

COLOSSIANS



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I N T R O D U C T I O N



Welcome to the book of Colossians!

Over the next 10 weeks, we will study the book of Colossians in detail, committing portions of it to memory, digging into the individual verses to determine what truths God desires to communicate, and applying these truths to our everyday lives. These steps are part of a process called **INDUCTIVE BIBLE STUDY**, where we seek to draw out the truths of scripture for ourselves and apply them concretely to our lives. What does this process look like? Inductive Bible Study is a five-step process:

SURVEY

SEE THE BIG PICTURE.

OBSERVE

ASK AND ANSWER, "WHAT DO I SEE?"

INTERPRET

ASK AND ANSWER, "WHAT DOES IT MEAN?"

APPLY

ASK AND ANSWER, "HOW DOES IT WORK?"

SYNTHESIZE

PUT THE PARTS BACK TOGETHER.

Now look at the diagram on the next page as we learn about each of these steps in greater detail. Imagine that you were studying a forest. In the first step, **SURVEY**, you fly quickly over the forest as a whole to get a sense of the big picture. In the same way, during our first week of Survey in Colossians, we will look at the book as a whole to discover who wrote it, why he wrote it, to whom he wrote it, and what overall themes were addressed.

Next, you would land the helicopter and spend the bulk of your time studying individual trees. In the same way, the bulk of our study this semester will involve detailed study of each passage (typically around 10 verses at a time). This detailed study involves 3 steps that we repeat for each passage.

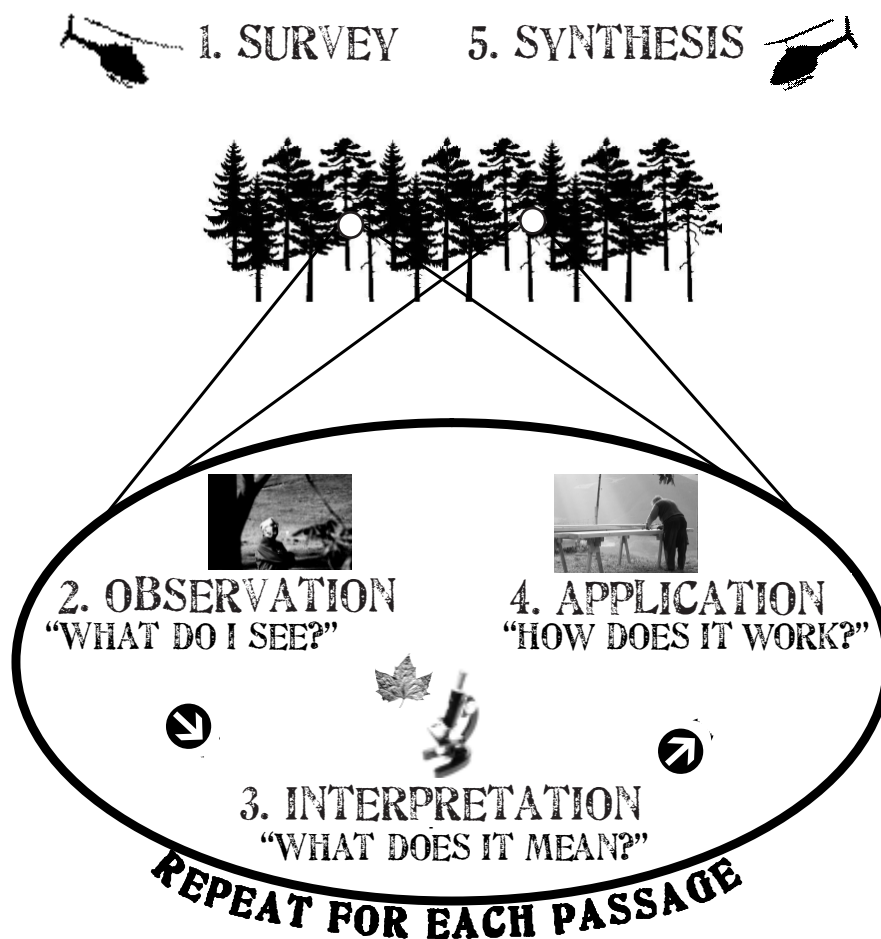


First, we **OBSERVE** the text by asking “What do I see?” We start by observing the passage as a whole, recording major themes, creating a passage title, and reflecting on the passage’s impact for our lives. Then we get detailed and look at each individual verse, highlighting key words and writing out all the questions we can think of.

Second, we **INTERPRET** the text by asking, “What does it mean?” We’ll study a number of practical tools this semester that will help us answer that question.

Third, we **APPLY** the truth that we’ve learned to our everyday lives by asking, “How does it work?” Each week we’ll repeat these 3 steps until we complete the book.

Returning to our forest analogy, once you finished studying each tree, you’d return to your helicopter and fly quickly back over the forest to try to understand how all the details you’ve learned fit together. Likewise, our final step in an Inductive Bible Study is to **SYNTHESIZE** what we’ve learned over the entire semester by summarizing our findings in charts, outlines, and final applications.



These five steps – **SURVEY, OBSERVE, INTERPRET, APPLY, AND SYNTHESIZE** – are your keys to discovering truth from God’s Word both now and for the rest of your lives. Learn them well so that you, too, can become an “approved workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth” (2 Tim 2:15).

H A V I N G D E V O T I O N S



QUESTION:

Why do so few Christians spend personal time digging into God's Word?

While many complain that they don't know how, don't have the time, or simply find it boring, the **#1 REASON** Christians choose not to study God's Word is simply that **THEY DON'T REALIZE WHAT THEY'LL GAIN FROM IT**. So what will you gain from personal time in the Word?

FIRST, YOU WILL GROW SPIRITUALLY (1 Pet 2:2). Just as an infant can't grow physically without milk, so we can't grow spiritually without personal time in God's Word. We're either in the Word and the Word is growing us to be more like Christ, or we're in the world and the world is squeezing us into its own mold. These are the only two options!

SECOND, YOU WILL BECOME SPIRITUALLY MATURE (Heb 5:11-14). Do you want to be a mature follower of Jesus Christ who obeys Him consistently? Spend regular personal time in the Word and you make yourself available to the process of spiritual maturity!

THIRD, YOU WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE IN MINISTRY (2 Tim 3:16-17). If you want to live a life that counts for eternity, you must be equipped through personal time in God's Word. Only the Holy Spirit and the Word of God can teach, reprove, correct, and train you to minister to others effectively.

So, why should we spend our time studying the Bible? Because only as we personally spend time in God's Word will we grow in our faith, become mature followers of Christ, and reach out to others effectively in eternally significant ways. If instead we choose not to make the Word a priority in our daily lives, we consign ourselves to a life of immaturity and eternal insignificance.

Okay, so we now know why we should spend time in the Word (often called "having a quiet time"). But how do we do it?



SINCE EVERY ONE OF US IS UNIQUE, we can't expect that there is any one right way to have a quiet time. In fact, most mature believers find it best to periodically try new ways of digging into God's Word. That keeps their time with Him fresh and energizing. Yet even though there are countless ways to structure your own quiet time, it is often helpful to start with an example and modify it as you see fit.

The following example assumes that you would spend approximately 30 minutes a day for four days a week studying Colossians through the guidance of this packet. Each week you can flip back to this example structure to guide your time in Colossians. Feel free to spread out the listed tasks over more days if you need. Or combine them into fewer but longer quiet times.

Day 1:

Open with prayer & confession of sins (3 min)
 Read week's skill section (5 min)
 Read whole chapter of Colossians (5 min)
 Re-read this week's passage (2 min)
 Determine passage themes and title(s) (7 min)
 Complete first "Reflection" section (8 min)

Day 3:

Open with prayer & confession of sins (3 min)
 Re-read whole chapter & review your first 2 days of work (5 min)
 Answer 2 of your own questions (12 min)
 Begin answering guided questions (10 min)
 End by praying that the Lord would make the truths you've learned in this passage real in your life.

Day 2:

Open with prayer & confession of sins (3 mins)
 Mark up entire passage; write down key observations and questions (22 mins)
 Complete second "Reflection" section (5 mins)

Day 4:

Open with prayer & confession of sins (3 mins)
 Finish guided questions (10 mins)
 Complete application section (12 mins)
 Complete final "Reflection" section (5 mins)

Use the days you're not studying Colossians to **ADD VARIETY TO YOUR QUIET TIMES** (3 days per week in the example above). For example, you may want to devote your whole time on these days to prayer. You could spend the first 15 minutes praising and thanking God and confessing your own sins and then the second 15 minutes praying for specific requests, both for yourself and for others. Or you may want to devote these three days to reading in a different book of the Bible, such as Psalms or one of the gospels, and then following that with a time of prayer.

S U R V E Y



Read the book of Colossians in a single sitting. Then read the book of Philemon, Revelation 3:14-22, and the following background article. Finally, fill in the “Survey Worksheet” on the following page.

AUTHOR

The Pauline authorship of Colossians is supported by abundant evidence both in and out of the book. Colossians has three personal references to Paul in the first person (1:1; 1:23; 4:18) and numerous references to Paul’s associates, such as Tychicus (4:7), Onesimus (4:9), Aristarchus (4:10), Mark (4:10), Justus (4:11), Epaphras (4:12), Luke (4:14), Demas (4:14), and Archippus (4:17). The style and content of Colossians is similar to Ephesians, written about the same time and probably alluded to as “the letter from Laodicea” (4:16).

While 34 Greek words are unique to Colossians, they are characteristic of the theme of the book and fit the thoughts of Paul. Words in this category include “visible” (1:16), “supremacy” (1:18), “fill up” (1:24), “philosophy” (2:8), and “Deity” (2:9).

The conclusion of Ephesians confirms that Tychicus was the carrier of both it and Colossians (Eph. 6:21; cf. Col. 4:7). This helps confirm Paul as the author of the Colossian epistle.

The external evidence for Paul’s authorship is strong, despite the claim of some that the heresy combated in the book is second-century Gnosticism. But there is good reason to believe that the heresy addressed in Colossians (at least in its incipient form) had appeared already in Paul’s lifetime. And in view of Paul’s other encounters with heresies, in books which are unquestionably his, it seems clear that he authored Colossians (cf. 1 Cor. 15; Gal. 1-2; 2 Thes. 2).

DATE AND PLACE OF WRITING

Colossians was written from Rome during Paul’s (first) imprisonment there, as recorded in Acts 28:30. At the same time Paul wrote Ephesians and Philemon (ca. A.D. 60-62). In Philemon 1:9 Paul referred to himself as “a prisoner of Christ Jesus.” Ephesians also contains references to Paul being a “prisoner” (Eph. 3:1; 4:1). And Ephesians refers to Tychicus carrying the epistles from Paul to their destinations (Eph. 6:21; cf. Col. 4:7). Since the record of Acts ends around A.D. 60-62, Colossians was probably written during this two-year imprisonment. And since neither Colossians, Ephesians, nor Philemon mention the outcome of Paul’s trial, anticipated in Philippians 1:19-21, it can be assumed that Colossians was written before Philippians.



OCCASION

The circumstance which prompted the writing of Colossians seemed to be the special heresy that arose there. This false teaching seemed to be the beginning of what later (in the second century) developed into Gnosticism. It contained several characteristics. (1) It was Jewish, stressing the need for observing Old Testament laws and ceremonies. (2) It was philosophical, laying emphasis on some special or deeper knowledge. (3) It involved the worship of angels as mediators to God (2:18). (4) It was exclusivistic, stressing the special privilege and “perfection” of those select few who belonged to this philosophical elite. (5) It was also Christological. But this seminal Gnosticism denied the deity of Christ, thus calling forth one of the greatest declarations of Christ’s deity found anywhere in Scripture (1:15-16; 2:9).

PURPOSES

Three purposes seem to have been in Paul’s mind as he wrote Colossians. First, he sought to show the deity and supremacy of Christ in the face of the Colossian heresy (1:18; 2:9). Second, he wanted to lead believers into spiritual maturity (1:28; 2:6-7). Third, he wanted to inform them about his state of affairs and elicited their prayers on his behalf (4:2-8).

(from the Bible Knowledge Commentary, article by Norman Geisler)

COLOSSAE

(ko-los’-e): A city of Phrygia on the Lycus River, one of the branches of the Maeander, and 3 miles from Mt. Cadmus, 8,013 ft. high. It stood at the head of a gorge where the two streams unite, and on the great highway traversing the country from Ephesus to the Euphrates valley, 13 miles from Hierapolis and 10 from Laodicea. Its history is chiefly associated with that of these two cities. Early, according to both Herodotus and Xenophon, it was a place of great importance. There Xerxes stopped 481 BC (Herodotus vii. 30) and Cyrus the Younger marched 401 BC (Xen. Anab. i. 2,6). From Col 2:1 it is not likely that Paul visited the place in person; but its Christianization was due to the efforts of Epaphras and Timothy (Col 1:1,7), and it was the home of Philemon and Epaphras. That a church was established there early is evident from Col 4:12-13; Rev 1:11; 3:14. As the neighboring cities, Hierapolis and Laodicea, increased in importance, Colossae declined. There were many Jews living there, and a chief article of commerce, for which the place was renowned, was the collossinus, a peculiar wool, probably of a purple color. In religion the people were especially lax, worshipping angels. Of them, Michael was the chief, and the protecting saint of the city. It is said that once he appeared to the people, saving the city in time of a flood. It was this belief in angels which called forth Paul’s epistle (Col 2:18). During the 7th and 8th centuries the place was overrun by the Saracens; in the 12th century the church was destroyed by the Turks and the city disappeared. Its site was explored by Mr. Hamilton. The ruins of the church, the stone foundation of a large theater, and a necropolis with stones of a peculiar shape are still to be seen. During the Middle Ages the place bore the name of Chonae; it is now called Chonas.

(from International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database Copyright (C) 1996 by Biblesoft)





The Mediterranean region during the first century. From the NET BIBLE on Bible.org.
<http://www.bible.org/assets/netbible/jp1.jpg>



Image courtesy of www.abu.nb.ca

SURVEY WORKSHEET

THEME (WHAT is the controlling idea that holds all the parts together?):

PURPOSES (WHY was it written? What events or issues prompted its writing?):

DATE (WHEN was it written?):

AUTHOR (WHO wrote it?):

Brief personal history up to the writing of this letter:

Current location and situation:

RELATIONSHIP WITH RECIPIENTS:

RECIPIENTS (WHO received it, WHAT were they like, and WHERE did they live?):

MAIN IDEAS AND REPEATED THEMES (WHAT really stands out?):

KEY VERSES:



Observe Like a Pro!

Every time you study a passage in the Bible, the first thing you should do is ask the question, “**WHAT DO I SEE?**” This is the crucial skill of **OBSERVATION**, and it lays the groundwork for our study of the Bible just like a foundation does for a house. Do your observations well and all that’s built upon them (Interpretation and Application) will be off to a strong start, but do them poorly and you guarantee that the rest of your study will be insignificant or even inaccurate!

So each week consistently follow the seven steps below to develop a habit of finding the most significant observations. After following these steps, write your most significant observations in the space provided to the right of the passage. I’ve given you examples on the next page to help you see how this skill works. You can also find a great example from Acts 1:8 on pg 71 (with 32 observations from this one verse!).

Try this method for a few weeks and then feel free to make modifications to fit your style better. You could use colored highlighters instead of the symbols below. Or you could do all your observations on a computer if you find that easier.

1. **START BY PRAYING** that God would open your eyes to understand and apply the passage.
2. **UNDERLINE ALL THE VERBS.** Go through and underline all the verbs in each sentence.
3. **DOUBLE UNDERLINE** any commands, admonitions, warnings, or promises.
4. **BOX ALL CONNECTING WORDS.** Here are some examples (a complete list can be found on p23) :

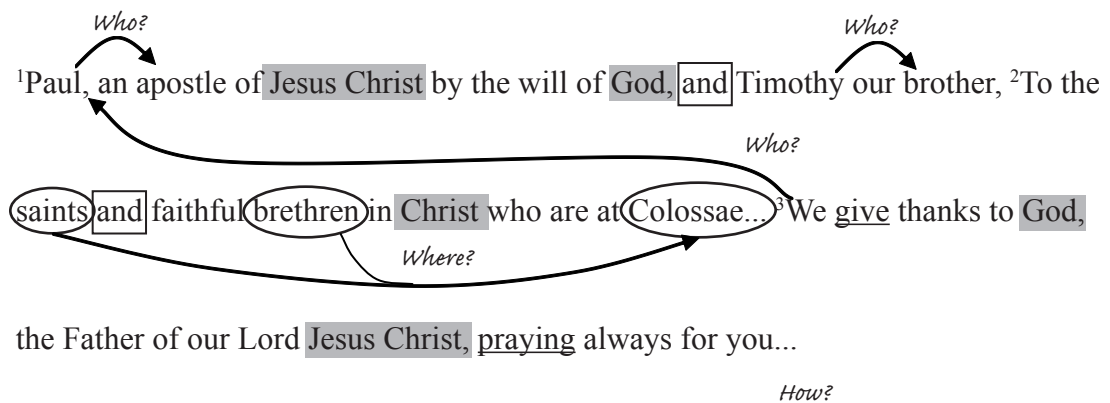
- “**but**” often indicates contrast
- “**and, like, likewise**” often indicate comparison
- “**because, for**” often introduce a reason or result of the previous statement
- “**so that, in order that, that**” often introduce a purpose of the previous statement

5. **CIRCLE ANY KEY TERMS.** These are words that are important theologically (like “saints” in Colossians 1:2) or thematically (they set the theme or main idea for the passage, such as “give thanks” and “praying” in Colossians 1:3)

6. **HIGHLIGHT ANYTHING THAT’S REPEATED OFTEN,** such as themes, ideas, or key words.

7. **ADD DESCRIPTIVE ARROWS,** lines, words, etc. that help you link words & phrases together in each verse. A helpful way to start this is to ask for each verb: Who did this action? What did they do? Whom did it benefit? When did they do it? Why did they do it? How did they do it?

Here’s an example of this 7-step process for Colossians 1:1-2:



SEE THE BIG PICTURE

overview

Read Colossians 1:1-8 and write down the key themes or ideas you see. Then summarize the passage with one or more titles (instructions on p29).

KEY THEMES	PASSAGE TITLES
	VV.
	VV.
	VV.

REFLECT

ponder

The passage says that the gospel is constantly bearing fruit and increasing in all the world. Is this easy for you to believe? Why or why not? How have you seen this in your own life?

OBSERVE *examine*

Mark up Colossians 1:1-8 and write down your key observations to the side. Feel free to work outside of the packet or in whatever way is most effective for you.

¹Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy
our brother, ²To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at
Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

³We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
praying always for you, ⁴since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and
the love which you have for all the saints; ⁵because of the hope laid up
for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth,
the gospel ⁶which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is
constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you
also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in
truth; ⁷just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-
servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf, ⁸and he also
informed us of your love in the Spirit.

v1-2

v3-4

v5-6

v7-8

REFLECT *ponder*

*What observations affected you the most? Why?
Spend a few minutes responding in prayer. Then begin to memorize Colossians 1:3-5a.*

INTERPRET *think*

To better understand Titus 1:1-8, attempt to answer these questions (find help p41).

1. What key themes does Paul introduce at the beginning of the letter? Do any of these themes correspond to the themes for the book you discovered during your survey?
2. The word “gospel” simply means “good news.” What is the good news that Paul and Timothy are speaking of in Colossians 1:5? (see Ro 1:16-17; 1 Cor 15:1-6; 2 Ti 2:8.)
3. Describe the interrelationship between faith, hope and love in verses 4 and 5. How do they fit together? Why is each so essential?
4. What characteristics do we look for and pray for as defining growth in our churches, organizations or in ourselves? Do we look for characteristics other than those described in the NT? If so, why?
5. In one sentence of your own words, describe the main point that Paul communicates in Colossians 1:1-8 (instructions on p29).

APPLY *action*

Prayerfully answer the following questions to help you apply what you've learned from Colossians 1:1-8.

✚ Paul and Timothy begin their letter by thanking God for the effect the gospel has had in the Colossians lives. How often do you thank God for the good news of your salvation? Spend some time thanking Him now.

✚ Epaphras is described as “a faithful servant of Christ” in verse 7. Would people ever describe you this way? How would you like to be described?

✚ Write a brief plan of action for how you can begin to become the person you want to be this week. Answer the questions: What changes can I make? What is the first step? When will I do this? Who will hold me accountable to accomplish this?

MEMORIZE *imprint*

Review your memory verse for the week – Colossians 1:3-5a - and write it out below.

{ }

It is delightfully easy to thank God for the grace we ourselves have received, but it requires great grace to thank God always for the grace given to others.

- James Smith

STOP *pray*

Thank God for what you've learned, and pray for His help to follow through on your application. Pray for the others in your group that they will continue to grow in the Lord and successfully apply what they've learned.

Notes...

Digging deeper..

1. Timothy is included with Paul as the author of this letter. What is the significance of this? Is he included as the author of any other of Paul's letters?

2. What is the significance of the phrase "in Christ"? (see 2:6-15; Rom 8:1,2; 12:5; 1 Cor 1:30; 2 Cor 5:17,19; Gal 2:16,17; Eph 1:3; 2:6,7,10,13; Phil 4:7,19; 2 Tim 1:9)

3. Paul was in prison when He was writing this letter, and yet he was able to deem himself as successful and rejoice to the Lord as the gospel continued to advance. What would be most people's response to being in Paul's situation? What would be yours?



Ask Great Questions

Why must we invest the time to discover lots of observations each week? Because they serve as the foundation for this week's skill, Asking Great Questions, which is the first step in the process of Interpretation. As you may have already noticed, when you mentally dig into a passage during observation, your mind naturally generates challenging questions based on your observations. Why did Paul use this word? What does this phrase mean? What is the flow of thought in this sentence?

This week we want to help you refine your question asking skills so that you can come up with the most important questions in any passage. As you're asking questions, don't worry about how to answer them. At this point, simply ask every question you can think of. Here's a list of WHAT and WHY questions to get you started:

Here are some examples:

WHAT?

WHAT is the...

...meaning of a word?

...significance of a word, phrase, idea, or literary structure?

...implication of a statement?

...relationship between words, ideas, phrases, or passages?

...atmosphere or mood of the passage?

...structure and form used in the passage?



...include this idea at all?

Paul had never met the Colossians and yet he was praying fervently for them. How would you feel if you had someone praying like that for you? (For example, what if Billy Graham wrote you to tell you that He was praying for you in this way?)

OBSERVE *examine*

Mark up Colossians 1:9-14 & write down your key observations to the side. Feel free to work outside of the packet or in whatever way is most effective for you.

⁹For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, ¹⁰so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; ¹¹strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. ¹³For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

v9-10

v11-12

v13-14

REFLECT *ponder*

What observations affected you the most? Why? Spend a few minutes responding in prayer. Then begin to memorize Colossians 1:13-14.



INTERPRET *think*

To better understand Titus 1:10-16, attempt to answer these questions (find help p41).

1. Answer your own two most important interpretive questions.

Q:

A:

Q:

A:

2. How does this passage relate to the previous passage? (HINT: Identify “the reason” in v9)

3. Paul wants his audience to “walk in a manner worthy of the Lord.” Looking just at Paul’s prayer in vv9-14, list out all of the characteristics you see that describe a worthy life.

4. Is it possible to have joy in the midst of situations that demand “endurance and patience” (v11)? How do we find joy in such situations? Look at John 15:10-11, Galatians 5:22, and Hebrews 12:1-3 to help you answer.

5. Rewrite Paul’s prayer in your own words.

APPLY *action*

Prayerfully answer the following questions to help you apply what you've learned from Colossians 1:9-14.

- ⊕ Paul's prayer is very different from the normal content of many of our prayers. Paul prays regularly, intensely, and in a focused and intentional way. Paul also does not simply wait until there is a problem and ask God to fix people, he practices preventative prayer. What does your prayer life look like? Is prayer a regular part of your life? How purposeful are you in prayer?
- ⊕ Brainstorm three people the Lord has placed in your life that you can spend time praying for this week.
- ⊕ Write a brief plan of action for how you will accomplish this. Answer the questions: When will I do this? How will I do this? How long will I spend doing this? Are there any needs that they have for which I can specifically be praying?
- ⊕ Who will hold you accountable to accomplish this? _____

MEMORIZE *imprint*

Review your memory verse for the week – Colossians 1:13-14 - and write it out below.

{ }

O Christ, do not give me tasks equal to my powers,
But give me powers equal to my tasks,
For I want to be stretched by things too great for me.
I want to grow through the greatness of my tasks,
But I shall need your help for the growing.

- E. Stanley Jones

STOP *pray*

Thank God for what you've learned, and pray for His help to follow through on your application. Pray for the others in your group that they will continue to grow in the Lord and successfully apply what they've learned.

Notes...

Digging deeper..

1. What are the “spiritual wisdom and understanding” in 1:9? (see Col 3:16; 1 Cor 2:6-16)
3. Paul and Timothy pray that the Colossians will bear fruit in every good work. What role do works play in the life of a believer? (see Eph 2:8-10; Titus 2:11-14; 1 Pet 2:11-12) Are works a requirement for salvation? (see John 1:12; Acts 16:29-31; Eph 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7)
4. According to this passage, what has Christ accomplished for us? What would have happened to us if Christ had not come?
3. How do verses 13 and 14 relate to verses 9 through 12?



Apply Truth to Your Life

During the **APPLICATION** stage, we ask and answer the question, “**HOW DOES IT WORK?**” Just as an opera’s not over until the fat lady sings, so Bible study’s not over until you’ve applied what you’ve learned to your life (see John 14:21). How do you personally apply God’s truth accurately and powerfully?

FIRST, you must observe and interpret well, or you risk wrongly applying the passage to your life!

SECOND, as with all aspects of Bible study, you must prepare yourself through prayer.

FINALLY, with these initial steps complete, you begin to ask yourself a series of questions:

WHAT ARE A FEW KEY TRUTHS or commands I discovered in this passage?

Your goal here is to identify 2 or 3 factual statements or commands in this week’s passage that are central to the author’s message. If any truth or command in the passage convicted you during your study, be sure to include it as one of your choices! As you list principles, be sure to check that they are timeless – that they are true for each of us today. Principles are not limited or canceled by later Biblical revelation, nor are they only applicable to one person or one small group of people.

HOW AM I DOING? When do I struggle to live out this truth or command?

Now you begin to compare the principle you’ve discovered to your own life. Are you living out this principle in all areas of your life on a regular basis, or are you falling short? Get very specific and write out in detail the circumstances or situations where you most struggle to live out this truth or command.

WHAT IS ONE PRACTICAL WAY that I can begin to live out this truth or command this week?

Begin by thinking through the following questions for ideas:

- Is there something to worship or thank God for?*
- Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?*
- Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?*
- Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?*
- Is there any relationship I need to work on?*

It's usually helpful to ask the follow-up question: **WHAT EXACTLY WILL I DO DIFFERENTLY THIS WEEK THAN LAST WEEK?** Will you wash the dishes every Thursday night? Will you invite your neighbor to church this week? Will you write an encouraging note to a friend? Will you watch no more than 1 hour of TV per day? If you don't make your application very concrete, you're almost sure to fail (it's very easy to wiggle out of a poorly defined application!)

WHO WILL HOLD ME ACCOUNTABLE next week to see if I've followed through?

Don't skip this step! We all need help in our spiritual growth. So choose a close believing friend or family member to hold you accountable, or ask your group leader or a fellow member of your group. Tell him or her exactly what you intend to do this week and ask this person to call you next week to check your progress.

SEE THE BIG PICTURE

overview

KEY THEMES

Read Colossians 1:15-23 and write down the key themes or ideas you see. Then summarize the passage with one or more titles (instructions on p29).

PASSAGE TITLES

	vv.
	vv.
	vv.

REFLECT

ponder

If Christ created all things, holds all things together, raised from the dead, reconciled all things to God, and made peace between God and men, why do we have such a hard time trusting Him with our lives and desires?

OBSERVE
examine

Mark up Colossians 1:15-23 & write down your key observations to the side. Feel free to work outside of the packet or in whatever way is most effective for you.

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

v15-16

¹⁶For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. ¹⁸He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. ¹⁹For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, ²⁰and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. ²¹And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, ²²yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—²³if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

v17-18

v19-20

v21-22

v23

REFLECT
ponder

What observations affected you the most? Why? Spend a few minutes responding in prayer. Then begin to memorize Colossians 1:15-16.



INTERPRET *think*

To better understand Titus 1:15-23, attempt to answer these questions (find help p41).

1. Answer your own two most important interpretive questions.

Q:

A:

Q:

A:

2. Many theologians think that Paul and Timothy may have been quoting an early Christian hymn in verses 13-20. Why would they insert this here? In other words what is the significance of this passage in advancing the purpose of the letter? (hint: read 1:28-2:8)

3. List out all that you learn about the nature, position, and deeds of Jesus Christ in this passage.

4. Explain the “if” statement of verse 23. In other words, what exactly is Paul calling the Colossians to do in verse 22? What will the result be if they do not live out verse 23? Compare these verses with 1 Cor 3:10-15; Luke 12:8-9; 1 John 2:28; 2 Tim 2:10-13.

5. CASE STUDY: You met Tom in lab. He is a great partner; not only do you get all of your work done, but you always have good conversation too. Midway through the semester you find out that that Tom is Muslim. You tell him you are a Christian and begin to talk about religion. Tom says that he admires and respects Jesus, but he doesn’t understand why Christians think He is God. He explains that in the Koran Jesus is said to be a prophet. He wants to know what the Bible says. Coincidentally, or maybe not, you have just finished studying this passage. What do you tell him?

APPLY *action*

Prayerfully answer the following questions to help you apply what you've learned from Colossians 1:15-23.

TIMELESS PRINCIPLES	HOW ARE YOU DOING?
List some timeless truths or commands you discovered in this week's passage that apply to ALL Christians:	Do YOU consistently live out this principle? When do you struggle to obey it? Be honest and specific!
Ex 1. <i>Christ is the head of all believers.</i>	<i>While I try to honor Christ, I still have a hard time honoring Him daily in the way I treat my roommate.</i>
2.	
3.	

DON'T STOP YET!! Prayerfully choose one principle from the list above. In what practical way can you begin to live out this truth this week? What is one specific step you can take to honor the Lord in this area? Think through these questions for ideas:

Is there something to worship or thank God for?

Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?

Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?

Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?

Is there any relationship I need to work on?

ACCOUNTABILITY: Who will hold you accountable to accomplish this? _____

MEMORIZE *imprint*

Review your memory verse for the week – Colossians 1:15-16 – and write it out below.

{ }

Christ is not valued at all unless He be valued above all.

- Augustine

STOP *pray*

Notes...

Digging Deeper..

1. What does “image” mean in v15? (see Gen 1:26-27; Rom 1:22-23, 8:29; 1 Cor 15:49; 2 Cor 3:18, 4:3-4; Col. 3:10) How does Christ visibly reflect “the invisible God” (Heb. 1:1-3)?

2. Paul and Timothy call Christ the “firstborn” in verses 15 and 18. Firstborn sometimes simply means the oldest child/son, but it is also sometimes used to convey other meanings. What does firstborn mean in this context? (see Heb 12:22-23; Ps. 89:27; Rom 8:29)

3. How is the word “present” (1:22) used elsewhere (Rom 6:13,16,19; 12:1; 14:10; 1 Cor. 8:8; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph 5:27; Col. 1:28; 2 Tim. 2:15)? Do the descriptive terms “holy, blameless and beyond reproach” apply equally to all believers?



See the Big Picture

By this time, you are probably already familiar with the “See the Big Picture” section on page 2 of each week’s study. The goal of this section is to help you keep the Big Picture, the **CONTEXT OF THE WHOLE PASSAGE**, constantly in mind as you are doing interpretation and application. Nothing is more important for arriving at accurate answers to your questions than keeping the overall context in mind.

Therefore, we’ve provided two steps each week to help you discover the big picture of the passage you’re studying. We’ve also provided a third step embedded in each week’s “Guided Questions” section to help you refine your understanding of the Big Picture by writing a summary sentence for the passage.

Well, now that you’ve tried these three steps for a few weeks, it’s probably a good time to give you the official directions! You’ll do the first two steps, **DISCOVERING THEMES** and **CREATING TITLES**, first thing each week. Then, towards the end of your week of study, you’ll do the final step: **SUMMARIZING THE PASSAGE**.

1. DISCOVER 2-3 PRIMARY THEMES IN A PASSAGE.

A primary theme is a central idea, truth, or command that the passage focuses on. In Colossians 1:15-20, the theme is “The Preeminence of Christ.” This is the dominant idea that motivated Paul to write 1:15-20. It’s usually best to look for 2-3 themes in each passage and state them as a single word or short phrase. By identifying these themes at the beginning of your study you develop a good overall grasp of the passage which will guide you during the interpretation phase.

2. CREATE 1-3 PASSAGE TITLE(S).

Once you have discovered the key themes of the passage, it’s time to create one-to-five-word titles that capture the big picture. Start by reading back over the passage and deciding how many titles you will need. Is this a relatively short passage that seems focused on one key idea? If so, create a single title for the entire passage. Colossians 1:9-14 is a good example – its primary purpose is to ask God to give the believers in Colossae the knowledge that they need in order to be motivated to live a life worthy of the Lord. Therefore, you could write a single title for the entire passage, such as “A Prayer for Knowledge Leading to Godliness.”



Other passages, such as Colossians 1:15-23, may be better split into multiple titles, such as “Christ as Lord in Creation and in Reconciliation,” for 1:15-20 and “Why Christ Reconciled Us,” for 1:21-23.

3. SUMMARIZE THE PASSAGE IN ONE SENTENCE.

Towards the end of each week’s lesson, we’ll create a summary sentence: a concise sentence in your own words that accurately encapsulates the author’s main point in a given passage. Usually this sentence will focus on the themes you discovered at the beginning of the week’s study. Don’t try to include everything that Paul says in your sentence, or it will be too long to be helpful! Simply include the big ideas. Here are a couple of examples from Colossians:

Summary Sentence for Colossians 1:9-14

“Paul and Timothy ask God that He would give the Colossians the knowledge of His will that would result in them walking in a manner worthy of the Lord.”

Summary Sentence for Colossians 1:15-23

“Christ is Lord of all things and the agent through whom God has reconciled all things to Himself so that they would be holy.”

SEE THE BIG PICTURE

overview

Read Colossians 1:24-2:5 and write down the key themes or ideas you see. Then summarize the passage with one or more titles (instructions on p29).

KEY THEMES

PASSAGE TITLES

	VV.
	VV.
	VV.

REFLECT

ponder

We see in this passage that Paul is so passionate about the gospel and about his ministry to the Gentiles that he devotes his entire life to laboring on behalf of Christ and is even willing to suffer for people he has never met. Is there anything in your own life that you are this passionate about? What would your friends and family say you are passionate about?

OBSERVE *examine*

Mark up Colossians 1:24-2:5 & write down your key observations to the side. Feel free to work outside of the packet or in whatever way is most effective for you.

²⁴Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions. ²⁵Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, ²⁶that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, ²⁷to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. ²⁸We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. ²⁹For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

v24-25

v26-27

v28-29

v1-2

¹For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face, ²that their hearts may be encouraged, having been knit together in love, and attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, ³in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴I say this so that no one will delude you with persuasive argument. ⁵For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ.

v3-4

v5

REFLECT *ponder*

*What observation affected you the most? Why?
Spend a few minutes responding in prayer. Then begin to memorize Colossians 1:28.*



INTERPRET *think*

To better understand Colossians 1:24-2:5, attempt to answer these questions (find help p41).

1. Answer your own two most important interpretive questions.

Q:

A:

Q:

A:

2. In the previous section Paul had been treating the Colossians themselves as the main subject (using the personal pronoun “you” throughout); in this section he becomes the subject (using the personal pronoun “I”). In the next section he switches back to “you.” What is the purpose of this section and how does it fit in to what comes immediately before and after?

3. How was Paul suffering for the Colossians and the rest of the church? (see 1 Cor 4:9-13; 2 Cor 11:23-33) Why does God allow His children to undergo suffering? (see John 15:18-22; Rom 5:3-5; 2 Pet 4:12-14)

4. Using only verses 25-27 define what the “mystery” is that Paul is speaking of, and determine why he calls it a “mystery.”

Now read Ephesians 3:1-10. Is the “mystery” the same in both places? What do you learn about the Mystery” in Ephesians 3?

5. In one sentence of your own words, describe the main point that Paul communicates in Colossians 1:24-2:5 (instructions on p29).

APPLY *action*

Prayerfully answer the following questions to help you apply what you've learned from Colossians 1:24-2:5.

TIMELESS PRINCIPLES	HOW ARE YOU DOING?
List some timeless truths or commands you discovered in this week's passage that apply to ALL Christians:	Do YOU consistently live out this principle? When do you struggle to obey it? Be honest and specific!
1.	
2.	
3.	

DON'T STOP YET!! Prayerfully choose one principle from the list above. In what practical way can you begin to live out this truth this week? What is one specific step you can take to honor the Lord in this area? Think through these questions for ideas:

Is there something to worship or thank God for?

Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?

Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?

Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?

Is there any relationship I need to work on?

ACCOUNTABILITY: Who will hold you accountable to accomplish this? _____

MEMORIZE *imprint*

Review your memory verse for the week – Colossians 1:28 - and write it out below.

{ }

Give yourself fully to God. He will use you to accomplish great things on the condition that you believe much more in His love than in your own weaknesses.

- Mother Theresa

STOP *pray*

Notes...

Digging Deeper..

1. What was lacking in Christ's afflictions that Paul was filling up? (see 2 Cor 1:3-7, 4:7-18; Eph 3:1-13; Phil 1:12-14; 2 Tim 2:8-10) HINT: It is helpful to first determine what was not lacking in Christ's afflictions. (see Heb 7:27; 9:12, 28; 10:10)
2. What does it mean to strive according to Christ's power (vs. 29)? (see 2 Cor 12:7-10; Eph 1:18-21; Phil 4:11-13)
3. In what sense are "all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" hidden in Christ? How do we "discover" these hidden treasures?



J. D. the Structure

This week we will add one more powerful observation skill to our repertoire – identifying structural indicators in a passage. Structural indicators are logical connections an author creates to develop his argument within a paragraph and throughout a book. Noticing these will help you to understand the author’s flow of thought and even help you build an outline of the book. These indicators can sometimes be identified from the “**KEY STRUCTURAL TERMS**” that we’ve listed below.

***But note, the presence of a key term does not necessarily mean that a certain structural indicator is present. For example, just because you see “and” in a particular verse does not mean that the author is making a comparison. In Ephesians 2:1, Paul uses “and” simply to introduce a new section that is loosely connected to chapter 1. Yet, when you do see these key terms, it’s a good clue that you probably are looking at the matching structural indicator.*

COMPARISON: points out the similarities between two or more related ideas (comparison), or simply joins like ideas (connection). Key words are “and, like, as, just as, also, so also, even so.” Observe Hebrews 5:1-10 for a comparison of the priesthoods of Aaron and Christ.

*“But his delight is in the law of the LORD, **and** (connection) in His law he meditates day and night. And he will be **like** (comparison) a tree firmly planted by streams of water” (Ps.1:2-3)*

CONTRAST: points out dissimilarities between thoughts or ideas. Key words are “but, rather, yet, however.” An excellent example is the comparisons and contrasts Paul makes between Adam and Christ in Romans 5:12-21. See also Ps. 73.

*“Now the deeds of the flesh are evident... **But** the fruit of the Spirit is....” (Galatians 5:19-23)*

PURPOSE: indicates the intended goal of an idea(s), action(s), or event(s) and is indicated by key words “that, so that, in order that.”

*“...but these have been written **that** you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:31)*

RESULT: indicates the actual consequences and is indicated by key words “that, so that, as a result, with the result that.”

*“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, **so that** you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...” (Ephesians 1:18)*

CAUSE: expresses the basis or cause of an action and is indicated by “because, since.” For examples see Acts 11:1-18, Mark 4:3-20, and Colossians 1:5.

*“Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, **because** he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin...” (1 Peter 4:1)*



INSTRUMENTATION: describes the means to an end. In the example from Acts 15 below, grace is the “means” to get to the “end” or result that we are saved. Look for the word “through.”

*“For by grace you have been saved **through** faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God” (Eph 2:8)*

EXPLANATION: what follows the key word further explains the previous idea(s) (what follows gives reasons why it is true, or why it occurred, or simply adds additional information). Look for the key word “for.”

*“because it is written, ‘YOU SHALL BE HOLY, **FOR** I AM HOLY.’” (1 Peter 1:16)*

INFERENCE: provides a logical consequence, a conclusion, or a summary to the previous discussion and is indicated by “therefore, for this reason” as in 1 Peter 1:13; 2:1; 4:7.

*“**Therefore** God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.” (Romans 1:24)*

QUESTIONS: structure is built around questions posed and answered by the author (or a hypothetical opponent created by the author).

“What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace might increase?” (Romans 6:1)

CONDITION: presents a condition that must occur before a certain action or conclusion can occur. The statement may or may not reflect reality (i.e. it could be hypothetical). Key word is “if” as in 1 Peter 1:17.

*“the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood; for **if** they had understood it they would not have crucified the Lord of glory...” (1 Corinthians 2:8)*

ILLUSTRATION: the use of a story, analogy, or quotation to clarify a proposition. The parables are excellent examples as are Paul’s quotation in Eph 5:14 and his analogy in Gal 4:22-31.

REPETITION: reiteration of the same word or phrase (when a similar but not exact word, phrase or idea is repeated it is known as continuity)

SEE THE BIG PICTURE

overview

KEY THEMES

Read Colossians 2:6-15 and write down the key themes or ideas you see. Then summarize the passage with one or more titles (instructions on p29).

PASSAGE TITLES

	vv.
	vv.
	vv.

REFLECT

ponder

Colossians 2:6 calls us to walk in Christ just as we received Him. Reflect for a moment on when you received Christ as your Savior. How did you receive Him? In other words, what did you have to DO to make Christ your Savior?

OBSERVE *examine*

Mark up Colossians 2:6-15 & write down your key observations to the side. Feel free to work outside of the packet or in whatever way is most effective for you.

⁶Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.

v6-7

⁸See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. ⁹For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, ¹⁰and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority; ¹¹and in Him you were also circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ; ¹²having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. ¹³When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, ¹⁴having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. ¹⁵When He had disarmed the rulers and authorities, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

v8-9

v10-11

v12-13

v14-15

REFLECT *ponder*

What observations affected you the most? Why?

Spend a few minutes responding in prayer. Then begin to memorize Colossians 2:6.



1. Answer your own two most important interpretive questions.

Q:

A:

Q:

A:

2. This section begins with a “therefore.” How does it connect to the previous passage?

3. This passage teaches us much about Christ. What do we learn about who Jesus is in this passage? What do we learn about what He has done for us?

4. In what sense has the believer been “made complete” (2:10; note Paul’s recurring reference to our riches “in Christ” or “in Him”)? How do you reconcile this with Paul’s statement in 1:28?

5. In one sentence of your own words, describe the main point that Paul communicates in Colossians 2:7-15 (instructions on p29).

APPLY *action*

Prayerfully answer the following questions to help you apply what you've learned from Colossians 2:6-15.

TIMELESS PRINCIPLES	HOW ARE YOU DOING?
List some timeless truths or commands you discovered in this week's passage that apply to ALL Christians:	Do YOU consistently live out this principle? When do you struggle to obey it? Be honest and specific!
1.	
2.	
3.	

DON'T STOP YET!! Prayerfully choose one principle from the list above. In what practical way can you begin to live out this truth this week? What is one specific step you can take to honor the Lord in this area? Think through these questions for ideas:

Is there something to worship or thank God for?

Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?

Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?

Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?

Is there any relationship I need to work on?

ACCOUNTABILITY: Who will hold you accountable to accomplish this? _____

MEMORIZE *imprint*

Review your memory verse for the week – Colossians 2:6 - and write it out below.

{ }

It is Christ in you who is the hope of glory. Anything less or anything else will bring no hope of glory but rather despair.

- T. Austin-Sparks

STOP *pray*

Notes...

Digging deeper..

1. What do you learn about Christ from 2:9? What current false religions does verse 9 refute?
2. What significance is there for a Jew in physical circumcision (cf. Gen. 17:1-14)? How were we “circumcised” in Christ? How is it similar/different from physical circumcision (cf. Phil 3:2-3; Rom 4:9-12)?
3. Practically speaking, how is a believer “firmly rooted,” “built up,” and “established” in their faith?



Discover the Answer

Now that you've learned how to ask lots of great questions, you may be wondering, "How do I answer them?" Well, we want to start with the **5 FUNDAMENTAL TOOLS FOR ACCURATE INTERPRETATION**. These are the 5 most important steps you can apply each week to answer your questions. After you've prayed for guidance, observed the text, and asked as many questions as you can, follow these 5 steps to seek out accurate answers:

USE THE CONTEXT – The meaning of the verse you are trying to interpret should primarily be determined by how it fits into its context. Look for important clues in the verses and chapters that come before and after the verse in question. Try to follow Paul's flow of thought throughout your passage. This may take you back to a previous week's work, so have it handy as a review. You'll soon see that context is truthfully the most powerful and helpful interpretive tool we have.

DEFINE WORDS – Grab an English dictionary and look up the meaning of key words. You can also find helpful key word dictionaries in the back of some English study Bibles. In a couple of weeks we will learn to do in-depth word studies to discover a word's meaning in the original Greek language (don't worry, it's easier than it sounds!)

COMPARE TRANSLATIONS – Look up your passage in a different English translation. If you use New American Standard (NASB) usually, look it up in the New International Version (NIV) or in the New King James Version (NKJV). You can find and compare numerous English translations of any Bible passage at www.biblestudytools.net.

STUDY CROSS-REFERENCES – If your Bible provides cross references in the margins, look these up to discover helpful parallel passages. You can also use the concordance in the back of most English Bibles to look up a key word in your verse and see where else it is used. Finally, you can turn to an internet site such as www.biblestudytools.net to help discover even more exhaustive cross-references.

WRESTLE WITH THE TEXT – Few tough questions are answered accurately in a hurry. So after you’ve used one or more of the above tools, take some time to wrestle with your question. You may need to trace Paul’s flow of thought through the passage or carefully weigh 2 possible answers. Try discussing the question with a friend who’s studying it too. He or she may help you see the question in a new light.

SEE THE BIG PICTURE

overview

KEY THEMES

Read Colossians 2:16-23 and write down the key themes or ideas you see. Then summarize the passage with one or more titles (instructions on p29).

PASSAGE TITLES

	VV.
	VV.
	VV.

REFLECT

ponder

Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.” The gospel is so simple that many people are often tempted to add other requirements to it. In Paul’s day it was dietary regulations, special festivals, and worship of angels. What are some things that people (even some Christians) do today to try to earn God’s favor?

OBSERVE
examine

Mark up Colossians 2:16-23 & write down your key observations to the side. Feel free to work outside of the packet or in whatever way is most effective for you.

¹⁶Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day—¹⁷things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. ¹⁸Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.

v16-17

v18-19

²⁰If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, ²¹“Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!” ²²(which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? ²³These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

v20-21

v22-23

REFLECT
ponder

*What observations affected you the most? Why?
Spend a few minutes responding in prayer. Then begin to memorize Colossians 2:9-10.*



1. Answer your own two most important interpretive questions.

Q:

A:

Q:

A:

2. Note the word “therefore” in 2:16. How are the truths of 2:11-15 related to Paul’s statements in 2:16 and following?

3. Grab an English dictionary and look up both “elementary” and “principle.” What could the “elementary principles of the world” that Paul refers to be? How have we died to these “elementary principles” with Christ (2:20)?

4. Why are the activities of 2:20-22 of no value against indulgence of the flesh (2:23)? What is the difference between asceticism, or self-denial for the sake of self-denial, and biblical self-denial (cf. Gal 3:1-3; Phil 3:1-8; Rom 6:8-13; Gal 5:13-18)?

5. In one sentence of your own words, describe the main point that Paul communicates in Colossians 2:16-23 (instructions on p29).

APPLY *action*

Prayerfully answer the following questions to help you apply what you've learned from Colossians 2:16-23.

TIMELESS PRINCIPLES	HOW ARE YOU DOING?
List some timeless truths or commands you discovered in this week's passage that apply to ALL Christians:	Do YOU consistently live out this principle? When do you struggle to obey it? Be honest and specific!
1.	
2.	
3.	

DON'T STOP YET!! Prayerfully choose one principle from the list above. In what practical way can you begin to live out this truth this week? What is one specific step you can take to honor the Lord in this area? Think through these questions for ideas:

Is there something to worship or thank God for?

Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?

Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?

Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?

Is there any relationship I need to work on?

ACCOUNTABILITY: Who will hold you accountable to accomplish this? _____

MEMORIZE *imprint*

Review your memory verse for the week – Colossians 2:9-10 – and write it out below.

{ }

To be in Christ is a matter of life and not of legalism.

- T. Austin-Sparks

STOP *pray*



Notes...

Digging Deeper..

1. How are the activities of 2:16 a “shadow of what is to come”?
2. How would the activities of 1:18 “puff” a person up in his mind? We probably don’t have a problem with worshipping angels today (or do we?), but we do have other special sources of spiritual pride. Can you think of any?
3. What is the “prize” (1:18) of which the Colossians were being defrauded? (cf. Col 3:24-25; 1 Cor 9:24-27; 2 Tim 2:12a)
4. Of what dangers did Paul warn the Colossians? Do these dangers exist today, and if so, how can we protect ourselves from them? What safeguards or remedies does Paul offer for each danger?



Studying Key Words

It's time to learn our **FIRST ADVANCED INTERPRETIVE SKILL** – studying key words in the original Greek. But how do we do them? **FIRST** choose a key word to study. **SECOND** get access to the internet – technology has really made this skill much easier! Third follow these steps:

Be encouraged: The instructions for this skill make it look complicated, but after you have done it once, you will find that it is not difficult at all!

FIND ALL THE NT REFERENCES

Go to www.biblestudytools.net. In the “search for:” box, type the verse that contains the word you are interested in, such as “Colossians 3:6” if you were studying the key word “wrath.” Then, in the box titled “using:” select the translation “NAS with Strong’s Numbers.” Finally, click the “Find” button.

After a moment, a new page will appear showing the verse you’ve selected with key words highlighted in blue. Click on the word you are interested in studying, (“stewards” in this example.)

Now a new page appears that gives you information about the original Greek word that you’re interested in (“οργη” for the English “wrath”). Towards the right of the page, there is a title “NAS Verse Count.” Below is a list of the number of times the Greek word appears in each NT book.

Click on the first book in the list. This allows you to look at each verse of that book that contains your key word. By repeating this procedure for each NT book that contains your key word, you will be able to look at every use of your word in the NT, enabling you to determine the word’s range of meaning.

DISCOVER THE RANGE OF MEANING

You are now ready to do a word study! Go to the first NT book under “NAS Verse Count” and click on that book. Once the new screen loads, look at the first verse using your key word, and create a concise definition for how your key word is used in that verse. Then write the reference after your definition. If you need to, open to the verse in your Bible and study the surrounding verses to help clarify the meaning.



Now, move to the second verse using your key word. If this verse uses the word in exactly the same way (so that you could use exactly the same definition you just wrote), add its reference behind the first definition. If it uses it in a different way, create a new, concise definition for this new use and add the reference for this second verse behind your new definition.

Continue to do this for all NT uses of your word. This should create a list of a few definitions, each with one or more references listed with it (see the example below). This list of definitions has defined your key word's "range of meaning" – the range of possible options for what it could mean in your verse.

DECIDE ON YOUR USAGE

Look back to the original verse you are studying (Colossians 3:6 in this example). Which of the possible definitions best fits? Here are a couple hints to keep in mind:

Give more weight to possible definitions that are used elsewhere by your author. In this case, possible definitions that Paul used in other passages are more likely to fit your verse in question than definitions that only Luke used.

It is possible that in your verse Paul uses the word in a unique way that is never used elsewhere in the NT. This is pretty unlikely, but it could happen. If so, try to define exactly what Paul has in mind in your verse and justify why none of the other potential definitions work.

COMPARE (optional)

Compare your categories of meaning to a Greek Lexicon. If you look back at www.biblestudytools.net, you will see a lexicon entry for your word on the same page that contained the "NAS Verse List" box. This entry will be under the title "Definition."

See pg__ in Appendix for example word study.

SEE THE BIG PICTURE

overview

KEY THEMES

Read Colossians 3:1-11 and write down the key themes or ideas you see. Then summarize the passage with one or more titles (instructions on p29).

PASSAGE TITLES

	vv.
	vv.
	vv.

REFLECT

ponder

Practically speaking, what is different about you since you became a believer? In what ways have you changed or grown?

OBSERVE *examine*

Mark up Colossians 3:1-11 and write down your key observations to the side. Feel free to work outside of the packet or in whatever way is most effective for you.

¹Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. ³For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

v1-2

v3-4

⁵Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. ⁶For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. ⁹Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, ¹⁰and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— ¹¹a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.

v5-6

v7-8

v9-11

REFLECT *ponder*

What observations affected you the most? Why?

Spend a few minutes responding in prayer. Then begin to memorize Colossians 3:1.



1. Answer your own two most important interpretive questions.

Q:

A:

Q:

A:

2. Explain the relationship between 3:1 and the preceding section.

Explain the relationship between 3:1-4 and 3:5 ff. (note the word “therefore” in 3:5)

3. What does it mean to “consider as dead” (literally, “put to death”) the “members” of your body (Rom 6:1-14)? Does this mean that we should no longer struggle with sin (Rom 7:14-25)?

How do we apply this practically to our lives?

4. What is “the wrath of God” (v6)? To answer this question use the instructions on the previous pages to do a Greek word study on “wrath.”

5. In one sentence of your own words, describe the main point that Paul communicates in Colossians 3:1-11 (instructions on p29).

APPLY *action*

Prayerfully answer the following questions to help you apply what you've learned from Colossians 3:1-11.

TIMELESS PRINCIPLES	HOW ARE YOU DOING?
List some timeless truths or commands you discovered in this week's passage that apply to ALL Christians:	Do YOU consistently live out this principle? When do you struggle to obey it? Be honest and specific!
1.	
2.	
3.	

DON'T STOP YET!! Prayerfully choose one principle from the list above . In what practical way can you begin to live out this truth this week? What is one specific step you can take to honor the Lord in this area? Think through these questions for ideas:

Is there something to worship or thank God for?

Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?

Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?

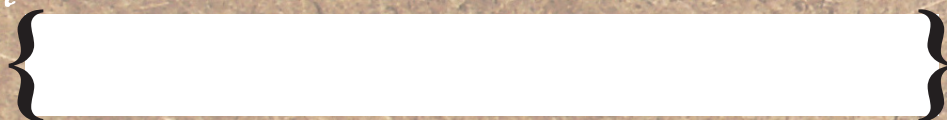
Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?

Is there any relationship I need to work on?

ACCOUNTABILITY: Who will hold you accountable to accomplish this? _____

MEMORIZE *imprint*

Review your memory verse for the week – Colossians 3:1 - and write it out below.



The Christian life is not merely a converted life nor even a consecrated life, but it is the Christ life. It is the consuming desire of the Lord Jesus to reincarnate Himself in the believer.

- Ruth Paxson

STOP
pray



Notes...

Digging Deeper..

1. What reasons does Paul give for us to “keep seeking the things above”?
2. What does it mean “set your mind” (3:2) on something (cf. Rom. 8:5-8,27; 12:2-3,16; Phil. 2:5; 3:15-16,18-19)? How do we practically do this in our daily lives?
3. How would you categorize the sins in 3:5? How would you categorize the sins in 3:8? Are these different types of sins? Why does Paul record these particular lists and not others?
4. Who is the “old man” (3:9), and who is the “new man” (3:10)? When, if ever, did we “lay aside” the old man and “put on” the new man? In what sense is the “new man” being “renewed”?
5. Why is it important in the context of Colossians that there is no distinction between the various groups mentioned in 3:11? Why does Paul add at the end of this verse that “but Christ is all, and in all”?



Mapping the Passage

Mapping a passage (or what's often called creating a mechanical layout) is our third advanced tool and a fantastic way to discover the author's intended meaning and flow of thought. It also will help you answer many of your interpretive questions. The first rule of mapping a passage is: **THERE IS NOT ONE "RIGHT" WAY!** However you create your map, your goal should be to discover the author's flow of thought by graphically laying out the passage. Here are some general rules to follow with examples from Ephesians 1:3-5.

1. First identify the main subject and verb of the first sentence (These form the main clause of your sentence.) Write the **MAIN CLAUSE** at the top left of your paper. Think of your map as an outline: This would be your Roman numeral I.

1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ
This is the main clause of Eph. 1:3

2. Continue writing out the first sentence, placing any modifying phrases or words directly under the words they modify. A **MODIFYING PHRASE** describes something in the main clause – how, why, when, to whom, etc.. In an outline, this would be your first subheading.

1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

who has blessed us with every spiritual
blessing
in the heavenly places in Christ,

"Who" modifies, or is talking about, God in this sentence
"In the heavenly..." modifies "Has blessed", it tells us
how/where the blessing is given.

1:3 ...who has blessed us...

+ just as He chose us...

⁵ ...He predestined us...

* Both of these phrases will have modifiers in your final map, but the phrases themselves should be lined up. This is like the a., b., c. in your outline.

3. If there are **MULTIPLE MODIFIERS** (several phrases or words all talking about the same thing), line them up underneath each other, under the word or phrase they are modifying.

4. Continue writing out the phrases in your sentence, each under whatever word(s) they modify, until you reach the end of the sentence or idea being discussed.

5. Your map will continue moving to the right of your paper until the author begins a new idea. At that point, you would put the next main clause back to the far left of your paper,

6. As you work, box all **CONNECTING WORDS**, and note how they are being used.

1:4 just as He chose us... {AS implies comparison}



Example from Colossians 1:24-25

²⁴Now I rejoice (main clause)
in my sufferings

for your sake,

and {ASSOCIATED idea, parallel to main clause}

I do my share in filling up

in my flesh (sphere in which Paul does his share)

that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions (content of Paul's contribution)

on behalf of His body {REASON}

(which is the church) {= IDENTITY}

²⁵ Of this church I was made a minister (could be regarded as a new main clause; this sentence
is a transition from Paul's reference to "church" in 1:24)

according to the stewardship

from God (source; the following 3 phrases modify
"stewardship")

bestowed on me

for your benefit, {REASON}

that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, {PURPOSE}

MAPPING TIPS:

1. Notice that phrases can sometimes be rearranged to make the flow of thought easier to follow. In Col. 1:24 the phrase "in my flesh" was put after the main clause of the sentence "I do my share in filling up" (which appears later in v24). The phrase "in my flesh" tells us how Paul did his share and should thus be placed under the main verb.
2. Keep your map as neat and spaced out as possible. You can use different fonts or colors to help make your layout clearer or easier to follow.
3. You can create your map on a computer making it easier to manipulate the sentences and make changes. Download the text from an internet site like www.biblestudytools.net.

SEE THE BIG PICTURE

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KEY THEMES

Read Colossians 3:12-4:1 and write down the key themes or ideas you see. Then summarize the passage with one or more titles (instructions on p29).

PASSAGE TITLES

	vv.
	vv.
	vv.

REFLECT

ponder

After reading the section think about your experience with the church and with other believers. How do those experiences compare to how Paul calls us to interact here?

OBSERVE *examine*

Mark up Colossians 3:12-4:1 and write down your key observations to the side. Feel free to work outside of the packet or in whatever way is most effective for you.

¹²So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. ¹⁴Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. ¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. ¹⁷Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

v12-14

v15-17

v18-20

¹⁸Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. ²⁰Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. ²¹Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart. ²²Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. ²³Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, ²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. ²⁵For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality. ¹Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.

v21-23

v24-25

v1

REFLECT *ponder*

What observations affected you the most? Why?

Spend a few minutes responding in prayer. Then begin to memorize Colossians 3:16.



INTERPRET *think*

To better understand Colossians 3:12-4:1 attempt to answer these questions (find help p41).

1. Answer your own two most important interpretive questions.

Q:

A:

Q:

A:

2. What is the relationship between 3:1-11 and 3:12-17? What is the significance of “And so...” at the beginning of 3:12?

3. How does love unify (cf. 1 Pet. 4:8)? Why is unity important in the body of Christ (cf. John 13:35)? How can we disagree on certain issues (e.g. debt or no debt on a new building; style of worship; various doctrines) and still remain unified?

4. What responsibilities does the Christian have in the various relationships listed by Paul? What are the different motivations that we are given to carry out these responsibilities?

5. In one sentence of your own words, describe the main point that Paul communicates in Colossians 3:12-4:1 (instructions on p29).

APPLY *action*

Prayerfully answer the following questions to help you apply what you've learned from Colossians 3:12-4:1.

TIMELESS PRINCIPLES	HOW ARE YOU DOING?
List some timeless truths or commands you discovered in this week's passage that apply to ALL Christians:	Do YOU consistently live out this principle? When do you struggle to obey it? Be honest and specific!
1.	
2.	
3.	

DON'T STOP YET!! Prayerfully choose one principle from the list above. In what practical way can you begin to live out this truth this week? What is one specific step you can take to honor the Lord in this area? Think through these questions for ideas:

Is there something to worship or thank God for?

Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?

Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?

Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?

Is there any relationship I need to work on?

ACCOUNTABILITY: Who will hold you accountable to accomplish this? _____

MEMORIZE *imprint*

Review your memory verse for the week – Colossians 3:16 – and write it out below.

{ }

Only let us seek to aim after this: that we see Christ in each other, and not the old nature; the life of the risen Jesus in each other. If we seek to discern Christ in each other, how we shall be drawn to each other!

– George Mueller

STOP
pray

Notes...

Digging Deeper..

1. What sequence do you find for Christian living from 3:1-17?
2. How do you “put on” the characteristics listed in 3:12? Why does Paul mention these particular traits here (i.e. why doesn’t he mention others such as steadfastness, perseverance, boldness)? How do these verses demonstrate the difference between godliness and merely “being a good person” (cf. Eph. 4:25-32)?
3. In what manner has Christ forgiven you (3:13)? When do you have the right to stop forgiving (cp. Mt. 18:21-22)? What exactly is forgiving? Does it include forgetting? Apply what you learn to someone you have struggled to forgive.
4. Why does this section on “submission” follow the ideas expressed in 3:16-17 (cf. Eph. 5:18-6:9)? What specifically does it mean to “be subject” to someone?



Digging Deeper

Few resources are as helpful to Bible study as a good **BACKGROUND ARTICLE**. Look, for example, at the following background articles which help us better understand Peter's description of elders as "salt."

SALT, the most commonly used seasoning in antiquity: 'Can that which is tasteless be eaten without salt?' (Job 6:6). Its preservative powers made it an absolute necessity of life and a virtual synonym for essential life-giving forces and, not surprisingly, endowed it with religious significance. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus calls the people who listen to him the 'salt of the earth' (Matt. 5:13). In Israelite worship, salt was used to season incense (Exod. 30:35) and all offerings had to be seasoned with salt (Lev. 2:13; Ezek. 43:24). A related usage finds salt symbolizing the making of a covenant (Num. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5).

Numerous references to 'the Salt Sea' (Josh. 15:5; Deut. 3:17) and the Valley of Salt (2 Kings 14:7; 2 Chron. 25:11) clearly identify the Dead Sea area as the place where supplies of salt were procured. Salt could either be mined in the rock formations along the Dead Sea (Lot's wife was turned into a 'pillar' of salt, Gen. 19:26), or be obtained by letting water evaporate from pans. Once the salt was removed from sediment, it was rinsed, purified, and crushed until fine.

Ironically, salt also became associated with the destruction of life, a land gone to waste (Deut. 29:23; Job. 39:6; Ps. 107:34; Jer. 17:6; Zeph. 2:9). In a common practice of conquest, Abimelech 'razed the city and sowed it with salt' (Judg. 9:45).

from *Harper's Bible Dictionary* edited by Paul Achtemeier



Here's a list of some great background resources:

The New Bible Dictionary edited by Wood and Marshall
[the best, if you must choose]

The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament by Craig Keener

The New Manners and Customs of Bible Times by Ralph Gower

Harper's Bible Dictionary edited by Paul Achtemeier

SEE THE BIG PICTURE

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KEY THEMES

Read Colossians 4:2-18 and write down the key themes or ideas you see. Then summarize the passage with one or more titles (instructions on p29).

PASSAGE TITLES

	VV.
	VV.
	VV.

REFLECT

ponder

In this section Paul mentions some people who have been key in the spiritual development of the Colossian church and praises them. Take a minute and list out some of the people that the Lord has used in you spiritual walk. Spend a minute thanking God for them.

OBSERVE *examine*

Mark up Colossians 4:2-18 and write down your key observations to the side. Feel free to work outside of the packet or in whatever way is most effective for you.

²Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; ³praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; ⁴that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

v2-4

⁵Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. ⁶Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

v5-7

⁷As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information. ⁸For I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts; ⁹and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number. They will inform you about the whole situation here.

v8-10

¹⁰Aristarchus, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings; and also Barnabas's cousin Mark (about whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him); ¹¹and also Jesus who is called Justus; these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision, and they have proved to be an encouragement to me. ¹²Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. ¹³For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis. ¹⁴Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and also Demas. ¹⁵Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea and also Nympha and the church that is in her house. ¹⁶When this letter is read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and you, for your part read my letter that is coming from Laodicea. ¹⁷Say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

v11-13

v14-16

v17-18

¹⁸I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.

REFLECT *ponder*

What observations affected you the most? Why?

Spend a few minutes responding in prayer. Then begin to memorize Colossians 4:2.



INTERPRET *think*

To better understand Colossians 4:2-18 attempt to answer these questions (find help p41).

1. Answer your own two most important interpretive questions.

Q:

A:

Q:

A:

2. How does this passage relate to the previous section? Is there any significance to the order or sequence in which Paul addresses various subjects in chapters 3-4?

3. What exactly is “wise conduct” towards outsiders (cf. Matt 5:16; Rom 13:7-8; 1 Thes 4:10-12; 1 Pet 2:12-20; 3:15-17)?

4. What is speech seasoned with “salt”? Use the background article at the beginning to help you answer this.

5. In one sentence of your own words, describe the main point that Paul communicates in Colossians 4:2-18 (instructions on p29).

APPLY *action*

Prayerfully answer the following questions to help you apply what you've learned from Colossians 4:2-18.

TIMELESS PRINCIPLES	HOW ARE YOU DOING?
List some timeless truths or commands you discovered in this week's passage that apply to ALL Christians:	Do YOU consistently live out this principle? When do you struggle to obey it? Be honest and specific!
1.	
2.	
3.	

DON'T STOP YET!! Prayerfully choose one principle from the list above. In what practical way can you begin to live out this truth this week? What is one specific step you can take to honor the Lord in this area? Think through these questions for ideas:

Is there something to worship or thank God for?

Is there a promise for me to claim or a truth for me to believe?

Is there something I am convicted about that I need to change or begin doing?

Is there something or someone I need to pray for specifically this week?

Is there any relationship I need to work on?

ACCOUNTABILITY: Who will hold you accountable to accomplish this? _____

MEMORIZE *imprint*

Review your memory verse for the week – Colossians 4:2 - and write it out below.

{ }

We must be so completely hidden away in Christ that the world will no longer see us, but the Christ who lives in us.

- J.R. Conant

STOP
pray

Notes...

Digging deeper..

1. What specific things must happen if we are going to be effective in our witness to the lost (4:2-6)?
2. What characteristics of effective prayer and ministry do you find in this section?

S Y N T H E S I S



READ the book of Colossians once again at a single sitting. Then review the “Survey Worksheet” from Lesson One.

STOP AND PRAY:

- (1) for God’s insight as you attempt to summarize Titus and
- (2) that as a result of this week’s study, you would grow to be more like Jesus Christ.

SYNTHESIZE

Having examined the details of the entire book through observation, interpretation and application, it is now time to put all the parts back together. This is the process of synthesizing the book. So what is involved in synthesizing a book?

Reevaluate your “survey” work that you did at the beginning of the semester. If your detailed study of the book has changed your views on any part of the survey, modify those parts.

Now it’s time to creatively synthesize the book. Your goal is to create something that will help you to see and remember the overall message, truths, and importance of what you learned during this study. What you create is totally your choice.

Here are three options to creatively synthesize the book:

1. You could summarize the book in a CHART...

Divide it into main sections and sub-sections as demonstrated in the example chart.

Summarize what each section and sub-section communicates.

Add supporting information for each section such as “Relationship to Previous Section,” “Key Themes,” and/or “Key Verses.”

** Your goal is to capture the most vital information in a clear, visually appealing chart. Be creative; every chart should be unique!*



OR

2. You could write an **OUTLINE** of Paul's flow of thought in these chapters...

Simply arrange the main ideas and supporting ideas of each paragraph in outline form, similar to the example on the next page for the book of Colossians (excerpt from *The Bible Reader's Companion*, Victor Books, 1991). This will give you a quick, visual overview of the chapters.

** Through writing summary sentences each week, you should have a great start on this task.*

OR

3. You could go outside the box and create a **SONG, POEM, PICTURE OR ANY OTHER CREATIVE DEVICE** to capture the big ideas of Titus.

APPLY

Finally, write out two application statements from the book as a whole to begin applying to your life during this coming year.

Here's an example of an application:

PRINCIPLE: *We are called to walk in Christ just as we have recieved Him.*

PLAN OF ACTION: *This summer I will seek to live everyday by faith. I will do this by beginning each morning with prayer, entrusting my day to the Lord before I even get out of bed. I will also pray for ways to daily encourage my family as a means of living out my new identity in Christ.*

ACCOUNTABILITY: Who will hold you accountable to accomplish this? *James (979) 555-5365*



SAMPLE OUTLINE OF 2 PETER:

- I. Greetings and blessings to the saved (1:1-11)
 - A. A reminder of what Christ has done (1:1-4)
 - B. Call to appropriate Christ's provision by growing godly attributes (1:5-7)
 - C. The results of this growth (1:8-11)
- II. Towards this goal, Peter's purpose is to remind us of key truths so we will remember them after his imminent death. (1:12-2:22)
 - A. The verifiable truth of Christ's identity (1:16-21)
 1. From a witness of the transfiguration (1:16-18)
 2. From the more sure prophetic word (1:18-21)
 - B. Warning against false teachers (2:1-22)
 1. Their rise and judgment (2:1-10)
 2. Their heart and actions (2:10-16)
 3. Their sorry state (2:17-22)
- III. Again, Peter's purpose is to remind us of key scriptural truths. (3:1-18)
 - A. God's future judgment of this world (3:3-13)
 1. Coming of those who mock Christ's return and judgment (3:3-4)
 2. The proof of His judgment from the Noahic flood (3:5-7)
 3. The sovereignty and patience in God's timing of His certain judgment (3:8-10)
 - B. The call to live accordingly (3:11-18)
 1. Live according to the promise (3:11-13)
 2. The call echoed by Paul, but distorted by men (3:14-16)
 3. Remain steadfast by growing in grace and knowledge of Christ (3:17-18)

SAMPLE CHART OF 2 TIMOTHY:

2 Timothy			
REKINDLE the gift	ENTRUST the gospel	CONTINUE in Scripture	RESPOND to Paul's needs
SUMMARY: 1:1-2 • greetings 1:3-10 • challenge to faithfully suffer for the gospel <div>Leadership Crisis</div>	SUMMARY: 2:1-13 • challenge to eternally significant ministry 2:14-26 • challenge to address quarrels in the church <div>cause & effect</div> <div>need to train faithful men</div>	SUMMARY: 3:1-17 • challenge to biblical faithfulness in the midst of evil <div>Godlessness in last days</div>	SUMMARY: 4:1-8 • challenge to preach the Word in Paul's absence 4:9-22 • Timothy's ministry to Paul and closing <div>cause & effect</div> <div>Timothy must preach the Word</div>
TIME: past/present MINISTRY: Paul to Timothy	TIME: present MINISTRY: Tim to other faithful men	TIME: future MINISTRY: Tim to end time conditions	TIME: present MINISTRY: Timothy to Paul
chapter 1	chapter 2	chapter 3	chapter 4
<div>Internal Trouble</div> <div>TRANSITION</div> <div>External Trouble</div>			



SAMPLE CREATIVE RAP OF PHILIPPIANS:

“Paul and the Phillies”

© 2003 Matt & Jenn Chalmers

A man named Paul once wrote a letter,
To his friends the Phillies so they could live better;
He was joyous and thankful for their participation,
In the gospel of Christ which was his occupation.
Paul’s desire was to see his dear friends grow,
So he wrote a few things he wanted them to know:

“Be of one mind, strive for unity,
Do this by displaying Christ’s humility;
Put aside complaining and surrender your rights,
So you can shine in the world as bright lights;
You have great examples like Tim and Mr. E,
Just like them be all that you can be;
Having confidence in the flesh is nothing but your loss,
So press on toward knowing Christ, for He is our boss;
Remember to keep your focus on things above,
For your Father will transform you with His love!”

Paul has learned the secret of being content,
By trusting in the power that Christ has sent;
He rejoiced and was thankful for the Phillies givin’,
It is profitable for them and it keeps him livin’;
Oh, and by the way, greet Paul’s bros,
Grace to you and Peace out, Yo!

REFLECT
ponder

Notice that throughout this letter Paul always points us back to Christ as the motivation for proper living. How have you grown in your understanding and appreciation of Christ during your study of the book of Colossians? List out some of the things you have learned.

SYNTHESIZE *put it together* Create your outline *OR* chart *OR* creative synthesis for the book of Colossians.

APPLY *action* Prayerfully consider how you will apply what you've learned from the book of Colossians.

PRINCIPLE:

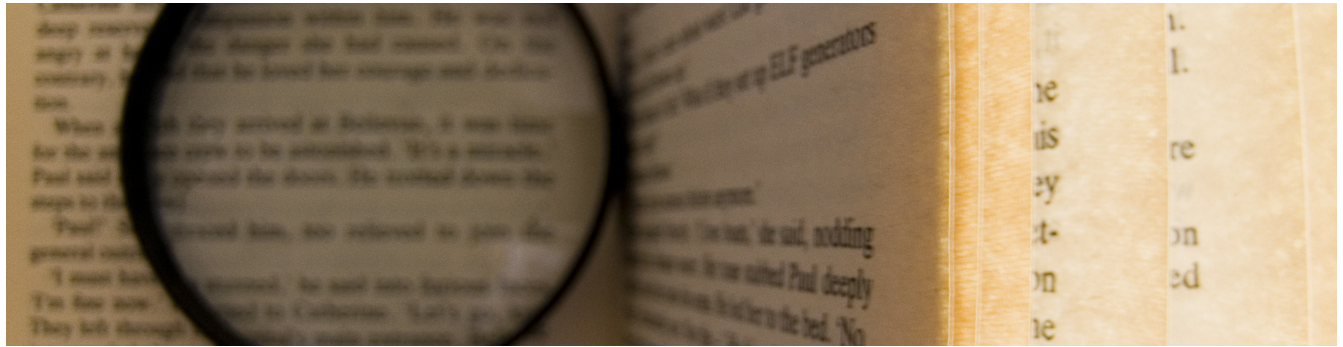
PLAN OF ACTION:

ACCOUNTABILITY: Who will hold you accountable to accomplish this? _____



Notes...

A P P E N D I X A



MORE ON OBSERVATION

Sample Observations from Acts 1:8

“...but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.” Acts 1:8

1. The dialogue of verses 7&8 is Christ’s response to the apostles’ question of vs. 6: “Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?”
2. Verses 7&8 both answer the apostles’ question and redirect their focus away from the “kingdom to Israel” and onto the subject matter of vs. 8.
3. Verse 8 is directly followed by the ascension of Jesus into heaven.
4. These are, therefore, the last words (at least as recorded in Acts) spoken by Jesus to His disciples.
5. Verse 8 starts with “but” drawing a contrast to something that came before.
6. Jesus is speaking.
7. This vs. contains two primary phrases: “you will receive power” and “you shall be My witnesses”.
8. Both main phrases are addressed to “you”
9. The phrases are linked with “and”.
10. The first main phrase is passive in nature – “receive power”.
11. “Will receive” is future tense.
12. The word “power” is a key word in this sentence. Thayer’s translates this word as “strength, ability, or power.”
13. The second main phrase is active in nature – “you shall be My witnesses”.
14. “Shall be” is future tense.
15. An unspecified “power” is what the apostles will receive.
16. They will receive it at some future time from when this vs. was spoken.
17. The reception of the power is conditioned upon the Holy Spirit coming “upon” the apostles.
18. The Greek word for “to come upon” is in the aorist participle tense.
19. There is no task, action, or confession that the apostles are called to perform for the HS to come “upon” them.
20. Indeed, from this text, it appears that the apostles are completely passive in regards to the coming of the HS.
21. The Spirit is explicitly identified as “Holy”.
22. They are to be Christ’s witnesses (“my”).



23. Unlike the NASB's "my witnesses" which seems to stress Christ's ownership or authority over the apostles, the NKJV has "you shall be witnesses to me" which seems to stress their message.
24. This quotation includes a geographic list of places and regions: Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, the remotest part of the earth.
25. The list progresses from places closest to the apostles' current home (Jerusalem from vs. 4) to places farthest from their home.
26. The list also progresses from places of Jewish majority (Jerusalem and Judea) to a place of half-breed Jews (Samaria) to a place of Gentile majority (the remotest parts of the earth).
27. The flow of the list is confusing given that "both" seems to describe more than 2 list items.
28. Jerusalem was, at this time, the religious capital of Judea and of the Jewish religion and contained the focal point of Jewish worship, the temple.
29. It would be dangerous for the apostles to witness of Christ in this city.
30. The apostles are to be witnesses in "all" of Judea. This word may also modify "Samaria", indicating that they are to witness throughout that entire region as well.
31. They are to go "even" to the remotest part of the earth. The use of the word "even" seems to make the list feel more exhaustive. Note that the NKJV does not include "even".
32. The NASB ends with "to the remotest part of the earth" while the NKJV ends with "to the end of the earth."

BONUS OBSERVATION SKILL: CREATING LISTS

We all know people who are fanatical list makers. They create a daily to-do list and love to check off what they accomplish. Making lists as you observe a passage of scripture is a little different. This skill involves identifying a key word, subject, person, place or event in the passage and then listing every fact given about that word.

For example, if you made a list on "God" from 2 Timothy 1, it might look like this:

God:

1. made Paul an apostle by His will (v1)
2. gives grace, mercy and peace (v2)
3. is the Father (v2)
4. is thanked and served (v3)
5. gives gifts (v6)
6. doesn't give spirit of timidity (v7)
7. gives spirit of power, love and sound mind (v7)
8. gives power for suffering (v9)
9. saved us (v9)
10. called us (v9)

As you read this list, what jumps out at you? Perhaps you see that "God gives" is mentioned five times in this list! What a gracious and loving God we serve. You have discovered one of the characteristics of God, His generous grace toward men!

What do you do with the insights you gain from making lists?

By categorizing your observations into lists, you will begin to see patterns of truth that you will want to study further to find their meaning (interpretation). This list on God may lead you to do a word study on “give” or find all the other references in Paul’s epistles to God’s giving nature. You will begin to build your theology (your belief system about God) based on what the Holy Spirit has revealed to you personally in His word!

Also, you will find much that will impact your daily life (application). This list can now be used for meditation, to praise and worship God, to encourage others and to proclaim the character of God to the lost.

One word of caution about lists, however. Just because you are able to create a list centered on a key word, such as “God” in 2 Timothy 1, does not mean that Paul’s main point in the passage is to talk about that key word. Paul’s emphasis in 2 Timothy 1, in fact, is not to discuss attributes about God, it is to encourage Timothy to press on in the ministry of the gospel. So make sure that before you create any lists you complete the initial processes of observation: list themes, create a title, mark up the text, and record your most significant observations. However, following these initial tasks by creating lists is a great way to deepen your study of a passage!

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14. “Shall be” is future tense.
15. An unspecified “power” is what the apostles will receive.



A P P E N D I X B



MORE ON INTERPRETATION

An Example of Studying Key Words

“Fruit” in Phil 1:11 (Greek word “karpos”)

“having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ...”

A) Define the Range of Meaning: (uses by Paul are underlined)

- a. Literal “fruit” off of a tree or vine - Matt 21:34; 1 Cor 9:7; Jas 5:18
- b. Figurative for Children - Luke 1:42; Acts 2:30
- c. Figurative for Godly behavior/character - Matt 3:8,10; 21:43; Gal 5:22; Eph 5:9; Col 1:10; Heb 12:11; Jas 3:17,18
- d. Figurative for True teaching - Matt 7:16-21
- e. Figurative for Responsiveness to the Gospel - Matt 13:23
- f. Figurative for Converts - John 4:36; 12:24; Rom 1:13; Phil 1:22 (results of ministry)
- g. Figurative for advantage, gain, profit, benefit - Rom 6:21,22 (eternal life); Phil 4:17; Jas 5:7,8 (spiritual benefit)
- h. Figurative for Money given as a gift - Rom 15:28
- i. Figurative for Praise to God - Heb 13:15

B) Determine the meaning in your verse (Phil 1:11):

Though Paul uses many of the potential definitions above (even in other verses of Philip-
pians), c. fits best since this “fruit” consists of righteousness and enables us to be “blame-
less” when Christ returns.

C) Create your own Basic Definition:

“The result(s) of a process or activity; could be figurative or literal.”

D) Compare to a Greek Dictionary (Lexicon):

Strong’s: “1 fruit. 1a the fruit of the trees, vines, of the fields. 1b the fruit of one’s loins, i.e. his progeny, his posterity. 2 that which originates or comes from something, an effect, result.”

ADVANCED INTERPRETIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

How do you solve those really tough interpretive problems that no word study or mechanical layout can crack? Let's use an example from Ephesians. Are the verbs in Ephesians 4:22-24 commands, or are they simple statements of fact? This grammar question has a major impact on our daily lives! Are we to apply this passage by (1) daily taking off the "old self" and laboring to "put on" the new self (the case if these are commands), or (2) daily remembering the motivating reality that we are no longer slaves to our "old self" but are already clothed in our "new self" (the case if these are statements of fact)? Clearly, this is a crucial interpretive problem to solve.

But how? We can start with the Five Fundamental Tools for Accurate Interpretation we learned this semester (1.use the context, 2.define words, 3.compare translations, 4.study cross-references, and 5.wrestle with the text). Yet for really tough interpretive questions, we need a more advanced method to find an accurate answer. For tough problems, follow this 5-step process:

List all the options. Always start by brainstorming – list every possible solution to your question. Be open-minded and creative, and don't rush this process. You'll often find that your third option proves better than your first. It's often helpful to work with others during this step so that you can benefit from different points of view.

In our example from Eph 4:22-24, there are only the two options discussed above. But other difficult problems will have more potential solutions, such as in Eph 4:9. What does Christ's descent into "the lower parts of the earth" refer to? Brainstorming yields four options: (1) the burial of His body in the ground, (2) His spirit descending into Hades between His death and resurrection, (3) His descent from heaven to earth during His incarnation, (4) some combination of the above options.

Gather support for each option. Once you've created a list of potential solutions, you need to compile evidence that supports each option. This evidence could include support you find from (1) the surrounding verses, (2) the book as a whole, (3) cross references to other books, (4) a word study, (5) a mechanical layout, (6) support from your overall understanding of Christian theology, or (7) support from historical/cultural background information on the book.

Under each potential solution, simply list everything you can think of that argues in favor of that option. Sometimes a piece of evidence will support multiple potential solutions – that's fine, simply list it under each option it supports. Here's what such a list would look like for our question from Ephesians 4:

Option 1: Commands	Option 2: Statements of Fact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- It works grammatically (indicated by the fact that NASB translates it this way).- It fits the immediate context well if we take vv25-32 as a practical explanation of how to take off the old & put on the new.- It fits the overall structure of Eph where chapters 1-3 focused on truths and 4-6 on application in life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- It works grammatically (proven from checking commentaries on Ephesians)- It fits the immediate context if we take vv25-32 as a description of the life that should result from believing and applying the facts of vv22-24.- It fits Paul's consistent style of revealing factual information that serves as the basis of how we should then live (ex. 5:1-6 – Christ's love is the basis for our walk in love).- It perfectly matches the closest parallel passages, Rom 6:6 and Col 3:9-10, both in overall context (both passages view these as facts about a past event) and theology (Rom 6:4-7 in particular describes the "old self" as an unregenerate person).- It fits the theology of passages such as 2 Cor 5:17 and Gal 3:27 – believers are new creatures who were clothed with Christ at one point in time and remain so today.



Choose your solution. Once you've listed all the evidence in favor of each option, it's time to choose the winner. But how? Look back at all the evidence and rate what's most convincing. Typically, evidence from the immediate context is most powerful, followed closely by evidence from the book as a whole. Evidence from other books or from Christian theology as a whole does not carry as much weight unless the solution you're looking at contradicts a major tenant of Christian doctrine. Since Scripture never lies and God can't contradict Himself, you know this solution won't work (ex. you can't interpret Mt 24:36 to say that Jesus is less than God since that would contradict the basic Christian doctrine about Jesus as well as the clear teaching of John 1:1-18; 20:28; Col 2:9, etc).

Decide on certainty. Having chosen what you believe to be the best solution, it's time to step back and humbly remember that interpreting the Bible is not like solving math problems. Our human fallibility, limited 21st century American perspective, and theological biases cause us to often make mistakes in interpreting the Bible. Therefore, we need to be realistic in determining the certainty of our conclusions. Does the evidence for the solution you chose clearly beat out the evidence for all other solutions? If so, you can probably write down that you are 80-90% certain of your choice (I rarely say I am 100% sure because someone may propose a solution I've never thought of that's even better than the one I chose). On the other hand, if there are some strong points of evidence against your choice, you may need to write down only 60-80% certainty. Perhaps there is another potential solution that seems to have just as much evidence as your chosen solution. If so, humbly write down 50% certainty – you're really not sure which way to go and remain open to other people's thoughts.

Check with others. Now that you've done your own study of a particular interpretive question, it's time to compare your findings with others. This is so important – just as Ephesians 4 clearly teaches us, we grow in knowledge and godliness as a corporate body, not as individual islands. Sharing our findings with each other can keep us from individually overlooking other creative options or neglecting key evidence. It also serves as a check on our personal solutions – I ought to be concerned if everybody else chose a very different solution than I did (this doesn't mean I'm wrong; it simply means I ought to look back over my work carefully). So make sure that you discuss key interpretive problems during your small group time. Share your own work, but make sure you listen attentively and openly to the work of your peers, learning all you can from them.

You can also check your work against Christian commentaries such as The Bible Knowledge Commentary by Walvoord and Zuck or 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus: The New International Biblical Commentary by Fee. Commentaries are particularly helpful for discovering (1) more potential solutions to a problem and (2) a wider range of grammatical, historical, and cultural evidence for each solution.

Just remember, a commentary is NOT always right. The scholars who write these commentaries are limited, fallible human beings just like you and me. In fact, commentaries on the same passage often disagree with each other, meaning it's a good idea to compare a couple of commentaries for any given interpretive problem.

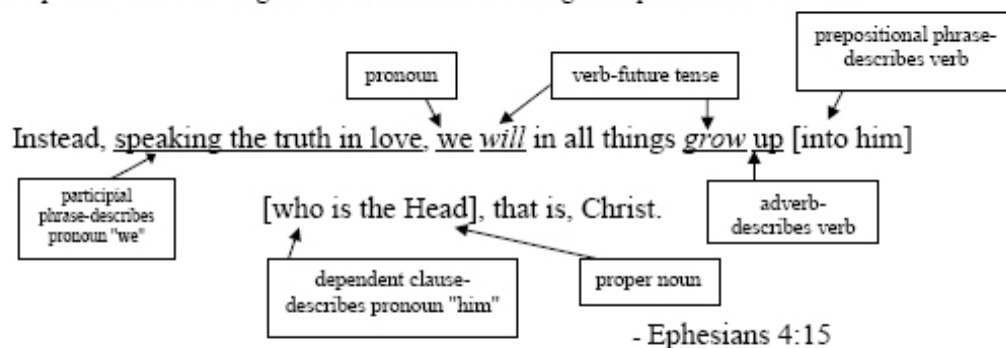
A P P E N D I X C



ESSENTIALS OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR

If you're like most newcomers to Inductive Bible Study, you may be feeling a little overwhelmed by the references to grammatical things like participles, pronouns, and clauses. Most of us haven't talked about those since junior high English! So here is a quick review of essential English grammar to help you get the most out of your study.

The way a word is used in a sentence always determines what part of speech it is. There are eight basic parts of speech. The following is a review of each including examples shown in *italics>*.



I. NOUN – a person, place, thing, or idea

- A. Nouns are found in five places in a sentence: subject, direct object, indirect object, object of the preposition, and predicate nominative (meaning noun); nouns are most often used as the subject.
- B. Types
 - 1. Common - A noun can be common, such as *preacher, city, leader, purity*.
 - 2. Proper - Or a noun can be proper (always capitalized), such as *Paul, Ephesus, Head, Truth*.

II. PRONOUN – a word that replaces a noun

- A. Since pronouns replace nouns, they can also be found in the same five places in a sentence.
- B. Types
 - 1. Personal – Most often used as the subject - *I, we, you, he, she, it, they*
 - 2. Possessive – Shows ownership - *my, our(s), your(s), his, hers, its, their(s)*
 - 3. Demonstrative – Used to point out or "demonstrate" an item - *this, that, these, those*
 - 4. Relative – Connects a clause about a noun to that noun - *that, who, whom, which, whose*
 - 5. Indefinite – Refers vaguely to persons or things not named - *all, few, each, some*

III. ADJECTIVES – a word that describes a noun or pronoun

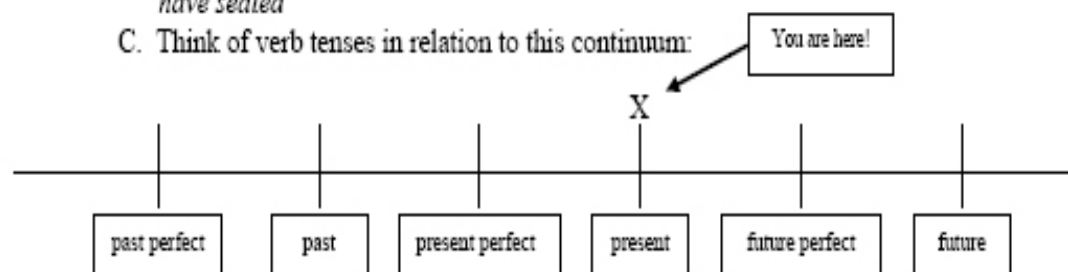
- A. An adjective answers one of the following questions about the word it describes: What kind?, Which one?, How many?, or How much?.
- B. In English, adjectives immediately precede the word they describe.
- C. Forms
 - 1. Positive - *strong or beautiful*
 - 2. Comparative - *stronger or more beautiful*



3. Superlative – *strongest or most beautiful*
- D. Articles – special type of adjective
 1. Definite (specific) – *the*
 2. Indefinite (not specific) – *a/an*

IV. VERB – a word or group of words that shows the action or state of being of the subject

- A. Types
 1. Action – *run, walk, flee, go, think, pray*
 2. Helping – *am, is, are, was, were, have, has, had, be, being, been, do, did, does, can, could, will, would, shall, should, may, might, must*
 3. Linking – *seem, feel (as in emotions), believe*
- B. Tenses
 1. Present – currently happening action – *He seals, He does seal, He is sealing*
 2. Past – completed action – *He sealed*
 3. Future – forthcoming action – *He will seal*
 4. Present perfect – action completed at some indefinite past time or continuing into the present time – *He has sealed*
 5. Past perfect – past action completed before a later past action – *He had sealed*
 6. Future perfect – future action that will be completed before a future time – *He will have sealed*
- C. Think of verb tenses in relation to this continuum:



V. ADVERB – a word that describes a verb, adjective, or another adverb

- A. Though adverbs may be in any position in a sentence, they are most often found at the very beginning of a sentence or in the middle of a verb phrase.
- B. An adverb answers one of the following questions about the word it describes: Where?, When?, Why?, How?, or To What Extent?.
- C. Adverbs commonly end in *-ly*.
- D. Little known adverbs – *although, because, how, not, never, really, since, so that, today, tomorrow, until, very, where, when, why, & yesterday*

VI. PREPOSITION – A word that shows where a noun or pronoun is in relation to a noun, pronoun, verb, adverb, or adjective.

- A. When any preposition stands alone, it is actually acting as an adverb.
Put on the full armor of God... ("on" answers Where? about "Put")
- B. Common prepositions – *in, inside around, above, to, with, beyond, behind, at, of, by, against, into, out, out of, beside, next to, after, & as*

- C. Prepositional phrase – the preposition and the noun that follows it. The prepositional phrase can act as an adjective or an adverb and therefore describe a noun or pronoun OR a verb, adverb, or adjective. As a result, prepositional phrases can answer either an adjective question or an adverb question about the word they are describing.
- D. In English, an adjective prepositional phrase will follow the word it describes. However, an adverb prepositional phrase might come at the beginning or end of the sentence or in the middle of the verb phrase.

Stand firm, then, with the belt [of truth] buckled [around your waist]...

prepositional phrase
answers "Where?" the belt
is buckled (adv. phrase)

prepositional phrase
answers "What kind?" of
belt (adj. phrase)

VII. CONJUNCTION – A word that connects words or groups of words together.

- A. Common conjunctions – *and, but, nor, for, so, yet, or*
 B. Conjunctions may connect two words, two phrases, or two clauses.

VIII. INTERJECTION – A word that expresses strong emotion or feeling but is not grammatically related to the rest of the sentence.

- A. Common interjections – *Oh! Wow! Yikes! Ouch! Well, My goodness!*
 B. Interjections are not commonly used in written English though they are used frequently in spoken English

Groups of words act together in one of two ways: a phrase or a clause. The following is a brief explanation of the difference.

I. PHRASES – A group of words that never contains both a subject and a verb. Most phrases are used as adjectives or adverbs.

- A. Prepositional phrases – previously discussed
 B. Participial phrase – contains a participle and is used as an adjective.
 1. Participle - a present or past tense verb ending in *-ing, -ed, -d, -t, or -n*.
 2. A participle will always begin the phrase.
 3. A participle is often separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma.

Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality... - Eph. 4:19

describes pronoun "they"

...and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. - Eph. 4:24

describes common noun "self"



C. Gerund phrase – contains a gerund and is used as a noun

1. Gerund – always a present tense verb ending in *-ing*
2. A gerund will always begin the phrase.
3. A gerund will never be separated from the rest of the sentence by a comma.
Singing songs to God gives me joy. ("Singing" is the gerund acting as the subject of the sentence.)

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up... ("building," a gerund, is the object of the preposition "for")

D. Infinitive phrase – contains an infinitive and is used as a noun, adjective, or adverb

1. Infinitive – "to" plus a verb such as *to run, to walk, to flee, to pray*
2. Infinitives should not be confused with prepositional phrases which are "to" plus a noun.
3. An infinitive will always begin the phrase.
4. An infinitive may or may not be separated by a comma from the rest of the sentence.
Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you... ("to win" is the infinitive acting as an adverb)

II. CLAUSES – A group of words that always has a subject and a verb. Clauses are either independent or dependent (upon an indep. clause)

- A. Independent - Otherwise known as a complete sentence, these clauses can stand completely on their own grammatically.
- B. Dependent – Otherwise known as a sentence fragment, these clauses must be partnered with an independent clause in order to make a complete sentence. Often these clauses will begin with words such as *who, whom, that, if, in order that, so that, until, as, because, since, why, & where*

