



DAILY BIBLE READING

THE COLOSSIANS CHALLENGE

Tim Blagg

Read. Ask. Live. Love

Daily Bible Reading

What?

Sometimes we find it hard to read the Bible, don't we? At church we hear it all the time: "*read the Bible more.*" But how? Some of the devotionals on offer seem to have less Bible than story. Some of the Bible reading plans seem too big to take on all at once; what should I think about? How can I possibly know what questions to ask as I read through God's word?

It's in light of these questions that these daily bible readings have come into existence! The aim is to help you read God's word for yourself and ask some of the questions to comprehend what God is saying to you today through his living and active word, with the hope asking these sorts of questions for yourself as you read through the Bible in bigger doses that this has to offer. It's a tool, and hence it's only as valuable as our use of it.

My prayer for you as you use these - whether by yourself or with your family around the dinner table - is that God will work through his word to grow you into the fullness of Christ and bring you joy as you come to know him through his word.

How?

The way to approach it every day (as recommended) is:

- 1) Pray to God; it is his word we're reading, so ask him to help you understand it.
- 2) Read the passage once or twice.
- 3) Go through each question, looking back at the bible to think through them.
- 4) Pray about what you have learned, and live out the applications for today.

Want more?

If you want more studies like these ones, check out our online database at www.trinitycity.church/youth - just follow the links. Alternatively, if you're looking for more in depth bible reading plans, many can be found in study bibles or online. Chat to your bible study group leader or pastor for more information.

In Christ,

Tim

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Week 1 (Colossians 1:1-14)

Monday

- Read Colossians 1:1-14

- Think through the following questions:

1. What are the things that “jump out” at you from this text - the things that are surprising or stick in your mind?
2. What questions do you have from reading these 14 verses? Write them down, pray over them and think through them over the next week.
3. How does this passage leave you feeling about God? Do you want to thank him for anything based on what you’ve read?

- Challenge for Today:

- Do you thank God for what he has done for you each and every day? Spend time praying to God and thanking him for what he has done in v13-14.

Tuesday

- Read Colossians 1:1-2

- Think through the following questions:

1. Who wrote this letter?
2. How did he become an apostle of Jesus Christ?
3. How does the author describe the people in Colossae?

- Challenge for Today:

- Think through how you identify yourself. Would you say that your distinguishing feature is that you are in Adelaide? Or that you are a student? What about that you are a Christian? That is Paul’s big emphasis on the on the identity of the Colossian church! And the same goes for us; first and foremost, we are Christians.

Wednesday

- Read Colossians 1:3-6

- Think through the following questions:

1. Why does Paul say he thanks God for the Colossians?
2. Where does Paul say that our faith and hope spring from?
3. What does Paul say the gospel is doing throughout the world?

- Challenge for Today:

- Pray to God - give thanks! - for what he is doing in saving people all around the world to himself through his gospel. Pray for 3 Christians that you know; give thanks that God has saved them.

Thursday

- Read Colossians 1:7-8

- Think through the following questions:

1. Who did the Colossians learn the gospel from?
2. How does Paul describe this man?
3. What do you think the term “fellow servant” means?

- Challenge for Today:

- Who did you learn the gospel from? Thank a/ God for them, and b/ them personally! Shoot them a text, or give them a call; let them know how thankful you are for God’s work through them in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with you.

Friday

- Read Colossians 1:9-12

- Think through the following questions:

1. What is the reason that Paul refers to in v9?
2. What does Paul ask God to fill them (and us) with?
3. Why does Paul pray for this; what is the aim? (v10-12)

- Challenge for Today:

- Are you living a life worthy of the Lord and pleasing him in every way? Read through the list over v10-12 again; this isn’t a “tick-off” list. It is a list of characteristics that come from God growing you to be more like his Son, Jesus. Pray for this growth! Pray for other Christians to have this growth! And spend time actively trying to grow through reading more of God’s word today.

Saturday

- Read Colossians 1:13-14

- Think through the following questions:

1. Where has God rescued us from?
2. Where has God brought us into?
3. What does Paul explain that we have in Jesus? (v14)

- Challenge for Today:

- It is only in Jesus that we have redemption - the forgiveness of sins. Take some time out to sit with Jesus today, confessing sin in your life and asking him for forgiveness. And then be assured in his might to rescue!

Sunday

- Church - Passage covered:_____

- What was the sermon about?:_____

- What do I need to change? _____

Week 2 (Colossians 1:15-23)

Monday

- Read Colossians 1:15-23

- Think through the following questions:

1. What are the things that “jump out” at you from this text - the things that are surprising or stick in your mind?
2. What questions do you have from reading these 9 verses? Write them down, pray over them and think through them over the next week.
3. How does this passage leave you feeling about Jesus and his achievements? Do you want to thank him for anything based on what you’ve read?

- Challenge for Today:

- When you think about what Jesus has achieved and who he is, how could we ever give anything else a greater place in our lives than Jesus Christ, who is creator of all things! Take 10 minutes now to really think and reflect; is there anything in my life that I care more about than Jesus? How much *quality* time do you give to Jesus through prayer and reading the Bible and fellowship with other Christians compared to entertainment, or other people, or video games?

Tuesday

- Read Colossians 1:15

- Think through the following questions:

1. Who is the “He” mentioned in this verse?
2. If we can’t see God - if He’s invisible - then what does it mean for this person to be the image of God? (Hint: John 14:9)
3. What does it mean that he is firstborn (meaning first in rank/highest in priority) over all creation?

- Challenge for Today:

- Want to see God? Want to know who he is? Look at this man; Jesus Christ. Challenge yourself; get to know Jesus! There are only 16 chapters in Mark’s gospel - you could read 1/day and know Jesus even better in 16 days time! So do it. Even better, invite someone to do it with you; spread the challenge.

Wednesday

- Read Colossians 1:16-18

- Think through the following questions:

1. Complete the (paraphrased) sentence. “*In everything, Jesus has*_____”
2. What does this mean for governments, or kingdoms, or dictatorships? Are they ultimately in charge?

3. According to these verses, are we able to live without Jesus' sustaining work?

- Challenge for Today:

- *"For in him we live and move and have our being."* (Acts 17:28a). You need Jesus in order to live! You wouldn't have trouble telling someone that they need oxygen to live; how much more should you tell people that they need Jesus to live!

Thursday

- Read Colossians 1:19-20

- Think through the following questions:

1. How much of God's fullness was in Jesus?
2. What did God reconcile to himself through Jesus?
3. How did God reconcile these things to himself/make peace through Jesus?

- Challenge for Today:

- Jesus is completely God. Take a moment to think through that. 100% God. Not 50-50 God and human. 100% God. Nothing less than this deserves our worship; anything less would be idolatry. Jesus is Lord; take a bit of time to praise him for this! (He is 100% man as well; not an easy concept, but we'll revisit it later).

Friday

- Read Colossians 1:21-23 (1)

- Think through the following questions:

1. What were we once? (v21)
2. How has God reconciled us?
3. The word "hope" is used in reference to the gospel. Explain this hope in one sentence (hint: look at v21-22).

- Challenge for Today:

- What has God said to us today? Through the death of his son, Jesus Christ, we are holy in his sight; without blemish and free from accusation. You *were* alienated, but now you are holy in God's sight. We were God's enemies, but now are free! Realise this in your life today. Through Jesus, God has forgiven your sin. This means that we need to ask God for forgiveness, and thank him for it, and live out forgiven lives! Continue in your faith.

Saturday

- Read Colossians 1:23 (2)

- Think through the following questions:

1. (From yesterday's devotion) - how has God reconciled us?
2. What provision/warning does Paul provide in v23a regarding our salvation?

3. When this letter was written, the gospel had been preached to the major towns in the Roman empire (i.e. representatives of the known world - every corner of it). Paul describes himself as a servant of the gospel. What does this mean? Could you give yourself the same description?

- Challenge for Today:

- Some people over history have taken this passage to mean that we don't have assurance in our salvation - that we constantly have to work hard to be saved. However, this is not the way the rest of the Bible explains salvation. The kind of person that is *truly* saved by God will *want* to continue in the faith - will *want* to stay in the hope offered by the gospel of Christ. **If you don't feel this way, then ask God to help you to feel this way; to want to know him better.** When you truly accept Christ's salvation into your life, you have crossed a line, and a HUGE brick wall is behind you; you can't get out even if you wanted to! You are saved! (This is a HUGE topic; talk to an older Christian about it if you have any further questions. Sadly, a small page like this can't contain everything; just the key reminders)

Sunday

- Church - Passage covered: _____

- What was the sermon about?: _____

- What do I need to change? _____

Week 3 (Colossians 1:24-2:5)

Monday

- Read Colossians 1:24-2:5

- Think through the following questions:

1. What are the things that “jump out” at you from this text - the things that are surprising or stick in your mind?
2. What questions do you have from reading these 11 verses? Write them down, pray over them and think through them over the next week.
3. How does this passage leave you feeling about the goals of Christian leaders like Paul as God works through them?

- Challenge for Today:

- You don't have to be a Christian leader to be a servant of God's word, proclaiming it with the hope of presenting everyone mature in Christ (1:28). Who can you be helping to become more mature in Christ? They can be either a Christian or a non-Christian. Pray for them and to ask if they'd like to spend time with you getting to know Jesus better.

Tuesday

- Read Colossians 1:24-27

- Think through the following questions:

1. What does Paul rejoice about?
2. What did Paul present to the Church in its fullness? What does it mean?
3. What mystery is now disclosed, or revealed, to God's people?

- Challenge for Today:

- v24 has been a bit tricky for Christians to understand. There is no doubt that Jesus' death was sufficient; that there was nothing lacking for people to be saved by Christ on the cross. So what does Paul mean by “...*fill up in my flesh what is still lacking...*”? Paul is speaking about suffering - Christians are told that they will suffer the attacks that are really directed at Jesus. By suffering, other people who watch will be able to grasp the reality that Jesus suffered for their sake, and they may be convicted of the truth of the Bible. And this is why Paul rejoices! Do you?

Wednesday

- Read Colossians 1:28-29

- Think through the following questions:

1. Who does Paul proclaim?
2. What is the goal of Christian leaders' teaching, admonishing and proclaiming?
3. Whose energy is Paul using in this work of his life?

- Challenge for Today:

- Paul is striving with the energy, or power, of God. What is this power? It's the same power by which God raised Jesus from the dead, made him supreme over everything (as we looked at last week) and that is saving people from death into eternal life every day. That's the power that Paul says he relies on in his ministry. It should definitely be the same for us! Focus in on what God is doing throughout the world through his word, and know this power is also at work in you.

Thursday

- Read Colossians 2:1-3

- Think through the following questions:

1. What does Paul say his goal is?
2. Why does Paul say that this is his goal?
3. What does Paul say is hidden in Christ?

- Challenge for Today:

- Look closely at v2-3. Obviously, people will know things even if they aren't Christians. Based on what Paul has written here though - some of his prayer for Christians - what do you think Paul really cares about? What kind of knowledge is really important? Spend time today in this truly important knowledge!

Friday

- Read Colossians 2:4

- Think through the following questions:

1. Why does Paul tell them all these things?
2. What do you think a "fine-sounding argument" could be? (It is an argument to Christians from "Christians")
3. Can you think of any examples of what "fine-sounding arguments" people could be using against Christians today - what kinds of false promises are made?

- Challenge for Today:

- The only way to beat a fine-sounding argument - ultimately, false teaching - is by knowing the truth incredibly well. So get to know the truth; ask God in prayer for help, and read his word to get to know him better!

Saturday

- Read Colossians 2:5

- Think through the following questions:

1. Is Paul physically with the Colossian church?
2. What is Paul delighted to see in the Colossian church?

3. Who is their faith in?

- Challenge for Today:

- Would your pastors, bible study group leaders, Christian friends who are more mature in their faiths, etc. be delighted in your discipline? Would they be excited about how firm your faith in Christ is? Take time to pray about this to God, and to take practical steps such as prayer, setting times to read the bible daily and talking with Christian leaders about how to grow, in order to grow in these areas!

Sunday

- Church - Passage covered: _____

- What was the sermon about?: _____

- What do I need to change? _____

Week 4 (Colossians 2:6-15)

Monday

- Read Colossians 2:6-15

- Think through the following questions:

1. What are the things that “jump out” at you from this text - the things that are surprising or stick in your mind?
2. What questions do you have from reading these 10 verses? Write them down, pray over them and think through them over the next week.
3. What does this passage tell us about who Jesus is and what God accomplished in and through Jesus?

- Challenge for Today:

- We follow a powerful, awesome God who has done so much through Jesus! Today, and for the rest of this week, read over v13-15 at the start of the day and take the time to let it sink in. You are following and trusting an awesome God who made you alive in Christ!

Tuesday

- Read Colossians 2:6-7

- Think through the following questions:

1. What are we to continue to do?
2. What are we to be overflowing with?
3. Why do you think we need to continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith? (Hint: this refers back to the first chapter of Colossians)

- Challenge for Today:

- We are to continue to live in Christ Jesus - *as Lord*. That means as king, as master, as our ruler. Okay, this isn't a popular idea in Australia; who'd want to be under authority?! Can others see that Jesus is your king in the way that you live, talk, study, work...? Jesus is your King - in everything you do today, ask if this is showing people what a loving, great King he is or not.

Wednesday

- Read Colossians 2:8

- Think through the following questions:

1. What are we to see that no-one takes us captive with?
2. How does Paul describe this kind of philosophy?
3. Paul emphasises at the end of v8 that the important thing to focus on is what/who?

- Challenge for Today:

- Paul is not warning against engaging with non-Christian ideas or thoughts, but rather to not be taken captive by them, losing out on Christ. What things have you been told or do others around you believe that are non-Christian ideas? What do you think Jesus would have to say about them? Take some time out to think through them, and see them in the light of who Jesus is.

Thursday

- Read Colossians 2:9-10

- Think through the following questions:

1. Complete the sentence: "*For in _____ all the fullness of the _____ lives in _____ form...*"
2. What have we been given in Christ?
3. In your own words, write out v9-10.

- Challenge for Today:

- You have fulness in Christ; this means you *don't* need to find your identity in anyone or anything else! Seriously though; *do you try to find your identity in anything else? If _____ was taken away, I wouldn't know how to define myself.* The fact is, everything BUT Christ will be taken away eventually. Do you need to make changes in how you spend your time, money and energy based on this?

Friday

- Read Colossians 2:11-12

- Think through the following questions:

1. Fill out the line below by completing this sentence: in Christ we have been/were also _____
2. In the Old Testament, the physical circumcision of men was a big deal as it was a symbol that the Jews were different for God. It was meant to symbolise their commitment to being a sinless people to show how great God is. In what sense are we "circumcised" in Christ?
3. How are we raised with Christ?

- Challenge for Today:

- Have you been baptised before? If you have, when and why were you baptised? What does it mean to you today? If not, why not? Talk to a pastor about it this week/today; if you believe in Christ for covering your sins and making you right with God, you should be baptised. And if you were baptised before you knew what it meant, why not publicly confirm this baptism?

Saturday

- Read Colossians 2:13-15

- Think through the following questions:

1. When did God make us alive with Christ?
2. What did God do with the written code that stood opposed to us?
3. How did God triumph over the powers and authorities of the world?

- Challenge for Today:

- What does the cross of Jesus mean to you? Today's challenge is in two parts: 1/ write down what it means to you below, and 2/ tell someone else what it means to you - it could be a parent, or a friend, or via text or snapchat. Tell someone else what the cross of Jesus means to you.

Sunday

- Church - Passage covered:_____

- What was the sermon about?:_____

- What do I need to change?_____

Week 5 (Colossians 2:16-3:4)

Monday

- Read Colossians 2:16-3:4

- Think through the following questions:

1. What are the things that “jump out” at you from this text - the things that are surprising or stick in your mind?
2. What questions do you have from reading these 12 verses? Write them down, pray over them and think through them over the next week.
3. What is contrasted in the first part of the passage (2:16-23) with the second part (3:1-4)?

- Challenge for Today:

- Back in Paul's day - and even today! - there were some people who called themselves “Christians” but insisted that in order to *really* be a Christian, you had to do certain things like eat/not eat certain foods, drink/not drink certain drinks and celebrate certain Jewish holidays. However, Paul calls all these things earthly things, and instead asks us to set our minds on things above, where Christ is now. Is your heart set on things above - do you spend time thinking about Jesus and God regularly during the day, not just when you're at home with the Bible? Today, take the challenge to think of 1 thing you are thankful to God for every hour - *things above*.

Tuesday

- Read Colossians 2:16-17

- Think through the following questions:

1. What does the “therefore” in v16 point towards? (hint: look at last week's passages!)
2. What are Christians *not* to let anyone do to them?
3. These things are described as a shadow of the things to come, but the _____ is found in Christ.

- Challenge for Today:

- Putting aside what these “Christians” judged the *real* Christians about, do you worry about what other people think about you/how they judge you? It's hard to ignore the judgements of others (in fact, sometimes these judgements are really important, like if you are actually sinning against God!), but Paul is making it clear that religion/rituals become very unimportant because the reality is found in Jesus! Don't get distressed if someone doesn't think you're Christian because you eat/don't eat, or drink/don't drink, or celebrate/don't celebrate a certain thing... What makes you Christian is Christ!

Wednesday

- Read Colossians 2:18-19

- Think through the following questions:

1. Who are Christians *not* to let verbally disqualify them from the prize - i.e. eternal life? (By verbally disqualify, it means that this certain type of “spiritual” person would make you feel as if you aren’t a good enough Christian).
2. Who has this type of person lost connection with?
3. How does the church/body of God grow?

- Challenge for Today:

- Sometimes we can look at other Christians who have “better” experiences (e.g. visions, speaking in tongues, healing) or churches than us (i.e. bigger, cooler music, louder drums, brighter lights, bigger stages, etc.), and it’s easy to feel like we are missing out, or maybe that we aren’t good enough Christians. Don’t. The church grows by God’s work! Your faith is on par with theirs. Your importance to God is on par with theirs. The challenge today is to remember that Christ is all that matters, and if he said you’re saved, then you are saved. Thank him in prayer.

Thursday

- Read Colossians 2:20-23

- Think through the following questions:

1. What does Paul say are the rules of this world (i.e. religious behaviour rules)?
2. Fill in the blanks: *“Such regulations indeed have an appearance of _____, with their self-_____ worship, their _____ humility and their _____ treatment of the body, but they lack any _____ in restraining sensual _____.”*
3. What do you think does have value in restraining sensual indulgence? (Hint: look at v20)

- Challenge for Today:

- Miriam is an openly Christian colleague, and has been trying to stop gossiping. She tells you that the best way for her to do this is *“To stop reading gossip magazines. That way, I won’t have anything to gossip about!”* Do you think she has dealt with her problem of gossiping? Why, or why not? What would you say to her in light of this passage?

Friday

- Read Colossians 3:1

- Think through the following questions:

1. Why are we to set our hearts on things above? (v1a)
2. What does it mean that we are raised with Christ?
3. Look back over Colossians 2, and note down the parts in which Jesus' resurrection/us being raised with Christ is referred to. What does it mean about our life now that we are "raised with Christ"?

- Challenge for Today:

- What things have influenced you to make you into the person that you are today? These could be people, or technologies, or even objects! What about being raised with Christ? Has that influenced the person you are today? If not, take some time to ponder why this might be the case. Pray and ask God to help you understand what it means that you are raised with Christ even more! And then share this with others who don't know it yet; it is too good to keep hidden!

Saturday

- Read Colossians 3:1-4

- Think through the following questions:

1. Where are we to set our hearts and minds?
2. Where is your life now hidden? (v3)?
3. How can you go about setting your mind on things above? (Practical answers!)

- Challenge for Today:

- Take just 5 minutes to reflect on the idea of us appearing with Christ in glory. You will be enveloped by Christ's glory! You will be entirely free of sinfulness, and of death and disease. You will be in relationship with Jesus Christ, never again to be hurt or pursued by the world. You will be in the *ultimate, perfect* relationship, never again to be disappointed or harmed or used or abused. You will be found in the glory of God.

Now that is something to look forward to. Jesus, who is our life, will appear again, and we will appear with him in glory.

Sunday

- Church - Passage covered:_____

- What was the sermon about?:_____

- What do I need to change? _____

Week 6 (Colossians 3:3-11)

Monday

- Read Colossians 3:3-11

- Think through the following questions:

1. What are the things that “jump out” at you from this text - the things that are surprising or stick in your mind?
2. What questions do you have from reading these 7 verses? Write them down, pray over them and think through them over the next week.
3. How does this passage “spell out” what it means for us to *not* set our minds on earthly things (3:1-4)?

- Challenge for Today:

- What is the “therefore” in v5 there for? It refers back to the reality of our lives being secure in eternity, that we will live with Christ and no longer be sinful beings. And because of this, Paul spends time explaining what this means we should no longer be focused on in this life, because it won’t come with us into eternity; it has no part in our ultimate future! This isn’t easy to swallow, but spend some time today looking at *your* life and priorities; does how you spend your time reflect the coming kingdom of God, or the here and now? What changes would you have to make to reflect the priority that God’s kingdom is coming?

Tuesday

- Read Colossians 3:3-5

- Think through the following questions:

1. What has happened in v3-4 that means we can put to death our earthly nature?
2. What things are we to put to death in our earthly nature?
3. What is classified by Paul as idolatry?

- Challenge for Today:

- Another potential translation for the word “greed” at the end of v5 is covetousness, or literally wanting what you don’t have for your own benefit. In this context, it is probably referring to a longing for more and more “pleasures” that aren’t yours to take. It’s an “over-wanting” of a good thing created by God! If you are single: it isn’t wrong to want a relationship. It is wrong to over-want a relationship, or companionship, or affection, or sex. What does over-want mean? It means wanting it more than you want God. If this is you, then take time today to talk to God about this! To repent of your idolatry, and to put God back where he belongs in your life; at number 1!

Wednesday

- Read Colossians 3:6-7

- Think through the following questions:

1. Why is the wrath of God coming?
2. Read v7 and the first few words of v8. Are Christians people who walk/live in the ways that will bring the wrath of God?
3. Therefore, who will experience the wrath of God? Is there anything that can be done for them before that day?

- Challenge for Today:

- It's not easy to talk about the wrath of God; in fact, it's a pretty unfriendly topic! But here's the fact: anyone who hasn't received Jesus as Lord will come under God's wrath; they will face eternal punishment. As you walk through school halls or the doors of your workplace, as you sit in food courts, as you hang out at the beach in summer - *anyone who hasn't received Jesus as Lord will come under God's wrath.* So what are you doing about it? Pray for your non-Christian friends. Tell them what you believe. Introduce them to Jesus. Pray for even more opportunities to tell them the gospel today!

Thursday

- Read Colossians 3:8

- Think through the following questions:

1. What area of life does Paul tackle in v8?
2. What aspects of this area of life does Paul say are not to be in the Christian life?
3. Andrew attends All Saints Anglican, and is feeling particularly annoyed at Isaac who decided to blow off a catch up at the last minute. Andrew comes to you to complain about how unreliable Isaac is and how angry he is. What would you say to him?

- Challenge for Today:

- How do you feel when you look at the list - rage, anger, malice, slander and filthy language? This kind of speech attracts attention to *you*; it builds you up and not others. How can you be building up others around you today in the way you speak?

Friday

- Read Colossians 3:9-10

- Think through the following questions:

1. What does Paul say we aren't to do to one another?
2. Why does he say not to do this anymore?

3. "...you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self..." What do you think that means?

- Challenge for Today:

- Where is your identity? Paul is saying it should be in who you are - who your "self" is. This means that you should find your identity in Jesus! 3:3 states that your life is hidden with Christ! You are wearing the new self - the one being renewed in the knowledge and image of God. Are you living as if your identity is in Jesus, or as if it is in your appearance, or in how you talk, or in what you wear, or in your artistic output, or in your grades or sport performance? Talk to God about this today, and remember where your identity really is; in Jesus!

Saturday

- Read Colossians 3:11

- Think through the following questions:

1. Paul is describing the family of God in v11. In this family, what doesn't matter?
2. In this family, what *does* matter?
3. Look back over these 7 verses (5-11). How is what Paul is teaching different to "moralism" (the belief that by following different rules, God will accept you)?

- Challenge for Today:

- Back in v9, Paul commands "*Do not lie to each other...*" Christians are to be known for the fact that we tell each other the truth (and we do it in love, but that's a topic for another day). Are you reminding your fellow Christians of the truth of Jesus? Are you telling one another the truth about how we are to be different from the world in sex and language? Are you reminding one another of the truth that the wrath of God is coming on those who don't believe? Today, make it your aim to tell the truth to those Christians around you; to remind them of the truth of God. Maybe you have a friend who is struggling in a particular way with a truth of God. Could you remind them of his truth from the Bible?

Sunday

- Church - Passage covered:_____

- What was the sermon about?:_____

- What do I need to change? _____

Week 7 (Colossians 3:12-17)

Monday

- Read Colossians 3:12-17

- Think through the following questions:

1. What are the things that “jump out” at you from this text - the things that are surprising or stick in your mind?
2. What questions do you have from reading these 6 verses? Write them down, pray over them and think through them over the next week.
3. List down all the things which a Christian should be doing. Where does the power to do this come from?

- Challenge for Today:

- How are you “clothing” yourself? This passage reminds us that we are God’s chosen people, and therefore we should be living like it; not because of anything we have done, but because of what he has done for us. Today, be sure to pray and ask God to transform your “clothing” and be actively working to be compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, patient, forgiving and loving.

Tuesday

- Read Colossians 3:12

- Think through the following questions:

1. We are God’s _____ (fill in the blank!)
2. What does it mean that we are “holy”?
3. You are “dearly loved” by God. How would you explain this idea to someone else? How has God demonstrated his love?

- Challenge for Today:

- Today is Sunday, so it is much easier to take some time out to read a little bit extra! Read through the entire letter of Colossians again; start to finish. Write down (or type up) every time that something about your identity in Christ is written, like this. Write down every promise that is made about who you are because of Jesus. This is your identity; go on! Do it! And pray about it today.

Wednesday

- Read Colossians 3:12-14

- Think through the following questions:

1. Yesterday we saw the new identity we have in Christ. What does this passage have to say about what this identity means for how we live and behave?
2. We are to forgive others as _____ (fill in the blanks!).

3. Take a look at the list of virtues again. Which ones do you think you need God's help in addressing? Pray about it now!

- Challenge for Today:

- Adrian has been thinking a long time about the fact that his friend Nick has been stealing money from his parents. He really cares for Nick, but knows what Nick's doing is wrong. Adrian says to you "I can't tell Nick what he's doing is wrong; it wouldn't be loving. And the Bible says that we need to be loving to others." How would you respond to him? What does it mean to be loving to others?

Thursday

- Read Colossians 3:15

- Think through the following questions:

1. What is the peace of Christ? (hint: look at 1:14 and 2:13 again!)
2. "Members of one body" - which means we are members of the Church; Jesus' body. What does this mean about how you relate to others (regarding the peace of Christ)?
3. What does the last part of v15 say that we are to be?

- Challenge for Today:

- Nicole says to you "just because I am a Christian doesn't mean that I have to go to church." How would you respond to her in light of v15? Is there anything else you would add?

Friday

- Read Colossians 3:16

- Think through the following questions:

1. What are we to let dwell in us/among us richly?
2. We are meant to teach and admonish _____ with all wisdom through psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing to ____ with gratitude in our hearts. (Fill in the blanks). Who are we singing to?
3. Do you have gratitude in your heart towards God for what he has done? For the statements made in Colossians 1:13-14, 3:1-4, etc. If not, take some time to pray about this and ask God to help you understand how great he is!

- Challenge for Today:

- Are you teaching your Christian brothers and sisters with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs? More specifically, are you helping the word of Christ dwell in your Christian sisters and brothers through your conversation with them *all week* and not just on a Sunday or a Friday? How can you change what you talk about to help encourage others in their faith?

Saturday

- Read Colossians 3:17

- Think through the following questions:

1. How much of our lives are to be impacted by the fact we are Christians?
2. Who are we living our lives for?
3. How should we be living our lives for him/what should accompany the actions we do? (hint: it's been in v15-16 as well!)

- Challenge for Today:

- Colossians 3:17 doesn't offer an easy way out; if you are a Christian, your entire life needs to be lived in the name of Jesus Christ. Everyone who looks at how you are living should be convinced that you are living your life differently. Is this the case?

Some people have said that St. Francis of Assisi has said "Preach the gospel, and if necessary, use words." This isn't actually what he has said (the facts have been checked!) but this is the attitude of some Christians today. But the Colossians didn't become Christians because they saw Epaphras doing good things; they were saved because they heard and responded to the gospel! We *must* preach the gospel with our words, and our actions *must* back this up; that's what 3:17 is getting at. Are you telling other people what you believe? Why/why not? Today's a great day to share your faith with someone!

Sunday

- Church - Passage covered:_____

- What was the sermon about?:_____

- What do I need to change?_____

Week 8 (Colossians 3:18-4:1)

Monday

- Read Colossians 3:18-4:1

- Think through the following questions:

1. What are the things that “jump out” at you from this text - the things that are surprising or stick in your mind?
2. What questions do you have from reading these 9 verses? Write them down, pray over them and think through them over the next week.
3. What is constantly repeated throughout the verses (take a careful look!)?

- Challenge for Today:

- This passage is tricky; no doubt about it! Read through Ephesians 5:21-6:9 to get another passage (expanding) on the same idea. Over the next few days, we will be looking at all the verses individually, so be careful about getting too worked up over different words e.g. “submit” or “slave”. *Take some time now to pray and ask God to help you to read his word for what it is - not how you react to it. Remember; he is trustworthy and his word is ALL useful (2 Timothy 3:15-16).*

Tuesday

- Read Colossians 3:18

- Think through the following questions:

1. How are wives to relate to their husbands?
2. Why? (focus on the second part of the verse)
3. You might not be a wife, but take a moment to think it through. We submit to others every day; to our parents, to the government, to the speed-sign laws, to the teacher as they teach us, or the employer as we work, and ultimately to God. This does *not* mean we are inferior to most of these (with the exception of God). Rather, we are respecting that they have a different and authoritative position which we willingly place ourselves under for good order. *Are we called to force other people to submit if they aren't?*

- Challenge for Today:

- Submission is good! Without it, our society couldn't function. But it must be willing, and it must be done out of reverence for God. For wives, this submission appears as respect towards their husbands, *out of reverence for Christ*. This *doesn't* mean that they are doormats; we get to see what the husband's responsibility is tomorrow. But take a moment to think; *why* does our society/culture react to the word “submit” so strongly? How can we be different?

Wednesday

- Read Colossians 3:19

- Think through the following questions:

1. How are husbands to treat their wives?
2. (Look at Ephesians 5:25). Why are they to treat their wives this way?
3. (Look at Romans 5:8) Did Christ wait until we were “pretty” or “desirable” before he loved us?

- Challenge for Today:

- You might not be a husband. Think back and combine yesterday's reading with today's. What kind of wife wouldn't want to submit to the husband who is being loving and not harsh? The husband - indeed, those in authority - are instructed to be caring for those under them. Now think of your involvement at church. Do you go along regularly? Do you put in effort to connect with the church programs? If you don't “submit” to the authority of the church in these areas, how can you expect to be cared for as a part of the church? Today, commit to being a part of your small group group/church; *call up or write an email/letter to your pastor* to ask them how you can be more involved.

Thursday

- Read Colossians 3:20-21

- Think through the following questions:

1. What are children to do towards their parents? Why?
2. How are fathers (really, parents as a team) *not* meant to treat their children?
3. Here's where the rubber hits the road; if you have parents, you are meant to obey them. They are to care for you, but that's their responsibility. You need to obey them (as long as they are *not* demanding anything *directly against God* e.g. stop going to church, stop reading the Bible, etc). What does it look like for you to obey your parents at your age and stage of life?

- Challenge for Today:

- Charlie is a local high schooler. You're chatting with him on week when he says to you “I'm over my parents telling me what to do. I'm 15 already; I can do whatever I want to! I don't have to be a slave to them or clean up or anything; besides, God wants me to be free!” What would you say to him?

Friday

- Read Colossians 3:22-25

- A few helpful tips/insights:

- Firstly, only 2 weeks ago Kevin Rudd said that the Bible endorses slavery. *This is wrong*. Nowhere in the Bible is slavery recommended or endorsed. Be very careful when reading the Bible; it says what it says, *not* what people want it to say.
- Slavery in these times is *very, very* different from the 18th-19th Century race based slavery in cruel and oppressive conditions. It wasn't ideal, but slavery came about as a result of war i.e. your country lost, so you became a slave to the winning country. Or you were poor/in debt, so you sold yourself into slavery to pay off this debt. This slavery was temporary - rarely were there slaves over the age of 30.
- As slavery is *described* - it was a regular social and cultural practice in the ancient world to the early Roman culture - the question Paul is tackling is *how*, in light of Jesus' death and resurrection, should Christian slaves treat their masters? And how should Christian masters treat their slaves? He points out that in Christ, all are equal (Galatians 3:26-29) - both slave and free.
- Now the Bible doesn't explicitly say slavery is wrong as an institution (it doesn't endorse it either!). So, let's see what it *does* have to say to slaves and masters, and work out from there how to think about it.
- Think through the following questions:
 1. How are slaves to respond to their *earthly* masters? Why? (v22)
 2. How are they to approach their work? (v23)
 3. Who does Paul say they are really serving in their actions?
- Challenge for Today:
 - In v25, we see that God will judge everyone according to how they live; that he doesn't show favoritism! You are not responsible for how anyone around you acts ultimately; only for how you act. Are you living a life that glorifies God? In this section, we see that it is bad when you only work when someone is watching you. Do you "slack off" when you think that no-one can see? God can. Subject is difficult? Study is hard? Work is boring? Too bad; whilst you are under this "earthly master", you need to remember that God is your master. So work, as if you are working for him.

Saturday

- Read Colossians 4:1

- Think through the following questions:

1. How are masters meant to treat their slaves?
2. Why?
3. I'm guessing that none of you are masters in a slave sense. But do you treat others with respect, realising that before God, you are all equal in stature?

- Challenge for Today:

- Remember these words; *"It is the Lord Christ you are serving."* (v24) How do you think Jesus would want you to approach your relationships with others? Jesus was primarily concerned with the need others had to repent and believe, because he saw that the kingdom of God was coming very soon! And as Christians, Paul is clearly convinced that we should be living our entire lives in light of the facts that 1/ we are saved by Christ alone and 2/ others need to repent and believe, and soon!, because 3/ the Kingdom of God is coming.

Pray for people you know who don't yet believe in God; pray that you will get a chance to share the gospel with them. Pray that they will respond. And then keep praying and sharing with them as you can.

Sunday

- Church - Passage covered:_____

- What was the sermon about?:_____

- What do I need to change?_____

Week 9 (Colossians 4:2-18)

Monday

- Read Colossians 4:2-18

- Think through the following questions:

1. What are the things that “jump out” at you from this text - the things that are surprising or stick in your mind?
2. What questions do you have from reading these 17 verses? Write them down, pray over them and think through them over the next week.
3. What do you notice is important in Paul’s mind throughout these verses?

- Challenge for Today:

- Paul is concerned with the spread of the gospel. Throughout this entire chapter he has said how it should change lives, and how it should be spread, and then he has demonstrated to us a few people whose lives have been changed by the gospel. Take some time to read through the list in v7-15. *What summary could be written about the way the gospel has changed your life/is active in your life today? Is this the summary you want to be known by? If not, this is a good area to pray over.*

Tuesday

- Read Colossians 4:2-4

- Think through the following questions:

1. What does Paul say that Christians should devote themselves to?
2. What should Christians pray for Christian leaders, missionaries, etc.? (v3-4)
3. What do you usually pray for? Is it the same as what Paul prays for, or different?

- Challenge for Today:

- It isn’t easy to pray; that is very clear from how we seem to work. And we are in good company; Jesus’ closest disciples fell asleep when they tried to pray with him! (Matthew 26:36-45) Paul isn’t telling us to devote ourselves to prayer out of the guilt that we don’t pray enough. Instead, he is telling us to devote ourselves to prayer, *watchfully* (that is, in light of eternity, knowing Jesus is coming back from heaven) and *thankfully* (in light of what Jesus has done for you!). Based on this, how should your personal prayers be different?

Wednesday

- Read Colossians 4:5-6

- Think through the following questions:

1. Who does Paul mean by “outsiders”?
2. Do you live in a way that promotes Jesus and the gospel, or doesn’t? (i.e. are you wise in the way that you act)

3. Is your conversation promoting Jesus and the gospel, or isn't it? (i.e. is your conversation full of grace, seasoned with salt and always ready to answer?)

- Challenge for Today:

- Today is about your actions. Church was a few days ago. Are you acting and speaking like a different person today? Fair enough if you are - school, uni and work are difficult places to be a Christian at. But take a moment to remember who Jesus is and what he has done for you on the cross. Remember that people are looking at you to see who and what a Christian is. Is your life and speech promoting Jesus and what he's done *all the time*? How should you change? Pray about this.

Thursday

- Read Colossians 4:7-9

- Think through the following questions:

1. Who are the people that Paul is talking about in these verses?
2. How does Paul describe them?
3. Read through the book of Philemon (only 25 verses long!). What do we learn about the nature of the relationship between Philemon and Onesimus? How has Onesimus been changed by the gospel?

- Challenge for Today:

- Write down the names of three Christians that aren't related to you. How would you describe them? Is it the same way that Paul describes the Christians that were important to him? Encourage these brothers and sisters in Christ by sending them letters/texts/emails/Facebook/carrier pigeon to let them know how important they are in Christ to you.

Friday

- Read Colossians 4:10-14

- Think through the following questions:

1. Who does Paul describe/send greetings from to the Colossians?
2. Mark (also known as John Mark) has been mentioned several times before in the New Testament. Read through Acts 15:36-41. It is clear here that Paul is not happy with Mark. How has his attitude changed at the time of the writing of Colossians?
3. Demas at the time of the writing of this letter appeared to be faithfully a follower of Jesus, and he was with Paul. Read Paul's last letter - 2 Timothy 4:10. How does he describe Demas there?

- Challenge for Today:

- Carly - a friend from church - is feeling confused. She asks you if a Christian can ever stop being a Christian, since her brother used to go to church but has stopped to spend more time hanging with his friends, playing sport and going out with his girlfriend. How would you answer Carly? (Hint: look at the reference to Demas in question 3). **This is a tricky question, and one which lots of people have trouble answering. What is important is that if you are really a Christian, you will inevitably be *wanting* to become more like Jesus every day, even if this is hindered by sinfulness.**

Saturday

- Read Colossians 4:15-18

- Think through the following questions:

1. Where was the church in Laodicea located?
2. What does Paul say to tell Archippus?
3. What does Paul ask us to remember?

- Challenge for Today:

- One of the things that we are reminded of in these closing verses is that the letter of the Colossians was actually written to multiple people in a large group setting in the church, not just to one or two individuals! This letter would have been read aloud in the church for all to hear, to interact with and to pray over. And the same goes for us; this letter is a community letter! So there are two things that you should do: 1/ talk about what you've learned with someone else with the Bible open in front of you! And 2/ practice reading the Bible publicly aloud. You will always have opportunities to do this at church, just let your pastor know.

Sunday

- Church - Passage covered:_____

- What was the sermon about?:_____

_____.

- What do I need to change?_____

_____.

You have just finished reading through the letter to the Colossians. 63 days worth of devotionals, spread over 9 weeks. Well done! To conclude: Paul's closing words are just as applicable for us today. "*Grace be with you.*" May the grace of God be with you, as you have been refreshed and reminded of Christ's work on the cross throughout the letter of Colossians!

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