



The Epistle of Paul to the Colossians

Author: Paul

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Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother,^a **2** to the holy ones and faithful brothers in Christ in Colossae. Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

3 We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, **4** since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the holy ones; **5** because of the hope laid up for you in the heavens. Of which you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, **6** has come to you, just as also in all the world it is bearing fruit and increasing, just as also among you from the day you heard about and understood the grace of God in truth; **7** just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow slave, who is a faithful servant^b of Christ on our behalf, **8** and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

Prayer for Spiritual Growth

9 For 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 accurate knowledge^c of his will in all

spiritual wisdom and understanding, **10** so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the accurate knowledge^d of God; **11** strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy, **12** giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the holy ones in the light.

13 For He rescued us from the authority of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,^e **14** in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The Supremacy of Christ

15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. **16** For 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. **17** And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18** And he is the head of the body, the congregation.^f Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. **19** For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fullness dwell, **20** and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens.

21 And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your minds, doing evil

meaning, “true,” “real,” “full,” “complete” or “accurate,” depending upon the context. Paul and Peter alone use *epignosis*.

^d *Epignosis* is a strengthened or intensified form of *gnosis* (*epi*, meaning “additional”), meaning, “true,” “real,” “full,” “complete” or “accurate,” depending upon the context. Paul and Peter alone use *epignosis*.

^e Lit *the Son of his love*

^f Gr *ekklesia* (“assembly”)

^a The plural Greek word *adelphoi* (translated “brothers”), depending on the context, may refer either to men or to both men and women who are spiritual brothers and sister within the Christ congregation.

^b Or *minister*

^c *Epignosis* is a strengthened or intensified form of *gnosis* (*epi*, meaning “additional”),



works, ²² yet he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him, ²³ if 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, became a minister.

Paul's Ministry

²⁴ Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the congregation.^a ²⁵ Of which I became a minister of this congregation^b in accord with the stewardship from God that was given to me in your behalf to preach the word of God fully, ²⁶ the mystery which has been hidden from the ages and from the generations, but has now been revealed to his holy ones, ²⁷ to whom God was pleased 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. ²⁸ Whom we proclaim, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect^c in Christ. ²⁹ For this purpose also I labor, striving according to his power, which mightily works within me.

Being Built Up in Christ

2 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face,^d ² that their hearts may be comforted, having been knit together in

^a Gr *ekklesia* ("assembly;" "congregation, i.e., of Christians")

^b Gr *ekklesia* ("assembly;" "congregation, i.e., of Christians")

^c i.e., *complete*

^d Literally seen my face in the flesh

love, and into all riches of the full assurance of understanding, and that they may have a complete knowledge^e of the mystery of God, namely Christ, ³ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴ This I am saying so that no one may delude you with persuasive arguments. ⁵ For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing and seeing your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

Made Alive in Christ

⁶ Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy^f and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ. ⁹ For in him is dwelling all the fullness of the deity bodily, ¹⁰ and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. ¹¹ and 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; ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

^e *Epignosis* is a strengthened or intensified form of *gnosis* (*epi*, meaning "additional"), meaning, "true," "real," "full," "complete" or "accurate," depending upon the context. Paul and Peter alone use *epignosis*.

^f The NIV reads, "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy" and the NET Bible reads, "Be careful not to allow anyone to captivate you through an empty, deceitful philosophy ..." In other words, there is nothing wrong with philosophy (i.e., love of wisdom), but we should be weary of hollow, deceptive, or empty philosophy.



¹³ And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, ¹⁴ having 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.^a ¹⁵ having disarmed the rulers and authorities, he made a public display of them openly, triumphing over them by it.^b

Let no Man Pass Judgment on You Based on Misinterpretation

¹⁶ Therefore let no man judge you about what you eat and drink or about the observance of a festival or of the new moon or of a sabbath day.^c ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things to come, but the reality^d belongs to Christ. ¹⁸ Let no man disqualify you of the prize who takes delight in a false humility and the worship of angels, taking his stand on the things he has seen, vainly puffed up without cause by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹ and 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.

²⁰ If you died together with Christ from the elementary things of the world, why, as if living in the world, do you submit yourselves to decrees: ²¹ Do not handle, nor taste, nor touch,” ²² (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? ²³ These things have indeed an appearance of wisdom in self-made worship,

and humility,^e and severe treatment of the body, they are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh.

Put On the New Person

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

Take Off the Old Person and Put On the New Person

⁵ Deaden, therefore, your members on the earth: sexual immorality,^f uncleanness, lustful passion,^g evil desire, and greediness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming [upon the sons of disobedience],^h ⁷ and you once walked in these things when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one

^e i.e., *false, mocking humility*

^f *Gr porneia*

^g *Lit passion; Gr pathos*

^h The longer reading, “upon the sons of disobedience,” has good early documentary support, but it is also absent from some very good early witnesses as well. In all likelihood, early scribes felt that something should have been a direct object after “the wrath of God is coming” upon whom? Thus, they likely made it to conform to the parallel passage of Eph. 5:6. Paul informs his readers as to why the wrath is coming (4:5), but not who the object of that wrath is. Of course, it would be upon those who are disobedient. We retained it in square brackets because it is found in the Untied Bible Society and the Nestle-Aland Greek text.

^a **σταυρός *stauros***; from the same as 2476; *an upright stake, hence a cross* (the Rom. instrument of crucifixion);—cross(27).—NASB Dictionaries

^b i.e. the cross; it could also be rendered *through him*

^c *Or days*

^d *Or substance*



another, seeing that you have put off the old man^a with its practices¹⁰ and have put on the new man^b who is being renewed through accurate knowledge^c according to the image of the one who created him,¹¹ where there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

Seek New Behavior

¹²Therefore, put on as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,¹³ putting up with one another and forgiving one another. If anyone should have a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.¹⁴ And above all these things put on love, which is a perfect bond of union.

¹⁵And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,^d to which also^e you were called in one body. And be thankful.^f ¹⁶Let the word of Christ^g dwell in you richly, in^h all wisdom teaching and admonishingⁱ one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God.¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

^a Or *old person*

^b Or *new person*

^c *Epignosis* is a strengthened or intensified form of *gnosis* (*epi*, meaning “additional”), meaning, “true,” “real,” “full,” “complete” or “accurate,” depending upon the context. Paul and Peter alone use *epignosis*.

^d Or *control your hearts*

^e Or *indeed*

^f Or *show yourselves thankful*

^g The Christ P⁴⁶ R² B C² D F G Ψ 1739 Maj it cop^{sa}; the Lord R^{*} I cop^{bo}; God A C^s 33

^h Or *with*

ⁱ Or *encouraging*

Duties in Christian Families

¹⁸Wives, be in subjection to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.²⁰ Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing in the Lord.²¹ Fathers, do not provoke^j your children, lest they become discouraged.²² Slaves, obey in all things them who are your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord:²³ Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men,²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.²⁵ For he who does wrong will receive back whatever wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

Instructions for Fellow Workers

4 Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.

The Colossians Are Prayerful, Watchful and Thankful

²Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving;³ at the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in prison;⁴ that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak.

The Colossians Are Fruitful

⁵Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, buying out for yourselves the time.⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

^j Or *provoking; irritating*



Paul’s Coworkers Tychicus and Onesimus

⁷All my affairs Tychicus, my beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow slave in the Lord, will make known to you. ⁸I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts, ⁹along with Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things that has taken place here.

Paul’s Coworkers Aristarchus, Mark, Justus, and Epaphras

¹⁰Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), ¹¹and Jesus who is called Justus; these are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me. ¹²Epaphras, who is one of you, a slave of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf^a in his prayers, that you may stand perfect^a and fully assured in all the will of God. ¹³For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis.

Paul’s Coworkers Luke and Demas

¹⁴Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas. ¹⁵Greet the brothers who are in Laodicea, and Nympha, and the congregation^b that is in her^c house. ¹⁶When the letter has been read among you, have it also read in the congregation^d of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea. ¹⁷And say to Archippus,

^a Or *complete or mature*

^b Gr *ekklesia* (“assembly;” “congregation, i.e., of Christians”)

^c One early MS reads *their*

^d Gr *ekklesia* (“assembly;” “congregation, i.e., of Christians”)

“See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.”

Final Greetings

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