



Lesson 1

MEETING A NEW BOOK

DAY ONE—JUST READING!

Before we approach the study of Colossians in more detail, let's read it! There is no better starting point than the text itself—a letter from the apostle Paul to the church in Colossae. (See the introduction for further background.) For this first day, read the book straight through in one sitting, which should take about twenty to thirty minutes. Do not stop in parts that seem difficult; we'll come back! Today's goal is to get a sense of the whole.

But wait . . . before beginning, speak to the Lord God who gave us this book, and ask him to teach you what it means, through his Holy Spirit who inspired it and who even today brings it to life in our minds and hearts.

DAY TWO—GETTING THE MAIN POINT

- I. Today, have not a read-through but a slightly briefer look-through, again of the entire book. This time, as you make your way through the text, ask yourself what

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COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON

Paul mainly seems to be after as he writes this epistle. Can you begin to identify a central theme that works its way through the whole book? Write down at least one or two possibilities.

2. Consider Colossians 2:6–7 as theme verses for this book.
 - a. How might you sum up the message of these two verses?

- b. In what ways do these verses relate to what you've read in the book as a whole?

3. What further sections or divisions of this book might you identify, between the introductory greetings (Col. 1:1–8) and the final greetings (Col. 4:7–18)?

DAY FOUR—THE WRITER’S PURPOSE FOR US

Having gained an overview of this letter, its main message, and its general shape, we should ask at the start: what is the purpose of this book for us, in the whole scope of God’s great biblical revelation? Paul states clearly his main purpose for those to whom he writes (Col. 2:2–4).

1. First, who are the ones for whom Paul wishes his purpose to be accomplished? See Colossians 2:1.

3. Colossians 2:4 adds a further “in order that” for this letter. How will the purpose of Colossians 2:2–3 insure the purpose of verse 4?

Colossians’ message will emphasize the reality and the treasure of all that is ours in Christ, if we have received him for who he is—and Paul will make clear who is this one in whom we are to put our faith. Continuing to know him more and to live in him faithfully is everything we need. May Paul’s message truly strengthen and encourage our hearts.

DAY FIVE—PRAYER

How amazing to think that Paul wrote this letter not only for the churches of his day but for us as well, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Take a few minutes to pray that this book of Colossians will accomplish in your life the purpose for which it was intended.

Lord God, as I study this book you have inspired and preserved, would you encourage my heart, according to your truth. Knit together in love those of us who study. May we together know more and more of the riches of full assurance of understanding found in Christ. May we plumb God’s mystery, which has been revealed in Christ. Thank you for giving us your only Son, the Lord Jesus, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

May I take the message of Colossians to heart, knowing what it means not only to have received Christ Jesus the Lord but also to walk in him, rooted and built up in him, established in the faith and abounding in thanksgiving.

In Christ I pray. Amen.

Notes for Lesson 1

