Supreme
Putting Christ First
COLOSSIANS

STRONG adults

Strong Adults Introduction 3

Strong Adults Resources 4

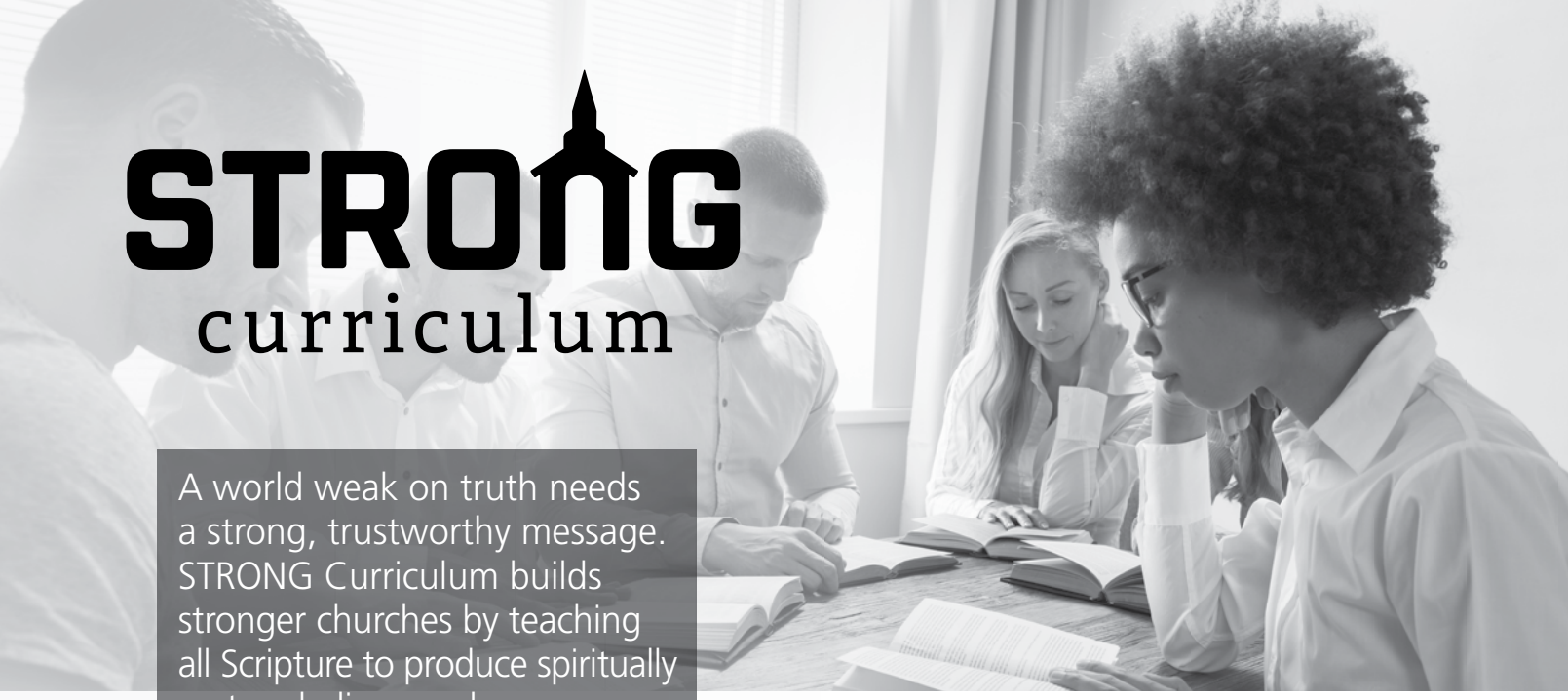
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Leading a Student to Christ 5

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STRONG curriculum

A world weak on truth needs a strong, trustworthy message. STRONG Curriculum builds stronger churches by teaching all Scripture to produce spiritually mature believers who measure up to the stature of Christ.

A Plan You Can Trust

The Bible has the answers to what adult learners need most. No other book or philosophy contains God's power to save and transform lives. Because of this, we've made it our unwavering commitment to build Strong Adults upon the sure foundation of God's Word. With this curriculum, your church can develop adults who will be strong defenders of the faith.

Strong Adults is designed around the seven teaching aims Jesus modeled in His ministry. Those aims are listed in the box to the right. Note that the first letter of each aim spells out **BuildUP**, a word that captures the curriculum's overall aim to build stronger churches through God's Word.

Every session in the Strong Adults courses addresses one of Jesus' seven teaching aims. Since the **BuildUP** aims are Jesus' aims, you can be confident in their importance and effectiveness. Take time to familiarize yourself with each of the aims. And plan to introduce them to your learners. Look for the **BuildUP** icons in the table of contents and on the first page of each lesson.

The Strong Adults scope and sequence will cover every Bible book, the major doctrines, and important topics. New courses are added periodically to fill out the scope and sequence. Other elective courses available from RBP give you flexibility to meet your ministry's adult curriculum needs.

JESUS' TEACHING AIMS

BELIEVE THE GOSPEL. Jesus taught His students to trust in Him alone for salvation and to share the gospel with others. This aim is obviously fundamental to all the rest

UNDERSTAND BIBLICAL ETHICS. Jesus instructed His students to live according to moral values. These values provided them with the tools to make wise decisions.

INTERNALIZE GODLINESS. Jesus taught His followers to be godly on the inside. He warned them not to become like the Pharisees, with a mere outward appearance of godliness.

LEARN DOCTRINE. Jesus knew the importance of teaching His students the truth and identified doctrine as one of the means for spiritual growth. Wishy-washy doctrine leads to faulty practice.

DEVELOP LIFE SKILLS. Jesus taught His followers to meet life's challenges in a way that honored and glorified God. He gave them the skills to navigate those challenges successfully.

UPLIFT OTHERS. Jesus' life was all about others. Leading by example, He taught His followers to be all about others too.

PREPARE TO SERVE. Jesus prepared His followers to serve in the context of local churches that were established soon after His ascension. He emphasized sacrifice and dedication.

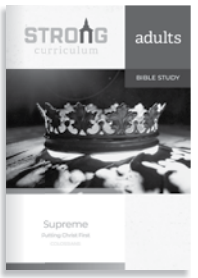
STRONG curriculum

This Strong Adults course covers Paul's instructions to the young and threatened church of Colosse. Promoters of a Colossian heresy taught that Christ wasn't enough. Paul wrote that Christ is sufficient for salvation and the believer's spiritual growth. He emphasized Christ's supremacy. Students will be challenged to put Christ first in their lives.

Kit Contents

- ☐ Teacher Guide
- ☐ 6 Bible Study Books
  Order one book for each learner
- ☐ Digital Access Download Code
  Gives you access to downloadable PowerPoint presentations, Prezis, visuals, promotional materials, and more.
- ☐ Posters





Digital Access Card



Ordering Information

All materials are available from Regular Baptist Press.

- Web: www.StrongCurriculum.com
- E-mail: orders@rbpstore.org
- Toll-free orders in the United States: 1-800-727-4440
- Fax: 1-847-843-3757
- Canada: Contact your distributor.

The Doctrinal Basis of Our Curriculum

A more detailed statement with references is available upon request.

- The verbal, plenary inspiration of the Scriptures
- Only one true God
- The Trinity of the Godhead
- The Holy Spirit and His ministry
- The personality of Satan
- The Genesis account of creation
- Original sin and the fall of man
- The virgin birth of Christ
- Salvation through faith in the shed blood of Christ
- The bodily resurrection and priesthood of Christ
- Grace and the new birth
- Justification by faith
- Sanctification of the believer
- The security of the believer
- The church
- The ordinances of the local church: baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper
- Biblical separation—ecclesiastical and personal
- Obedience to civil government
- The place of Israel
- The pretribulation rapture of the church
- The premillennial return of Christ
- The millennial reign of Christ
- Eternal glory in Heaven for the righteous
- Eternal torment in Hell for the wicked

How to Teach STRONG adults Lessons

STRONG ADULTS has been designed to help you clearly present God's Word to your students. Each lesson will guide students through the Bible, encouraging them to interact with the material and apply it to their lives.

Familiarize yourself with the teaching resources so you can maximize your effectiveness in the classroom. Find the download card in your kit. Follow the instructions on the card to gain access to the teaching resources you will need throughout the course. The downloadable resources include a PowerPoint for each session, a Prezi presentation for select sessions, visual resources, and promotional materials.

Encourage students to do their Bible study book lessons before class so they are ready to interact when you ask the questions during your lesson. Note that the questions and commentary in this leader's guide match those in the Bible study books.

Some of the PowerPoint presentations contain additional slides that obviously tie into the teacher guide lessons. Make sure you review the PowerPoint presentations before teaching.

Before Each Lesson

- Read the **Scripture Focus** passage(s) several times. Read and ponder the **Teacher Preparation** section on the first page of the lesson.
- Read the **BuildUP Theme**, **Measurable Response**, and **Session Summary** to get an overview of the lesson. Work on the **Memory Verse**.
- Read the **Bible Study** and the passages referenced in the lesson. Read the questions and answers. Consider additional questions and answers to add to the session.
- Plan how to use the PowerPoint or the Prezi. Practice using them along with the lesson.
- Prepare any materials you will need for the **Session Starters**.
- Read the steps and questions in the **Session Application** section of the lesson. Consider how to personalize the application.
- Pray for yourself, your students, and your lesson.

Leading a Student to Christ

AS A TEACHER, your most important concern is the personal salvation of your learners. Talk to them about whether they know Jesus Christ as their Savior. Consider giving your students several minutes to write out an answer to a question like, How can a person get to Heaven? Collect their answers and read them during the following week. Talk to any of your students who seem confused about salvation. Present the gospel to them and provide the opportunity for them to trust in Christ. If possible, deal with students individually.

The Plan of Salvation

- Everyone is a sinner. No one can live up to God's perfect standard (Romans 3:23).
- Sin's penalty is death (Romans 6:23).
- God loves us and sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay for our sin. Christ died in our place (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).
- When people place their trust in Jesus' payment for sins, Christ becomes their Savior. God forgives their sins and grants them eternal life (John 1:12; 5:24). Everlasting life begins the moment we trust in Jesus (John 3:36).
- Once people are saved, they are always saved. Nothing could take them out of God's hand; they are secure (John 10:27–29).
- The experience of the new birth (being born into God's family) is not based on a feeling, but on confidence in God's Word (1 John 5:11, 12).

Encourage students to pray, but explain that prayer does not save a person. Prayer is how we communicate our inward thoughts to God. Ask new believers to explain what they have done and what has happened to them.

Discipleship

Give new believers guidance in reading the Bible and explain the importance of prayer. Connect them to someone to who can invest in teaching them how to live the Christian life. Your goal is for the new believer to become a disciple maker him- or herself.

STRONG adults

SESSION 1

new life in Lycus Valley

Scripture Focus

Colossians 1:1–8

BuildUP Theme



BELIEVE THE GOSPEL

God gives believers the hope of the gospel which produces faith and love in believers' lives.

Measurable Response

The students will determine how they will respond to the hope of Heaven.

Memory Verse

"We give thanks to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of your love for all the saints" (Colossians 1:3, 4). NKJV

"We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints" (Colossians 1:3, 4). ESV

Teacher Preparation

- ☐ In what areas of your life do you find some measure of dissatisfaction? Perhaps you would like to make a little more money, have a little bigger house, take a longer vacation, or buy a better car. What do you think it would take for you to feel like you have enough?
- ☐ Have you ever felt like you don't have enough in Christ? Perhaps you want Him to do a little more for you or provide you with more resources?
- ☐ Read Colossians 1:1–8. What did Paul hear about the church members in Colosse? Would you say Christ was sufficient for their lives? With the way Paul opened Colossians, we might conclude the church was strong and content. But there was an undercurrent of uncertainty and discontentedness beginning to move through the church. Its members were being influenced by a heresy that taught Christ wasn't enough for the believer.
- ☐ Colossians reminds us about the sufficiency of Christ. As you teach, make a point to emphasize Christ's supremacy over all things and all beings. As believers, we must appreciate what Christ did in saving us and what He will do to mature us as believers. We ought to show our love for Him by recognizing He is supreme over us and sufficient for our lives.

Session Summary

The apostle Paul wrote to the Colossian church while he was under house arrest in Rome. Although he had never visited Colosse, he genuinely appreciated the Colossian believers. He had heard from Epaphras that they faithfully demonstrated faith and love, both of which were a result of their shared hope from the gospel. Paul also heard that the church faced a threat from what became known as the Colossian heresy. Paul taught the sufficiency of Christ in response to the heresy. His emphasis on Christ is immediately apparent as he opened his letter with statements on the gospel's positive effects on the Colossians.

Session Starters

Option 1—Never Enough?

1. Have students finish the following sentence: I could never have enough . . .

   ASK: What causes us to think we need more of something?

   ASK: What do we hope to achieve by getting more of the things we crave?

2. Discuss the sufficiency of Christ.

   ASK: Have you ever felt Christ wasn't enough for you? Why or why not?

   ASK: What difference has Christ's sufficiency made in your life?

3. Transition to the Bible study.

   Colossians teaches us the sufficiency of Christ for all believers. Christ is enough for our salvation and for our growth as a believer. This study will help us grasp that truth and make practical applications to our lives based on that truth.

Option 2—Abandoned but Not Forgotten

Gather

- Resources 63-R1 and 63-R2.

Steps



63-R1



63-R2

1. Display resources 63-R1 and 63-R2. The resources show an abandoned post office and motel in the ghost town of Glenrio. Read the following background information about Glenrio.

   Glenrio straddles the New Mexico–Texas border. The town was founded in 1903. By the 1930s, the road through town was paved and made part of the famous Route 66. The town declined in the mid-1970s when it was bypassed with the opening of Interstate 40. The post office is in particularly bad shape. It has been gutted and its ceiling is falling in. It hasn't processed a letter in decades.

   In 2006, the producers of the animated film "Cars" modeled the motel in their fictional Radiator Springs after an abandoned motel in Glenrio. The following year, Glenrio's 31-acre site was put on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2008, the Glenrio Welcome Center in New Mexico opened to draw people in to look at what used to be a bustling town.

2. Discuss ghost towns.

   ASK: What long forgotten ghost towns have you visited? (Q1)

   ASK: What signs of a once bustling town did you see? (Q2)

3. Transition to the Bible study.

   Colosse was once described as a major city in the region of Phrygia in what is now the country of Turkey. Eventually, the city was abandoned as better locations for commerce and amusement opened down the road. Today the city is buried under a mound of earth. Little to no excavation has happened to uncover the ruins. Yet the city was the recipient of Colossians, one of Paul's letters. Paul wrote Colossians to defend the gospel and emphasize Christ's sufficiency. Because of Paul's letter, the Colossian believers didn't abandon the gospel even though they eventually abandoned their city.

Bible Study

Gather

- Resources 63-R3 and 63-R4.

I. Background of the Epistle (Col. 1:1, 2)

A. The little city

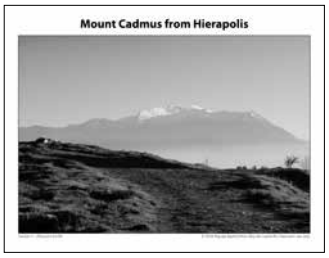


63-R3

DISPLAY: Resource 63-R3. Show the location of places as you mention them in the lesson.

Colosse is located one hundred miles west of the big city of Ephesus, in the Roman province of Asia and in the region of Phrygia. Nestled in the upper corner of the Lycus Valley about twelve miles southeast of Laodicea, Colosse straddled the Lycus River and offered a commanding view of eight-thousand-foot Mount Cadmus. The area had subterranean cavernous fires and hot springs. Flowing through the valley and into the Lycus River, Mount Cadmus's cascading streams saturated the Lycus River with calcium deposits from the soil. These deposits created beautiful limestone formations.

The land around Colosse is unusually fertile, producing rich pastures that treated large flocks of sheep to succulent grazing. But due to grander opportunities for growth and wealth in nearby Laodicea and Hierapolis, the town of Colosse, once a great city of Phrygia, began to die. Laodicea lay at a major crossroads and replaced Colosse as the region's center for commerce. Hierapolis had the region's best hot springs and baths. The town attracted people wanting a retreat. In the end, Colosse couldn't compete with its flourishing neighbors.



63-R4

DISPLAY: Resource 63-R4. Show Mount Cadmus as viewed from Hierapolis, a city near Colosse.

B. The Colosse residents

Colosse was home to many Jews. Some descended from Jews whom Antiochus the Great had transplanted from Babylon into the region. Others moved to the region from Israel to pursue the opportunities in the region of Phrygia. The overall population was predominantly Gentile. And most of the Gentiles were pagan.

Paul likely never visited Colosse, though he ministered in Ephesus for a two-year period. Probably some believers had carried the gospel from Ephesus to Colosse and introduced the Colossians to Christ (Acts 19:10).

The "streams of living water" that had reached Colosse were more beautiful and productive than the tainted streams from Mount Cadmus. Also, the Lord's Colossian "sheep" enjoyed "pastures" far greener than those in the verdant Lycus Valley. Paul wrote to point out the gospel's greatness. As we will learn later in the lesson, a heresy threatened to pollute the streams of living water and to poison the green pastures.

C. The authoritative writer (1:1)

The apostle Paul wrote the book of Colossians around AD 60 while he was under house arrest in Rome. Paul wrote to encourage the church to worship and serve Christ. He wanted the Colossian believers to understand that they were complete in Christ (2:10). As this study will reveal, Paul made the believer's completeness in Christ crystal clear.

READ: Colossians 1:1.

Paul wrote that he was an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God (1:1). This statement carried a lot of weight and established Paul's credibility as he dealt with the false teachers in Colosse. The statement also pointed to Christ as the source of Paul's writing. Paul wasn't writing his own thoughts and musings. The Colossians needed to view his words as coming directly from Christ.

READ: 1 Corinthians 14:37. **ASK:** What did Paul call his writings? (Q3) *The commands of the Lord.*

READ: 1 Thessalonians 2:13. **ASK:** How did the Thessalonians accept Paul's writings? (Q4) *As the truth, the word of God.*

ASK: What could the Colossians assume about any teachings that went against Paul's teachings? (Q5) *That the teachings were unauthoritative and false.*

Timothy, Paul's son in the faith (1 Tim. 1:2), stayed with Paul during Paul's imprisonment. He was a true friend. The Colossians knew

Timothy was a native of Lystra (Acts 16:1). His mother was a Jewess, and his father was a Greek. Apparently, Paul had led Timothy to Christ (1 Tim. 1:2). On his second missionary journey, Paul added Timothy to his team (Acts 16:3). Later Timothy became pastor at Ephesus and received two divinely inspired letters from Paul.

Timothy was fully confident that God had called Paul to be an apostle.

D. The church in Christ (1:2)

READ: Colossians 1:2.

The term "baptism by the Spirit" refers to the act of the Holy Spirit's placing believing sinners into Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). All who are in Christ share a corporate unity; we are many members in one Body—the Body of Christ (1:12–14, 27).

The word "saints" identified the Colossian believers as those who had been set apart unto God as His holy ones. At one time they had been far from God, Who saw them as lost in sin. When the Colossians trusted in Christ, the Holy Spirit placed them into Christ, where they received the righteousness of God (Rom. 6:1–4; 2 Cor. 5:21). From the time of that supernatural transaction, God viewed the Colossian Christians as wholly His people and His holy people. God views believers today in the same way: we are "saints."

As saints, we show forth the praises of God by living with faith and love (1 Pet. 2:9). Faith and love are evidence of the power of God in our lives. Others will praise God when they see His power in us (Matt. 5:16).

Paul also addressed the Colossians as faithful brothers in Christ (Col. 1:2). The Colossians were faithful to their calling to proclaim the praises of God through their lives. They had become brothers in Christ by believing in Christ.

ASK: Why did the Colossians, who were facing uncertainties concerning their doctrine and practice, need to hear they had been faithful? (Q6) *Paul's acknowledgment of their faithfulness showed them they were already on the right track. They needed to reject the heresy beginning to surface in their church.*

Although Paul had never visited the Colossian church, he had a warm place in his heart for the believers there. Paul extended warm greetings to the Colossian believers, wishing them "grace"—God's favor—and "peace"—a sense of well-being that accompanies a close relationship with God (Col. 1:2).

E. The threatening heresy

A mixture of Greek philosophy and Jewish legalism threatened the church in Colosse. That threat, which remained unidentified, prompted Paul's letter. We call the threat the Colossian heresy. From Paul's writing we can identify four distinct characteristics of the heresy threatening to derail the Colossian church. We will address each of these distinctions more thoroughly as they come up in Colossians. The following is a summary of each point.

First, the heresy was driven by a philosophy that denied the teaching that Christ is sufficient (Col. 2:8). Heretics taught that their visions and some recently discovered secrets led them to believe something needed to be added to Christ to achieve salvation.

Second, the heresy emphasized the need to participate in Judaistic ceremonialism (2:11, 16, 17; 3:11). The heretics pointed to circumcision, food laws, and the observance of special days from the Old Testament law as integral to their faith.

Third, the heresy introduced angel worship (1:16; 2:15, 18). The false belief in Christ's insufficiency is at the root of such a practice.

Fourth, the Colossian heresy promoted asceticism, a severe treatment of the body and a rigorous abstention from self-indulgence (Col. 2:20–23). This aspect of the heresy went beyond the Old Testament law, adding suffering as a means of gaining favor with God.

> **ASK:** What would you say is the root problem with the Colossians heresy? What drove the heretics to invent and follow their teachings? (Q7) *The arrogant and self-righteous belief that salvation and sanctification must at least partly depend on people.*

Given the tenets of the Colossian heresy, it is no wonder Paul emphasized Christ's sufficiency so clearly in his epistle. And even though we aren't threatened by the Colossian heresy, we can benefit from Paul's clear teaching in that we can gain a better understanding of Christ's sufficiency for our salvation and sanctification.

II. Confirmation of the Gospel (Col. 1:3–8)

Epaphras gave Paul a report of how the work in Colosse was progressing. Included in that report must have been word about the heresy threatening the church. Paul constructed his opening greeting and address with the heresy in mind. In doing so, he confirmed the gospel message as still relevant, powerful, and sufficient.

A. The gospel is God's work (1:3)

> **READ:** Colossians 1:3.

Paul opened his address to the church by focusing on God, giving thanks to God for the Colossians. His point is that all that had happened to bring the Colossians to understanding salvation and putting their faith in Christ was God's work. Paul's mention of the Lord Jesus Christ points to the means of the Colossians' salvation. Christ made salvation possible by His death on the cross and by His resurrection.

> **ASK:** What did Paul communicate to the Colossians by adding that he and Timothy pray "always" for them? (Q8) *That he and Timothy depended on God to spiritually mature the Colossian believers.*

Notice that Paul intentionally didn't give any credit to the heretics for the Colossians' salvation or spirituality. If their message was indeed correct, Paul would have commended them for their teachings. Paul wanted the Colossians to grasp that the gospel is a work of God.

B. The gospel changes people (1:4)

READ: Colossians 1:4.

The Colossians' faith in God and love for others were evidence that God was answering Paul's prayer for the Colossians. The gospel was transforming the Colossians' lives, giving them God's love for each other in their hearts. God's love had motivated them to reach out to each other and care for each other in ways that became abundantly obvious to the world. What was happening in the Colossians' congregation wasn't normal.

Paul gave a list of descriptions of godly love in 1 Corinthians 13.

ASK: How is God's love in our hearts different from the love the world knows? (Q9) *It is genuine, selfless, sacrificial, and pure.*

READ: John 13:34, 35; 1 John 2:9–11. **ASK:** What is the connection between faith in Jesus Christ and love for fellow believers? (Q10) *Love for fellow believers grows out of our being rightly related to Christ through faith.*

According to the report given to Paul, no one felt unloved in the Colossian church. The believers in the church had refused to put restrictions on their love for one another.

ASK: Do you see mutual love between believers in our church? How so? (Q11)

C. The gospel gives hope (1:5)

READ: Colossians 1:5.

The Colossian believers all had the same hope of final deliverance from sin and eternity in God's presence. This common hope drew them together in love (cf. 3:14). Such hope ought to draw us together in love for one another too. We are all recipients of God's love now and will someday spend eternity together with perfect love for each other.

We shouldn't miss the fact that the believer's hope is "laid up . . . in heaven" (1:5; cf. Matt. 6:19–21). This phrase points us to the rewards Christ will give to believers at the Judgment Seat of Christ in Heaven (2 Cor. 5:10). Those rewards are in the form of crowns believers will use to glorify God.

READ: 2 Corinthians 5:10, 14, 15. **ASK:** What connection did Paul make between love and the hope of rewards? (Q12) *Christ's love compels believers to live for Christ by loving others. As we show Christ's love for others, we lay up treasures in Heaven.*

So far, Paul had given the Colossians no reason to believe that Christ and the gospel are in any way deficient. Thanks to God and His gospel, the Colossians had faith, love, and hope.

D. The gospel spreads (1:6)

The growth of the church at Colosse provided further evidence of the sufficiency of Christ's provision for salvation. If the doctrine the heretics taught was so vital to true salvation and spirituality, then how could they explain all the "fruit" in Colosse?

READ: Colossians 1:6.

"Don't chop down the fruit tree," Paul essentially wrote. "The gospel is working. It changes lives and gives hope. Don't abandon it for an unproven, unauthoritative heresy."

The Colossian believers owed both the fruit of their salvation and the spiritual fruit in their lives to divine grace. They knew "the grace of God in truth." By grace, God saves those who believe the truth (Eph. 2:8, 9). Furthermore, by grace, God uses the Word to conform believers into the image of Christ. A sinner cannot save him- or herself; neither can a believer develop Christlike character by relying upon his or her own determination, strength, or ingenuity.

The gospel bore fruit not only at Colosse but also in all the world beyond the Lycus Valley. Some have estimated that at the time of Paul's writing there were 500,000 believers scattered throughout the inhabited world. That's quite an early testimony to the power of the gospel. To add something to the gospel or to suggest Christ lacked sufficiency was absurd.

ASK: Why did Paul write a letter to address the Colossian heresy despite the absurdity of adding to the gospel and diminishing Christ? (Q13) *Because Satan is at work to distort and hijack the gospel. Paul saw the heresy as a serious threat to the gospel's progress and power.*

Paul worked tirelessly to define the gospel and defend it against distortion and intrusion. He understood the importance of its purity. Christ did too, of course. For Paul essentially wrote the words of Christ as he penned his epistle.

E. The gospel is precise (1:7, 8)

READ: Colossians 1:7.

Epaphras was instrumental in carrying the transforming gospel of grace to the Colossians. Paul considered him a dear fellow servant and a faithful minister of Christ. Epaphras must have felt the threat of being undermined by the heretics in Colosse. So, Paul intentionally put his stamp of approval on Epaphras. If the Colossian believers adopted the heretics' mangled gospel, they would do so without approval from Epaphras, Paul, and Christ.

Fellow servant (Col. 1:7) is *sundoulos*, meaning "fellow slave." This identification appears nowhere else in the New Testament. Fellow servant identifies Epaphras as a partner with Paul in a willing bond-slave relationship to Christ. It focuses on Epaphras's devotion to Christ. "Minister" emphasizes service activity rather than relationship. Because Epaphras, like Paul, regarded himself as Christ's bond slave, he willingly served the Colossians and did so dependably.

READ: 2 Timothy 4:2, 7, 8. **ASK:** What was Paul's personal testimony concerning his defense of the faith (doctrine)? (Q14) *He preached the unadulterated truth and therefore will receive a crown of righteousness at the Judgment Seat of Christ in Heaven.*

READ: Colossians 1:8.

Paul mentioned again that Epaphras had told him about the Colossians' love. Paul might have sensed the church might consider Epaphras to be a bit of a tattletale for going all the way to Rome to tell them about the heresy brewing in their church. That wasn't the case at all. Epaphras went to Paul because he loved the Colossians and was concerned about their future spiritual growth. Upon Epaphras's return and the reading of the epistle, the Colossians needed to embrace him with the Holy Spirit directed love they had already shown toward each other.

READ: Galatians 5:22–26. **ASK:** What is the connection between the Holy Spirit and a believer's love for fellow believers? (Q15) *Love is a fruit of the Spirit.*

Paul's opening to his epistle is masterful. He focused on the greatness and personal nature of God's transforming gospel. He reminded the Colossians of the wonderful life they enjoyed in Christ. The Colossian heresy would destroy their unity and sap their power if they didn't put an end to it. The next section of Paul's letter, the topic for session two, will begin to make that clear.

Session Application

Steps

1. Ask the following questions about the faith, hope, and love that should be apparent in our lives because of the gospel.

   ASK: How is the gospel's power evident in your life? Does your love reflect God's love? (Q16)

   ASK: Would the people in your life say you are a person of faith? Why or why not? (Q17)

   ASK: How would you describe the hope that is laid up for you in heaven (Col. 1:5)? (Q18)

   ASK: How will you let the hope of Heaven affect your life in the coming week? (Q19)

2. Discuss any threats to the gospel your church might be facing. (Q20)
3. Close in prayer by thanking God for the gospel's staying power and for its personal effects on those in your class.