

## Session 1: Colossians 1:1–14

### SESSION GOALS

*Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.*

**Main Idea:** In light of Jesus’s grace, faithfulness, and the outpour of His love through the Spirit, we should allow the Spirit to mature us in faithfulness back to Christ.

**Head Change:** To know the truth of the gospel and how it directly relates to us.

**Heart Change:** To feel adoration for Jesus because of all He’s done for us.

**Life Change:** To pursue Christian maturity through transformed actions, attitudes, and mindsets.

### OPEN

**Share about a time when you were less mature than you are now—maybe a story from your childhood, school days, or first day at a job. What did you do or say that showed your immaturity?**

As we grow in Christ, our habits, attitudes, and words change. We become more and more like Jesus the longer we follow Him. As we’re going to discover in this study on Colossians, a mature faith begins with full submission to the supremacy of Jesus. Louie Giglio will walk us through the first section of chapter one to show how the simple gospel is the starting point to Christian maturity.

### READ

Read Colossians 1:1–14.

### WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Louie Giglio’s teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how Louie answers the following questions.

**What is the central message of Colossians?**

**Who wrote Colossians? Why did he write it? Whom did he write to?**

**What does it mean to live a life worthy of God?**

**Show Session 1:** Colossians 1:1–14 (13 minutes)

## **DISCUSS**

Louie Giglio began the discussion on Colossians with two reminders. He first reminded us that the Bible is God's breathed-out words to us. God's teaching us about Himself through Scripture. **Would you say it's easy to forget that the Bible is God's word to us? What might the effects be when the Bible has become more of a simple book and less of God's actual word?**

**How has God's Word proven to be living and active in your life? What, specifically, has changed in you because of how you've interacted with the Bible through reading it, listening to sermons, etc.?**

**What expectations do you have for this study? How do you hope to change through reading the book of Colossians?**

Another point Louie talked about was the context of Colossians. Paul wrote Colossians from prison alongside Timothy. He penned the letter to correct some wrong theology circulating in the church in Colossae by emphasizing the supremacy of Jesus. **What do you think of when you hear "the supremacy of Jesus"? How would you define supremacy?**

**How would you describe a life fully submitted to the supremacy of Jesus? What would it look like? What's appealing to you most about that kind of life?**

Read Colossians 1:1–2.

**What details that Louie provided about Paul, Timothy, and Colossae help you understand the letter better? How?**

**Leader:** *If your group is unfamiliar with Paul and Timothy, spend some time reviewing who they are with your group. Consider reading Acts 9:1–31 for Paul's story and Acts 16:1–5 and 1 Timothy 1:1–2 for information about Timothy.*

Read Colossians 1:3–8.

**According to these verses, how did those in Colossae hear the gospel? Who shared it with them? (Epaphras)**

What's interesting about Colossians is Paul didn't plant this church—Epaphras did. Paul writes to a church he's never met before, but still expresses deep care for them. **What kinds of things does Paul point out about the church in these verses?** (Paul pointed out their faith, love, hope, how they're bearing fruit, and how they understood God's grace.)

**How do you tend to express your love for God's people? What about your faith in Jesus Christ? Your hope stored in heaven? What does it practically look like to be full of love, faith, or hope?**

**If you had to pick faith, love, or hope to work on, which one would you pick? Why? What might it look like to improve in that area?**

Paul recognizes the Colossians' true understanding of the gospel when they first believed. They bore the spiritual fruit of love and faith. Paul continues his encouragement in the next section of verses.

Read Colossians 1:9–14.

Paul mentions for the second time that he and Timothy pray for the church in Colossae. He specifically says they never stop praying for them. **When has someone modelled this kind of prayer life for you?**

Christians who are more mature than us can give us an example of what it looks like to follow Jesus. In their prayers for the Colossians to grow in Christ, Paul and Timothy offer an example of Christian maturity. They pray that the Colossians would live a life worthy of God. **How does Paul describe a worthy life in these verses?** (A worthy life is one that bears fruit, grows in the knowledge of God, is strengthened by God, endures, is patient, and gives thanks.)

### **GO DEEPER**

*Read more about what Paul says about living a worthy life in the following verses: Rom. 16:1–2; Eph. 4:1–3; Phil. 1:27–28; 1 Thess. 2:9–12*

**According to these passages, what kind of attitude characterizes a worthy life? What do these verses say about how we should treat other people?**

When Paul asks believers to live a worthy life, he is telling them to live a life that matches the salvation they've received.

**How do the actions mentioned in these verses reflect a changed life in Christ?**

In Christ, we are forever changed. He frees us from sin and death and brings us into relationship with God. But being saved doesn't mean we can do whatever we want—as Christians we should conduct ourselves in a way that reflects the grace we've received. In Christ, we are forever changed. He frees us from sin and death and brings us into relationship with God. But being saved doesn't mean we can do whatever we want—as Christians we should conduct ourselves in a way that reflects the grace we've received.

If we look back to verse 9, living worthily begins with God filling us with His knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. To Paul, following God begins in the mind and heart, and then expresses itself through action. **What has it looked like in your walk with Christ to grow in knowledge, wisdom, and understanding? How have you seen your mind mature?**

### **PEEK AT THE GREEK**

Paul prays that God would fill the Colossians with the knowledge of His will. The Greek word for knowledge is epignosis. When Paul uses this word, he often refers to the knowledge of God. Rather than knowledge being an intellectual understanding of God, Paul uses it to express the personal knowledge of God Christians experience through relationship with Him. This type of knowledge produces wisdom and understanding, but for Paul, mere head knowledge isn't the end of the line. Knowing God should fundamentally change us, which trickles down into our everyday actions.

**What are some things you know are true of God? How do you know they are true? How have those truths changed the way you act?**

What we think about God and what we do are intrinsically connected. Following Jesus isn't just a head knowledge, it's acting in obedience too. Paul sums up this section in verses 12–14. The reason we're even able to know God and follow Him is because of Jesus. He has brought us into a new kingdom—the kingdom of light.

Louie put it this way, “It's not what you do that brings you to life spiritually. It's what God does for you that makes you a follower of Jesus and brings you to life spiritually.” **What difference does it make in your relationship with God when you operate as if you have to “do something” in order to gain spiritual life?**

**What kinds of things do we sometimes add to the gospel message?** (We sometimes believe we have to do certain things like read your Bible, pray, tithe, fast, and serve in the local church in order to be a Christian.)

Louie reminded us that salvation doesn't come by our own efforts or by any insider information—what he called the “secret society.” The Colossians had added to the gospel message in several ways. We'll investigate those additions throughout this series and see how we may have fallen into some of the same traps. How do you think an incorrect view of the gospel—and of God Himself—could impact someone's actions? What would their life look like?

**Have you ever seen that happen in your life? What were you “adding” to the gospel? How did you come to realize what you were doing?**

**Going back to verses 13–14, what does it mean to you that you've been rescued from the kingdom of darkness? How does that truth relate to living a life that's worthy of God?**

### **PEEK AT THE GREEK**

When Paul says God has rescued us from the dominion (NIV) or domain (ESV) of darkness, he uses the word *exousias*. This word refers to authority, the holder of authority, or a sphere of authority. What Paul means by *exousias* is that through Christ, our ultimate authority has changed. We were once under the *exousia*—or authority—of darkness: of Satan, sin, and death. Now through the redemption and forgiveness brought through Jesus, we have been brought into the kingdom of light under the authority of Christ.

As mentioned before, living a life worthy of God is only possible through Jesus. He made a way for us to be reunited with God and gives us the Holy Spirit so we can grow in maturity. That's not to say we have to strive to be perfect in our own power. Rather, the Spirit fills us and gives us all we need to pursue maturity in Christ—all beginning with the knowledge of God. **When did you first hear and understand the gospel message?**

**Since then, how has the gospel helped you mature as a believer? How has the Spirit played a role in your maturity?**

**What's one thing you could do this week to remind yourself of the gospel story?**

## **LAST WORD**

To be a mature follower of Christ is to know God and His gospel so fully that it permeates every inch of our lives. It's a life full of the Spirit and characterized by love, hope, and faith. Living this way begins with the simple truth that God has delivered us from sin and death by the work of His Son. We are now under His rule, free to follow Him wherever He leads.

As Louie mentioned in his teaching, the Colossians had fallen away from the true gospel, adding to it and making Christianity like an exclusive club. They had forgotten the simple truth we read in verses 13 and 14 of chapter one. As we go about this week, let's remind ourselves of the truth of the gospel. Let's pray God would reveal to us the ways we've added to the gospel message as we study Colossians.

We also talked about what it means to live a life worthy of God in this session. A worthy life looks like a transformed heart, which overflows into how we treat other people, what we say, and our attitude towards the things God asks us to do. It begins with God giving us the knowledge of Himself through the Spirit. This week, let's ask God to help us know Him better and reflect what we know about Him through your actions

## **LIVE IT OUT**

**Pray:** When you pray this week, thank God for delivering you from sin and death. Pray for His Spirit to show you what it means to live a life that reflects the salvation you've received as you study Colossians.

**Memorize:** Commit Colossians 1:13–14 to memory this week. Write it on a notecard or create a background for your phone with the verse. Recite it to yourself to remind you of what God has done for you.

**Write:** Take ten minutes to write out the gospel story as simply as possible. Reflect on ways you might have added or taken away from it and ask God to refresh the gospel message in you this week.

**Act:** As an expression of gratitude to God, choose one way to show someone God's love this week. Help your spouse with something on their to-do list, send a friend flowers, or mow the neighbor's lawn. As you do, pray for the person you're serving.

**Thank:** Send a thank you text, note, or email to the people in your life who led you to Jesus. Tell them how God used them in your life to grow closer to Him.

## Session 2: Colossians 1:15–23

### SESSION GOALS

*Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.*

**Main Idea:** Since Jesus is supreme over all things—creation, authorities, the Church. Through Christ, we are reconciled to God, we can stand firm in our faith, rooted in the hope of the gospel and Christ’s supremacy.

**Head Change:** To know Jesus is supreme over everything in life—creation, authorities both spiritual and not, and the Church.

**Heart Change:** To feel secure in Jesus’s authority over all things and rooted in the hope of the gospel.

**Life Change:** To stand firm in our faith—faithful to God and obedient to His Word—regardless of any circumstance.

### OPEN

**How do we use the word “supreme” in our culture?** (supreme pizza, the Supreme Leader in Star Wars, the Supreme Court, etc.)

**With those examples in mind, how would you say our culture defines supremacy?** How do you think that compares to the biblical definition of supremacy? (Cultural defines supremacy as the best or highest or something that has the most. Biblical supremacy refers to God’s authority, rulership, and power over all creation.)

Louie Giglio has already mentioned the supremacy of Jesus so far in this study of Colossians. The passage we’re studying today talks specifically about Jesus— His supremacy, authority, and power. Before we begin, let’s pray that the Spirit would deepen our love and understanding of Jesus as we go through this session.

### READ

Read Colossians 1:15–23.

### WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Louie’s teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how Louie answers the following questions.

**What is Jesus supreme over?**

**How does Jesus’s supremacy and the sufficiency of Jesus relate to our worth and purpose?**

**Show Session 2:** Colossians 1:15–23 (12 minutes)

## **DISCUSS**

Before we dive into this session, let's review what we've already discussed in Colossians. Remember that Paul wrote this letter while in prison with Timothy. He penned this letter to encourage and correct the church in Colossae. This church had added to the gospel in several ways—and we'll talk more about the specifics of what they added later on in this series.

Louie summed up the theme of this book—it's all about the supremacy of Jesus over all things. How did the supremacy of Jesus apply to the verses we studied in the last session? (Jesus is supreme over our salvation. He rescued us from sin and death by His own death. We're now in His kingdom. See Colossians 1:13–14 for a refresher.)

As Louie walked through verses 15–23, he pulled out three characteristics of Jesus. Jesus is the originator, sustainer, and leader. **What other initial observations about Jesus do you make in these verses?**

Verses 15–20 are actually a hymn. Some of your Bible translations might even format this part of the text differently, like a poem or the lyrics to a song. It's as if Paul pauses for a brief moment to exalt Christ by worshipping Him. This section begins by saying Jesus is the image of the invisible God. **How did Jesus display the character and nature of God while He was on earth?**

## **GO DEEPER**

*Read more about the image of God in Scripture in these verses: Gen. 1:26–27; Exod. 20:4–6*

**According to these verses, how would you describe a biblical definition of “image”?** (An image is someone or something that represents God. Humans were made in God's image—in His likeness. Idols attempted to make a physical representation of God on earth.)

**Why do you think God didn't want images made of Him? What about a human-created image is insufficient?** (A created image isn't God. God didn't want a tangible representation of Him on earth that misrepresented who He is. He also wanted Israel to have faith in Him.)

**Why, then, is it okay that Jesus is the image of God?** (Jesus is God. He is the physical representation of God on earth. He images God by being fully God and fully human.)

In verse 15, Paul says Jesus is the “firstborn over all creation.” **Does saying Jesus was “firstborn” mean He was created? Why not?**

Some people take this verse to mean that God created Jesus since Paul calls Jesus “firstborn over all creation.” The early church councils deemed this view heretical, but we still see it pop up among groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses. Paul isn't saying Jesus was created. Rather, the term “firstborn” refers to Jesus's position of privilege. He exercises authority over all creation because, as we see in verse 16, all things were made through Him and for Him.

**How does verse 16 describe Jesus's authority?** (He is over heaven, earth, the visible and invisible, thrones, powers, rulers, and authorities because He created them.)

**Why do you think it matters that all things were made by and for Jesus?**

**What specific things does Jesus have authority over in your life?** (Some answers include: your job, family, boss, salary, friendships, president/representative, spouse, habits, natural disasters, etc.)

**What areas of your life are difficult for you to view as under Jesus's authority? Why?**

**What do you think it looks like to live in such a way that reflects Jesus's authority over all things?**

Reread verse 17. Louie talked about a protein called laminin—a cell adhesion molecule, which means it holds human body cells together and is in the shape of a cross. Louie used laminin to remind us that Jesus does hold all things together—quite literally.

### **GO DEEPER**

*Read more about the deity of Christ in these verses: John 1:1–5, 18; Heb. 1:1–4; Phil. 2:5–11*

**What truths about Jesus do we learn from these verses?**

**How do these verses contribute to the discussion of Jesus's supremacy?**

**How are these verses similar to what Paul says about Jesus in Colossians 1?** (In John and Hebrews, it mentions Jesus is the agent of creation. Philippians talks about Jesus's life, death, and resurrection.)

Jesus is fully God. Scripture clearly states it as fact. In His deity, Jesus rules with authority and power.

Because Jesus is fully God, He could bring reconciliation between God and us through His sacrifice on the cross. He became the perfect sacrifice needed to reunite us with God.

**What is it like to be alienated from God?**

**Leader:** *Encourage your group to share their stories as they answer the question above. Ask them to explain what their lives were like before knowing Jesus. If they came to Christ at a young age, ask them to talk about how different their lives would be today if they hadn't met Jesus.*

Being alienated from God leads to destruction, chaos, and ultimately death. But in Christ, we have been reconciled to God and are presented as holy before Him. **What's been the biggest difference in your life experience between knowing Jesus and not knowing Him?**

**How does it feel to know that you're presented "without blemish and free from accusation" before God because of Jesus?**

**How does Paul describe the proper response to what Jesus has done for us in verse 23?** (He says to continue in faith, to stand firm, and to not move from the hope found in the gospel.)

Paul says faith, perseverance, and hope mark a believer who understands who Jesus is. **What do you think it means to live a life that reflects Jesus's sacrifice and supremacy, practically**



**speaking? How would this perspective of Jesus change the way someone faces suffering or encounters blessing?**

**In what areas of your life do you need to remember Jesus's supremacy? What's one way you could trust Him with that area this week?**

## **LAST WORD**

Jesus reigns supreme over all creation. All things were created through Him and for Him. He rules over the seen and the unseen—the physical and the spiritual world. From the foundation of the world, He has authority over the created realm. By defeating death, Jesus rules over it and made a way for us to be reconciled to God. His sacrifice solidifies His supremacy. From your salvation to your work to your inner thoughts, Jesus has authority over it all.

We live under Jesus's supremacy. His rule changes everything for us. As we learned from Colossians 1:13–14 in the last session, we now live in His kingdom—the kingdom of light. We've been freed from sin and death and have been presented as holy before God. We owe our lives to Jesus for what He's done for us. Are we living in a way that reflects that truth? This week, take time to consider whether or not your life reflects the supremacy of Jesus. A life surrendered to His authority isn't ruled by fear or swayed by opposition. Instead, it is characterized by faith, perseverance, and hope.

## **LIVE IT OUT**

**Pray:** Ask God to reveal the areas of your life that need to submit to Jesus's authority. Pray that the Spirit would guide you in surrendering those things to Jesus.

**List:** Read back through Colossians 1:1–23 and list all the attributes of Christ mentioned in these verses. Take a few minutes to reflect on who Jesus is and revisit the list throughout the week.

**Share:** Write out your testimony this week. Focus on what life was like before you knew Christ and how He's changed your life since. Share your story with someone this week.

**Create:** Make something to remind yourself that Jesus is supreme over all creation. Display your creation so you can see it and remember this passage throughout the week.

**Worship:** Choose a praise song that exalts Jesus. Listen to that song in the margins of your life this week to remind you of His supremacy over all things.

## Session 3: Colossians 1:24–2:5

### SESSION GOALS

*Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.*

**Main Idea:** The mystery of God—the gospel—proclaims the good news of salvation through Jesus, roots us in the future hope of His return and coming glory, and compels us toward spiritual maturity in Christ.

**Head Change:** To know what it means to have Christ in us and how that truth impacts our lives.

**Heart Change:** To feel encouraged to pursue Christian maturity.

**Life Change:** To act in a way that reflects that Christ is in us.

### OPEN

**What’s your favorite mystery book, TV show, or movie? Why is that one your favorite?**

In this session, we’re studying verses in Colossians that talk about the mystery of God. The good news is we don’t have to look far to figure out the mystery—it’s already been revealed to us through Christ.

### READ

Read Colossians 1:24–2:5.

### WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Louie’s teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how Louie answers the following questions.

**What’s the significance of both Jews and Gentiles being a part of God’s family?**

**What’s the mystery of God Paul talks about in these verses?**

**What’s the difference between Christ and us and Christ in us?**

**Show Session 3:** Colossians 1:24–2:5 (15 minutes)

### DISCUSS

We pick up this section of Colossians after Paul exalted Jesus as supreme over all things in the previous verses. Jesus is supreme, sufficient, and the sustainer of all things. Paul surrendered His life to serving Jesus and His Church, so much so that he ended up in prison for proclaiming the gospel. **Even though he’s in prison, how does Paul describe his attitude in verse 24?** (He

rejoices in his suffering.) **Is that your typical response to suffering? What do you think empowered Paul to be able to rejoice in prison?**

Paul counted it a joy to suffer for Jesus because Jesus suffered so much for him. **How could Jesus's suffering for you shape the way you personally view pain and hardship?**

Paul rejoiced in prison because he knew he was joining in the sufferings of Christ. When he says the afflictions of Christ were “lacking,” he doesn’t mean Jesus’s suffering on the cross wasn’t enough to save us. Instead, he’s talking about the suffering of the Church—we endure tribulation until the suffering of believers ends when Christ returns. Jesus suffers alongside us and grounds our hope that one day it will all come to an end. **How does Jesus’s return bring you hope in times of suffering?**

**What truths of Scripture have helped you in times of suffering?**

Read verses 25–27.

Paul had a firm foundation in the gospel truth and his calling from God, which he describes in verse 25. With this foundation and conviction, he was able to look past his current situation to focus on God. **Describe an instance where the gospel helped you look to God in the midst of a difficult time.**

Paul knew God had called him to take the gospel to the Gentiles—to those who were outside the Jewish faith. Verses 26 and 27 remind us that the gospel isn’t for an elite group of people. It’s for all people who put their faith in Jesus, Jew and Gentile alike. **What difference does it make in your life knowing that God chose to bring you into His family? How could that truth impact the way you treat believers you don’t naturally click with?**

### **GO DEEPER**

*Learn more about how the Gentiles have been brought into the family of God from the following verses: Acts 10:34–35, 44–45; Acts 11:15–18; Gal. 3:26–28; Eph. 3:1–6*

**Did the believers in the early church think Gentiles could be part of God’s family at first?**

**How did Peter’s experience change their minds?**

**Why would Paul encourage the church to be one in Christ? How might have unity been difficult for Jews and Gentiles?**

**How do we still face disunity today? What do these verses have to say about it?**

God desires a unified and diverse people. As members of His family, we should strive to be unified as one. Each of us partakes in the mystery—Christ is in each of us. We can be united through Him.

The mystery of God is that Christ now unifies God’s people—both Jews and Gentiles—by being in them. Christ in us is the hope of glory—the hope that we will one day share in Jesus’s glory when He returns. Louie explained the difference between Christ and us and Christ in us. **How would you describe the difference between the two? Would you add anything to Louie’s explanation?**

## PEEK AT THE GREEK

The Greek word translated as “mystery” is *mysterion*. Our English word, mystery, implies there’s a secret that people have been trying to uncover but failed to do so. The Greek word *mysterion* speaks to a deeper meaning—it’s something previously unknown but God has disclosed it to His people. Through Jesus’s death and resurrection, God revealed the mystery of His redemptive plan that involves both Jews and Gentiles.

As Louie explained, having a Christ-and-us mentality makes us think we have to do all the work to be the perfect Christian. He used the illustration of a joint wrestling match. Sometimes we think we have to fight through life on our own and tag Jesus in when we’re spent. **What is it like when you live out the Christ-and-you mentality? How does it impact your thoughts and actions?**

**How does the Christ-and-you mentality fall short of the true gospel? What’s the actual truth?** (The actual truth is Christ in you.)

Louie described living as Christ-in-you as letting go of a rope. We sometimes strain to hold our faith in our own hands. But the reality is God is the one who’s done all the work and He is the one to sustain us to follow Him every day. **How would you describe your attitude towards your relationships with God? Do you have an “and” mentality or an “in” attitude?**

**What does it look like to walk in the reality that Christ is in you? How does it differ from living like it’s Christ and you?**

**Does believing the Christ-in-you truth mean you stop everything you’re doing? Why not?**

Read verses 28–29.

**What’s Paul’s goal for those he leads?** (He wants them to be fully mature in Christ.) **Where does Paul find his energy to make that goal a reality?** (He finds his energy in Jesus.)

**How does Paul’s goal and source of energy prove that Christians aren’t supposed to simply sit back and be lazy?**

Louie took us to these two verses to show that just because Christ is in us doesn’t mean we stop obeying and following Him. Our obedient actions shouldn’t change much when we realize Christ is in us. Instead, our attitude changes: we obey because we know and love Christ and realize He is in us, not because we want to earn His favor or follow Him in our own power.

**Who do you know who best represents a mature follower of Christ? What about them shows they are mature?**

For Paul, Christian maturity is a big deal. He’s already talked about how he prays the Colossians would grow in their faith in Colossians 1:9–12. He begins chapter two by explaining further what how he hopes the Colossians will grow. R

Read Colossians 2:1–5.

Even though Paul never met the Colossians (and the Laodiceans—church members from a neighbouring town), he wanted them to know he cared about them and their spiritual growth. **What is Paul's ultimate goal in the Colossians' maturity?** (That they would not be deceived by arguments that sounded good but were actually lies.)

Verses 2 and 3 talk about the love, understanding, wisdom, knowledge, and unity that come with knowing Christ. **How might each of those things help someone stand up against false teaching?**

**How have you grown in discernment since you first followed Jesus? What do you do to discern if something is true?**

Paul ends this section by mentioning that the Colossians have a firm faith. **What does it mean to have a firm faith? What does a firm faith have to do with Christian maturity?**

As we grow in these truths—that there's hope beyond suffering, Christ is in us, and we should be discerning—we will become mature followers of Jesus. What are some practical ways you could pursue growth in your faith?

**How could you remind yourself this week that Christ is in you?**

## **LAST WORD**

Paul's words in this passage remind us of the hope found in the gospel message. In Jesus, we know there's an end to suffering—one day He will return and renew all things. Through Jesus, we've been given understanding to the mystery of God. People of all nations can put their trust in Him and He lives in every believer.

With these truths in mind, we can embrace the challenge Paul gives to the Colossians to pursue maturity. We can stand firm in our faith and grow in knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. We can begin by internalizing the truth that Jesus is in us—we don't have to strive to earn salvation or God's approval. Instead, we obey from a place of love and an intimate relationship with God.

This week, take a moment to sit in the truth of the mystery of God. Ask Him to transform how you perceive the Christian walk and empower you to pursue maturity in Him. Let's thank Him for all He's done for us as we close this session.

## **LIVE IT OUT**

**Pray:** Ask God to transform the way you think about following Him. Pray the truth that Christ is in you would settle into your heart and mind this week.

**Write:** Make two columns on a sheet of paper. On one side, write what it's like to live with the Christ-and-me mentality Louie talked about. On the other side, write what it means that Christ is in you. Reflect on those differences this week.

**Ask:** Talk to someone you consider a mature Christian this week. Ask them what God has used to mature them as they've followed Christ. Take a moment to pray for them and their walk with Jesus.

**Study:** Read John 15 this week and take note of the attributes of Christ that appear in the text. As you study, pray God would grow you in the characteristics of Jesus.

**Encourage:** Share the truths discussed in this section of Colossians with another Christian this week. Encourage them that Christ is in them by talking about the mystery of God.

## Session 4: Colossians 2:6–15

### SESSION GOALS

*Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.*

**Main Idea:** Since Jesus brought us from death to life and triumphed over every authority, we can now live rooted in Christ, unswayed by a false gospel, and abundant in faith.

**Head Change:** To know that we’ve been brought from death to life by the power of Jesus and we can now live in a way that reflects His authority.

**Heart Change:** To feel confident in the truth of the gospel so that we can stand firm in Christ without being persuaded by a false gospel.

**Life Change:** To live a life that reflects the new life we’ve been given in Christ with a strong foundation in Him so that we can stand firm in our faith.

### OPEN

**Describe one of your favorite commercials. What makes that commercial compelling?**

**Would you say you’re persuaded by every advertisement you see? What would be different about your life if you were convinced by all of them?**

It’s sometimes easy to be persuaded to do something or to change something about our lives. Advertisers bank on that happening. In this portion of Colossians, Paul cautions the Colossian church to not be led astray by false teaching. Instead, they should find their foundation in Jesus and His gospel.

### READ

Read Colossians 2:6–15.

### WATCH

Before viewing the session, here is an important thing to look for in Louie’s teaching. As you watch, pay attention to the following question.

**What are the four words Louie uses to outline this section of Colossians?**

Show Session 4: Colossians 2:6–15 (14 minutes)

### DISCUSS

Louie walked through the text using four phrases: follow up, foundation, fullness, and finished work. Each coordinates with certain verses. Follow up is first with verses 6 and 7.

Read Colossians 2:6–7

**If we have received Christ by grace through faith, what does that say about what it means to live in Him?** (It means we should continue to follow Him by grace through faith.)

Paul urges the Colossians to “live your lives” in Jesus. He uses that phrase often in his books to mean that Christians should continue to walk in their faith. Louie described it as “follow up.” We continue to keep in step with Jesus after choosing to follow Him, all by His grace through faith. **What does it look like to live your life in—or to follow—Jesus? What is different about your actions, thoughts, or attitudes?**

Louie talked about how consistent growth as a Christian is more about what is unseen than what is seen. Verse 7 talks about being rooted and built up in Him. The hidden things we do are what mature us as His followers. **What sorts of hidden, beneath-the-surface things have helped you grow in your faith?** (Some answers might include: personal Bible study, prayer, giving in secret, singing worship songs during commutes, fasting, etc.)

In verse 7, Paul tells the Colossians to be strengthened in their faith. He mentions giving thanks as a characteristic of strong faith. **What sorts of spiritual disciplines strengthen your faith? In what ways has thanksgiving bolstered your walk with Jesus?**

Being thankful to God reminds us of what He’s done for us and who He is. Reflecting on these things, especially in community, can encourage each of us in our faith. **What’s one thing you’re thankful for this week?**

Louie’s next word ties into this idea of developing deep roots in Jesus and His gospel—it’s the word “foundation.”

Read verse 8.

As we’ve already discussed in this study, the Colossians were being led astray by what Paul calls a “hollow and deceptive philosophy.” Louie talked about the false belief—it said there was a secret insider way to get more access to God. Paul wrote to remind the Colossians of their foundation found only in Jesus and His gospel, not in any secret society. **What are some examples of “hollow and deceptive” beliefs in our world?**

### **PEEK AT THE GREEK**

Paul addresses the Colossian heresy directly in verse 8 when he talks about the hollow and deceptive philosophy. The Colossians would have known exactly what he was referring to. He says this philosophy is of human and spiritual origin. The word he used to describe the spiritual forces, stoicheia, or “elements,” refers to a Jewish tradition that says spiritual beings rule over humans. Paul debunks the myth that spiritual forces have any power over Christians. The deception the Colossians were following was contrary to the work of Christ, came from humans and evil spiritual forces that Jesus conquered through the cross (v. 15).

Louie encouraged us to filter everything we hear and read outside of Scripture through Jesus. We should ask: Does this idea have its foundation in Jesus and His Word? **Why is it so important to**



**discern the validity of ideas, books, and speakers through the lens of the Bible and Christ? What do we lose if we remove Jesus and the Bible from any “Christian” message?**

**What are some ways you go about making sure something you hear or read is grounded in the truth of Scripture?** (Reading the Bible, praying, seeking wise counsel, etc.)

When we encounter ideas that are contrary to Jesus and His gospel, we can turn to truth and stand firm instead of going astray. The next two sections of Scripture explain why this is possible. The first section ties to Louie’s third word, fullness.

We’ve already talked about Jesus’s divinity back in chapter 1 of Colossians. **Why is it critical that Jesus is fully God?** (If Jesus isn’t fully God, He doesn’t have the power to save us. He had to be both fully God and fully human in order to redeem us through His sacrifice.)

Through Jesus—fully God and fully man—we find salvation from sin and death. **According to verse 10, what do we receive in Christ?** (We have been filled by Him.)

As Louie discussed, we are fully complete in Jesus— we lack nothing. The salvation He brings to us doesn’t need anything else. In Him, we experience the full and complete salvation of God. **Why do you think we’re sometimes tempted to think or act as though our salvation isn’t enough?**

### **GO DEEPER**

*Learn more about the significance of circumcision in the following verses: Gen. 17:9–14; Rom. 2:25–29*

**What did circumcision mean for the Israelites?** (It was an external sign of that they were part of the covenant people of God.)

**According to the Romans passage, what was the spiritual significance of circumcision?**

**What does it mean to have a heart circumcised by God?** (It means to have a heart that is surrendered, obedient, and glorifying to God.)

When Paul talks about Jesus circumcising our hearts, he’s using a relevant image the Jewish people recognized to explain a spiritual reality. Jesus has removed everything that kept us from being obedient to God. We can now enjoy being His covenant people because He made a way for us to be with Him.

These verses show how God is the one who secured our salvation through His actions alone. We can’t add to it. Paul uses circumcision to explain his point. Circumcision was an external sign of the covenant Israel had with God. But the circumcision Paul talks about in verse 11 is not a physical but a spiritual circumcision. Our flesh, which used to rule us, has been taken off by Jesus. **How would you describe life in the flesh? What was your life like before Jesus?**

## **PEEK AT THE GREEK**

In verse 11, Paul uses the word *acheiropoietos* to describe the spiritual circumcision we experience in Christ. Translated “by human hands” (NIV) or “made without hands” (ESV), this word is best defined by being “unhandmade.” In other words, the salvation we receive in Jesus doesn’t come by human hands. It comes from God. Therefore, it cannot be added to, destroyed, or tampered with. God Himself saves us, removes the old self, and raises us to new life—all by His power alone.

**If our sinful flesh has been completely removed, what does that mean for us now? Does it mean we don’t sin? Why not?** (Jesus has taken away the consequence of sin, given us new life, and given us a new identity in Him. We will still sin this side of eternity, but we now operate out of Jesus’s power and under His rule, not the rule of the flesh, sin, and death.)

When we decide to follow Jesus, our old selves die with Him and we’re raised to new life. Paul is clear that it’s the power of God that both raised Jesus from the dead and brought us to life again. **How would you describe the new life you have in Christ?**

This idea of new life, found in verses 12 and 13, brings us to Louie’s last word: finished work.

Read verses 13–15.

Not only does Jesus bring us new life, but He also brings the forgiveness of sins. Without Jesus, Paul says we were indebted to God because of our sin. We were guilty. **According to verse 14, how did God cancel our debt?** (He did it by nailing it to the cross.) What does that mean for us?

Through Jesus’s death we have been given new life, we are no longer ruled by the flesh, and we’re free from guilt before God. Our salvation is a finished work—Jesus did everything necessary to save us. **What difference does it make to the way you approach your relationship with God knowing that you can’t add to or take away from your salvation?**

**If our salvation is finished work, why do you think we still feel the tension between sin and Christlikeness?** (We still feel the tension because we live in a fallen world. Jesus has not yet returned to restore all things. In the meantime, we faithfully follow Him.)

Verse 15 tells us that in addition to all these things, Jesus has disarmed the spiritual authorities that once ruled. When Paul says Jesus made a “public spectacle of them,” he’s alluding to a Roman practice. When Romans captured an enemy, they’d parade them around, making them look foolish. What’s ironic is Jesus has defeated the spiritual forces behind the authorities holding Paul captive in prison. Paul has a clear view of who has the ultimate victory—the risen and reigning Jesus.

**How could Paul’s perspective shape the way you view your present circumstances? What could be different about us and the way we perceive the situations we’re in if we remembered Jesus’s victory on the cross?**

**What's one thing you could do this week to deepen your foundation in Jesus and His gospel?** (Some examples include: spend time with Him, read about His life, pray, put one of the Live it Out suggestions into practice, discuss the gospel story with a friend, etc.)

## **LAST WORD**

Salvation is an incredible gift. We've received Christ and in Him we can continue to follow Him every day of our lives. He is our firm foundation. When we root ourselves in Him and His gospel message, we are able to discern when people and spiritual authorities try to deceive us.

Jesus has overthrown these powers—He triumphed over them through the cross. We've received the fullness of salvation through His finished work. We are alive in Him. Nothing can undo the work Jesus has done to save us.

We live on the other side of the cross and empty grave. With the reality of our salvation and Christ as our foundation, we can walk forward in obedience. This week, let's ask God to deepen our roots in Him. As we close, let's thank Him for what He's done for us.

## **LIVE IT OUT**

**Pray:** Pray God would deepen your foundation in Him and the gospel this week. Ask Him to refresh the gospel message in you.

**Give Thanks:** Verse 7 of this passage talks about overflowing with gratitude. Write down one thing you're thankful for every day this week and praise God for how He's moved in your life.

**Study:** Deepen your understanding of the gospel by studying the first eight chapters of Romans. Take your time and write out your thoughts as you go.

**Create:** Make something this week that reflects the truth that you've been brought from death to life. Place your creation somewhere you'll see it to remind yourself that you're alive in Christ.

**Memorize:** Memorize Colossians 2:6–7 this week. Write it down and place it somewhere you'll see it throughout your day.

## Session 5: Colossians 2:16–23

### SESSION GOALS

*Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.*

**Main Idea:** Since our sinful selves died with Christ, we’re freed from human rules and we now walk in the way of the Spirit, which is the only true way to shed our old selves and avoid falling back into the patterns of the world.

**Head Change:** To know that the foundation of our faith is not what we do, but who we follow.

**Heart Change:** To feel joy in the freedom from human standards of Christianity.

**Life Change:** To shed human religious rules and return to Jesus, the foundation of our faith, in all we do, say, and think.

### OPEN

**When you were a kid, what was your attitude toward the rules? Were you a rule follower or a rebel or something in between?**

**Has your attitude towards the rules changed at all over the years? If so, how?**

Paul continues to combat the false teaching the Colossians faced in the section of Colossians we’re reading today. He’s going to talk about how human rules are inadequate to save and aren’t necessarily founded in Christ.

### READ

Read Colossians 2:16–23.

### WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Louie’s teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how Louie answers the following questions.

**Is following Jesus only about doing things for Him? Why not?**

**What’s the significance of the illustration about the two kids mowing the lawn?**

**Show Session 5:** Colossians 2:16–23 (12 minutes)

### DISCUSS

The first verse in the section we’re studying today begins with “therefore,” signaling our need to look back at the previous verses. That’s why Louie started off the session by reviewing what we’ve

been talking about in Colossians. **How would you summarize in your own words the main points of Colossians so far?**

The main message of Colossians is Jesus is supreme over all things. He defeated the grave and every spiritual authority when He died on the cross and rose from the dead. He's our firm foundation, the one we should base our lives on.

Read verses 16 and 17.

**What's the significance of the religious rituals for Paul?** (He says they're a shadow of the things to come, namely Christ.)

### **GO DEEPER**

*Learn more about how the religious rituals of Israel were a shadow of things to come in these verses: Heb. 8:1–7; 10:1–4*

**How do the sacrificial system and priesthood fall short of saving people from sin?**

**In what ways are the priesthood and sacrificial system a “shadow” of what was to come in Christ?**

**How does salvation through Jesus complete what the Law couldn't do?**

God's salvific plan always involved Jesus. When He ordered Israel around the Law, He showed them how He goes about saving His people. We can now see how He orchestrated all things to culminate at the death and resurrection of Jesus.

**Why would Paul tell the Colossians to not let anyone judge them on their diet or religious celebrations?** (He's reminding them their religious practices aren't the point of being a Christian—the point is to follow Christ and allow Him to reign supreme over your life.)

**What are some of the external religious practices we tend to advocate for in the Church today? Would you say those practices have a foundation in Christ? Why or why not?**

Read verses 18 and 19.

There was a group of people who tried to disqualify the Christians in Colossae by pushing their ideas of asceticism, or severe spiritual self-discipline, and the worship of angels. **How does Paul describe these people? (He says they are puffed up, unspiritual, and disconnected with the Jesus.)**

Read Colossians 2:8.

**How does this verse connect to the two verses we just read?**

The false teachers mentioned in these verses did not rely on Christ at all—they based everything on their own human insight. Even so, it seems the Colossians believed them enough to cause Paul to write them about it. We can fall into the same trap today. **We've already talked about some of**

**the external religious practices, but what are some other areas the Church has drifted away from Jesus?**

**Why do you think we can sometimes follow teachers like the ones described in verse 19? What about them is appealing? Why are they harmful?**

Verse 19 makes it clear that Jesus supports and holds us together, and God brings us growth. **What are some ways you've experienced the growth God provides through Jesus?**

### **GO DEEPER**

*Learn more about the body of Christ in these verses: Rom. 12:4–8; 1 Cor. 12:12–27; Eph. 4:1–6*

**How has God designed His body? Why does He give everyone different gifts?**

**Who is the source of strength and unity for the body? (Christ)**

**What are some of the gifts God has given you? How do you use those gifts to build up the body of Christ?**

God is the one who gives us spiritual gifts for the good of the body. He's also the source of our growth and unity. God designed the Church to rely on Him entirely—it's by His grace alone that we are able to love each other and carry Christ to the world.

Spiritual growth happens on an individual level and also on a corporate level through the Church. While it's sometimes difficult to see the spiritual growth of the global Church, the local church gives us a small glimpse of how God's working in His Church. **How have you seen God grow your local church in spiritual maturity?**

Read verses 20–23.

**According to these verses, should we still submit to the human-made rules? Why not?**

As Louie mentioned, the Colossians were being held by a false teaching, which said there were extra rules and practices necessary to gain access to Jesus. **Are there any practices we have to adopt in order to be saved by Jesus? How does adding requirements to salvation twist the gospel into something it's not?**

From these verses, it's apparent that the false teachers were telling the people they needed to do certain things to improve themselves. But as Paul pointed out, the rules were selfish, harsh, and lacking of any real value. **What are some "rules" of cultural Christianity that could be categorized in the same way?**

Walking with Jesus looks different for every believer. There are some things we all do—like reading our Bibles, praying, and exercising spiritual disciplines. But even those practices look different for each individual. We don't all have to walk out our faith in the same way. **What are some the unique aspects of your walk with Jesus? Would you say those things would absolutely work for or have the same effect on every believer? Why or why not?**

The last verse says the human rules the Colossians followed were useless in self-discipline. **In what ways, if at all, have you seen a lack of self-discipline in your life? What are helpful ways to exercise self-discipline?**

The core message of this passage goes back to what we've been discussing in this series: the supremacy of Jesus. Louie shared the story of two neighborhood boys who mowed their lawns—one did so out of fear, the other out of love. **How does the principle from this illustration—that we should do things for God out of love for Him—tie into the passage we read today?**

In Christ, our salvation is sealed. We don't have to work to earn His love or approval. We also don't serve human—or any other—authority any longer. We submit to Jesus only, which is why Paul urges the Colossian church to no longer follow the world's empty rules. But, as Louie said, our internal transformation does influence our external actions—we should still pursue holiness. What's different is our attitude.

**How is your attitude different when you do something out of love for Jesus versus doing something out of obligation?**

**How could you live in a way that reflects you've died to the things of this world this week? What worldly standards of spiritual success do you need to let go of?**

Paul's main criticism of the false teachers was they weren't connected with the Head, or Christ. **What could you do this week to remain connected to Jesus?** (Some examples are included in the Live it Out section.)

## **LAST WORD**

Jesus secured our salvation through His death and resurrection. He defeated every spiritual authority and gives us new life when we choose to follow Him. We are no longer bound to the authorities and rules that once imprisoned us—we've died to them with Jesus. But we sometimes find ourselves submitting to the rules of the world, just as Paul cautioned the Colossians against in verse 20. Instead of planting our foundation in the shaky things of this world, we must remain connected to the Head—Jesus Christ. In Him, we find freedom from sin, wisdom for daily life, and strength to pursue holiness. Let's rely on Him this week.

## **LIVE IT OUT**

**Pray:** Pray for God to reveal the ways you've been submitting to the rules of this world rather than to Christ this week. As He shows you, confess sin and pray for Him to teach you to remain connected to Jesus.

**List:** Make a list of all the things you think are necessary for being a "good Christian." Take some time to investigate Scripture to see what's true about your list (Ephesians is a good place to start) and pray God renews your perception of salvation.

**Confess:** Sit down with a trusted Christian friend this week. Reread this section of Colossians and confess how you've been submitting to the rules of the world rather than to Christ. Pray for each other.

**Reflect:** Choose a worship song that talks about the gospel story. Listen to it this week to remind yourself to remain connected to Christ.

**Connect:** Set aside time this week to connect with Jesus. Fill your time with Him with prayer, Scripture reading, and reflection.



## Session 6: Colossians 3:1–17

### SESSION GOALS

*Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.*

**Main Idea:** Since we're alive in Christ, we can take off the old self and put on the new self, which affects our mindset, our actions toward each other, and how we engage in corporate worship.

**Head Change:** To know what it means to put on the new self so that we can identify the things that are of Christ and that are of the world in our lives.

**Heart Change:** To feel certain of the new life God gives us to replace our life of sin.

**Life Change:** To daily put on the new self by putting sin to death through confession and repentance and embracing the actions and characteristics of Christ both corporately and individually.

### OPEN

**Describe a time when you showed up somewhere— like an event, a trip, or a celebration—wearing the wrong clothing.** (Some examples include: dressing casually for an important business meeting by accident, wearing a t-shirt and shorts to a get together that was actually a formal party, forgetting to wear a costume to a costume party, etc.)

**How does it feel to be over or under dressed for something? What do your clothes potentially communicate about yourself to others?**

Throughout this series, we've been talking about what Jesus's supremacy over all things means for us and our lives. As we've discussed, this truth has a profound impact on our salvation and our day to day. This session dives into some specific ways we apply the supremacy of Christ in our lives—by taking off the old self and putting on the new. Like changing into a new outfit, we put on a whole new identity when we follow Jesus.

### READ

Read Colossians 3:1–17.

### WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Louie's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how Louie answers the following questions.

**What three words summarize this section of Colossians?**

**What does it mean to take off the old self and put on the new self?**

**How can we do all things in the name of Jesus? How does that truth apply to all areas of life?**

**Show Session 6:** Colossians 3:1–17 (11 minutes)**DISCUSS**

Louie used three words to outline this section of Colossians: glory, garment, and glory. Read the first section, which is in verses 1–4. **How does the first part of verse 1 connect with the other things we’ve studied in Colossians?** (Back in chapter 2, we talked about how God made us alive with Christ. We have new life in Jesus through faith in Him. See Colossians 2:9–15 for a quick review.)

**What do you think it means to set your mind on things that are above? What does it mean to think about earthly things?**

**GO DEEPER**

*Learn more about the right hand of God in these passages: Luke 22:66–71; Acts 2:32–33; Acts 7:54–56; Rom. 8:34–39; Heb. 12:1–2*

**What do these verses reveal about the character and nature of Jesus?**

**Would you say the right hand of God is an indication of Jesus’s authority? If so, why?**

Jesus is at the right hand of God, which means He intercedes for us, has authority, and offers us hope as we persist in following Him. He is God. He hears our prayers. He acts on our behalf. He loves us. And He will one day return.

**What difference does it make in your life knowing that Jesus intercedes for you, offers you hope, and stands in authority at the right hand of God?**

**What things do you do to keep your heart and mind focused on God?**

Paul tells the Colossians to set their minds above because their life is now found in Christ. He is our hope. One day, when He returns we will also be with Him in His glory—Louie’s first point. **How could focusing on the future glory of Christ help you keep your mind on Him today?**

**PEEK AT THE GREEK**

Paul says in verse three that we’ve died, but our life is now “hidden with Christ in God” (NIV, ESV). Paul uses the word *krupto*—the word we translate as “hidden”—to describe this life we have in Christ. Paul wants the believers to know that though they’ve died with Christ, their new source of life is now found in Christ. Rather than it being a visible life source, the life Christ gives us is hidden and it goes beyond what the world could ever give us. With Jesus supplying our life, He strengthens us to pursue the new self.

**What does it mean to you that you will appear with Christ when He returns? How does that truth offer hope?**

We have an incredible hope in Christ. He will return and when He does, we’ll see Him and be with Him in glory. The future hope we have changes the way we live today.

Read verses 5–14.

Louie summarized these verses with the word “garment.” Now that we’re in Christ, we take off the old self and put on the new self. **How would you describe your old self, or who you were before Jesus?**

**What does it look like to put to death the old self and its habits? How have you done this in your own life?**

### **GO DEEPER**

*Learn more about what it means to put sin to death in these verses: Gal. 5:16–26; Rom. 8:12–17*

**What does it mean to put sin to death? What does it mean to live by the Spirit?**

**What are we to do instead of sinning? How does the Spirit empower us to do that?**

**What’s one way you could put sin to death in your life?**

A great exchange occurs when we decide to follow Jesus. We move from death to life, from the old self to the new self. Now with the Spirit of God in us, He empowers us to walk in His ways by embracing our new identity as the children of God.

**How would you define the new self? What’s been different in you since following Jesus? How have your actions also changed?**

All of these sins listed in these passages have relational consequences, and all the things Paul encourages the Colossians to “put on” are also relational. **How has following Jesus changed the way you interact with other people, specifically other Christians?**

In verse 10, Paul talks about how our new selves are being “renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator.” How have you experienced the renewing of your mind as a Christian? In what ways are you more like Jesus than when you first believed?

Verse 11 reminds us of the unity we have in Jesus. No religious, cultural, racial, or social divisions divide Christians any longer because Jesus demolished them when He died and rose again. His blood has redeemed all of us—none of us is above the other. **How have you experienced the unity of the body of Christ? In what ways do you think Christians could improve in this area?**

### **PEEK AT THE GREEK**

In verse 11, Paul gives a few examples of opposites (Gentiles and Jews, circumcised or uncircumcised, etc.) to show that Jesus unifies all believers. The only time he doesn’t use opposites is with barbarians (barbaros) and Scythians (skuthes). Barbarians were considered to be those who were uncultured and uncivilized. Scythians were considered barbarians as well, but to a whole other extreme—the GrecoRoman world considered Scythians to be the ultimate example of paganism and being uncivilized. Paul uses these two as examples to show that not only do race, religious backgrounds, or social class no longer bar us from other Christians, but also cultural backgrounds don’t separate us either—even if the cultural background is barbaric and pagan.

Verse 13 says to forgive others as God has forgiven us. **What does it look like to forgive someone? How have you seen forgiveness at work in your life?**

In verse 14, Paul encourages the Colossians to clothe themselves with love above all else. **Why do you think Paul tells the Colossians to put on love over all the other virtues he mentions?**

The love of Jesus enables us to take off the old self and put on the new self. As we saw in verses 11 and 14, His love unites all believers. Everything we do should flow from Jesus's love for us to the people in our lives, which includes putting sin to death, caring for the other Christians in our lives, and, as we'll see in the next verses, bringing glory to God.

Louie summarized verses 15–17 with the word glory.

Read verses 15–17.

**How does putting on the new self and living in Christian community bring glory to God?**

Paul encouraged the Colossian church to let the gospel—the message of Christ—dwell among them. He told them to do so through teaching through psalms, hymns, and songs. **How do songs and psalms help you remember and reflect on the gospel?**

**What are some of your favorite psalms, hymns, or spiritual songs? Why are they your favorites? What do they teach about God and His gospel?**

There's a theme of gratitude in these verses—we see thankfulness in all three of these verses. **As you think back over your story, what are some things you're thankful to God for?**

Louie talked about how important it is that we do all things in the name of Jesus. He said following God is less about our job or position in life and more about who we work for. **What about Louie's perspective could give deeper meaning to your day-to-day life?**

**What do you think it would look like for you to do everything in Jesus's name this week?**

**What's one practical way you could take off the old self and put on the new self this week?**

## **LAST WORD**

As we saw in this passage, taking off the old self and putting on the new isn't something we're meant to do alone. It can seem like an overwhelming—maybe even impossible—task on our own. But we know that not only do we have the power of Christ in us through the Spirit, but we also have a community of believers to encourage us forward.

This week, look back through these verses and ask God to show you one thing He wants you to put to death and one thing He wants you to put on. Consider sharing what He teaches you to a trusted Christian friend, so he or she can hold you accountable. We look more like Jesus when we're unified together through His love, peace, and compassion.

Let's not neglect to remind each other of the gospel message, as Paul tells the Colossians to do at the end of this passage. As we come to a close, let's thank God and pray He would solidify the truths from these verses in us this week.

**Leader:** *Consider ending your small group with a short time of corporate singing as a way to practically live out Paul's instructions in verse 16. If you have someone in your group who's gifted in leading worship, ask him or her beforehand to prepare a couple songs to sing. If not, play music over a speaker, TV, or smartphone.*

## **LIVE IT OUT**

**Pray:** Pray through the characteristics of the old and new self this week. Ask God to show you what you need to put to death and what you need to put on and ask Him for the strength to obey.

**Memorize:** Commit Colossians 3:1–3 to memory this week. Use these verses to remind yourself to keep your mind on Christ and not on the things of this world.

**Reflect:** Every time you get dressed or change clothes this week, reflect on what it means to take off the old self and put on the new self. Pray God would continue to remind you that you have been made new in Christ.

**Worship:** The next time you're in corporate worship or listen to a worship song, pause to consider the words you're singing. Let the truths of the song settle in as you praise God for who He is and what He's done.

**Thank:** Make a list of things you're grateful to God for. Consider going back through your story of coming to know Jesus and making note of the things God's done for you. Take a few minutes to thank Him for how He's brought you from death to life.

## Session 7: Colossians 3:18–4:1

### SESSION GOALS

*Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.*

**Main Idea:** Just as Jesus enables us to be reconciled to the Father, He also empowers us to have Godhonoring relationships with those closest to us.

**Head Change:** To know that the supremacy of Christ not only changes us on the inside, but it also impacts the way we treat the people in our lives.

**Heart Change:** To feel increased affection toward other believers through the power of the Spirit.

**Life Change:** To act out the love of Christ in all our relationships so that Jesus is glorified in us and through us.

### OPEN

**What’s been the most influential relationship in your life? What’s unique about that relationship? How has that person impacted you?**

We started talking in the last session about how Jesus changes our relationships with others. In this session, we’re going to look at three specific examples of how that plays out in our lives: marriage, parenting, and work. Even if you’re not married, don’t have kids, or don’t have a boss, there are timeless principles we can apply to our lives today in the relationships that matter most to us.

### READ

Read Colossians 3:18–4:1.

### WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Louie’s teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how Louie answers the following questions.

**What was the cultural context of the Colossian church?**

**Is God more interested in changing us or our circumstances? Why?**

**How can we specifically honor God in our marriages, families, and workplace?**

Show Session 7: Colossians 3:18–4:1 (15 minutes)

## **DISCUSS**

Before we dive into this session, let's review the cultural context of the Colossian church. **How did Louie describe the situation in Colossae, specifically about women and slaves?**

Women had significantly fewer rights than today and slaves were part of the norm in the Roman Empire. Louie talked about how the Bible isn't condoning these practices. Instead, it's speaking into the cultural moment to teach how to apply biblical principles in everyday life. **Do Louie's points impact the way you view the passage we're looking at today? If so, how? What biblical principles, specifically from the previous session, could relate to this session?** (The last session talked about putting on the new self. This passage shows how putting on the new self and all that comes with it—love, peace, unity, worship, and gratitude—works itself out in specific relationships.)

Louie said God wants to speak into our situations to cause internal transformation. He said, "it doesn't necessarily require the circumstances changing for God to revolutionize you right in the middle of the circumstances." **Do you expect God to change your circumstances? How do you typically respond when He doesn't?**

**How have you experienced God changing you internally through a difficult situation?**

It's true that God doesn't always change our external circumstances. This passage might be especially difficult for us to swallow because of a broken marriage, a prodigal child, or a cruel boss. Or maybe the sting comes from not being in that particular season of life—being single, childless, or jobless. But we can take hope in the fact that God is working in us to make us into the image of Jesus. There's something in this passage for everyone. With all that in mind, let's dive into the text.

Read verse 17.

**What does this verse say about how we should act? Should our circumstances change the fact that we do everything for Jesus? Why or why not?**

**Why do you think it's so difficult to shift from self-focus to gazing on Christ?**

Paul wants the Colossians to embrace Jesus and His people through selfless love. He continues this idea—that we should serve Jesus and His people—by giving three specific examples of how Christians can apply this principles to their lives: marriage, family, and slaves and masters.

Read verses 18–19.

**PEEK AT THE GREEK**

The word Paul uses that's translated "submit" is the Greek word *hupotasso*, which means to willingly subject or subordinate. It's not referring to the authority, power, or worth of a person. This word is used in Luke 2:51 to describe Jesus's attitude toward Mary and Joseph—He willingly submitted to them. To submit isn't to subjugate yourself to abuse or cruelty or even to obey necessarily. Rather, to submit is to willingly put another person's interests above your own. Paul's appeal to wives isn't about hierarchy, but about living out the principle stated in verse 17 to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, which includes serving and loving their husbands.

**For those who are married, what's difficult about putting your spouse's interests above your own?**

**What does it look like when it's done well? How do you feel when your spouse loves and serves you well?**

**Regardless of your marital status, what are some examples of marriages you're familiar with that personify the selfless service Paul talks about in this passage?**

Paul shifts to the second example: parents and children.

Read verses 20–21.

**What was it like to obey your parents as a kid? What does that look like to honor them today?**

**For those who are parents, how do you feel when your children obey you? What about when they don't?**

**What do you think it means to not embitter or provoke your children? What are some ways you can encourage them?**

**Even if you don't have kids, what are some ways you can model the selfless love of Jesus to those who are younger than you?**

Paul concludes his argument by talking to slaves and masters. Slavery in those days wasn't based on race. Rather, people could sell themselves into slavery to pay off debt. They were seen both as people and as property. They could work for and earn their freedom in some cases. Paul doesn't urge slaves to leave their masters, instead he tells them to honor Christ in the midst of their situation.

Read Colossians 3:22–4:1.

**What do you think would be difficult about these instructions for slaves? What about for masters?**

**How does Paul encourage the slaves to act? How do you think having a holy mindset would change the way they worked?**



## **GO DEEPER**

*Learn more about the inheritance of the people of God in these verses: Eph. 1:11–14; Heb. 9:13–15; 1 Pet. 1:3–5*

**Who is the guarantee of our inheritance? (The Holy Spirit)**

**Is this inheritance something we’ve obtained for ourselves? Who obtained it for us and how did He do it?**

**How do you think this promise of an inheritance would have resonated with slaves who had no earthly inheritance?**

**How does the promise of our inheritance provide us hope for what is to come?**

If you believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit lives in you as a seal of your inheritance. There’s so much hope for us beyond today. Everything on this earth will pass away but what we have waiting for us in eternity will last forever. With the Spirit in us and Christ before us, we can endure any trials on this earth.

We aren’t in the same situation as these slaves and masters. But all of us know what it feels like to be in a situation that’s less than ideal. We’ve all been in chaotic circumstances, difficult relationships, or tough jobs. Verse 23 takes us back to verse 17—in all things, no matter the situation, we work for God and His glory. **What specific life situations do you find yourself in today?** (Some examples include: singleness, marriage, divorce, job, unemployed, family turmoil, prodigal child, loss of a family member, etc.) **Are they similar or different from what Paul describes in these verses? How so?**

**What’s difficult about the life circumstances you’re in? What are some of the blessings to this time of life?**

**Would you say it’s easier to focus on yourself in these situations, or on others and Christ? Why do you say that?**

**What would it look like to focus on working for Jesus in all areas of your life? What could you do this week to honor God in your relationships and circumstances?**

## **LAST WORD**

We all know that following Jesus doesn’t guarantee us an easy life. Jesus promises the opposite in John 16:33—in this world, we will endure hardship. But we can put our hope in Jesus, who overcame the world through His death and resurrection. In all that we do and in every relationship we can look to Jesus and rely on the strength of the Holy Spirit.

Louie encouraged us to find purpose in our work, in our families, and in the mundane moments of life through Jesus. We work for Him—for His glory, honor, and fame. All that we do can exalt Him. This week, let’s live with this truth at the forefront of our minds.

## **LIVE IT OUT**

**Pray:** Pray about your specific situation in life this week—your relationships, job, school, neighborhood, family. Ask God to teach you how to honor Him in all that you do.

**Serve:** Pick one person to serve this week. Choose two to three intentional actions you could do to lovingly put that person above yourself.

**Work:** Whether you're employed or not, take a moment at the beginning of each day to remind yourself that you're working for God. Come up with a way to creatively remind yourself of that truth throughout the day—phone reminders, a sticky note, or a verse as your computer wallpaper.

**Thank:** Thank your parents, or someone who has acted like a parent to you, this week.

**Memorize:** Memorize Colossians 3:23–24 this week. Use it to remind yourself that you work for the Lord throughout the day.

## Session 8: Colossians 4:2–18

### SESSION GOALS

*Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.*

**Main Idea:** Those with a complete view of Jesus as their foundation live lives of prayer and faithfulness, which results in holy actions toward both the family of God and unbelievers.

**Head Change:** To know what it means to be faithful to God in all circumstances and on a daily basis so that we can apply it to our lives today.

**Heart Change:** To feel devotion to God regardless of external situations.

**Life Change:** To practice faithfulness through prayer, witness, and practical obedience every day.

### OPEN

**Describe someone in your life who is faithful—maybe to their work, spouse, or convictions. What do they do that shows they are faithful?**

As we close this series, we're going to see some real-life examples of faithfulness to Jesus—our supreme Lord and Savior. All believers are called to daily faithfulness to God and this session will show us what that looks like.

### READ

Read Colossians 4:2–18.

### WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Louie's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how Louie answers the following questions.

**What's unique about Paul's request for prayer?**

**What can we learn from Tychicus and Mark?**

**Show Session 8:** Colossians 4:2–18 (18 minutes)

### DISCUSS

As we move into the last chapter of Colossians, it's important to remember the central points of the book. **How would you summarize the book of Colossians and its main points?** (Some main points include: Jesus's supremacy over all things, the truth of the gospel and its importance, putting on the new self in Christ, etc.)

We've discussed the supremacy of Christ throughout this study and how that truth applies to every aspect of our lives. Louie encouraged us to pay attention to how Paul closes his letter because we can see tangible examples of what it looks like to keep Christ supreme in your life.

Read verses 2–6.

**What does it mean to be devoted to prayer? Who do you know who practices devotion to prayer?**

**What does it look like to be both watchful and thankful in prayer?** (We should be watchful for God's answers to our prayers and thankful that he both hears and answers our prayers.)

Louie pointed out how Paul doesn't ask for the church to pray for his escape. Instead, he asks for prayer to be a faithful witness of the gospel. Louie also shared Randall's story—he asked for prayer for his doctors, nurses, and family rather than healing. **When you're in a difficult situation, what do you pray for? How do Paul and Randall's perspectives challenge you?**

**How would your prayer life change if you focused your prayers on being a faithful witness rather on changing your circumstances? What would be the same?**

Paul tells the Colossians to be wise and gracious in interactions with those who aren't believers. He says to make the most of every opportunity. **How would you describe your interactions with nonbelievers generally? What could it look like in your life to make the most of every opportunity you have with nonbelievers?**

Paul gives us a clear picture of what it means to be faithful to God—it involves prayer and witness. **If you consider your walk with Christ, how would you say you're doing in these areas? What might be holding you back from walking in faithfulness?**

Paul shifts his letter in verse 7 from practical instruction to greetings. The Colossians would have known these people and their backgrounds—some of them were even from Colossae—but we'll have to do a little digging to find out more about them. What we do know is the people Paul mentions each embody different aspects of faithfulness to Christ.

Read verses 7–9.

Louie talked about Tychicus—how God used his small faithful action of delivering the letter of Colossians for a greater purpose. **What is one modern day example you can think of someone who shows small, daily faithfulness to God?**

**Why do you think our culture tends to glorify the “big” actions and belittle—or ignore—the “small”? What does God value?** (God values continued faithfulness to Him, no matter what that looks like on a daily basis.)

**What could faithfulness look like in your life—in your work, home, school, neighborhood, or church?**

Seemingly small acts of faithfulness to God change us and impact the people around us, often in ways we'll never fully see or understand. As those under the supremacy of Jesus, we focus our gaze on our future hope, not on present circumstances.

**GO DEEPER**

*Learn more about Onesimus in the following passage: Phlm. 8–20*

**According to verse 16, what was Onesimus? (He was Philemon's slave, or bondservant.)**

**Looking at verse 15, what did Onesimus do? (He ran away.)**

**What does Paul tell Philemon to do about Onesimus? (He says to receive him because he is a brother in Christ.)**

**What do Philemon and Onesimus show us about reconciliation for the people of God?**

Onesimus wronged Philemon. But now as a brother in Christ, Paul urges Philemon to receive Onesimus into the community of believers. In Christ, we can seek reconciliation with other Christians. Our love for each other is a witness to the world of the One who loves us.

Verse 9 mentions Onesimus. We learn in Philemon that Onesimus was a slave who ran away from his master, Philemon. Now a believer, Paul urges the Colossians to welcome him into the church. This theme of reconciliation continues in the next few verses.

Read verses 10–11.

Louie gave some background on Mark. Mark abandoned Paul and Barnabas on a missionary journey. Barnabas decided to give Mark a second chance, but Paul went his own way without them. You can read the full story in Acts 15:36–41. In this passage in Colossians, Paul tells the Colossians to welcome Mark, showing there's been a change in both Mark and in Paul. Louie pointed out how God redeemed and used Mark regardless of his past.

**What sorts of things can keep us from welcoming people into the church?**

**How does the supremacy of Christ relate to this idea of reconciliation?**

Jesus has reconciled us to the Father through His death and resurrection. He now reigns supreme over all and empowers us by the Spirit to be unified as the body of Christ. We saw this theme in chapter three—we put on the new self not just for our own sake, but also for the sake of the Church, out of love and reverence for Christ.

**What does it look like to be welcoming to other believers? When has someone welcomed you? How did it make you feel?**

In addition to prayer and witness, faithfulness to God also plays out in how we treat each other. We can seek reconciliation and welcome brothers and sisters into our lives. Verse 11 talks about the Jewish Christians in general and the way they comforted Paul in prison. **When has another Christian comforted you? How can you be a source of comfort to other Christians?**

The way we treat each other matters. Our actions not only communicate God's love for each other, but also for those who don't yet know Him.

Read verses 12–18.

We learned back in Colossians 1:7–8 that Epaphras was the one who told the Colossians about Jesus. He continues to pray for them—for their endurance and maturity. **If you’ve led someone to Christ, what kinds of things do you pray for them now? What do you pray for other believers, in general?** It’s clear that we should pray for each other—for our faith, endurance, and maturity. **What’s one thing you’d like prayer for?**

**Leader:** *Consider pausing here and taking a few minutes to pray for the requests brought up by your group.*

The closing of Colossians reminds us that this letter was written not just for the church in Colossae, but also for other churches in the surrounding areas. Paul concludes by reminding the Colossians of his situation in prison.

**Looking back on the book of Colossians, what’s one thing you want to remember from this study? How could you apply it to your life this week?**

## **LAST WORD**

The question we walk away from Colossians asking is: How will we respond to the supremacy of Jesus Christ? His supremacy and sufficiency demands a response. We must allow Him to reign over all areas of our lives—from our work, to our family, to our friendships.

We begin by reminding ourselves of the full gospel. Jesus has conquered sin and death, set us free, and rules over all things. By faith in Him and in the power of the Spirit, we put on the new self, unify with other Christians, and love each other. It all boils down to the word we discussed in this session: faithfulness. We can pursue faithfulness every day, in both the small things and in the big.

As we close this series, ask yourself how you will respond to Jesus’s supremacy. Will you give Him authority over all things in your life? Will you faithfully follow Him wherever He leads? Let’s close by praying God would empower us by His Spirit to live as faithful witnesses to Him.

## **LIVE IT OUT**

**Pray:** Pray that God would build you up in faithfulness this week. Ask Him for opportunities to obey Him by praying for other Christians, being a witness to nonbelievers, and comforting others.

**Read:** We see in Colossians 4:16 that this letter was read aloud to the believers in Colossae. Carve out time to read the entire book of Colossians out loud to yourself or listen to the audio version. Write down what you learn through that process.

**Welcome:** Welcome another Christian into your home this week. Consider how you could use the time you spend together to serve them.

**Witness:** Tell someone about what you learned in this study of Colossians. Encourage another believers in the truths from this book or tell a nonbeliever about Jesus.

**Thank:** Thank a Christian who has been influential in your walk with Jesus this week. Ask how you can be praying for them and take a moment to pray for them.