

Colossians 1:1 - 1:23

Title: Week 1

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*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**

What is an accomplishment that has given you great satisfaction?

### **Biblical Context**

Paul wrote to the church in Colossae to fortify it against false teachers who might try to impose strict rules about eating and drinking and religious festivals. Paul shows the superiority of Christ over all human philosophies and traditions. He writes of Christ's deity ("He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" [1:15]) and of the reconciliation he accomplished with his blood. He explains that the right way of living in this world is to focus on heavenly rather than earthly things. God's chosen people must leave their sinful lives behind and live in a godly way, looking to Christ as the head of the church (1:18). Paul wrote while in prison, probably about the same time as he wrote to the Ephesians.

### **Initial Question**

By what means do you keep your faith journey on the right path? How do you know it's right and by what do you evaluate it against?

### **Looking at the Text**

1. Read Colossians 1. Paul had never met the church at Colossae. How did he hear about him? What is his opinion of them? How do you imagine the church felt receiving these words from an Apostle of Christ?
2. Take a closer look at verses 9-12. Paul lists four ways in which the Colossians can live a life that pleases the Lord - bear fruit, grow in knowledge of God, have the strength to endure and be patient, and give joyful thanks to the Father.
3. As the Roman Empire grew in the first century, the Ceasar's claimed to be divinity - sons of gods. Pressure was being placed on all citizens (subjects) to pay homage to these lords and receive their blessings of security and prosperity. It wasn't politically correct to imagine otherwise. How does Paul approach this mindset in verses 15-20?
4. Identify the verse(s) that summarize the gospel message. Is it complete - is anything missing?

### **Life Application**

5. In verse 10 what does it mean “bearing fruit in every good work”? What “fruit” are we supposed to bear? Read John 15:1-6. Do you believe “bearing fruit” is a command, a byproduct or something else?
6. Read Galatians 5:22-23. What are the similarities between Paul’s list in Colossians 1:9-12 and the list in Galatians?

**Action Step**

In the coming week measure your own life with Paul’s list of four things that pleases the Lord.

1. What good works in your life are bearing fruit?
2. Are you growing in the knowledge of God?
3. What areas of your life are requiring a great deal of endurance/patience?
4. Do you give Him “joyful thanks” on a daily basis? Why? or Why not?