



HELD TOGETHER

a study in Colossians

CHRIST IS SUPREME

¹⁵Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, ¹⁶for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities of the unseen world.

Everything was created through him and for him. He is before all things, and he is sustaining all things by his word of power. Nothing was left without him, and he has made himself visible to us in the past century, and he will continue to do so. ¹⁷He existed before all things, and he is the head of the church, his body, the church that he himself saved with his blood, to cleanse it by the word of water through the word, to present it to himself as a glorious church, not stained or wrinkled or anything of the kind, but holy and blameless, without blemish.

FREEDOM FROM RULES AND NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

^{2:6}And now, just as you have accepted Christ Jesus the Lord, you must continue to grow in him. ⁷Let your roots be planted in him and be built up in him. Your faith will be grounded in the truth you have learned, and you will be able to understand the fullness of his wisdom. ⁸Do not let anyone capture you with their philosophies and ideas, which are based on human thinking and are not based on the wisdom that comes from God. ⁹For in Christ, the fullness of God dwells in a physical body. For he holds all things together, and he is the one who grows as God grows.

For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality. ¹⁸Don't let anyone condemn you by insisting on a list of rules about food and drink, and about ceremonial washings of angels, saying they have special visions about these things. Their sinful minds are self-made, and they are not connected to Christ, the reality of the body. For he holds all things together, joints and ligaments, and he is the one who grows as God grows.

You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. ⁸But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. ⁹Don't lie to each other, for you have been stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. ¹⁰Put on your new nature, and live in it, characterized by love, kindness, and peace. ¹¹Put on your new nature, and live in it, characterized by love, kindness, and peace. ¹²Put on your new nature, and live in it, characterized by love, kindness, and peace.

²⁰Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged. ²²Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them as if you were working for the Lord. ²³Whatever you do, do it with a sincere heart, as if you were working for the Lord. ²⁴Remember that the Lord is watching you, and that the wages you receive will be from him. ²⁵Whoever does not obey the Lord will be punished by him. ²⁶For God is fair: to your slaves, he will be fair to your slaves. ²⁷Remember that you also have a Lord in heaven.

⁹I am also sending Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, one of your own people. He and Tychicus will tell you everything that's happening here. ¹⁰Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, sends you his greetings, and so does Mark, Barnabas's cousin. As you were instructed before, make Mark welcome if he comes your way. ¹¹Jesus (the one we call Justus) also sends his greetings. These are the only Jewish believers among my co-workers; they are working with me here for the Kingdom of God. And what a comfort they have been! ¹²Epaphras, a member of your own fellowship and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. He always prays earnestly for you, asking God to make you strong and perfect, fully confident that you are following the whole will of God. ¹³I can assure you that he prays hard for you and also for the believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis. ¹⁴Luke, the beloved doctor, sends you his greetings, and so does Demas. Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea, and to Nymphas, the church that meets in their house. ¹⁵After we have read this letter, we will send it to the church at Laodicea so they can read it, and you should read the letter we wrote to them. ¹⁶Give my greetings to Archippus, "Be sure to finish the ministry that you have started for the Lord."



Held Together in Prayer

PART 11 - NOVEMBER 15, 2020

COLOSSIANS 4:2-6 [CSB]

2 DEVOTE yourselves to prayer; STAY ALERT, in it with THANKSGIVING. 3 At the same time, pray also for us that God may open a door to us for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains, 4 so that I may make it known as I should. 5 Act wisely [WALK IN WISDOM] toward outsiders, making the most of the time.

HELD TOGETHER
a study in Colossians

COLOSSIANS 4:2-6 [CSB]

6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer each person.

CHRIST IS SUPREME
Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, ¹⁶for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can't see—

such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.

¹⁷He existed before anything else, and he holds everything together. ¹⁸Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all, even the dead. ¹⁹Nothing has happened that he is not aware of.

¹⁹For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, ²⁰and through him he reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

²¹This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. ²²Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

²³But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it.

FREEDOM FROM RULES AND NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

²⁴And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. ²⁵Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will overflow with thankfulness.

²⁶Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and ²⁷with you were taught, and you will not be proud, ²⁸and they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For he holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it. ²⁹You have died with Christ, and ³⁰you used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. ³¹But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. ³²Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. ³³Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. ³⁴In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, ³⁵and ³⁶you are not to be concerned with all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

³⁷Since God chose you to be the people he has loved, don't let ³⁸you be ruled by such things as mere human teachings about things that deteriorate as we use them. ³⁹These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, pious self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires.

LIVING THE NEW LIFE
³⁹Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. ⁴⁰Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. ⁴¹For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴²And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. ⁴³So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. ⁴⁴Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming.

⁴⁵So don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths. ⁴⁶

⁴⁷For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality. ⁴⁸Don't let anyone condemn you by insisting on pious self-denial or the worship of angels, saying they have had visions about these things. Their sinful minds have made them proud, ⁴⁹and they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For he holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it.

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLDS
⁶¹Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord. ⁶²Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.

⁶³Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord. ⁶⁴Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged. ⁶⁵Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely because of your reverent fear of the Lord. ⁶⁶Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. ⁶⁷Remember that the Master you are serving is Christ. ⁶⁸But if you do what is wrong, ⁶⁹don't let it be known. For the Lord is watching. ⁷⁰Remember that the Master you are serving is Christ. ⁷¹Put if you do what is wrong, ⁷²don't let it be known. For the Lord is watching. ⁷³Remember that the Master you are serving is Christ. ⁷⁴Put if you do what is wrong, ⁷⁵don't let it be known. For the Lord is watching.

⁷⁶Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart. ⁷⁷Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am here in chains. ⁷⁸Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should. ⁷⁹Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. ⁸⁰Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.

PAUL'S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS AND GREETINGS
⁸¹Tychicus will give you a full report about how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper who serves with me in the Lord's work. ⁸²I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you.

⁸³I am also sending Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, one of your own people. He and Tychicus will tell you everything that's happening here.

⁸⁴Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, sends you his greetings, and so does Mark, Barnabas's cousin. As you were instructed before, make Mark welcome if he comes your way. ⁸⁵Jesus (the one we call Justus) also sends his greetings. These are the only Jewish believers among my co-workers; they are here for the Lord. And what a comfort they have been! ⁸⁶Epaphras, a member of your own fellowship and a servant of the Lord, sends you his greetings. He always prays earnestly for you, asking God to make you strong and perfect, fully confident that you are following the whole will of God. ⁸⁷I can assure you that he prays hard for you and also for the believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

⁸⁸Luke, the beloved doctor, sends his greetings, and so does Demas. ⁸⁹Please give my greetings to our brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church that meets in her house. ⁹⁰After you have read this letter, pass it on to the church at Laodicea so they can read it, too. And you should read the letter I wrote to them. ⁹¹And say to Archippus, "Be sure to carry out the ministry the Lord gave you."

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CHRIST IS SUPREME

“Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation.” “For through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see—

such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.

“He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.” Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything.

“For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ.” “And through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ’s blood on the cross.

“This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions.” “Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

“But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don’t drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God’s servant to proclaim it.”

FREEDOM FROM RULES AND NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

“And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.

“Don’t let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from wisdom. For what you have learned through your union with Christ—who is the head over every rule and authority—has made you wise. So you also are complete through your union with Christ.

“You were buried with Christ when you were baptized, and with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. You were buried with him in baptism, which is the washing away of your sinful nature. “For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized, and with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty

power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. You were buried with him in baptism, which is the washing away of your sinful nature. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. “He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. “In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.

“So don’t let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new-moon ceremonies or Sabbaths.”

“For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality. “Don’t let anyone condemn you by insisting on pious self-denial or the worship of angels, saying they have had visions about these things. Their sinful minds have made them proud, and they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For he holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it. “You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world, which are the rulers of the world, such as

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LIVING THE NEW LIFE

“Since you have been raised to new life, let your feet be set on a firm foundation in the place of honor at God’s right hand. “Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. “For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. “And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

“So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don’t be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshipping the things of this world. “Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming.

“Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord. “Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged. “Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely, because of your reverent fear of the Lord. “Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. “Remember that the Lord will give you a full reward.

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PAUL’S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS AND GREETINGS

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“Labras, a member of your own fellowship and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. He always prays earnestly for you, asking God to make you strong and perfect. Fully confident that you are following the whole will of God, “I can assure you that he prays hard for you and also for the believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

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HELD TOGETHER

a study in Colossians

How do we partner with the One who holds all things together?

Pray. Walk. Talk.

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“This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions.”⁴ Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

“But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it.”

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“When you came to Christ, you were ‘circumcised,’ but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature.”⁷ For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

“You were dead because of your sins, and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins.”⁸ He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.⁹ In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.

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“You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world.”¹³ So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as, “Don't handle! Don't taste! Don't touch!”¹⁴ Such rules are merely human ideas. You should use your mind to judge for yourselves whether you are strong or weak in faith, and not please yourselves with self-denial, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person's evil desires.

LIVING THE NEW LIFE

“Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand.”¹⁵ Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.¹⁶ For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.¹⁷ And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

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“Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tender mercies and kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other, as the Lord forgives you, so you must forgive others.”²³ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.

“And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.”²⁴ Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.²⁵ And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLDS

“Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord.”

“Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.”

“Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord.”²⁶ Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged.

“Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely, because of your reverent fear of the Lord.”²⁷ Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.²⁸ Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.

“But if you do what is wrong, you will be paid back for the wrong you have done. For God has no favorites.”²⁹ Masters, be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven.

An Encouragement for Prayer
“Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.”³⁰ Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am here in chains.³¹ Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should.

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“Epaphras, a member of your own fellowship and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. He always prays earnestly for you, asking God to make you strong and perfect, fully confident that you are following the whole will of God.”

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“After you have read this letter, pass it on to the church at Laodicea so they can read it, too. And you should read the letter I wrote to them.”

“And say to Archippus, ‘Be sure to carry out the ministry the Lord gave you.’”

“Here is my greeting in my own handwriting—Paul. Remember my chains. May God's grace be with you.”

HELD TOGETHER

a study in Colossians

PRAYER

CHRIST IS SUPREME

“Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation.”¹ For through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—

such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.

“He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.”² Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything.

“For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ.”³ And through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.

“This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions.”⁴ Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

“But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it.”

FREEDOM FROM RULES AND NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

“And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.”

“Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ.”⁵ For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body.⁶ So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

“When you came to Christ, you were ‘circumcised,’ but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature.”⁷ For you were buried with Christ when you believed in the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.

“You were dead because of your sins, and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins.”⁸ He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.⁹ In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.

“So don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths.”¹⁰

For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality.¹¹ “Don't let anyone condemn you by insisting on pious self-denial or the worship of angels, saying they have had visions about these things. Their sinful minds have made them proud,¹² and they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For he holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it.”

“You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world.”¹³ So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as, “Don't handle! Don't taste! Don't touch!”¹⁴ “Such rules are merely human-made regulations that use words and philosophy to parade themselves. They are not for setting us free but for enslaving us.”¹⁵ Remember the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.¹⁶ “Above all, clothe yourselves

with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”¹⁷ But if you have not yet been united with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand.¹⁸ Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.¹⁹ For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.²⁰ And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.

“So put to death the sinful earthly things lurking within you: Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshipping the things of this world.”²¹ Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming.

“You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world.”²² But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander and dirty language.²³ Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds.²⁴ Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.²⁵ In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

“Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tender mercies, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other as the Lord has borne with you. Remember the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.²⁶ Above all, clothe yourselves

with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”²⁷ But if you have not yet been united with Christ, that is why I am here in chains.²⁸ For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.²⁹ Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.³⁰ And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLDS

“Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord.”

“Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.”

“Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord.”³¹ Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged.

“Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely, because of your reverent fear of the Lord.”³² Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.³³ Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.

“But if you do what is wrong, you will be paid back for the wrong you have done. For God has no favorites.”³⁴ Masters, be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven.

An Encouragement for Prayer
“Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.”³⁵ Pray for us, for we are in chains.³⁶ Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should.

“Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity.”³⁷ Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.

PAUL'S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS AND GREETINGS

Tychicus will give you a full report about how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper who serves with me in the Lord's work.³⁸ I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you.

“I am also sending Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, one of your own people. He and Tychicus will tell you everything that's happening here.”

“Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, sends you his greetings, and so does Mark, Barnabas's cousin. As you were instructed before, make Mark welcome if he comes your way.”³⁹ “Jenis (the one we call Justus) also sends his greetings. These are the only Jewish believers among my co-workers; they are working with me here for the Kingdom of God. And what a comfort they have been!”

“Epaphras, a member of your own fellowship and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. He always prays earnestly for you, asking God to make you strong and perfect, fully confident that you are following the whole will of God.”

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HELD TOGETHER

a study in Colossians

PRAYER

THAT IS MARKED BY STEADFAST DEVOTION

1A

COLOSSIANS 4:2-3

2 Devote [BE DILIGENT, STEADFAST AND PERSISTENT]

yourself to prayer;

STAY ALERT [BE WATCHFUL],

in it with thanksgiving.

3 At the same time, pray also for us.

HELD TOGETHER

a study in Colossians

CHRIST IS SUPREME

“Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation.”¹ “For through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see—

such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.

“He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.”² Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything.

“For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ.”³ “And through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ’s blood on the cross.”

“This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions.”⁴ Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.

“But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don’t drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God’s servant to proclaim it.”

FREEDOM FROM RULES AND NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

“And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.”

“Don’t let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ.”⁵ “For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body.”⁶ So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.

“When you came to Christ, you were ‘circumcised,’ but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature.”⁷ “For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized, and you were raised from the dead by the power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.”

“You were dead because of your sins, and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins.”⁸ “He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.”⁹ “In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.”

“So don’t let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths.”¹⁰

“For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality.”¹¹ “Don’t let anyone condemn you by insisting on pious self-denial or the worship of angels, saying they have had visions about these things. Their sinful minds have made them proud,”¹² and they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For he holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it.

“You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world.”¹³ So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as,

“‘Don’t handle!’ ‘Don’t taste!’ ‘Don’t touch!’”?¹⁴ “Such rules are merely human ideas. You should use your mind to judge for yourselves. Do not let anyone condemn you for not observing these rules. You have died to these rules, and severe bodily discipline. But they provide no help in conquering a person’s sinful nature.”¹⁵

“So put to death the sinful nature with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God’s right hand.”¹⁶ “Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.”¹⁷ “For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God.”¹⁸ “And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.”

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PRAYER

THAT IS MARKED BY VIGILANT GRATITUDE

1B

“Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord.”¹ “Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged.”

“Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely, because of your reverent fear of the Lord.”

“Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.”² “Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.”

“But if you do what is wrong, you will be paid back for the wrong you have done. For God has no favorites.”³ “Masters, be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven.”

“Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.”⁴ “Pray for us, Paul and Timothy, that we may be able to come to you without any hindrance. We are in chains for the Lord Jesus Christ, that is why I am here in chains.”⁵ “Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should.”

“Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity.”⁶ “Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.”

PAUL’S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS AND GREETINGS

“Tychicus will give you a full report about how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper who serves with me in the Lord’s work.”⁷ “I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you.”

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HELD TOGETHER

a study in Colossians

CHRIST IS SUPREME
12 Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, 13 for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. 14 He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. 15 Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. 16 For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, 17 and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross. 18 This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. 19 Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. 20 But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it.

FREEDOM FROM RULES AND NEW LIFE IN CHRIST
21 And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. 22 Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. **COLOSSIANS 1:3**
23 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you...
LIVING THE NEW LIFE
24 Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your minds on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. 25 Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. 26 For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. 27 And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. 28 So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. 29 Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming.

7 For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality. 8 Don't let anyone condemn you by insisting on pious self-denial or the worship of angels, saying they have had visions about these things. Their sinful minds have made them proud, 9 and they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For he holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it. 10 You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as, 11 "Don't handle! Don't taste! Don't touch!"? 12 These things deteriorate as we use them. 13 These rules may seem wise because they require strict devotion, pious devotion, and piety, but they do not help in conquering a person's evil desires.

LIVING THE NEW LIFE
14 Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your minds on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. 15 Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. 16 For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. 17 And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. 18 So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. 19 Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. 20 You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. 21 But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. 22 Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. 23 Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. 24 In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us. 25 Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must live in love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. 26 And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. 27 Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. 28 And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father. **INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLDS**
29 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord. 30 Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.

31 Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord. 32 Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged. 33 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely because of your reverent fear of the Lord. 34 Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. 35 Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ. 36 But if you do what is wrong, you will receive punishment for the things you have done. 37 Be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven. **An Encouragement for Prayer**
38 Don't let your prayer life be hindered by a thankful heart. 39 Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am here in chains. 40 Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should. 41 Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. 42 Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone. **PAUL'S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS AND GREETINGS**
43 Tychicus will give you a full report about how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper who serves with me in the Lord's work. 44 I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you.

45 I am also sending Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, one of your own people. He and Tychicus will tell you everything that's happening here. 46 Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, sends you his greetings, and so does Mark, Barnabas's cousin. As you were instructed before, make Mark welcome if he comes your way. 47 Jesus (the one we call Justus) also sends his greetings. These are the only Jewish believers among my co-workers; they are working with me here for the Kingdom of God. And what a comfort they have been! 48 Epaphras, a member of your own fellowship and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. He always prays earnestly for you, asking God to make you strong and perfect, fully confident that you are following the whole will of God. 49 I can assure you that he prays hard for you and also for the believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis. 50 Luke, the beloved doctor, sends his greetings, and so does Demas. 51 Please give my greetings to our brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church that meets in her house. 52 After you have read this letter, pass it on to the church at Laodicea so they can read it, too. And you should read the letter I wrote to them. 53 And say to Archippus, "Be sure to carry out the ministry the Lord gave you." 54 Here is my greeting in my own handwriting—Paul. Remember my chains. May God's grace be with you.

HELD TOGETHER
a study in Colossians

CHRIST IS SUPREME
Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ, and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross. This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions. Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault. But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God's servant to proclaim it.

FREEDOM FROM RULES AND NEW LIFE IN CHRIST
And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. When you were young, you were misled by philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ. For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body. So you also are complete through him. Don't let anyone lead you away with their philosophy, which is based on human wisdom and vain boasting. Don't let anyone condemn you by insisting on a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual work in me when I was in prison. For our freedom, you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead. You were dead because of your sins and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins. He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross. In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross. So don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths.

COLOSSIANS 4:2B

STAY ALERT [BE WATCHFUL],

in it with thanksgiving.

3 At the same time, pray also for us.

For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality. Don't let anyone condemn you by insisting on pious self-denial or the worship of angels, saying they have had visions about these things. Their sinful minds have made them proud, and they are not connected to Christ, the head of the body. For he holds the whole body together with its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it. You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as, "Don't touch," "Don't taste," "Don't marry," and other things that deteriorate as we use them. These rules may seem wise because they require strong devotion, piety, and self-control, but they do not help in conquering a person's evil desires.

LIVING THE NEW LIFE
Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, you must live in the heavenly place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming.

Don't use them to do these things when your life was still part of this world. But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us. Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must live with tenderness, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For your hearts and bodies are God's temple, and you will be kept safe by God's Spirit. So always be thankful. Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLDS
Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.

Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged. Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely because of your reverent fear of the Lord. Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ. But if you do what is wrong, you will be paid back for the wrong you have done. For God has no favorites. Masters, be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven. An Encouragement for Prayer Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart. Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am here in chains. Pray that my message will be proclaimed as clearly as I should. Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.

PAUL'S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS AND GREETINGS
Tychicus will give you a full report about how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper who serves with me in the Lord's work. I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you.

I am also sending Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, one of your own people. He and Tychicus will tell you everything that's happening here. Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, sends you his greetings, and so does Mark, Barnabas's cousin. As you were instructed before, make Mark welcome if he comes your way. Jesus (the one we call Justus) also sends his greetings. These are the only Jewish believers among my co-workers; they are working with me here for the Kingdom of God. And what a comfort they have been! Epaphras, a member of your own fellowship and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. He always prays earnestly for you, asking God to make you strong and perfect, fully confident that you are following the whole will of God. I can assure you that he prays hard for you and also for the believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis. Luke, the beloved doctor, sends his greetings, and so does Demas. Please give my greetings to our brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church that meets in her house. After you have read this letter, pass it on to the church at Laodicea so they can read it, too. And you should read the letter I wrote to them. And say to Archippus, "Be sure to carry out the ministry the Lord gave you." Here is my greeting in my own handwriting—Paul. Remember my chains. May God's grace be with you.

HELD TOGETHER
a study in Colossians

CHRIST IS SUPREME

“Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation.”¹ “For through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see.”

“Everything was created through him and for him.”

“He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.”² “Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything.”

“For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ.”³ “And through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ’s blood on the cross.”

“This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions.”⁴ “Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.”

“But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don’t drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News. The Good News has been preached all over the world, and I, Paul, have been appointed as God’s servant to proclaim it.”

FREEDOM FROM RULES AND NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

“And now, just as you accepted Christ Jesus as your Lord, you must continue to follow him. Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness.”

“Don’t let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ.”⁵ “For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body.”⁶ “So you also are complete through your union with Christ, who is the head over every ruler and authority.”

“When you came to Christ, you were ‘circumcised,’ but not by a physical procedure. Christ performed a spiritual circumcision—the cutting away of your sinful nature.”⁷ “For you were buried with Christ when you were baptized. And with him you were raised to new life because you trusted the mighty power of God, who raised Christ from the dead.”

“You were dead because of your sins, and because your sinful nature was not yet cut away. Then God made you alive with Christ, for he forgave all our sins.”⁸ “He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.”⁹ “In this way, he disarmed the spiritual rulers and authorities. He shamed them publicly by his victory over them on the cross.”

“So don’t let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths.”¹⁰

“For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality.”¹¹ “Don’t let anyone condemn you by insisting on pious self-denial or the worship of angels, saying they have had visions about these things. Their sinful minds have made them proud, and they are not connected to Christ. He reached out to you with his arms like joints and ligaments, and it grows as God nourishes it.”

“You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep on following the rules of the world, such as ‘Don’t handle!’ ‘Don’t touch!’ ‘Don’t taste!’? Such human teachings are things that deteriorate as you use them.”¹² “These rules may seem wise because they require strict devotion, self-control, and severe discipline. But they help in conquering a person’s evil desires.”

LIVING THE NEW LIFE

“Since you have been raised new life with Christ, you must seek the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God’s right hand.”¹³ “Think about what is above. Do not let the things of this earth distract you, for you died to them. Your real life is hidden with Christ in God.”¹⁴ “And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory.”

“So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you: Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don’t be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshipping the things of this world.”¹⁵ “Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming.”

“You used to do these things more than your life was still part of this world.”¹⁶ “But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander and dirty language.”¹⁷ “Don’t lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds.”¹⁸ “Put on your new nature, and don’t let it be deceived as you learn to know the Lord’s will. It doesn’t matter if you are Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised.”¹⁹ “Barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free, Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.”

“Since God chose you to be the holy ones before the world began, you must love one another with tender mercies, human teaching, and things that deteriorate as you use them.”²⁰ “These rules may seem wise because they require strict devotion, self-control, and severe discipline. But they help in conquering a person’s evil desires.”

“Love one another with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.”²¹ “Since you have been raised to the peace that comes from Christ, let the peace of God rule in your hearts, signifying the relationship of members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.”²² “Let the message about Christ, in all its fullness, dwell in your hearts. Teach and counsel one another with all wisdom and understanding. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.”²³ “And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.”

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLDS

“Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord.”

“Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.”

“Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord.”²⁴ “Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged.”

“Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely, because of your reverent fear of the Lord.”²⁵ “Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.”²⁶ “Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.”

“But if you do what is wrong, you will be paid back for the wrong you have done. For God has no favorites.”²⁷ “Masters, be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven.”

An Encouragement for Prayer

“Devote yourselves to prayer with an alert mind and a thankful heart.”²⁸ “Pray for us, too, that God will give us many opportunities to speak about his mysterious plan concerning Christ. That is why I am here in chains.”²⁹ “Pray that I will proclaim this message as clearly as I should.”

“Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity.”³⁰ “Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.”

PAUL’S FINAL INSTRUCTIONS AND GREETINGS

“Tychicus will give you a full report about how I am getting along. He is a beloved brother and faithful helper who serves with me in the Lord’s work.”³¹ “I have sent him to you for this very purpose—to let you know how we are doing and to encourage you.”

“I am also sending Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, one of your own people. He and Tychicus will tell you everything that’s happening here.”

“Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, sends you his greetings, and so does Mark, Barnabas’s cousin. As you were instructed before, make Mark welcome if he comes your way.”³² “Jenis (the one we call Justus) also sends his greetings. These are the only Jewish believers among my co-workers; they are working with me here for the Kingdom of God. And what a comfort they have been!”

“Epaphras, a member of your own fellowship and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings. He always prays earnestly for you, asking God to make you strong and perfect. Fully confident that you are following the whole will of God,”

“I can assure you that he prays hard for you and also for the believers in Laodicea and Hierapolis.”

“Luke, the beloved doctor, sends his greetings, and so does Demas.”³³ “Please give my greetings to our brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church that meets in her house.”

“After you have read this letter, pass it on to the church at Laodicea so they can read it, too. And you should read the letter I wrote to them.”

“And say to Archippus, ‘Be sure to carry out the ministry the Lord gave you!’”

“Here is my greeting in my own handwriting—Paul. Remember my chains. May God’s grace be with you.”

HELD TOGETHER

a study in Colossians

A Practical Takeaway

P PAUSE

R REJOICE

A ASK

Y YIELD



HELD TOGETHER

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CHRIST IS SUPREME

¹⁵Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation, ¹⁶for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities of the unseen world.

Everything was created through him and for him. He is before all things, and he will sustain all things by his word. ¹⁷He existed before anything else, and he is the one who holds everything together. He is the head of the church, his body, the church which he saved with his blood. He is the supreme ruler of the church, the one who saves and cleanses himself through the word.

FREEDOM FROM RULES AND NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

^{2:6}And now, just as you have accepted Christ Jesus the Lord, you must continue to grow in him. ⁷Let your life be hidden with him in heaven, where you will be built up with him in faith. You will be brought to the full truth you will have known, and you will be able to thank him all the time for his grace and kindness.

Don't let anyone capture you with all their philosophies and rules, which are based on human thinking and not on Christ. ⁸Don't let anyone condemn you by insisting on a list of rules about how you should live. They don't have any wisdom about the things of God. Their sinful minds are selfish and prideful, and they are not connected to Christ, the one who is the head of the body. For he holds the whole body together, using his own blood, to cleanse and strengthen the joints and ligaments. And as you grow as God's people, you will grow as God's people.

For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality. ¹⁸Don't let anyone condemn you by insisting on a list of rules about how you should live. They don't have any wisdom about the things of God. Their sinful minds are selfish and prideful, and they are not connected to Christ, the one who is the head of the body. For he holds the whole body together, using his own blood, to cleanse and strengthen the joints and ligaments. And as you grow as God's people, you will grow as God's people.

You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. ⁸But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. ⁹Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. ¹⁰Put on your new nature, and let it be renewed as you learn about God and his will for you. ¹¹Don't let your feet slip into laziness, like so many of the people here. Instead, work hard to serve the Lord with all your heart and mind, with all your strength and energy, and with all your resources. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, and strength. Love your neighbor as yourself. Put on the new nature, which is characterized by love, kindness, and patience. ¹²Let your peace with others be known to all. Be kind and merciful to one another, just as the Lord has forgiven you, with all his grace. ¹³Don't let anyone steal your freedom by insisting on a list of rules about how you should live. They don't have any wisdom about the things of God. Their sinful minds are selfish and prideful, and they are not connected to Christ, the one who is the head of the body. For he holds the whole body together, using his own blood, to cleanse and strengthen the joints and ligaments. And as you grow as God's people, you will grow as God's people.

²⁰Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹Fathers, do not aggravate your children, or they will become discouraged. ²²Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them as if you were working for the Lord. ²³What is wrong, whatever you do, do it as if you were working for the Lord. ²⁴Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance and that the Lord will give you a reward. ²⁵Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ²⁶Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ²⁷Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ²⁸Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ²⁹Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ³⁰Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ³¹Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ³²Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ³³Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ³⁴Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ³⁵Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ³⁶Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ³⁷Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ³⁸Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ³⁹Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁴⁰Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁴¹Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁴²Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁴³Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁴⁴Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁴⁵Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁴⁶Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁴⁷Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁴⁸Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁴⁹Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁵⁰Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁵¹Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁵²Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁵³Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁵⁴Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁵⁵Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁵⁶Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁵⁷Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁵⁸Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁵⁹Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁶⁰Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁶¹Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁶²Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁶³Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁶⁴Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁶⁵Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁶⁶Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁶⁷Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁶⁸Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁶⁹Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁷⁰Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁷¹Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁷²Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁷³Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁷⁴Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁷⁵Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁷⁶Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁷⁷Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁷⁸Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁷⁹Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁸⁰Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁸¹Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁸²Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁸³Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁸⁴Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁸⁵Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁸⁶Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁸⁷Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁸⁸Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁸⁹Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁹⁰Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁹¹Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁹²Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁹³Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁹⁴Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁹⁵Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁹⁶Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁹⁷Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁹⁸Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ⁹⁹Remember that the Lord will give you a reward. ¹⁰⁰Remember that the Lord will give you a reward.

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