

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Who Is Most Important
Colossians 1:1-21

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.
2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)
3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

See suggestions for an interest center given in Worship Time ideas.

Bible Study Leader:

Have a white board or large piece of paper available for listing characteristics of Christ.

In your leading, you will be using material from both the “Introduction to Colossians” (which is available as a guide—online under this Unit of Study, 21-48-00-en) and the Background printed below as a part of the **Teacher Preparation** section. It would be good to have both in hand when you actually lead the session.

Worship Time Leader:

Talk with leader of “**Youth!!! Take Ten**” about using the activity suggested for them as part of the worship time. You may want to ask another member to prepare this activity if there are no youth in your group.

Create an interest center with a world map or globe. Use pictures or articles of clothing from around the world to further interest in today emphasis.

Make the number of copies needed (as suggested) of each of the final two pages of this session. The first is for the youth-led reading. The second is for the conclusion of the service to be read by the whole congregation.

Music Sources:

Blessed Be Your Name, *The Worship Hymnal* # 26, CCLI # 3798438

How Great Is Our God, *The Worship Hymnal* # 5, CCLI # 4348399

Your Grace Still Amazes Me, CCLI # 3262500

Jesus is Lord of All, *The Worship Hymnal* #294; CCLI # 26478

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Who Is Most Important

Focal Text

Colossians 1:1-23

Background Text

Colossians 1:1-23

Main Idea

Because Christ is supreme in revealing God and providing reconciliation, Christ deserves the supreme place in our lives.

Question to Explore

Who is the most important person in your life?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to identify who Christ is and decide how they will make Christ the most important person in their lives.

Gathering together:

Sing **Blessed Be Your Name**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 26, CCLI# 3798438

First thoughts:

The theme of the book of Colossians is simply expressed as: Christ is All. He is all I need. He is everything. We focus today on the centrality of Christ.

These powerful words may help us focus on Paul's intent for writing this book. People in the small city of Colossae and in that region needed to be reminded that Christ is all. He is all we need. He is everything. No one lives apart from his persevering grace.

People who live today need that same reminder. We personally need that reminder. Economic and political crises around the world exist. Environmental disasters lurk. Wars never cease. Yet, in the midst of these frightening realities, we rest sure in the hope that Christ is everything we need. How that actually becomes a reality to us

depends upon our ability and desire to rest in Him and his promises. Our study of Colossians may strengthen our faith to do just that.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Who Is Most Important

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Colossians 1:1-23

Background Text

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Question to Explore

Who is the most important person in your life?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to identify who Christ is and decide how they will make Christ the most important person in their lives.

Introduction to your personal study:

There is much conversation today about what postmodernism is. For young adults today, this world view is just the way it is. For older people who were more influenced by the 20th century than by the 21st century, there may be conflict. For those of us who lived a large portion of our lives under “modernism”, there is the memory of science as the answer to life’s problems. We were a hopeful generation who felt that with better education, economic help for poorer countries, and new solutions to health care issues – that we would live to see a better world before we died.

For people of faith, there was always the implication that we were hopelessly out of step with what the future held. Postmodern thinkers are more open to spirituality, relationships, and environmental issues. At the same time, they seem to want to squeeze every moment of pleasure from life. Extreme sports, instant communication,

and a spiritual life that is relationship based and needs oriented are marks of the postmodern thinker.

Reading Colossians may cause us to reflect on how at home the postmodern thinker might have been in Colossae. Syncretism is an ages-old phenomenon of blending together religions of one kind or another or blending religious expression with ideas of philosophy. This was present in Colossae; it is present in the postmodern thought of today.

Paul said in verse 8 of chapter 2, ***“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.”*** That admonition is as current today as it was in AD 62.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the **“Introduction”** article found at the beginning of this series of Bible Study and Worship sessions (Bible Teaching #.....). The person who downloaded this session should have that material for you, as well.

Colossians is one of the prison epistles written by Paul while he was in prison in Rome. These included Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

Tychicus carried the letter to the Ephesians.
Epaproditis carried the letter to the Philippians.
Epaphras carried the letter to the Colossians.
Onesimus carried the letter to Philemon.

These men were friends of Paul who ministered with and to Paul during his imprisonment in Rome.

Now let's look at the focus or main emphasis of each of Paul's letters that we just named:

Ephesians concerns itself with the body of believers called the church.

Philippians shows the church living out the faith in Christ with emphasis on becoming a servant.

Colossians directs our attention to the head of the body who is Christ.

Philemon shows Christianity in action.

As for Colossians: The letter is thought to have been written in 62 A.D. There is no record that Paul visited Colossae. Converts from Paul's ministry in Ephesus may have formed the nucleus of the church in Colossae.

Focusing on the Meaning:

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Who Is Most Important – 21-48-01-en

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We may break down today's passage in the following way:

- A. Introduction (1:1-14)
 - a. Salutation (1: 1, 2)
 - b. Prayer of thanksgiving (1:3-8)
 - c. Prayer of petition (1:9-14)

- B. The Supremacy of Christ (1:15-23)
 - a. The scope of Christ's supremacy (1:15-18)
 - b. The basis for Christ's supremacy (1:19-23)
 - 1. The fullness of God in Christ (1:19)
 - 2. The reconciling work of Christ (1:20-23)

Paul begins the letter by declaring himself to be an apostle. The word means "one sent". At its deepest level it means an authorized spokesman for God, one commissioned and empowered to act as his representative. This identification encourages respect for what he would say. He speaks with authority.

Paul includes Timothy in the salutation of the letter.

Even though Paul invokes his apostolic authority, he speaks in a loving way "to the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae" (v. 2, RSV). He speaks grace and peace to these brothers.

As Paul often does, his letter then tells the believers of the thankful prayer Paul makes to God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He commends them for their faith in Christ Jesus and their love for others.

In his prayers, Paul asked for a walk that is fruitful, growing in knowledge of God, strengthened by God's power and gratitude to God for the blessings of redemption.

Paul reminds the readers that "all over this world this gospel in producing fruit and growing" (v. 6, RSV).

As Paul often does, he commends a fellow worker. "You have learned (God's grace) from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the spirit" (v. 7). Paul has left a beautiful example of how we are to honour and appreciate those who work with us in spreading the gospel.

In verse 8, Paul speaks of his asking God to fill the believers at Colossae with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. This is one of six times that Paul speaks of wisdom in this short epistle.

Verse 9 speaks of “giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light”. Dr. Curtis Vaughn has said that “appeals for thanksgiving run through Colossians like the refrain of a song.” It may be that those who lack a deep sense of thankfulness to God are especially vulnerable to doubt and spiritual delusion.

After Paul’s introductory remarks in vv. 1-14, he enters into a strong passage on the supremacy of Christ.

His descriptive phrases are strong reminders of who Christ is

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. By Him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. Thrones, power, rulers, or authorities – all things were created by him and for him.

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. The whole creation is preserved from disbanding and running into confusion. This represents the principle of cohesion in the universe -Christ is over creation because he made it.

He is the head of the church. He is the chief, the leader. He guides and governs it. The Church is the body of Christ – a living organism. It is the means by which Christ carries out his purposes and performs his work. We, as the Church, are the hands and feet of God himself.

He is the beginning and the first-born among the dead. Christ existed before the foundation of the world and his resurrection is the way in which we have hope of an eternal life.

All of God resides in Christ – all fullness dwells. Jesus Christ is absolutely everything the Christian needs.

Through Christ all things are reconciled to God.

These strong statements were necessary because there was a group of people in Colossae to whom Christ was not the triumphant Redeemer to whom all authority in heaven and on earth had been committed. At best he was only one of many spirit beings who bridged the space between God and man.

The Greek word image refers to a representation or reproduction with precise likeness. Paul says Jesus was that – a representation of God the Creator-Father. But more, the word also means manifestation. More than being in the likeness of God, as all persons created, Jesus was God himself in human incarnation. The Colossians knew that Paul was countering the Gnostic philosophy that Christ was one expression among many emanations from God, or that He was not truly or fully human. Paul made it clear: in

the body of one human, Jesus of Nazareth, God was incarnated. This is clear evidence that there is truly only one way to God.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

Every person that God entrusts to you as their teacher needs to make Jesus the most important person in their lives. This includes small children and older adults. Your task this week as their teacher is to do your best to help all of them make that decision and to renew that pledge and commitment each day. Remember that children need to hear over and over that Jesus loves them – and to hear it in several ways. They learn from that to respond by loving Him in return.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this session bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Who Is Most Important

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Colossians 1:1-23

Background Text

Colossians 1:1-23

Main Idea

Because Christ is supreme in revealing God and providing reconciliation, Christ deserves the supreme place in our lives.

Question to Explore

Who is the most important person in your life?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to identify who Christ is and decide how they will make Christ the most important person in their lives.

Connect with Life:

Distribute paper and pens to the group. If you have younger children present, give them crayons and ask them to draw a picture of someone they like. Then ask older children, youth, and adults to make a list of six to ten people (or groups of people) who are the most important people in their lives.

Guide the Study:

Introduce and discuss the concept of postmodern thought which you studied in the Teacher Preparation material. **Watch your time here as this is a high-interest subject and could involve more time than is available.**

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Who Is Most Important – 21-48-01-en

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Discuss information from the Background material. Emphasize that Paul is writing from prison.

Have someone read the introductory statements in Colossians 1:14.

Read again verses 1-3.

Comment on the thanksgiving which Paul expresses for the believers in Colossae.

Seek opinions: How important is it to express to others our appreciation for what they mean in our life?

Another person may read Colossians 1: 4-6.

This expresses three dimension of Christian experience:
upward to God
outward to the brethren
forward to God's future for us

Have a different person read Colossians 1:8-9.

The gospel is true, universal, fruitful, growing.

Read Colossians 1:9-14.

Encourage an answer: What is Paul's prayer for the church in Colossae?

Here are the answers to that question:

- That they be filled with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding;
- that they live a life worthy of the Lord that pleases Him in every way;
- that there is fruit in good works and growth in the knowledge of God;
- that they are strengthened with power so that they would have great endurance and patience. (Patience may be seen as the capacity to bear with people without becoming embittered).
-

Each one of these concepts will need time to discuss and understand.

Perhaps someone would confirm this: Is this a prayer you would want someone to pray for you?

Suggest that they each answer this but **not aloud**: Is there someone for whom you need to pray this prayer?

Verse 12 emphasized giving thanks which is the master motive of the Christian soul.

Have someone read Colossians 1: 15-21.

Ask: What characteristics of Christ are listed here? Use a white board or large piece of newsprint to write these down in bold letters.

The fullness of Christ. Paul's purpose is to instruct a questioning faith and enrich daily Christian living. In these verses we see Christ's pre-eminence in relationship to the Father; pre-eminence in God's heart; pre-eminence in status and authority. He is Redeemer and thus pre-eminent in responsibility.

Image of the invisible God

Firstborn over all creation

By Him, all things were created – to fulfill his aims, serve His purpose and promote His glory

He is before all things

He holds all things together

He is the head of the church

He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead

All the fullness of God dwells in him

He will reconcile all things to himself.

Encourage a discussion by guiding the group to consider some aspect of Christ's character that stood out to them from this listing. Give time for comments from the group.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the session by and for themselves.

Share: There exist three things a Christian must never forget:

A Christian must never forget that Christ is Lord of the universe. This realization will strengthen us in the fearful storm of life when it seems that evil and tragedy rule.

A Christian must never forget that Christ is the Lord of the Church. We represent Christ in the world.

A Christian must never forget that Christ is his or her Lord.

Close by asking someone to pray, thanking God that Jesus is Lord of the **universe, our church, and ourselves.**

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

YOUTH!!! TAKE TEN

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Who Is Most Important Colossians 1:1-21

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

1

Who Is Most Important?

Using the list of the characteristics of Christ studied in the Bible Study Time, prepare a worship reading to be used in the Worship Time that will follow in just a few minutes. Use different people to dramatically say the descriptions; use a drum beat between phrases; use repetition. In other words, help the congregation to grasp how incredible these descriptive words are. Your imagination should help you come up with new ideas.

Image of the invisible God

Firstborn over all creation

By Him, all things were created

He is before all things

He holds all things together

He is the head of the church

He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead

All the fullness of God dwells in him

He will reconcile all things to himself.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)

Who Is Most Important Colossians 1:1-21

This session may be used as a missions outreach. If your home church has access to missionaries or immigrants who have stories of how God is at work around the world, ask them to share. Emphasize Colossians 1:6 as the scriptural theme for worship.

Beginning the Service:

Choose one or more songs from the following:

How Great Is Our God, *The Worship Hymnal* # 5, CCLI# 4348399

Your Grace Still Amazes Me, CCLI # 3262500

Jesus is Lord of All, *The Worship Hymnal* #294; CCLI#26478

Note to worship leader: If your youth group has prepared a dramatic interpretation of the characteristics of Christ given in the study today, ask them to present it either at the beginning or end of the worship time. If you do not have a youth group, you may want to use the suggestions given in “**Youth!!! Take Ten**” to ask someone in the group to prepare an effective presentation

Offering:

Praying for the World:

Today’s worship time includes a number of stories of God’s activity around the world and encourages prayer for those situations.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God’s call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

All Over This World **Colossians 1:6**

Verse 6 of Colossians 1 says ***“All over this world this gospel is producing fruit and growing, just as it has been among you since the day you heard it and understood God’s grace in all its truth.”*** (RSV)

Paul’s world was not as big as our world. However, his vision was enormous. On what is called the missionary journeys of Paul, he helped to spread the gospel from Jerusalem in what is now again called Israel throughout much of the near Mideast and then across the Mediterranean through Greece to Rome in Italy.

Today’s missionary enterprise can say with Paul, ***“All over this world this gospel is producing fruit and growing, just as it has been among you since the day you heard it and understood God’s grace in all its truth”.***

Today we want to highlight areas where the gospel is being preached – sometimes under very difficult circumstances. As we do that we remind ourselves of the focus of our study today which is the fact of Christ as all we need.

A group of young Chuabo girls of Mozambique are studying the Bible. We can pray that they are faithful and continue to grow in their knowledge and understanding of God and His plan for their lives. (Ask someone to lead in that prayer).

Many are trying to reach the Bridge people of Indonesia through the use of Media: music, drama, film, and radio broadcasts. Pray for these endeavours to be protected from the enemy and for authentic media to be produced that will honour the message of the Saviour. Pray that the Lord will provide Bridge people to participate in the creation of these media products, enabling the production of natural, interesting, and believable media that will draw the Bridge people to the Father. (Ask someone to lead in prayer).

More than 30 unreached people groups are scattered over Dagestan, the “Land of the Mountains” in southern Russia. With a population of 2.5 million people – only eight percent of which is Russian – Dagestan is the center of Islam in Russia. Pray that the home church materials available in Russian may be of use to these people. (Ask someone to lead in prayer).

In Bangladesh, two new classes are receiving vocational training at centers run by Christians. Pray that the students will be diligent and will understand the course work. Ask for a good atmosphere in the classroom and for opportunities to build relationships both in and outside the classroom. Pray for the Christian instructor to teach well and to discern who among the students might be open to hear about God’s invitation to eternal life through faith in Jesus. (Ask someone to lead in prayer.)

Fulani women go to great lengths to be beautiful. They endure hours of pain and days of discomfort from the tattooing of their lower lip and chin. Many buy lotions to lighten their skin. Extra money is spent on new hairstyles, fine clothes, and jewelry because their worth is tied to physical appearance. Pray for Fulani women to know that they are loved and accepted by Christ no matter how they appear to the world. Pray for them to surrender their hearts to Christ and to serve Him. Give thanks to the Lord for believing Fulani women whose faithful love for their husbands bear testimony to their devotion and love for God in the face of rejection by other family members, even non-believing husbands. Pray for the gentle, quiet spirits of these believers to draw not only their husbands, but other Fulani women to the Lord. (Ask someone to lead in prayer).

Give opportunity for your group to share about ways in which they are aware of the gospel spreading in today's world. Include information about your own city or town. Spend the remainder of your worship time in prayer for you own part in the spreading of the good news about Christ who is all we need.

Call to Commitment: Many Christian laypersons are involved in missionary endeavours around the world. As a call to commitment, encourage members to consider what God might have them do to enlarge their service area.

Concluding the Service:

Make enough copies of the reading of Psalms 34:1-5 so that everyone in the service can read the passage aloud as a group. Ask the group to stand and read the passage together.

Psalms 34:1-5 (from the New English Bible)

***“I will bless the Lord continually;
his praise shall be always on my lips.***

***In the Lord I will glory;
the humble shall hear and be glad.***

***O glorify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt his name together.***

***I sought the Lord's help and he answered me;
he set me free from all my terrors.***

***Look towards him and shine with joy;
no longer hang your heads in shame.”***

If you have youth who will do this reading during the Worship Time, then make a copy for each one who will be participating. Note the instructions to the youth in the section: "Youth: Take Ten".

**Image of the invisible God
Firstborn over all creation
By Him, all things were created
He is before all things
He holds all things together
He is the head of the church
He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead
All the fullness of God dwells in him
He will reconcile all things to himself.**

+++++(Cut here)+++++

**Image of the invisible God
Firstborn over all creation
By Him, all things were created
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In the Lord I will glory;
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O glorify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt his name together.

I sought the Lord’s help and he answered me;
he set me free from all my terrors.

Look towards him and shine with joy;
no longer hang your heads in shame.”

++++++(Cut here)++++++

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