep many laws. Others again say you must worship all the spirits.

But what did Paul not want the Colossians to follow? _____

7. He did not want them to follow the religions of men. This was his first aim in writing to them. If they followed the religions of men, they would lose the true way to worship.

Colossians 3:1:

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Whom should the Colossians put first in their lives? _____

8. They should put Christ first. But the Christians at Colossae were being taught something else.

What was Paul's first aim in writing to them?

(1) _____

(2) That they would put Christ first.

9. His first aim was that they would not follow the religions of men. If they did this they would be putting Christ second.

But where did Paul want them to put Christ in their lives?

10. He wanted them to put Christ first. Then they would not be tempted to follow other things.

Colossians 2:6:

As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him.

In his first aim, what did Paul not want the Colossians to follow?

11. His aim was that they would not follow the religions of men. Some religions today do not allow children to come to the meetings. They do not want the children to know the secrets of the elders. But Christ loved the children. He wanted them to come to him. Some religions teach that we should punish ourselves for our sins. Others teach that we should worship angels or spirits.

If we worship angels or spirits, who will not be first in our lives?

12. Christ will not be first. Paul wrote to help us with this problem.

Colossians 1:18:

He (Christ) is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, first born from the dead, that in every thing he might be pre-eminent (or first).

What was Paul's second aim in writing to the Colossians?

(1) That they would not follow the religions of men.

(2) _____

13. His second aim was that they would put Christ first. But what does it mean to put Christ first? It means to worship nothing besides him. It also means to please him in everything we do.

Colossians 3:17:

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 was Paul's first aim in writing to the Colossians? _____

14. His first aim was that they would not follow the religions of men. Paul wanted the Colossians to grow strong in their spiritual lives.

Colossians 1:9-10:

And so, from the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God.

What was Paul's second aim in writing to the Colossians?

15. His second aim was that they would put Christ first. Read what these churches teach. Write Christ first beside the things which put him first. Write Not first beside those which do not put him first.

- _____ (1) All church members must wear certain clothes.
 - _____ (2) You must tell others about Christ.
 - _____ (3) You must give tithes and offerings to God.
 - _____ (4) Before you enter the church, you must say secret words.
 - _____ (5) You must believe that Christ is a prophet but not the Son of God.
-
-

16. We will talk about these in class.

What were Paul's aims in writing Colossians?

- (1) _____
 - (2) _____
-
-

WEEK 8: COLOSSIANS

DAY 3: DO NOT WORSHIP THINGS LIKE LAWS AND ANGELS

1. The first day we learned the big subject of Colossians. It is: The fulness of God is in Christ. Yesterday we learned Paul's aim in writing to the Colossians.

What are they?

(1) _____

(2) _____

2. His aims were that they not follow the religions of men, and that they put Christ first. The religions of men in Paul's day were like the religions of men today. Let us learn some of these religions. At the end of the lesson you will write three of them.

(1) Keeping laws

(4) Obeying visions

(2) Punishing yourself

(5) Worshipping spirits

(3) Worshipping angels

Take your Bible now and read Colossians 2:16 to 23. The religions Paul wrote about here, were they the truth of God or the religions of men?

3. They were the religions of men. Sometimes the religions of men sound very good. They promise great things. But if they are not God's truth, they will harm us. The first religion of men in this chapter is keeping laws.

Colossians 2:16:

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath.

All of these came from the law of Moses. Some teachers said Christians must keep all these laws. Paul said No. You remember that the Christians in Galatia also had false teaching.

What was Paul's aim in writing to the Galatians? _____

4. His aim for the Galatians was that they would not follow teachers of the law. Perhaps you remember how Paul explained the law. He said that the law was a helper to bring us to Christ. But after Christ came we did not need the law in the same way. If we put laws first, then we do not have Christ first.

Who besides the Galatians were tempted to follow the religion of men about laws?

5. The Colossians were tempted to do this. These people were tempted to leave Christ and follow a religion of men.

Colossians 2:20-21:

Why do you submit to regulations (or laws), "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" ... according to human precepts (or laws) and doctrines?

What was the first religion of men which the Colossians were tempted to follow?

6. The first one was keeping laws. Look at the religions again.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| (1) Keeping laws | (4) Obeying visions |
| (2) Punishing yourself | (5) Worshipping spirits |
| (3) Worshipping angels | |

Colossians 2:18:

Let no one disqualify you (or judge you), insisting on self-abasement (or punishing yourself).

From this verse, whom were some of the Colossians trying to punish?

7. They were trying to punish themselves. With some people, it is easy for them to see their sins. They know they have done wrong. But they do not know how to be forgiven. So they try to punish themselves. They go without food or water. They separate themselves from their friends. Some beat themselves. Others cut their bodies to show God that they want to please him.

Instead of punishing ourselves, who should we trust? _____

8. We should trust Christ. He took our punishment for us. We should keep him first and not follow the religions of men. Colossae was a busy place. Teachers of different religions passed through the city. They taught beliefs which were not true.

The first religion of man was keeping the law. What was the second religion the Colossians were tempted to follow?

9. It was the religion of punishing themselves. Look at the religions again.

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| (1) Keeping laws | (4) Obeying visions |
| (2) Punishing yourself | (5) Worshipping spirits |
| (3) Worshipping angels | |

Colossians 2:18:

Let no one disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels.

The Bible tells us that angels are good. They help us. But from this verse, what should we not do to them?

10. We should not worship angels. Let us see just two verses which tell us what angels do.

Psalms 34:7:

The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them.

Hebrews 1:13-14:

But to what angel has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet"? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation?

Angels are sent to help us. Do they have the fulness of God?

11. We have learned that they do not have the fulness of God. We should thank God for their help. We should never try to worship them.

Besides keeping laws and punishing themselves, what religion of men were the Colossians tempted to follow?

12. They were tempted to worship angels. The fourth religion of men was obeying visions. Some of the people were getting their beliefs from visions and dreams. If they dreamed a certain thing, then that became truth. They took their stand on their visions . They argued against anyone who did not accept all of their dreams.

Colossians 2:18:

Let no one disqualify you, insisting on self abasement and worship of angels, taking his stand on visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous or earthly mind.

Why do you think we should not take our religion from our visions and dreams?

What were the first two religions the Colossians were tempted to follow?

- (1) _____ (3) Worshipping angels
(2) _____ (4) Obeying visions
-
-

13. The first two religions of men were obeying laws and punishing themselves. We will talk in class about obeying visions. God does sometimes speak through visions and dreams. But Satan can speak this way too. If a dream does not agree with the Bible, then it is not from God. We should not obey it. We cannot find the way to serve God from dreams and visions only.

What was the fourth religion of men which the Colossians were tempted to follow?

14. They were tempted to make a religion of obeying dreams. We see some people doing this today. In their visions they hear someone telling them where to find medicine. Or they hear someone telling them to judge others. If they obey this instead of the word of God, they will have trouble.

Another religion of men in Colossae was worshipping spirits.

Colossians 2:8:

See to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe and not according to Christ.

What should we do to Christ, which we must not do to other spirits?

15. We should worship Christ or put him first. But we must not worship spirits. We must not fear them and try to please them. If we do, we are not truly worshipping Christ. We are not putting him first. The spirits belong to Satan. Satan has much power over the earth today. We sometimes see the work of his evil spirits. Some people respect this work. They try to worship these spirits.

Do the spirits have the fulness of God? _____

16. The spirits do not have the fulness of God.

Colossians 2:20:

If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the universe why do you live as if you still belonged to the world?

From this verse, if we do not belong to the world, whom should we not worship?

Write three other religions of men which the Colossians were tempted to follow.

(1) _____ (3) _____

(2) _____

17. We should not worship spirits. We should also not make a religion of keeping laws, punishing ourselves, worshipping angels, or obeying visions. We must worship Christ only. We must keep him first in our lives and in our church.

Your people need to hear these things. Prepare a sermon to preach from yesterday's and today's lessons. On another paper write the big things you will say. Bring the paper to class.

18. Write three religions of men which the Colossians were tempted to follow.

(1) _____ (3) _____

(3) _____

WEEK 8: COLOSSIANS

DAY 4: CHRIST HAS POWER OVER ALL THINGS

1. Write three religions of men which the Colossians were tempted to follow.

(1) _____ (2) _____

(2) _____

2. They were tempted to follow these religions: keeping laws, punishing themselves, worshipping angels, obeying visions, and worshipping spirits. The Colossians needed help. They needed someone to lift up Christ. That is what Paul did. In this short letter he wrote many important things. He showed in many ways that Christ is God. We will look at three ways. At the end of the lesson, you will write two.

Paul showed that Christ is God by saying:

- (1) Christ is the image of God.
- (2) All things were created through Christ.
- (3) Christ has power over all things.

Take your Bible now and read Colossians 2:8 to 15.

3. Paul lifted up Christ in every part of this letter. He told the Colossians to put Christ first. But who is Christ that he should be put first? Should the Colossians not put God first? Paul could have said that. But the false teachers said that God was far off. He would not come near earth. Paul showed that God did come to earth. We have seen this in the big subject of Colossians.

Colossians 1:15:

He is the image of the invisible God (or God who cannot be seen), the first-born of all creation.

Who is the image of God? _____

4. This is Christ. This is another way of saying that the fulness of God is in Christ. The Bible tells us that no one can see God. He is a spirit. If God wanted us to see him he would have to put on a body. He did this. He sent his Son who is one with him. Christ came to show us what his Father is like. Now we can see the image of the one who cannot be seen. We can know what he is like.

Of whom is Christ the image? _____

5. He is the image of God. He showed what God is like. He is God. When I look in the mirror, I see my image. I know it is I. That is the way I am. We can say that God shows himself in a mirror. When we look at it we see the image. We see Christ. And we know we are seeing God.

Why is it important to know that Christ is God? Remember the problems of the Colossians. They were tempted to leave Christ and follow the religions of men. If they did this, they would be leaving God.

Can we see God directly? _____

How can we see him? _____

6. We cannot see God directly. We see him in Christ. God showed this to Paul. And Paul wrote it down for us.

Colossians 2:9:

For in him (Christ) the whole fulness of deity (or being God) dwells bodily.

Who is Christ? _____

7. Christ is God. This is what Paul is showing in Colossians.

What is the first thing Paul says to show this?

- (1) _____
- (2) All things were created through Christ.
- (3) Christ has power over all things.

8. First, Paul says that Christ is the image of God. Then he shows that Christ is also the Creator.

Colossians 1:16:

For in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities – all things were created through him and for him.

From this verse, how many things were created through Christ? _____

9. All things were created through him. This is Paul's second way of showing that he is God. For we know that God is the only one who can create things. Some people at Colossae thought the world was only evil. They said that God did not create the world. They were wrong. God says that he did create the world. He did it through someone.

Through whom were all things created? _____

10. This is through Christ. Christ is the Creator. This shows that Christ is God. It is hard for us to think that two people are one person. But this is what the Bible explains to us. And it is not just two people it is three people. The holy Spirit is God too. These three - the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit - are one God. Some people say we are wrong because we have three Gods. No, we have one God.

What did Christ do in the beginning with the Father and the Holy Spirit that shows us he is God?

11. He created all things. As God, Christ is the Creator. After he created this world, he did not leave it.

Colossians 1:17:

He (Christ) is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Christ helped to create all things. And he is still here, holding them together.

Paul showed that Christ is God. The second thing he said to show this was that all things were created through Christ. What was the first thing he said?

12. First he said that Christ is the image of God.

What is the second thing Paul said to show that Christ is God?

(1) Christ is the image of God.

(2) _____

(3) Christ has power over all things.

13. Paul said that all things were created through Christ. Then he showed that God did not forget the things he created. He is still holding them together. He has put them all under the power of someone.

Colossians 2:10:

and you have come to fulness of life in him (Christ), who is the head of all rule and authority (or power).

Who is the head of all rule and power? _____

14. Christ is the head of all power. He has power over everything. He has power over the angels. He has power over Satan, though he still allows Satan to work for a time. He has power over the spirits. He has power over kings and governments. He has power over us.

When he says that Christ has power over all things, who does Paul show that Christ is? _____

15. He shows that Christ is God.

As God, what does Christ have over all things? _____

16. He has power over all things. He has all of God's power. God has put all his power and rule into Christ.

Colossians 2:15:

He (God) disarmed (or defeated) the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him (Christ).

Is there any power over Christ? _____

17. There is no power over Christ. Nothing can defeat him. He is God.

What is the third thing Paul says to show that Christ is God?

(1) Christ is the image of God.

(2) All things were created through Christ.

(3) _____

18. The third thing Paul says is that Christ has power over all things. But Paul does not stop here. He shows that Christ uses his power for us. Christ uses his power to make us alive as he made the Colossians alive. He uses his power to make us strong.

Colossians 1:11:

May you be strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy.

Who is Paul showing that Christ is? _____

19. Paul shows that Christ is God.

Write two of the three things Paul wrote in Colossians to show that Christ is God.

(1) _____

(2) _____

20. Paul wrote these things to show that Christ is God: Christ is the image of God. All things were created through Christ. Christ has power over all things.

It is wonderful to think about all this. Christ is God and he loves us. He died on the cross to save us. He lives today to help us. He promises to hear us when we pray.

Do you think we should worship anyone besides Christ? _____

21. It would be wrong to do this. We will talk about it in class.

Write two things Paul wrote in Colossians to show that Christ is God.

(1) _____

(2) _____

WEEK 8: COLOSSIANS

DAY 5: WE MUST PUT ON THE NEW NATURE

1. We hope you are enjoying this study of the New Testament. You have learned many things. As you remember them you will use them in your life.

Write two things Paul wrote in Colossians to show that Christ is God.

(1) _____

(2) _____

2. Paul wrote that Christ is the image of God. All things were created through Christ. And Christ has power over all things. Then Paul showed that if Christ is God, then he can help us overcome sin. He can help us live new lives. This is what Paul wrote about in Colossians chapters 3 and 4. He showed what we must do to overcome sin. This is what we will learn today.

From Colossians 3, we can overcome sin by doing two things:

(1) We must put away the old deeds.

(2) We must put on the new nature.

Take your Bible now and read Colossians 3:5 to 13. Read verse 8 again. What are some of the old deeds which we must put away?

3. We must put away anger, wrath or bad feelings, malice or hate, slander or gossip, foul or evil talk. Remember that the Colossians were tempted to follow the religions of men. Some of them believed they could live good lives by punishing themselves. Some went without food for a long time. Others beat themselves. Others refused to go near women.

What were these people trying to overcome? _____

4. They were trying to overcome sin. But punishing themselves did not help. They were not free from sin in their lives. Paul told them this was not God's way of overcoming sin.

Colossians 2:23:

These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting rigor of devotion (or making us strong) and self-abasement and severity (or punishment) to the body, but they are of no value in checking (or stopping) the indulgence of the flesh (or sinning to please ourselves).

This verse means that the religions of men look as if they help. They seem to help us obey. They seem to help us humble ourselves. But they do not really help. We still try to please ourselves. We need God's help.

Can the religions of men stop us from sinning? _____

5. They do not stop us. They do not help us overcome sin in our lives. Paul knew this from his own life. Even though he kept the Jewish laws, he did not overcome sin. Paul told them two things to do.

- (1) Put away old deeds.
- (2) Put on the new nature.

By whose help should we put away the old deeds? _____

6. We can do this by the help of God or Christ. We must see that men's religions do not work. But God's way works. By his help we put off something which does not work and put on something which does work. It is like taking off an old blanket which is full of holes. It does not keep you warm. When we put on the new nature it is like putting on a new blanket. The new blanket is thick and strong. It keeps you warm.

In God's way of overcoming sin, we put away something and put on the new nature. What do we put away?

7. We do this to the old deeds. We can do it by God's help. The old deeds of sin ruled us before we were saved. Some Colossians were still letting the old deeds rule them. Perhaps some of your people are doing this too.

Colossians 3:8-9:

But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another.

What does Paul say we should do with the old deeds? _____

8. We must put them away. We cannot do this by punishing ourselves. But we can do it by trusting Christ. Unless we do this we cannot overcome sin in our lives. God says we should stop the old sins. He cannot look at them. He hates them. They make him turn away from us. But by his help we can stop anger, hate, evil talk, and lying. Paul also tells other things we can stop.

Colossians 3:5:

Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and covetousness, which is idolatry.

We must put Christ first. We must think of him. We must pray. We must turn away from wrong things. We must put away the old deeds.

But what should we do if we fail sometimes and do one of the old deeds again?

9. We will talk about this in class. If we do something wrong we should confess it right away. We must show God that we do not want it. God will forgive and we will have more power to refuse temptation next time. All of this is part of the first way to overcome sin.

What is the first thing Paul wrote that we should do to overcome sin?

(1) _____

(2) Put on the new nature.

10. We must put away the old deeds. But that is only the first part. If we only do this we will not overcome sin. The second thing we must do is to put on the new nature.

It is something like the wool of a sheep. Each year the wool of the sheep is cut off. Then new wool grows in place of the old wool. This new wool is clean and soft. The sheep looks new. But our new nature is better than new wool. Wool is on the outside. But a new nature is on the inside. It changes what we think and how we feel. It changes what we want.

Do you think God is pleased if we only stop doing bad things but do no good things?

11. God wants us to be completely changed. He wants us to do new things. We can do this when we are changed inside.

Colossians 3:9-10:

... seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

In order to overcome sin, what must we put on? _____

12. We must put on the new nature. The new nature is seen in the new deeds of love which we do. Christ helps us to do good things. We may say that the new nature is Christ in us.

Colossians 3:12-13:

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and ... forgiving each other.

From this verse, what do you think God wants us to do with the new nature?

13. You can answer in different ways. You can say that he wants us to overcome sin. Or that he wants us to do good things. Or that he wants us to be kind to others. Here are some other things he wants us to do.

Colossians 4:2,6:

Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving ... Conduct yourselves wisely toward outsiders, making the most of the time. Let your speech always be gracious.

We cannot overcome sin by putting away old deeds only. If we do that we are like an animal which steals chickens. After he eats, he walks around for a while doing no harm. But soon he returns to his evil way of stealing chickens.

Putting away the old deeds is the first thing to do to overcome sin. What is the second?

14. We must put on the new nature. We must let Christ do his work in changing us. We must let Christ live in us and rule us. Then his life will be seen in us.

Colossians 3:15:

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.

What is the first thing we must do to overcome sin? _____

15. We must put away the old deeds. Perhaps it is hard to understand how this works. We cannot change ourselves. And yet we must work with God as he changes us. By our own will we let his life show through ours.

What is the second thing we must do to overcome sin? _____

16. We must put on the new nature. People should be able to see that Christians are different. Paul says that Christian wives will obey their husbands. Christian husbands will love their wives. Christian children will obey their parents. Christian parents will not make their children angry. Christian workers will do good work to please God.

Do you think that people who are not Christians see a difference in the people of your church?

Take your Bible now to find something which touches your heart. Read Colossians 3:18 to 4:2. Read until something speaks to you. Write what you feel God is saying to you from these words.

17. What two things from Colossians 3 should we do to overcome sin?

(1) _____

(2) _____