



eLesson 003

Text: Colossians 1:1 – 1:12

Subject: Knowledge of God

Colossians – Part 1

The book of Colossians is small in size ... but not small in importance. It was written to believers who needed knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. They needed to grow up in their knowledge of God and of His will. They needed instructions about their relationships in the Body, in their families, in their work, and with the lost. This book is very important for every believer today. It would be a good idea to read Colossians once, right now, before continuing this lesson. If you do, you will learn so much more. I am serious about this. Stop right now ... read the book of Colossians through once (it is only 95 verses) ... and then come back to this lesson.

Welcome back. In your reading of Colossians, you should have noticed the general subjects of prayer, knowledge and wisdom, the person of Christ, the work of Christ, warnings, an upward focus, relationships, and the importance of people. Did you also see that the first two chapters are about doctrine and the last two are about application? It is truth in the first two ... then applied truth in the last two. Read Colossians again after you finish this first lesson in the series through this book. Divide the book into your own titled paragraphs.

It is time for a test. Who wrote the book of Colossians? How is that for a simple one-question test? Ask almost any believer and you will get the same answer ... Paul. Was that your answer? Read the first two verses of Colossians 1 again. Now ... who was the author? It was Paul *and* Timothy. That, in itself, is not very important unless you are Timothy wondering why everyone ignores you. However, for us, it does show how easy it is to miss the details. Pre-conditioning can cloud our understanding of Biblical truth. We must learn to study the Bible with open minds and open hearts.

Paul and Timothy were writing to believers to the saints and faithful brethren in Colossae, 1:1-2. Their prayers are described in ten verses, 1:3-12. They were praying always for them (the believers in Colossae), 1:3. They did not cease to pray for them, 1:9. Paul and Timothy had a deep commitment to those people. That is interesting because the New Testament gives no indication that Paul or Timothy ever visited Colossae. Are we that committed to the people we do see? Do we care enough to pray *always* for our families and for our fellow-believers? We should be like Epaphras, 4:12, laboring earnestly for others in our prayers.

Paul and Timothy thanked God for what already existed in the lives of the Colossian believers, 1:3-8. They thanked God for the believers' faith and for their love, which came from hope. The Colossians had responded to the Gospel. They had believed in Jesus. Moreover, they had a love for one another that came from their hope, 1:5. Believers are the only people in the world with true hope ... the only ones who should not fear death. In one of my flights over the Atlantic, there was an apparent serious mechanical problem. We began a rapid descent, turning back toward land for a possible emergency landing. Most of the crew and passengers spoke no English ... but

I could see that they were terrified. People were openly crying ... some sobbing loudly. However, I sat there with no fear. Think about it. What was the worst thing that could have happened to me? If the plane had crashed, I would have died and gone to heaven. Is that bad? Of course not! That would have been good. In addition, I was on a mission trip. Would that have made me a martyr? I fly economy class in the back section of the plane. I do not get to sit up front, closer to the pilot, in first class where the seats, food, and service are the best. However, if I die as a martyr, I go first class to heaven ... and I get to sit closer to the Throne. It doesn't get any better than that. I doubt that would have classified me as a martyr ... but it is an interesting thought. Martyr or not ... should I have been afraid on that plane? Of course not! After the danger passed, we returned to flying altitude and turned back toward New York. A young mother sitting near me finally stopped crying. She asked why I was not afraid ... what a great opportunity for the Gospel! As believers, we have the promise and hope of eternity together in the presence of God. So we should certainly get along with each other here. After all, we will spend eternity together. So let us love each other now. Then the Gospel is proved by our lives and the good news of Jesus will spread to even more people.

Faith and love are not enough. Faith in Jesus is enough to get us to heaven. However, faith and love are not enough for the Christian life. The Colossians were lacking something specific. Today, many believers are lacking the same thing ... they are lacking real knowledge of God. Many Christians are committed to God. They go to church. They even serve on committees and boards. They want to live for Jesus. However, underneath all the Christian activity, their lives are filled with all the same problems that non-believers have. For example, Christian marriages fail at about the same rate as other marriages in America. Think about that. In America, you can listen all day to Christian radio programs about the family. You can buy dozens of Christian books about the home. On almost any weekend, you can attend a conference on building a better Christian marriage and home. Many of these are very good ... and very popular. Nevertheless, Christian marriages still fail at the same rate as other marriages. Why? The answer is knowledge ... not knowledge about marriage ... but knowledge about God. I was told that C. S. Lewis wrote that no combination of bad eggs makes a good omelet. That is at the heart of many of the problems that Christians face today. Many individual Christians are not right. They desperately need to know more of God. Therefore, their lives with others are a mess. No combination of two immature Christians makes a good marriage. Moreover, no combination of a large number of immature Christians makes a good church. Christians need to grow up in their knowledge of God ... and of His will.

Paul and Timothy attacked this problem with prayer. They did not cease to pray that the Colossians would be "*filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding*" 1:9. It is clear from the next few verses that being filled with that knowledge changes lives ... individually and collectively. Colossians 1:10-12 gives eight results of that increased knowledge. Start praying today for your own increased knowledge. Pray for your family's increased knowledge. Pray for your church's increased knowledge. God will answer your prayers. Pray and watch for those eight results.



Study Questions Answers at end of lesson.

1. What could be good titles for the four chapters of Colossians?

Chapter 1: _____

Chapter 2: _____

Chapter 3: _____

Chapter 4: _____

2. What are the first two chapters about? _____
3. What are the last two chapters about? _____
4. Who wrote the letter to the Colossians? _____
5. Were the recipients of this letter believers *or* nonbelievers? _____
6. According to 1:3-5, what two things did the Colossians have?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
7. What one thing were they lacking? _____
8. What did Paul and Timothy do for the Colossian believers? _____
9. What eight results of increased spiritual knowledge are found in 1:10-12?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____
 - f. _____
 - g. _____
 - h. _____



Personal Reflection No answers provided for these questions.

1. Why do many Christians think that only Paul wrote Colossians?

2. How are your faith, love, and hope?

3. Would you have been crying on that airplane? Why?

4. How is your knowledge of God compared to your faith, love, and hope?

5. What have you learned new of God in this past week or month?

6. Who prays for you unceasingly and earnestly?
If *no one*, how will you change that?

7. Whom do you pray for ... unceasingly and earnestly?
If *no one*, when will you start ... and for whom?

8. Why is it true, that in marriage increased knowledge of God is more important than increased knowledge about marriage?

9. Why do so many believers lack knowledge about God? And what about you?

10. What are you going to do to increase your knowledge about God and His will?
Be very specific in your answer ... in what, how, and when.



Answers to Study Questions

1. What could be good titles for the four chapters of Colossians?

Chapter 1: The accomplishment of Christ.

Chapter 2: What we have in Christ.

Chapter 3: The Christian's walk.

Chapter 4: More instructions about relationships.

Note: These are not the only possible chapter titles.

2. What are the first two chapters about? Doctrine ... Biblical truth.

3. What are the last two chapters about? Applied doctrine/truth.

4. Who wrote the letter to the Colossians? Paul and Timothy.

5. Were the recipients of this letter believers or nonbelievers? Believers.

6. According to 1:3-5, what two things did the Colossians have?

a. Faith.

b. Love for all the saints.

7. What one thing were they lacking? Spiritual knowledge/wisdom.

8. What did Paul and Timothy do for the Colossian believers? Prayed unceasingly.

9. What eight results of increased spiritual knowledge are found in 1:10-12?

a. A walk worthy of the Lord.

b. A life pleasing to God.

c. Bearing fruit in every good work.

d. Increasing/growing in knowledge of God.

e. Increased strength/power.

f. Attaining of steadfastness.

g. Attaining of patience.

h. Thankfulness to God.

.....

This Acts One Eight eLesson, copyright 2004, is provided for your personal or group study. You may copy it, unchanged, for free distribution ... but only with this copyright statement attached. Bible quotations are from the New American Standard unless otherwise noted. Visit www.eLessons.org for your own free e-mail subscription, to update your subscription, or to tell a friend about the eLessons. Additional lessons and info on other ministry resources are available on that site. Send questions and comments to questions@eLessons.org.

