

Colossians 1:24 - 2:15

Title: Week 2

Leader note: This Message Guide is intended to help you facilitate discussion with your group. You can use the guide exactly as it is, ignore some of it, or add to it. We hope you view this guide as a flexible teaching tool, and not a rigid teaching task.

Welcome & Icebreaker

It's time to slow down. What is one thing you can remove from your schedule to create more time to relax?

Biblical Context

Christians in the Roman Empire were being bombarded with heretical teachings from all sides. Some Jewish converts were trying to incorporate strict Jewish traditions and laws, such as circumcision, into Christian living. Some "traveling evangelists" who made money by going to different churches, preaching and taking up collections, would say that Paul was not an apostle, that he never knew Jesus personally and that he was teaching contrary to the teachings of Christ. The Roman government was tying religion into their success as a nation by equating the Emperors to gods. Philosophies were also seeping into the teaching of Christianity trying to negate the deity of Christ by saying it is impossible for God to become a physical being because everything physical is evil. Epaphras probably conveyed to Paul his difficulty in dealing with all of the influences his church was facing. Paul, however, was no rookie in confronting these teachings and addresses each one in this short letter.

Initial Question

When you think of "the Gospel message," what comes to mind?

Looking at the Text

1. Read Colossians 1:24 through 2:8. In light of the context, what false teachings do you see that Paul is addressing? (Hint: all those mentioned in the context, and more.)
2. Take another look at Col 1:26-27. In the Biblical sense, a mystery is not a riddle. It is a truth that can only be known by revelation and not by intuition. What is the magnitude of these two short verses? Read also John 14:20-23 and 2 Corinthians 13:5.
3. Read Colossians 2:2-3. With all of the external influences the Colossian church had, Paul was trying to give them laser focus by pointing to their newly found belief in Christ as the source to all the answers that their world was seeking. What does Paul mean by the phrase "full assurance and understanding?"

4. In Col 2:9-15, notice how Paul walks the Colossians through the application of the Gospel (mentioned in chapter 1:21-22) to their own lives by comparing the Jewish law of circumcision, which they were being told by some Jews that they needed to practice, with their baptism into Christ. Also notice that Paul confirms that the completeness of this gospel “canceled the charge of [their] legal indebtedness” - they are complete (brought to fullness). What was Paul saying about things others were telling them that they needed to do?

Life Application

5. Identify some modern day “heretical teachings,” how are they similar to the heresies of the first century?
6. How does Paul’s warnings to the Colossians church apply to today’s heresies?

Action Step

Include in your daily prayer that God will reveal to you the false teachings of today that you may have accepted. Ask that He reveals truth to you so that you can be complete in Him.