

ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH

TEACHING GUIDE

Colossians: Christ Is All We Need

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Adult Bible Study in Simplified English Teaching Guide

Colossians: Christ Is All We Need

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These lessons use the New Life Version (NLV) of the Bible. You can read it online at www.biblegateway.com and at www.studylight.org. BibleGateway has a free app available for iPad, iPhone, Android phones, and Kindle Fire. If you prefer a hard copy of the NLV, go to barbourbooks.com (search for "New Life").

Colossians: Christ Is All We Need

Introduction for Teachers

Welcome!

The purpose of this Teaching Guide is to provide teachers with a plan for teaching a quality Bible lesson while helping participants improve their English language skills. Use of this material is suggested for International Sunday School classes or any Bible study group taught at a Basic English level.

The Teaching Guide begins with listings of the Lesson Focus, Focal/Background Text, and Memory Verse, all of which provide the premise for the lesson. This information is followed by a teaching plan under headings of Prior Preparation, Connect with Life, Guide the Study, and Encourage Application. At the end of each lesson, Extra Teaching Ideas are provided under those same headings. As the teacher, you may pick and choose from these helps to use along with the student's Study Guide to fit the lesson to your class members' abilities and needs.

Pray and prepare

Prayer is key to every teacher's preparation, as well as an integral part of every teaching experience. We include a time of prayer in every lesson plan, but you can rearrange the plan to place the prayer time at a segment that is most conducive to your class experience. Use your own judgment as to where it best fits into your teaching session.

Online Resources and Study Helps

At **Bible Stories for Use with ESL Students**, you will find free materials, including picture sequence pages for both Old and New Testaments. Go to: <http://pages.suddenlink.net/eslbiblestories/index.htm>. The picture pages cover all important Bible passages and are copyright-free, so you can make handouts and posters for your students.

EasyEnglish is a form of simple English developed by Wycliffe Associates (UK). Their website: www.easyenglish.info contains Bible commentaries, Bible translations, Bible studies, and other materials written in simple English. They are free for download and use.

At **BaptistWay Press**, you will find additional adult Bible study helps. Go to BaptistWayPress.org and click Teacher Helps > Teaching Resource Items. While these are not specifically coordinated to the Simplified English Teaching Guide, they do coordinate with the theme/Bible passage for each unit.

The **Baptist Standard** online edition provides additional commentary on current lessons at www.baptiststandard.com > Resources > Bible Study (or www.baptiststandard.com/resources/bible-study).

Which Bible translation is used with these lessons?

The Bible text printed in this curriculum uses the New Life Version (NLV), a translation (not a paraphrase) which uses only an 850-word vocabulary.

The NLV is accessed free online at: www.biblegateway.com and www.studylight.org, so it is easily available to your students via their tablet or phone in class.

Bible Gateway also has a free app available for iPad, iPhone, Android phones, and Kindle Fire.

To order a hard copy of the NLV, go to barbourbooks.com (search for "New Life").

Why use the New Life Version (NLV)?

The NLV Bible often uses simplified phrases to express terms generally familiar to anyone raised in a Christian environment. In the Teaching Guide, these terms will usually be expressed using the NLV terminology, followed by the more common term in parentheses; for example, "proud religious lawkeeper (Pharisee)" or "early preacher (prophet)." The teacher has the option of using the NLV term for new Christians or beginning students or the common term where it will be better understood and less cumbersome in teaching. Once a word or phrase has been introduced in the Word List or teaching procedures, the familiar expression may be used to help students add it to their vocabulary.

This unique translation is gender-correct (same as the King James Version). All pronouns referring to God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are capitalized. Short sentences are used with the subject usually preceding the predicate. No contractions are used. Many paragraphs are preceded with captions which summarize the content. There are no footnotes. Most Old Testament quotations in the New Testament are followed by the reference. Most words are limited to one meaning, an important feature for new readers and people learning English as a second language.

Colossians: Christ Is All We Need

Suggestions for Teaching

General Suggestions

1. Provide language edition Bibles so students can read the focal passage in their native languages.
2. Beginning students may require three sessions to complete one lesson.
3. Review the Word List before beginning the study. Provide Study Guide pages for class to keep vocabulary studies in their notebooks.
4. Prepare 9-12 core sentences which tell the most important part of the Bible focal text. Illustrate each sentence with stick figures and symbols in *picture sequence* form (see details below).
5. Prepare lesson outlines or written materials before class—make your own cling sheets by cutting apart white plastic garbage bags and writing on them with markers. The plastic bags will cling to the wall.

Bible Comments/Focal Text

1. Help students hear English and practice their pronunciation by modeling phrases and sentence. Allow the entire class to repeat. Be consistent with stress and intonation. Speak naturally.
2. Allow individual students to read a sentence or paragraph at a time. For further practice, ask students to tell sections from Bible comments in their own words.
3. When time allows, pairs may read the lesson again to each other.
4. Class may close books and listen as a native speaker reads the section again.
5. Discuss lesson using “Things to Think About.”

Memory Verse

1. Challenge class members to say the Memory Verse several times each day.
2. Provide blank paper for students to write Memory Verses.
3. Write phrases or individual words on separate pieces of paper. Give to students to place in order.
4. Write entire verse on board. Read in unison. Erase key words a few at a time. Recite until entire verse is erased and class can repeat by memory.
5. Make a symbol for each word or phrase of the verse.
6. Use the symbols as a reminder for saying the verse.

Picture Sequencing (Lipson Method)

This method is especially suited for teaching beginners. It consists of a series of pictures with accompanying sentences that tell a story. It may be used solely for oral production (using pictures alone) or for integrated skills (engaging students in reading and writing the story).

You may use real pictures, videotape, pictures that are professionally drawn, or stick figures.

Other benefits include the following:

1. Relaxed, low-anxiety atmosphere as students focus on the pictures and create their own sentences to tell the story

Focus on fluency, not just accuracy

Focus on a message or task rather than form or grammar

Minimal error-correction as students tell the story

2. Pictures (even stick figures) convey meaning in every language.
3. The same set of pictures can be used with more than one level of students by making the sentences easier or more difficult.
4. The use of pictures helps students learn the language in “chunks” rather than words in isolation.
5. The only item needed is a piece of chalk—or a marker, if using a cling sheet or overhead transparency.

Picture Sequence pages for both Old/New Testaments are available free at Bible Studies for Use with ESL Students: <http://pages.suddenlink.net/eslbiblestories/index.htm>. The picture pages cover all important Bible passages and are copyright-free, so you can make handouts and posters for your students.

Preparation

1. Put a story into sentences that are suitable for the level of your students. Try to tell the story with a maximum of ten sentences. For low beginners, choose the simplest and fewest words possible. Keep sentences in their most basic form, so students can combine sentences later.
2. Draw simple pictures or stick figures to illustrate key points in the story. These serve as prompts for the telling of the story. Other drawing tips:

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English Teaching Guide

An “x” in a small square beside a picture enables you to cue for a negative as you tell the story.

Direct quotations may be indicated with a cartoon-type bubble.

Procedure

1. Introduce the story by following your prepared script of sentences (for consistency) and pointing to the pictures as you speak. This will give students the main idea and help them think in chunks of language (as in real-life language use).
2. Introduce the new words as you again reference the pictures. Use props and/or dramatization as needed to establish understanding. Work on individual sounds and word stress as students repeat new words.
3. Lead students in repetition of the story, one sentence at a time, working on sentence stress and intonation.
4. Lead the class in one more repetition of the story (going straight through and continuing to refer to the pictures throughout the story).
5. Ask the class to tell you the story as you cue the story sequence by pointing to the pictures. (You become “stage prompter” at this point.)
6. Then ask for a single volunteer to tell the story. (This may open the door for several more proficient students to use what they know.)
7. Divide the class into small groups of 3-5 students to give each person practice in telling the story. (Inevitably, the most eager student will go first, followed by another “semi”-eager student. By the time it is the least proficient student’s turn, he/she will have learned a lot by listening, will have observed a good model at least a couple of times, and will have bolstered courage for risk-taking.)
8. Follow with questions to review story (begin by naming the setting, the characters, etc.—easy questions).
9. Conclude with life application questions that require some thought and give students opportunity to express opinion, emotion, and their own ideas.

Lesson Expansion

If the setting and circumstances permit, use these ideas:

- Sequencing pictures (a set for each pair of students) while listening to you or to a taped voice tell the story
- Picture sequencing without hearing the story told
- Matching pictures and sentences

—Scrambled sentences to arrange in order (writing numbers or letters in front of sentences to show sequence; cutting up sentences and moving around to position correct order)

—Strip story (cutting up sentences, issuing one strip per student, asking students to arrange themselves in order, having them retell the story by contributing the portion on their paper strip)

—Cloze (supplying a written copy with every nth word blank; students work in pairs to fill in the missing words)

—Dictation (teacher or student telling the story while students write what they hear)

—Provide a copy of the sentences for each student. Ask that they read the story to a partner.

—Ask students to write the story in their own words.

Bible passage as content for reading

Procedure

1. Tell the parable or story using pictures. Use animation and simple sentences.
2. Ask questions about the main idea of the story.
3. Read story aloud while students follow along and underline unknown words. Go over the meaning of these words with the whole class.
4. Intermediate or advanced students: Have students read silently a second time to look for answers to two or three questions about details that you have written on the board. Ask students to discuss their answers with a partner. Then go over answers with the whole class.
5. Beginning or low-intermediate students: Read story again and ask students to repeat it with you line by line.
6. Invite the class to read the story with you in unison.
7. Ask pairs to read the story to each other.
8. Ask for volunteers to tell the story in their own words.
9. Make drawings large enough for the back row to see.
10. Select a list of new words in the story—unfamiliar words that the students would not likely be able to figure out from context (generally 8-10 new words per lesson).
11. List the new words in categories: verbs, nouns, adjectives, adverbs. When listing verbs, you may write both simple present and past tense forms (e.g., eat/ate, walk/walked). Basic beginners would do well to tell the story in present tense, but high beginners could work in present tense, then retell the story in past tense.

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English Teaching Guide

Checklist for Successful Classrooms*Right Kind of Input*

1. New language in every lesson
2. Input that is slightly above the students' current level of proficiency
3. Content relevant to the students' real-life needs and interests
4. Language learned in meaningful chunks, not words in isolation
5. Comprehensibility achieved by use of the following:
 - Realia or authentic materials
 - Simplified language (rephrasing, repeating, clear enunciation)
 - Demonstration and multiple examples rather than explanation
 - Lots of gestures and nonverbal language

Low Anxiety Environment

Students should not be afraid to make mistakes or take risks in language learning. The following factors contribute to a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere and build a sense of community:

- Personally greeting and bidding farewell to students
- Sincere and frequent affirmation
- Minimal error correction from the teacher
- Frequent reference to the culture(s) of the students
- Smiles and laughter that are commonplace
- Connecting with students through eye contact and positioning yourself on students' eye level
- Calling students by name

Checklist for Real-Life Interaction

1. Pace activities with a balance of noisy/quiet and still/active
2. Attention to different learning styles (visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic)
3. Variety in grouping (predominately pairs and small groups of three or five; using whole class in initial presentation and again for feedback and wrap-up at the end)
4. A focus on a task or message rather than form (grammar)
5. Provision for all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing)
6. Avoidance of questions for which answers are known
7. Use of information gap activity in which partners have different pieces of information and must ask

each other questions in order to fill in their gaps of understanding

8. Other useful activities: surveys, interviews, role-play, problem-solving, and interactive games

9. Review previous material.

Some suggestions based on material developed for the *EFL Training Manual—Beyond our Borders*.

Meet This Unit's Writers

Janet Roberts wrote lessons 1-2. She has taught ESL since 1976, trains teachers in Plano, Texas, and teaches English in other countries.

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Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Colossians:
Christ Is All We Need

Lesson 1: Great News!

Lesson Focus

The Great News came to the Colossians in the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Their faith, love, and hope in Christ caused Paul to give thanks for them.

Focal Text

Colossians 1:1-8

Memory Verse

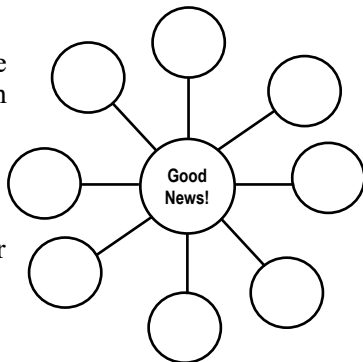
"We give thanks to God for you because we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus." (Colossians 1:4a)

Prior Preparation

- ♦ Pray before preparing and before class. Ask God to guide you in knowing the best way to present the truths of the gospel near the end of the lesson.
- ♦ For Encourage Application #8-9, make copies of The Romans Road bookmark (on the next page) on heavier paper like cardstock. Prepare one for each student. (If your class members are already believers and you can help them learn more about how to share their faith, prepare extra copies for them to take so that they can use the bookmarks to explain the Great News of Jesus to someone else.)
- ♦ Pronunciation tip: Paul's letter of Colossians was written to the church in Colossae (pronounced *ko-LOSS-ay*).

Connect with Life

1. Make a word web on the board with the exclamation "Good News!" in the middle with a circle around it and lines drawn out from it. Ask the class to brainstorm by asking for short sentences that tell something that is *good news*. Write those exclamations of good news



at the end of each line and circle them. If needed, prompt the class with some of the exclamations used in the introduction to the lesson. Explain that today's lesson will focus not only on good news, but *great news*!

For English learners: There is no need to use the word "exclamation" for a less advanced group of English speakers. Give them an example instead; demonstration is better than explanation. When the word web is complete, have them repeat each exclamation aloud with the correct inflection, emphasis, and volume as if they were telling someone their good news.

Guide the Study

2. After finishing the word web, ask a volunteer to read aloud the introduction to the lesson. *For English learners:* Read it aloud yourself as a language model or ask a volunteer who is an experienced English speaker.

3. Divide the class into three groups: the Faith Group, the Love Group, and the Hope Group. Say: *Each group is to read aloud Colossians 1:1-8 from the last page of the lesson, then look for the parts that talk about their word (faith, hope, or love). Each group has other verses on page 13 of the lesson (also written on the board). Each person may write down what they learn as a group about their word from these verses. Challenge them to become an "expert" about their word.*

Write these words and extra verses (see page 13 of the lesson) on the board:

Faith - Hebrews 11:1-3

Love - 1 John 4:7, Matthew 22:37-40

Hope - Romans 5:3-4

4. When each group is finished reading and discussing, regroup everyone so that the new groups all have at least one representative from each of the Faith, Love, and Hope groups. Try to ensure that Faith, Love, and Hope are as equally represented as possible. If the class is large, two experts from each group can form a new group of 6. Have each expert share with the new group what they learned about their word from the verses they read.

5. When the groups are finished, read aloud 1 Corinthians 13:13 from the New Life Version: *And now we have these three: faith and hope and love, but the greatest of these is love.*

Say: *Just as Paul wrote a letter to the church at Colossae, Paul wrote these words in his letter to the church at Corinth in the first century A.D. He often wrote about faith, love, and hope because they were very important to the early church — just as they are to us today, too.*

6. Choose one or two confident English speakers from the original expert groups to read aloud (or summarize) the sections of the lesson corresponding to their word, encouraging the class to ask questions along the way.

Encourage Application

7. Read aloud (or share highlights from) the section called Faith, Love, and Hope in Life.

8. Depending on your group and how God guides you, either read aloud the section called Things to Remember, pausing to allow class members to comment and ask questions — or ask class members to read that section to themselves and then raise their hands if they would like to talk to you about what they have read.

Either way, be prepared to help any who are not yet followers of Christ through the process of becoming a believer as outlined in the last section and as written on The Romans Road bookmark (on this page).

9. Use The Romans Road bookmark to review the steps in becoming a follower of Jesus, being sensitive to any who may be ready to do just that. Either lead the class as a whole in these steps or ask anyone who might be interested in talking about it to stay after class.

10. Close in prayer, asking God to grow each student in faith, love, and hope, bringing them closer to understanding God's love for them. Thank God for each class member, asking God to bless them as they study the book of Colossians in the coming weeks.

Extra Teaching Ideas Connect with Life

♦ Instead of doing a word web, simply make a list of things that people say when they have good news to share.

For English learners: After the list is complete, practice saying each phrase aloud with accurate inflection and emphasis.

♦ Read the introduction to the class with a special emphasis on the great news that Paul, Timothy, and Epaphras shared wherever they went.

Ask: *Does everyone understand what this great news is and why it is so great?*

If there is just a blank stare from some class members or if they don't seem clear about it, skip to the section Things to Remember and read through it carefully, filling in any blanks, giving examples from your own testimony, and making sure that the class understands your examples. Be sure to give those who are not Christians an opportunity to become followers of Jesus. Refer to #8-9.

Guide the Study

♦ Instead of having each student become an expert, after each of the three groups is finished with their study of the verses and the corresponding sections of the study, you can have them report to the whole class as a group about what they learned. Allow the other class members to ask the group any questions they may have.

♦ If the class members are all believers, put an emphasis on helping them to learn how to share their faith with those who are not yet believers by using The Romans Road.

Encourage Application

♦ After all the groups are finished reporting, have them stay in their groups and answer the questions in Things to Think About. Walk around and listen to the answers, especially as they get to questions #3 and #4. Be prepared to help them understand what the questions are asking and to answer any further questions that may arise, especially for those who are not yet believers.

The Romans Road

All have sinned.

Romans 3:10: "For all men have sinned and have missed the shining-greatness of God."

Romans 3:23: "The Holy Writings say, "There is not one person who is right with God. No, not even one!"

Sin keeps you away from God.

Romans 6:23a: "You get what is coming to you when you sin. It is death!"

Because He loves you, Jesus paid the price to make you free.

Romans 5:8: "But God showed His love to us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Salvation is a free gift.

Romans 6:23b-24: "But God's free gift is life that lasts forever. It is given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ. Anyone can be made right with God by the free gift of His loving-favor. It is Jesus Christ Who bought them with His blood and made them free from their sins."

The way to become a follower of Christ is to say you have sinned, believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, and tell Him that you give your life to Him.

Romans 10:9: "If you say with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved from the punishment of sin."

Romans 10:13: "For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved from the punishment of sin."

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Colossians:
Christ Is All We Need*

Lesson 2: Paul's Prayers

Lesson Focus

Paul was very thankful for the Colossians Christians and thanked God for them. He prayed for their growth and understanding of God and the power of the Holy Spirit. Paul's example teaches us that prayer is powerful.

Focal Text

Colossians 1:9-14

Memory Verse

"I pray that God's great power will make you strong, and that you will have joy as you wait and do not give up." (Colossians 1:11)

Prior Preparation

- ♦ Pray that the seeds of the Good News that were planted in the last lesson will be watered and will grow. Pray for a spiritual harvest in your class.
- ♦ For Encourage Application #7, write The Lord's Prayer in one corner of the board (refer to the NLV version in #7 from Luke 11:2-4).
- ♦ For Encourage Application #9, make a bookmark using the "Knowing God's Will" content on the next page. Also, consider making a large poster using the content. Familiarize yourself with the material so that you can walk through the information confidently with the class.
- ♦ For Extra Teaching Ideas / Connect with Life, bring a device for playing the song from the link. (Try amplifying the sound from your cell phone by placing it in a large ceramic coffee cup!)

Connect with Life

1. Start class with a lively activity of the Telephone Game. Create at least two teams, if possible, with five or more persons per team. Explain that the game is played by whispering a sentence from person to person, all the way down the line and then finding out if the first person's

sentence was accurately communicated to the last person.

Each person may only whisper the sentence to the next person twice and that person is not allowed to hear it from anyone else closer to the beginning of the line (some will want to ask). You are to whisper to the first person in each line the same sentence. The theme for this sentence is what children say to their parents. A suggested sentence is: *Dad, may I have the car and stay at my friend's house tonight?* (Make it shorter for a lower level class.)

It's fun to hear how the sentence changes and which line comes closest to the original. After each team has finished and the last person has told what they heard, transition to say: *It's important for families to talk to each other. But it's more important for God's children to talk to their Father in heaven. Prayer is talking to God. Today we are talking about prayer and learning what Paul prayed for the Corinthians. Prayer is important and powerful!*

Guide the Study

2. Ask the class to read silently Colossians 1:9-14 on the last page of the Study Guide, looking for what things Paul prayed about. When they are finished, ask the class to tell you what they found and which verse it was in. Make a list on the board. For example:

Fill them with wisdom and understanding - verse 9
They would know more about God - verse 10

3. When the list is finished, read aloud the introduction to the lesson. (Begin at: "My mom made a special book..." and conclude at "I know God's will for my life.")

Say: *Paul prayed for many important things for the Colossians. Which one do you think the lesson's writer would say was the most important from what I just read?*

4. Accept any answers but steer them toward: That they may know what God wants them to do (verse 9). Pointing to the list on the board from #2, ask: *Which of these do you think is the most important for every Christian to have?*

After a brief pause, say: *It is hard to decide but let's take a vote. As I point to each one, raise your hand if you think it is the most important. You can only vote one time!*

Write the name of each student next to the one they voted for.

5. Use this list of names to call on students to read a sentence or paragraph from the section that teaches about that verse. For example, if Jose voted for "Fill them with wisdom and understanding - verse 9," ask him to read aloud part of that Study Guide section, "Know God's Will (Colossians 1:9)." If there are not enough class members for every section, either read additional verses aloud yourself or ask for volunteers to read again.

Encourage Application

6. Read Luke 1:11 from the NLV: "Jesus had been praying. One of His followers said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray as John the Baptist taught his followers.' "

Say: *The followers of Jesus asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. If your child asked you to teach them how to pray, what would you say?*

7. While pointing to the Lord's Prayer written in a corner of the board, say: *This is the prayer that Jesus used to teach His followers how to pray.* Read it out loud and answer any questions from the class.

Jesus said to them, "When you pray, say, 'Our Father in heaven, Your name is holy. May Your holy nation come. What You want done, may it be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us the bread we need everyday.

Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. Do not let us be tempted."

8. Divide the class into five groups and assign one of the questions from Things to Think About to each group. When they have finished answering the questions with their first group, regroup everyone so that they can all share answers among other class members.

1. What is God's will for all Christians? What is God's will and purpose for your life?
2. How has your life been difficult? How can you live a better life now?
3. If you are a Christian, where can you find power to live a good life? If you are not a Christian, how could your life be different if you decide to become a follower of Jesus?
4. What have you seen in this world that you would call darkness? Give some examples.
5. What have you seen in the Christian world that you would call light? Give some examples.

9. Distribute the Knowing God's Will bookmarks. Explain that everyone has times in life where they want to know what God wants them to do next. This bookmark and these concepts/verses can be an important reference tool in the future. Review the concepts and be prepared to answer questions from the class.

10. Use the Memory Verse as a closing blessing for the whole class, adding any other prayer requests or concerns that are mentioned.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ Review the first lesson by playing and discussing the words to "My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rkMapZB8qMk>). This is a video with words, so if you can, project it or just have it playing as class members arrive, then discuss it some when you start class. (As a follow-up to last week's lesson, encourage members to write a new verse to the music with words about faith, love, and hope.)

Guide the Study

♦ For a lower level reading group, instead of voting on their favorite part of Paul's prayer (from Guide the Study #4), simply ask for questions after writing the themes from

Paul's prayer on the board. Then ask for volunteers to read the paragraphs in each section. As they read, put a * by the item on the list that the students made as that part is mentioned in the Study Guide. Not all things on the list will be mentioned in the Study Guide.

Knowing God's Will

1. Give your will to God; want to do His will, not your own more than anything.

1 Corinthians 6:19b-20a: "Now you belong to God. You do not belong to yourselves. God bought you with a great price."

2. Spend time with God in Bible study and prayer.

Knowing God's written Word leads to knowing His will.

Psalms 119:133: "Set my steps in Your Word. Do not let sin rule over me."

Psalms 88:13: "But I have cried to You for help, O Lord. My prayer comes to You in the morning."

3. Look for and trust God's will to be done.

Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not trust in your own understanding. Agree with Him in all your ways, and He will make your paths straight."

4. Do not think like the world thinks but let God give you a new way of thinking.

Romans 12:2: "Do not act like the sinful people of the world. Let God change your life. First of all, let Him give you a new mind. Then you will know what God wants you to do. And the things you do will be good and pleasing and perfect."

5. Do what God has shown and God will show the rest of His will.

Hebrews 12:1: "Let us put every thing out of our lives that keeps us from doing what we should. Let us keep running in the race that God has planned for us."

6. Talk to Christian leaders and friends.

Proverbs 15:22: "Plans go wrong without talking together, but they will go well when many wise men talk about what to do."

7. Look for open and closed doors.

Acts 16:6-10: Paul wanted to go one way and the Holy Spirit would not let him, but then he was called in a dream to go into Europe for the first time.

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English

Colossians: Christ Is All We Need

Lesson 3: Who Is Christ?

Lesson Focus

Jesus Christ is God in the flesh, the creator of the world, and the Son of God.

Bible Text

Colossians 1:15-19

Memory Verse

"Christ became human flesh and lived among us. We saw His shining-greatness. This greatness is given only to a much-loved Son from His Father. He was full of loving-favor and truth." (John 1:14)

Prior Preparation

- ♦ Find/print the Barna study for Connect with Life #1.
- ♦ Select and prepare a song for Encourage Application #14.
- ♦ Find and bring magazines, scissors, pictures of Jesus; or find the *Guess Who?* game for Extra Teaching Ideas/Connect with Life.
- ♦ Make copies of the case study for Extra Teaching Ideas/Encourage Application.

Connect with Life

1. As class begins today, share or summarize highlights from the 2015 Barna study entitled, "What Do Americans Believe About Jesus?" Emphasize the main points of the article for class members.

- The vast majority of Americans believe Jesus was a real person
- Younger generations are increasingly less likely to believe Jesus was God
- Americans are divided on whether Jesus was sinless
- Most Americans say they have made a commitment to Jesus Christ
- People are conflicted between "Jesus" and "good deeds" as the way to heaven

You can find a summary of this report at the following website:

<https://www.barna.com/research/what-do-americans-believe-about-jesus-5-popular-beliefs/>

2. Say: *Today's lesson title asks an important question. Let's examine more about it.* Then read aloud the lesson introduction from the Study Guide.

3. Ask class members to discuss responses to Question #1 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide. Conclude the discussion by saying: *In today's Bible text, Paul answered this very important question for the Colossians.*

Guide the Study

4. Ask a class member to read Colossians 15:15 for the class. Instruct members to listen for words and phrases that Paul used to describe Jesus. List their responses on the marker board.

1. Christ is as God is.
2. God cannot be seen.
3. Christ lived before anything was made.

5. Discuss each group of words with the class. Ask class members to work together to find at least one synonym for each phrase. Encourage them to use a thesaurus or other online resource. Point out any words from the Word List.

1. Holy; divine; perfect
2. Invisible; unseen; hidden
3. Eternal; unending; everlasting

6. Summarize or comment on these verses by drawing on the Study Guide section entitled "Jesus Christ Is God." Guide the class to consider and discuss Question #2 from Things to Think About.

7. Ask a class member to read Colossians 15:16-17. Point to the title of this section in the Study Guide. Ask class members to pay attention to v. 16 and listen for all the things Christ has made. List these on the marker board.

- everything in the heavens and on the earth
- everything that is seen
- things that are not seen
- the powers of heaven
- everything was made by Him and for Him

8. Comment on these verses by drawing on the Study Guide section entitled "Christ Is Creator." Then ask members to respond to Question #3 from Things to Think About.

9. Ask a class member to read Colossians 15:18. Then divide class members into four groups. Assign each group one of the statements from this verse. Ask the groups to put each statement in their own words. Then call on each group to share their response.

10. Guide the class to discuss Question #4 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide.

11. Call on a final class member to read Colossians 15:19. Comment on these verses by reading or summarizing the Study Guide section entitled “Christ Is the Son of God.”

12. Ask the same groups from Guide the Study #9 to read Hebrews 4:14-16. Or read the verses aloud for these groups to hear.

Hebrews 4:14-16

We have a great Religious Leader Who has made the way for man to go to God. He is Jesus, the Son of God, Who has gone to heaven to be with God. Let us keep our trust in Jesus Christ. Our Religious Leader understands how weak we are. Christ was tempted in every way we are tempted, but He did not sin. Let us go with complete trust to the throne of God. We will receive His loving-kindness and have His loving-favor to help us whenever we need it.

After reading these verses, ask the groups to talk about Question #5 from Things to Think About. Then call on a leader from each group to share the group’s ideas with the class.

Encourage Application

13. Read aloud or summarize “Things to Remember” from the Study Guide. Guide a class discussion in response to Question #6 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide.

14. Select a favorite song that describes who Jesus is. Arrange to share that song with members as class closes today. You might show a video or download a recording or invite someone to perform it for the class. Take time to tell class members why you selected this song. Consider traditional hymns like “Fairest Lord Jesus” or “Jesus Paid It All.” You might also consider contemporary songs like “I Can Only Imagine” or “Jesus Messiah.” Be sure to provide the lyrics for class members.

15. Close class by praying that each member will discover Jesus Christ for himself or herself. Pray, too, that each one will trust Christ to forgive them and to take away the punishment for their sins.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ Before class today, write the following question on the marker board.

WHO IS JESUS CHRIST?

Bring a stack of magazines and some scissors to class today. Ask class members to cut out pictures that represent their answer to this question.

Alternatively, find and bring a few artists’ renderings of Jesus. Select any that are your favorites, as well as others you find by searching the Internet. Post these near the question on the marker board for class members to view as they enter class today.

♦ Find a version of the *Guess Who?* game described in the introduction from today’s lesson. Bring it to class today to show members how the game is played. Then read the lesson introduction aloud.

Guide the Study

♦ When discussing the Study Guide section entitled “Christ Is Creator,” review the account of Creation from Genesis 1. Display or distribute a chart like the one below to summarize the days of Creation for class members.

Encourage Application

Days of Creation	
Genesis 1:1-5	Day and Night
Genesis 1:6-8	Heaven
Genesis 1:9-13	Earth, Seas, and Plants
Genesis 1:14-19	Stars, Sun, and Moon
Genesis 1:20-23	Animals in Sea and Sky
Genesis 1:24-31	Land Animals and People
Genesis 2:1-3	Rest

♦ Copy and distribute the following case study. Ask the same groups from Guide the Study #9 to discuss the case study. After time for discuss, ask a leader from each group to share their ideas with the class.

Case Study

Imagine that a close friend calls you and needs to talk. You know that your friend is hurting because of some hard things that have happened. Over dinner, your friend says that she is no longer going to attend church. She further says that she does not believe in God. What would you think? How would you feel? How would you respond? What would you say about God? How would you explain who Jesus Christ is to you?

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English

Colossians: Christ Is All We Need

Lesson 4: Hope in Christ

Lesson Focus

Sin separates people from God, but God planned to bring people back to Himself through Christ's death and resurrection.

Bible Text

Colossians 1:20-23

Memory Verse

"Everything in heaven and on earth can come to God because of Christ's death on the cross. Christ's blood has made peace." (Colossians 1:20)

Prior Preparation

- ♦ Provide extra markers for Connect with Life #1.
- ♦ Provide index cards for Encourage Application #11.
- ♦ Provide a map and pins or sticky note flags for Extra Teaching Ideas/Connect with Life.
- ♦ Prepare to share the slide show for Extra Teaching Ideas/Guide the Study.
- ♦ Invite someone to share a testimony, or select an appropriate song for Extra Teaching Ideas/Encourage Application.

Connect with Life

1. Before class members arrive today, write the following word on the marker board.

H O P E

As members enter, offer them a marker. Request that they write on the board something that they are hoping for this week. It might be something they hope to happen or something that they hope to get.

2. As class begins, ask: *What is the difference between the hope mentioned in the Bible and the hope people talk about in the world? Say: In today's Bible text, we will discover how Christ provides the hope that people need.*

3. Read aloud or summarize the introduction from today's lesson. Guide class members to discuss Question #1 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide.

Guide the Study

4. Take time to review some background information about the Book of Colossians.

- Paul did not start the church in Colossae or know its members.
- Paul knew about the Colossians' faith from Epaphras.
- Paul wrote to make sure the Colossians did not believe false teachers.
- These false teachers said Jesus couldn't be both God and man.
- The main idea in the Book of Colossians is that Christ is all we need.

5. Ask a class member to read Colossians 1:20-21. Instruct members to look for words they feel are the most important in these verses. Call for responses and list words on the marker board. Ask why these words seemed important to them.

- Heaven
- Earth
- Death
- Cross
- Blood
- Peace
- Strangers
- War

6. Comment on these verses by drawing from the Study Guide section entitled "Separated by Sin." Lead class members to share responses to Question #2 from Things to Think About.

7. Ask another class member to read Colossians 1:22. Once again, ask class members to listen for words they feel are most important in this verse. Add these words to the list. Be sure to clearly define any words class members do not understand.

- Death
- Cross
- Holy
- Pure
- Blame

8. Ask class members if they recognize a group of words that is repeated in Colossians 1:20 and 1:22. Help them to identify the following phrase.

DEATH ON THE CROSS

Guide class members to understand that these words are the answer to Question #3 from Things to Think About from the Study Guide. Further discuss this idea by drawing on the Study Guide section entitled "Brought Back to God."

9. Finally, call on a different class member to read Colossians 1:23. Instruct class members to listen for two commands Paul gives in these verses. List them on the marker board.

1. You must not change from what you believe now.
2. You must not leave the hope of the Good News.

10. Guide a discussion of these verses by referring to the Study Guide section entitled “Faith and Hope.” After discussion, ask class members to answer Question #4 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide.

Encourage Application

11. Read aloud “Things to Remember” from the Study Guide. Then, point out Question #5 from Things to Think About. Pass out an index card to each class member. In response to Question #5, ask members to write down the name of one or two people they know.

12. Collect index cards from each class member. Promise to pray daily this week for every person whose name is on these cards. Place these cards in front of you and ask class members to recite this week’s Memory Verse over these cards.

13. Revisit class members’ responses to the activity in Connect with Life. Say: *The hope we have in Christ is different from the hope the world knows. The hope the world talks about is often just wishful thinking that something will happen. But Christ changes everything. In Christ, our hope is based on the confidence we have in the clear power of God to save us from all our sin, as shown through the cross, that is, the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

14. Close the class in prayer that members will know the hope of Christ and extend it to others.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ As class members enter today, display a world map on the wall or marker board. Ask class members to use small pins or small sticky notes to mark places where special friends and family live. At the start of class, call attention to the map. See if you can make a few interesting observations for the class about the map. Consider which state/country has the most pins. Consider which state/country is the farthest away from your location. Then guide the class to discuss what it is like to be separated from family and friends. Pay special attention to the way that separation can affect a relationship.

Conclude this activity by saying: *Distance is not the only thing that can cause separation. Sometimes conflict causes separation. Even busy-ness can cause separation. In today’s Bible text, we will see how sin causes people to be separated from God. We will also see how Christ is the only true hope for people who are separated from God.*

Guide the Study

♦ To help class members understand how sin first entered the world, review Genesis 3. In retelling the events of Genesis 3, point out how sin separated Adam and Eve from God. Also point out how blood was shed to make a covering for them.

You might want to use the free slide show found at the link below to help you recount Genesis 3.



<http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/adam-eve-fall/>

♦ Consider these two passages as you discuss the Study Guide section entitled “Separated by Sin.”

Isaiah 59:1-3

See, the Lord’s hand is not so short that it cannot save, and His ear is not closed that it cannot hear. But your wrong-doings have kept you away from your God. Your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear. For your hands are sinful with blood, your fingers with wrong-doing, your lips have lied, and your tongue talks about sin.

Ephesians 2:12-13

You were living without Christ then...You had nothing in this world to hope for. You were without God. But now you belong to Christ Jesus. At one time you were far away from God. Now you have been brought close to Him. Christ did this for you when He gave His blood on the cross

Encourage Application

♦ Invite a church member to come and share a brief testimony with the group, focusing on how he or she came to find the hope of Christ in his or her own life. Encourage your guest to make a clear presentation of the gospel. Be prepared after class to counsel any member who may have questions or want to make a profession of faith in Christ.

♦ Close class today singing a song about the hope we have in Christ. Consider the traditional hymn, “My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less.” Alternatively, consider Phil Wickham’s contemporary song, “Living Hope.” Provide class members lyrics for the song you select.

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Colossians:
Christ Is All We Need*

Lesson 5: The Hidden Secret Of Christ

Lesson Focus

To lead adults to recognize and use the gifts the Holy Spirit has given them to bless the church.

Bible Text

Colossians 1:24-29

Memory Verse

"God wants these great riches of the hidden truth to be made known to the people who are not Jews. The secret is this: Christ in you brings hope of all the great things to come." (Colossians 1:27)

Prior Preparation

- ♦ Prepare some puzzles for Connect with Life #1.
- ♦ Make copies of the case study for Encourage Application #11.

Connect with Life

1. Bring three or four puzzles to class today. Select puzzles that have about 25-40 pieces. Take the pieces out of the box and place each puzzle in a Ziploc bag. Divide the class into two or three teams. Give one puzzle to each team, but do not give them the box just yet. Have a quick contest to see which team can assemble its puzzle first. After a few minutes stop the groups. Ask if any groups are having trouble putting the puzzle together without the picture on the puzzle box. At this point, allow each group to have the box for its puzzle, and finish assembling. After the contest is over, award a small prize to the members of the winning group.

2. Afterwards, discuss the contest by asking the following questions:

- What was the hardest thing about this contest?
- Did the puzzle box make a difference in completing the puzzle? Why or why not?

3. Read the introduction from today's lesson in the Study Guide. Ask class members to respond to Question #1 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide.

Guide the Study

4. Read Colossians 1:24-25 for the class. Invite class members to follow along in the Bible text at the end of this lesson. Instruct members to circle or highlight every time Paul used the pronoun *I*. Ask class members to identify phrases that Paul used to describe himself.

Colossians 1:24-25

Now I am full of joy to be suffering for you. In my own body I am doing my share of what has to be done to make Christ's sufferings complete. This is for His body which is the Church. I became a preacher in His church for your good. In the plan of God I am to preach the Good News.

5. Draw comments from the Study Guide section entitled "Joy in Suffering for Christ." Guide class members to discuss Question #2 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide. Conclude the discussion by saying: *The hidden secret of Christ is very valuable. This is why Paul found such great joy in his suffering. His joy came because he was suffering for Christ's sake. He was suffering so that others could know the hidden secret of Christ.*

6. Ask a class member to read aloud Colossians 1:26-27. Instruct members to listen for the words *hidden* and *secret* and *made known*. Encourage them to mark their Bible text.

Colossians 1:26-27

This great secret was hidden to the people of times past, but it is now made known to those who belong to Christ. God wants these great riches of the hidden truth to be made known to the people who are not Jews. The secret is this: Christ in you brings hope of all the great things to come.

7. Read or summarize from the Study Guide section entitled "Christ Lives in You." Lead the class to answer Question #3 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide. Say: *Jesus Christ is chosen by God to save people from the punishment of sin. The hope of Christ lives in every Christian. This is the hidden secret of Christ.*

8. Ask a class member to read Question #4 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide. Tell class members that the answer can be found in Colossians 1:28-29.

9. Read Colossians 1:28-29 aloud for the class. Ask members to answer Question #4 from Things to Think About. Then comment on these verses by drawing on the Study Guide section entitled “Preaching Christ.”

Encourage Application

10. Read or summarize Things to Remember from the Study Guide. Ask class members to share their responses to Question #5 from Things to Think About.

11. Ask members to gather in the same teams from the opening activity. Pass out copies of the case study below.

Case Study

Tim shared the following testimony with his Bible study group:

I spent the first twenty years of my Christian life living a religion. My faith was all about attending church, tithing, asking the blessing before a meal, and trying not to curse or think evil thoughts. I loved God as much as I could but had no idea what that meant. The real nature of the Christian life was hidden from me, even though I did a bunch of Christian things. My whole life changed in college when I realized that the Christian life is Christ living in me, Christ empowering me to do things He would do. When I grasped the power of letting Christ live His life in and through me, I understood what I had been missing.

Imagine that you heard Tim share the testimony above. Think about the words from Colossians 1:27: “Christ in you brings hope of all the great things to come.” How would you explain the words from this verse after hearing Tim’s story?

12. After groups have had time to read and discuss, allow a leader from each group to share ideas with the class. When each group has shared, guide the class to practice reciting this week’s Memory Verse.

13. Close in prayer that members will know the hidden secret of Christ and share it with others.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ Write the following word on the board before class members arrive today.

MYSTERY

As class begins, encourage class members to use their phone to find a definition for this word. One reliable website to help with this task is listed below.

<http://www.learnersdictionary.com/>

Lead class members to one of the following definitions.

MYSTERY

1. something that is not known, difficult to explain or understand.
2. a religious event or idea that cannot be completely understood or explained
3. someone or something whose identity has been kept secret

Say: *In today’s lesson, Paul described Christ as a mystery. And Paul pointed to clues that help us understand the truth about the hidden secret of Christ.*

Guide the Study

♦ While discussing the Study Guide section entitled “Christ Lives in You,” share the description of Jesus that is found in Isaiah 53. Point out that there are many clues about Jesus Christ hidden in the Old Testament. Remind class members that these words were written hundreds of years before Jesus was born. Read Isaiah 53:4-6 aloud. Ask class members to listen for words that remind them of Jesus.

Isaiah 53:4-6

For sure He took on Himself our troubles and carried our sorrows. Yet we thought of Him as being punished and hurt by God, and made to suffer. But He was hurt for our wrongdoing. He was crushed for our sins. He was punished so we would have peace. He was beaten so we would be healed.

All of us like sheep have gone the wrong way. Each of us has turned to his own way. And the Lord has put on Him the sin of us all.

♦ For more Old Testament predictions that point to Jesus as the Christ, consider the article found at the link below. The article comes from *The Jesus Film Project*.

<https://www.jesusfilm.org/blog-and-stories/old-testament-prophecies.html>

Encourage Application

♦ After examining the Bible text in today’s lesson, share other passages that use similar words and phrases to explain the Good News of Christ. Suggested verses are listed here.

- Ephesians 1:9
- Ephesians 3:3-9
- Ephesians 5:32
- Ephesians 6:19
- Colossians 2:2-3

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English

*Colossians:
Christ Is All We Need*

Lesson 6: Christ's Church

Lesson Focus

Christ's church is bound together through His love and becomes stronger as its members follow Him.

Bible Text

Colossians 2:1-7

Memory Verse

"Have your roots planted deep in Christ. Grow in Him. Get your strength from Him. Let Him make you strong in the faith..." (Colossians 2:7a)

Prior Preparation

- ♦ Select and display church photos for Connect with Life #1.
- ♦ Browse the link to opendoorsusa.org to prepare for Extra Teaching Ideas/Encourage Application.

Connect with Life

1. Use an Internet search to help you locate and display several churches representing buildings from different cultures and time periods. Post these around the room for

class members to view as they enter today. At the opening of class, ask members to share their thoughts about the pictures. Ask if any particular picture reminded them of churches from their own experiences.

2. Say: *In today's Bible text, Paul talked about the church. He described Christ's church and its members.* Read the introduction from today's lesson in the Study Guide. Then ask the class to respond to Question #1 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide.

Guide the Study

3. Ask a class member to read aloud Colossians 2:1-2. Remind members that the pronoun *I* refers to Paul, the writer of Colossians. Ask members to listen carefully in verse 2 for four things Paul desired for the Colossian church. (Hint: The word *may* comes before each of these things.) Encourage members to mark these things in their Bible text. Record these on the marker board.

Colossians 2:2

May their hearts be given comfort. May they be brought close together in Christian love. May they be rich in understanding and know God's secret. It is Christ Himself.

4. Comment on these verses by drawing on the Study Guide section entitled "Connected Through Christ." Guide the class to discuss Question #2 from Things to Think About.

5. Ask another class member to read Colossians 2:2-4. Divide the class in half. Ask half the class to listen for words that relate to the heart. Ask the other half of the class to listen for words that relate to the mind. List their responses on the marker board.

Heart

- Comfort (v. 2)
- Love (v. 2)
- Brought close (v. 2)
- Understanding (v. 2)

Mind

- Wisdom (v. 3)
- Understanding (v. 3)
- Big sounding talk (v. 3)



6. Read or summarize ideas from the Study Guide section entitled “The Heart and the Mind.” Lead members to answer Question #3 from Things to Think About.

7. Read Colossians 2:5-7 aloud. Ask class members to listen carefully for Paul’s praise and instructions for the church. Encourage members to mark these things in their Bible text as you read.

Colossians 2:5-7

Even if I am far away from you in body, I am with you in spirit. I am happy to learn how well you are getting along. It is good to hear that your faith is so strong in Christ. As you have put your trust in Christ Jesus the Lord to save you from the punishment of sin, now let Him lead you in every step. Have your roots planted deep in Christ. Grow in Him. Get your strength from Him. Let Him make you strong in the faith as you have been taught. Your life should be full of thanks to Him.

8. Further discuss these verses by referring to the Study Guide section entitled “Faith That Is Planted Strong, and Full.” Ask class members to respond to Question #4 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide.

Encourage Application

9. Read or summarize Things to Remember from the Study Guide. Then guide class members to discuss Question #5 from Things to Think About.

10. Ask class members to work together in small groups to practice this week’s Memory Verse. Say: *Think about the word picture Paul created in this verse. Pretend that you are teaching a group of children to memorize this verse. Create a few simple motions or hand signals that could help the children remember key words from this verse. Practice with your group a few times. Then select a group leader to share their ideas with the class.*

11. Close class today in prayer that the members of Christ’s church in your class can help make Him known to those close to them and to people around the world.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ As class members enter today, write the word **CHURCH** on the marker board from top to bottom. Ask the groups to think about words that describe Christ’s church. Instruct class members to work in groups to brainstorm words or phrases for each letter of the word.

C—Christ-centered

H—Happy to serve others

U—Unconditional Love and Acceptance

R—Ready to tell about Jesus

C—Community of Christians

H—Helping to meet needs

A sample acrostic is provided here for you.

Allow groups time to work and ask them to share some of their ideas. Say: *In today’s Bible text, Paul talked about the church. He described Christ’s church and its members. He wrote these words of advice and encouragement to the church in Colossae. But His words also have great value for the Church today.*

Guide the Study

♦ When discussing the Study Guide section entitled “The Heart and Mind,” remind members about The Great Law.

Matthew 22:37-38

Jesus said to him, “‘You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest of the Laws.

♦ Compare Paul’s description of the Church in Colossians 2:7 with the psalmist’s description of a godly man in Psalm 1:1-3. Look for similarities and note that a church like the one Paul describes must be made up of individuals like the one the psalmist described.

Psalm 1:1-3

Happy is the man who does not walk in the way sinful men tell him to, or stand in the path of sinners, or sit with those who laugh at the truth. But he finds joy in the Law of the Lord and thinks about His Law day and night. This man is like a tree planted by rivers of water, which gives its fruit at the right time and its leaf never dries up. Whatever he does will work out well for him.

Encourage Application

♦ Say: *In Christ’s church, the love of Christ connects members no matter how far apart they may be.* Take some time at the end of class today to share how class members can minister to and pray for persecuted Christians around the world. The following link provides a direct opportunity to send messages around the world to brothers and sisters in Christ who are suffering for their faith in Christ. Emphasize that distance does not break the bond that Christians have through Christ’s love.

<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/take-action/advocacy/letter-writing/>

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Colossians:
Christ Is All We Need

Lesson 7:

Complete in Christ

Lesson Focus

Christians have everything they need when they have Christ, and they must not add false teachings to the truth about Christ.

Bible Text

Colossians 2:8-15

Memory Verse

"When you have Christ, you are complete."
(Colossians 2:10a)

Prior Preparation

- ♦ Locate the lyrics and a recording of Dennis Jernigan's "All in All" for Encourage Application #12.
- ♦ Locate the lyrics and a recording of "More Is Better" for Extra Teaching Ideas/Connect with Life.

Connect with Life

1. Write the following word on the marker board before class members arrive today.

M O R E

Begin class by asking the following question: *What do you wish you had more of in your life?* Record responses on the marker board.

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| • Money | • Cars |
| • Time | • Clothes |
| • Fame | • Friends |
| • Power | • Freedom |
| • Food | • Romance |
| • Awards | • Success |

2. Read aloud the introduction to today's lesson from the Study Guide. Guide the class to discuss Question #1 from Things to Think About.

Guide the Study

3. Read aloud Colossians 2:8-11 for the class. Ask class members to listen carefully for any words they do not understand. Instruct them to circle these words in their Bible text. Help the class to define any difficult words. Be sure to point out that the word *complete* appears in v. 8 and in the title of today's lesson. List some synonyms for *complete* on the marker board. Say: *To be complete means that nothing is lacking.*

Complete:

Whole; Total; Full; Entire; All

4. Divide the class into four groups. Assign each group one verse from this section, verses 8-11. Ask each group to explain its verse in their own words. Call on a leader from each group to share ideas with the class. To further explain these verses, draw comments from the Study Guide section entitled "False Teachers."

5. In the same groups from Guide the Study #4, invite members to discuss Questions #2, #3, and #4 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide. Then, review these questions with the entire class, asking a leader from each group to share the group's responses.

6. Read aloud Colossians 2:9-15. Again ask class members to listen carefully for any words they do not understand. Encourage them to mark these words in their Bible text. Be sure to define any difficult words.

7. Repeat the instructions from Guide the Study #4. To further explain verses 9-15, draw comments from the Study Guide section entitled "God's Full Power in Christ."

Encourage Application

8. Say: *Notice all the things that Christians have through Christ.* Ask class members to review Colossians 2:8-15. Make a list on the marker board.

Complete in Christ

- You are complete (2:10)
- You are set free from the sinful things of this world (2:11)
- You are set free from the sins of your old self (2:11)
- You are raised to new life (2:12)
- You are raised as Christ was raised (2:12)
- Your sins are forgiven (2:13)
- You have new life through Christ (2:13)
- The Law is destroyed and nailed to the cross (2:14)
- God won the battle over worldly leaders and powers of darkness (2:15)

9. Read or summarize the Study Guide section entitled “Things to Remember.” Guide the class to discuss Question #6 from Things to Think About.

10. Guide class members to practice this week’s Memory Verse by reciting it as a responsive chant. Practice it several times, allowing groups to reverse roles.

Colossians 2:10a

Group #1

When you have Christ;

Group #2

You are complete.

11. Close class today by singing “You Are My All in All.” Provide lyrics, a video, or invite a church member to lead the class in singing.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ As class begins today, share a brief summary of the Broadway play, *Mean Girls*.

Mean Girls: A Summary



Mean Girls is an American movie and a Broadway play. It tells the story of Cady Heron as she moves from Africa to a town in Illinois. Cady’s parents are scientists who study wildlife in Africa. Moving means that Cady must leave the only home she has ever known. Attending a new school brings many changes to Cady’s life. In many ways, Cady has much more than she

did while living in Africa. She has more clothes, more friends, more comfort, and more choices. But when Cady meet a boy she really likes, he helps her see that more is not always better.

Then share the song “More Is Better” from the musical. Be sure to provide lyrics. After listening to the song, ask if class members can state the main idea of this musical number. Point out that this song suggests that in life, more is not always better.

Guide the Study

♦ Review the Word List for today’s lesson. Play a short game of charades using these words to make sure that members know the meaning of each one. Ask teams to take turns acting out the words to see if their team can identify the correct meaning for each word.

♦ In discussing these verses, share Psalm 23. Compare

Colossians 2:10 with Psalm 23:1. Emphasize that both these verses point to the same idea. Say: *In Christ, we have everything we need.*

Psalm 23

The Lord is my Shepherd. I will have everything I need. He lets me rest in fields of green grass. He leads me beside the quiet waters. He makes me strong again. He leads me in the way of living right with Himself which brings honor to His name. Yes, even if I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will not be afraid of anything, because You are with me. You have a walking stick with which to guide and one with which to help. These comfort me. You are making a table of food ready for me in front of those who hate me. You have poured oil on my head. I have everything I need. For sure, You will give me goodness and loving-kindness all the days of my life. Then I will live with You in Your house forever.

Encourage Application

♦ Write the following on the marker board. Ask: *What things do you see Christians adding to their life in Christ?* Call for responses and list them on the board. Say: *These things are not all bad. But we are only complete in Christ.*

Jesus + _____

After listing and discussing these “add-ons,” cross them out. Also, erase “+ _____” or rewrite “JESUS.”

Restate that Jesus is all we need; Christians are complete in Christ.

- Good works
- Religious rules
- Traditions
- Education
- Church attendance
- Tithing

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Colossians: Christ Is All We Need

Lesson 8: Focus on Christ

Lesson Focus

Christians must stay focused on Christ instead of becoming distracted by religious rules, traditions, ceremonies, or experiences.

Bible Text

Colossians 2:16-23

Memory Verse

"The important thing is Christ Himself." (Colossians 2:17b)

Prior Preparation

- ♦ Select and display several photos as described in Connect with Life #1.
- ♦ Prepare and copy the word list exercise for Extra Teaching Ideas/Encourage Application.

Connect with Life

1. Before class today, search the Internet for some photographs that show how a camera's focus can affect a picture. Print these pictures and display them around the room as members arrive today. Some sample photos are included here for you to consider. Guide the class to discuss what is in focus and out of focus in the pictures you have displayed. Ask: *How does the camera's focus change each of these pictures?* Say: *In today's Bible text, Paul also talks about focus. He tells the Christians in Colossae to make sure that they keep their focus on Christ.*

Guide the Study

2. Ask a class member to read Colossians 2:16-17. Instruct members to listen carefully for the words *not* or *no*. Suggest they mark these words in their Bible text for further discussion of the passage.

3. Guide discussion of these verses by reading or summarizing the Study Guide section entitled "Do Not Focus on Man-Made Rules."

Colossians 2:16-17

Do **not** let anyone tell you what you should or should not eat or drink. They have **no** right to say if it is right or wrong to eat certain foods or if you are to go to religious suppers. They have **no** right to say what you are to do at the time of the new moon or on the Day of Rest. These things are a picture of what is coming. The important thing is Christ Himself.

4. Then ask the class to respond to Question #2 from Things to Think About. Summarize responses by reading Galatians 5:1.

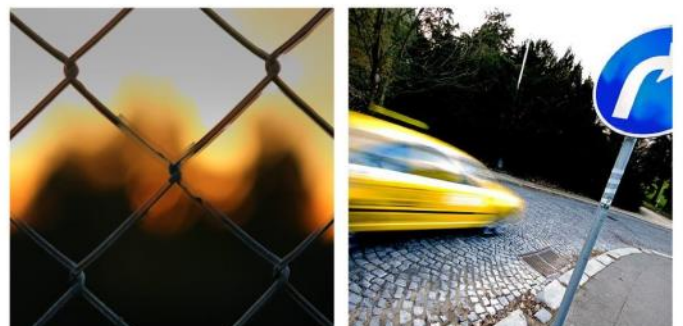
Galatians 5:1

Christ made us free. Stay that way. Do not get chained all over again in the Law and its kind of religious worship.

5. Ask another class member to read aloud Colossians 2:18-19. Instruct class members to listen for the word *they*. Suggest that they mark this in their Bible text.

Colossians 2:18-19

Do not let anyone rob you of your crown. **They** will try to get you to bow down in worship of angels. **They** think this shows you are not proud. **They** say they were told to do this in a dream. These people are proud because of their sinful minds. Such people are not a part of Christ. Christ is the Head. We Christians make up His body. We are joined together as a body is held together. Our strength to grow comes from Christ.



6. Guide class members to see that Paul uses the word *they* to refer to people who have nothing to do with Christ. Ask: *What words or phrases does Paul use to describe these people?*

People Who Are Not A Part of Christ

- Try to get you to worship angels
- Think this shows you are not proud
- Say they see dreams
- Are proud
- Have sinful minds

7. Draw comments on these verses from the Study Guide section entitled “Do Not Focus on Special Religious Things.” Then ask the class to respond to Question #3 from Things to Think About.

8. Ask a class member to read aloud Colossians 2:20-23. Instruct class members to pay special attention to verse 23.

9. Ask: *In verse 23, what words or phrases are repeated?* Help the class to identify Paul’s pattern of speech by writing the phrases in bold below on the marker board. See if members can help fill in Paul’s statements from these verses.

It looks as if ...

- *it is wise to follow these rules in an act of worship*
- *they are done without pride*

But...

- *they are worth nothing.*
- *they do not take away a man’s desire to sin*

10. Guide further discussion of these verses by drawing from the Study Guide section entitled “Focus on the Power of Christ. Then lead the class to consider Question #4 from Things to Think About.

Encourage Application

11. Read Things to Remember from the Study Guide and ask class members to respond to Question #5 from Things to Think About in the Study Guide.

12. Dismiss class in prayer that class members will stay focused on Christ. Close the prayer by inviting the class to proclaim today’s Memory Verse aloud as a benediction.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ Share the following story about Arnold Palmer.

Carol Mann tells this story about legendary golfer Arnold Palmer in *Reader’s Digest*. In the 1961 Masters Tournament, Palmer had a small lead going into the last hole. Everyone was confident he would win. On the way to his last shot, an old friend stopped to shake Palmer’s hand and congratulate him. This distracted Palmer. It ruined his focus. He missed two simple shots after that and lost the tournament.

Guide the Study

♦ In discussing Colossians 2:19, guide members to consider different things to which Christ’s church is compared in the Bible.

Christ’s Church as...

- Bride of Christ (Revelations 19-22)
- Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4)
- Building/Temple of Christ (1 Peter 2; 1 Corinthians 3)
- Family of God (1 John 4, 1 Timothy 5)

Encourage Application

♦ Lead the class to summarize Colossians 2:16-23 by working in groups or pairs to complete the following Word List Exercise. (Answers: *tempt, focus, worthy*)

Word List Exercise

Use terms from the Word List to complete the passage below.

Paul cared deeply about the Colossian church. He wanted them to stay strong in their faith. But Paul knew that there were many false teachers in Colossae. Paul did not want the Colossians to follow what they taught. He knew that their ideas would _____ the Colossians to believe things that were not true. These false teachers were taking the _____ away from Christ. They were adding new ideas to the truth about the hidden secret of Christ. Paul proclaimed that only Christ is _____ to be worshiped and obeyed. No one should add to Christ’s death on the cross. Through Christ’s death and resurrection, Christians are complete. We have all we need in Christ alone.

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Colossians:
Christ Is All We Need*

Lesson 9: Life and Death

Lesson Focus

Followers of Christ must die to our sin so that we can live in the freedom and fullness that Christ offers.

Bible Text

Colossians 3:1-9

Memory Verse

“For sure, I tell you, unless a seed falls into the ground and dies, it will only be a seed. If it dies, it will give much grain. Anyone who loves his life will lose it. Anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it forever.” (John 12:24-25)

Prior Preparation

- ◆ For Connect with Life #1, locate two plants, one healthy and thriving and the other yellowed and dying. Bring these two plants to class. If plants cannot be located, find two pictures of plants to bring to class to show a healthy plant and a dying one.
- ◆ For Guide the Study #8, write Colossians 3:5a from different translations on index cards to hand out in class.
 - “So put to death anything that comes from sinful desires.” (New International Reader’s Version)
 - “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you.” (ESV)
- ◆ For Extra Teaching Ideas / Connect with Life, gather small pots, potting soil, water, and seeds to plant together in class. Suggested seeds to plant are: basil, chives, calendula, or oregano.
- ◆ For Extra Teaching Ideas / Encourage Application, do an online search for “messy teenager’s bedroom” and select an image to display in class on a tablet, laptop, screen, or as a printout.

Connect with Life

1. As class members arrive, display the plants or pictures you brought for all to see as they enter. Begin class by asking class members to comment on the plants or pictures they see. Ask: *What do you notice about each plant? What does the unhealthy plant need to make it healthy?*

2. Invite class members to read the introduction in the Study Guide aloud. Ask if there are any gardeners in the room. Invite them to share how they see both life and death in caring for plants. Say: *Sometimes plants need unhealthy things taken away so they can grow strong and healthy. That is true for us, too. We need to put away or get rid of anything that separates us from God.*

Guide the Study

3. Read aloud Colossians 3:1-4. Ask class members to listen for and circle words that relate to life or death. Ask:

- *How can you know if a plant or animal is dead?*
- *How can you know if a plant or animal is alive?*
- *Why do you think Paul used the word picture of dying and being raised to describe Christians?*
- *How can you know if a person is spiritually dead?*
- *How can you know if a person is spiritually alive?*

4. Say: *In this passage, Paul says that Christians should “keep looking for the things of heaven” and “keep our minds thinking about things in heaven.” Let’s think about what this means. Ask: If you think about things in heaven, what will you think about?* Begin a chart on the board such as the one shown below (see #6). List responses. Help the class to think beyond simple pictures of heaven to thinking of things from a heavenly perspective.

5. Ask: *If you only think about things in this world, what will you think about?* Make a second list on the board.

6. Say: *Our thoughts direct our actions. How we think influences what we do. Let’s look at how this works.* Work through the lists on the board one-by one, asking where each thought will lead. This time, begin with the worldly thoughts and then turn to the heavenly thoughts. Help the class to understand that Paul is not telling believers to withdraw from the world, but to live in the world with a different focus and purpose.

Thinking about Things in Heaven		Thinking about Things in This World	
Thoughts	Actions	Thoughts	Actions
God	Become more like God	Possessions	Selfishness, greed, always wanting more
People	Grow in love, unity	People	Desire, clinging to relationships for happiness
Responsibilities	Obey God, live with integrity	Entertainment	Play more and work less

7. Invite one or two volunteers to read aloud Colossians 3:5-9. Ask: *What does it mean to “get rid of” something?* Discuss things we might get rid of and how we do it? Examples might be: extra clothing or household items are given away or sold; extra pounds are gotten rid of through diet and exercise; bad habits are changed by building new habits or a new lifestyle.

8. Say: *Some other translations of the Bible use different words in this verse.* Pass out the cards with Colossians 3:5a printed in other translations for other class members to read aloud. Ask: *Are getting rid of something and putting something to death the same? How are they similar? Why do you think Paul used such strong language to talk about sin?*

9. Direct class members back to the Scripture passage. Ask: *What does Paul say to get rid of?* List the two lists Paul gives on the board. After both lists are written, ask class members to summarize each list into one theme or similarity. Ask: *How are all the sins in this list similar?*

Sins of Desire	Sins of Anger
Sex sins Anything that is not clean Desire for sex sins Wanting something that someone else has	Anger Bad temper Bad feelings toward others Talk that hurts people Speaking against God Dirty talk

10. Ask:

- *Do you think these are lists of all the sins we need to worry about? Are these the only sins that matter?*
- *Why do you think Paul didn't list more sins?*
- *Why do you think he chose to list these sins?*

Encourage class members to recognize that this is just a sampling of the types of sin we might find in our lives. Paul was not trying to list all the sins we might commit, and we should not limit our attention to only these sins. ALL sin must be put to death, whatever it is.

Encourage Application

11. Say: *We know how to get rid of things, extra weight, or bad habits. But how do we get rid of sin?* Use the list in the box below to guide the conversation to talk of practical ways to deal with our sin.

Getting Rid of Sin

- Be honest about your sin.
- Ask God to help you change.
- Memorize Bible verses that help you.
- Ask a strong Christian friend to pray for you.
- Talk to a pastor or counselor about your struggles.
- Write your thoughts and prayers.
- Praise God for any victories!

12. Redirect class members' attention to the plants or pictures displayed at the beginning of class. Ask a strong reader to read the first paragraph in the Study Guide section entitled, “Things to Remember.” Ask: *Have you ever seen an unhealthy plant change and grow strong and healthy? Have you ever seen this change happen to a person?* Allow class members to share their stories of transformation either in themselves or in someone they have known. Be prepared to share a story of your own to get the discussion started.

13. End in prayer that all will see the destructiveness of sin in our lives and that all will have the strength to get rid of it to live in freedom and peace in Christ.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ Ask a volunteer to read the Memory Verse aloud for the class. Invite class members to tell what they know about planting seeds to grow a plant.

If possible, provide each person with a small pot and some potting soil. Pass out seeds and demonstrate how to sow them in the soil. Be sure to provide each plant with a small amount of water to moisten the soil. If the class is too large to provide each member with a plant of their own, consider guiding a demonstration of how to plant seeds and care for a plant.

After the planting is done, return to the Memory Verse and discuss Jesus' words about one seed producing many more by dying. Ask: *What did He mean when He said that “anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it forever?” What does it mean to hate your life in this world?*

Encourage Application

♦ Ask if there are any class members who have teenagers living at home or who have raised teenagers in the past. Hold up the printed picture (or display the image on screen) of the teen's messy room and ask if anyone has seen a room look like this!

Ask: *How might a teenager clean a messy room like this when they are told to clean up their room? As a parent, would you consider the room really clean if they just pushed everything under the bed? What would be needed to really clean the room?*

Discuss the difference between changing the outside of our lives and how we look versus changing from the inside out. Encourage class members to see the necessity of getting rid of sin and not just hiding or covering it up so that others cannot see it.

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English

*Colossians:
Christ Is All We Need*

Lesson 10: How to Dress

Lesson Focus

When followers of Christ replace our sins with the virtues of God, we receive God's peace and we glorify God.

Bible Text

Colossians 3:10-17

Memory Verse

"You are God's chosen people. You are holy and dearly loved. So put on tender mercy and kindness as if they were your clothes. Don't be proud. Be gentle and patient."
(Colossians 3:12 NIRV)

Prior Preparation

- ◆ For Connect with Life #1, if possible, send a text or email to class members several days before class to encourage them to wear something special to class. Instruct members to wear something that has shows something about them. Examples might be a sports jersey, a charm bracelet, or a clothing item associated with good memories. Plan to wear something special yourself as well.
- ◆ For Guide the Study #4, use masking tape to label various items around the room (chair, table, window, etc.) prior to class.
- ◆ For Extra Teaching Ideas / Encourage Application, collect several flashy or distinctive accessories such as hats, scarves, sunglasses, etc., to use as costumes.
- ◆ For Extra Teaching Ideas / Encourage Application, print each of the wise sayings from the next page onto a separate index card for use in class.

Connect with Life

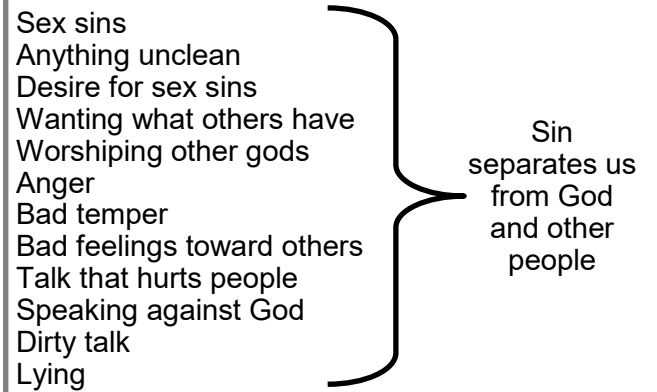
1. Begin class by asking class members to share what they chose to wear and what is shows about them. (If your group is very large, share in small groups.) With each member, ask: *What did you wear? What should it tell us about you?*

2. Say: *It's fun to wear things that tell others about ourselves, isn't it? But when we look at one another, we see*

more than just the clothing we wear. When other people look at us, often they can see more than we think they do. What we are thinking or feeling often shows on our face, doesn't it? Today in our lesson, we will be talking about the things we want people to see when they look at us. We will ask the question, "Do people see Jesus in me?"

Guide the Study

3. Briefly review the previous lesson on dying to sin. With class members' input, list some of the sins mentioned in the first nine verses of Colossians 3 on the marker board. Ask: *What effect does sin have on our lives?* Guide members to recall previous discussions about how sin separates us from God and others.



4. Invite class members to notice the labels placed on items around the room. Read the word *label* and its definition from the Word List in the Study Guide for the class. Ask: *For what reasons might we label something?*

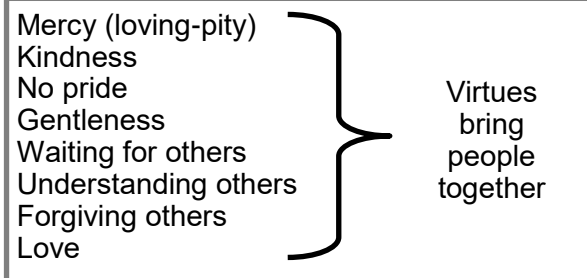
5. Invite a volunteer to read Colossians 3:10-11 aloud. Say: *In verse 11, Paul names some different groups of people such as Greeks and Jews, slaves and free men. What are some ways we group or label people today?* With class members' input, create a list of labels on the board. Ask: *What is the effect of labeling people in our society?* Help members to see that labeling is a way of noticing differences or dividing us into different groups.

6. Direct class members back to verse 10 and the end of verse 11. Say: *Paul tells us that there is only one label we need: Christian.* Ask: *What does being a Christian mean to you?*

7. Direct class members to turn back to the Scripture page for lesson 3 in the Study Guide. Invite a reader to read aloud Colossians 1:15-17. Ask: *What do these verses tell us about Jesus? Why is belonging to Jesus the only label we need?*

8. Turn back to the Study Guide for Lesson 10 and read aloud the definition for *virtue* in the Word List. Ask: *What are some virtues that you like to see in others? Why are these virtues important to you?* As class members name virtues, list them on the board near the list of sins listed previously.

9. Invite volunteers to read aloud Colossians 3:12-14. Add to the list of virtues on the board any found in this passage that were not previously named. Ask: *What effect might these virtues have on our lives?* Help class members to see that virtues bring healing and unity to relationships.



10. Invite a volunteer to read aloud the Memory Verse for today. Ask: *What word picture does Paul use in this verse? (Putting on clothes) Why do you think he chose this word picture? What reason does he give for why we should put on these virtues?* Guide class members into a discussion of what it means to be loved and chosen by God and how that knowledge might change us.

11. Ask: *Which virtue does Paul say is the most important? (Love) Why do you think love is so important?* Read aloud (or ask a strong reader) the two paragraphs in the Study Guide section entitled “Put on Love” to aid the discussion.

12. Invite volunteers to read aloud Colossians 3:15-17. Ask: *What things in life steal our peace? What do these verses tell us we can do to have peace in our lives?*

13. Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group one of the following Scripture passages: Ephesians 2:14-16, Philippians 4:6-7, and John 14:27. Each of these can be found on the Scripture page in the Study Guide. Be sure to point out that the verse from John is a quotation from Jesus. Ask each group to read their verses and then answer the following questions:

- *What type of peace is being described? (peace with God, between people, or inside our hearts)*
- *How can we get this peace?*

Allow time for groups to discuss their answers as a group, then invite groups to share their thoughts with the class. Lead the class in a discussion of how Jesus has brought us peace with God and now we can have peace in our hearts and between us because of what He has done for us.

Encourage Application

14. Read aloud Colossians 3:17 once again for the class. Say: *Our reason for getting rid of sin and putting on the virtues of God is to point to Jesus. When we give our lives to Him, He changes us from the inside out. We don't need to just act like new people. We are new people! And we want the world to see what He is doing in us.*

15. End in prayer that God will help us to put on His virtues so that we can become more like Jesus and bring Him honor in all we do.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ Ask: *Have you ever had a dream (nightmare) that you went to school or work in your underwear? What makes this such a bad dream?*

Say: *In our last lesson, we talked about getting rid of things — extra weight or bad habits. What are some reasons we might want to get rid of things like this?*

Guide the class to discuss getting rid of things that are broken or bad for us. Then ask: *What happens if we only get rid of things or habits but never replace them with other things or habits? How can we apply this idea to sin? With what might we replace our sin?*

Encourage Application

♦ Invite volunteers to come to the front and read a wise saying aloud to the class. Have each volunteer read their saying one at a time, just as they are.

Next, instruct the volunteers to select a costume item from the accessories you brought and to put it on. Now have them read their sayings again. Afterward, ask the class if they noticed anything different about the way they read their sayings.

Finally, instruct volunteers to choose an attitude to “put on” as they read their sayings. Again, ask about the difference in how they read their sayings afterward.

Discuss what it means to “put on” the virtues of God. Talk about the differences between pretending to be something, like putting on an act, and really being something different.

Ask: *Do you think that Paul meant for us to just pretend to be kind and loving? Can we ever change our hearts by first changing our actions?* Also talk about how the clothing we wear changes the way we feel about ourselves. Ask: *How might putting on kindness or love change how we feel about ourselves?*

Pretty is as pretty does.
(Unknown)

Butterflies come to pretty flowers.
(Korean proverb)

Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it.
(Confucius)

Beauty is God's handwriting.
(Ralph Waldo Emerson)

People are more than just the way they look.
(Madeleine L'Engle)

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English

*Colossians:
Christ Is All We Need*

Lesson 11: The Secret to Happy Relationships

Lesson Focus

To honor Christ in how we relate to others in our homes and in our jobs.

Bible Text

Colossians 3:18 to 4:1

Memory Verse

"God's plan looked foolish to men, but it is wiser than the best plans of men. God's plan which may look weak is stronger than the strongest plans of men." (1 Corinthians 1:25)

Prior Preparation

- ♦ For Connect with Life #1, prepare a boxed brownie mix as directed on the box. Add one tablespoon of cinnamon and one tablespoon of chili powder, and bake as directed. Be prepared to serve this treat to the class.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #3, prepare an illustration of strength and weakness as seen in the next column.

Connect with Life

1. Begin class by singing "Let Others See Jesus in You." (Find the lyrics at: https://www.hymnlyrics.org/requests/let_others_see_jesus_in_you.php)

Invite members to sample the brownies you prepared.

Say: *There are secret ingredients in my brownies! Can you tell what they are?* Invite guesses as to the secret ingredients that you added. Ask: *Does it seem foolish or strange to add cinnamon and chili powder to brownies?*

Ask if they have recipes with secret ingredients. Allow a few examples to be given.

Say: *It may seem odd to others to add these kinds of ingredients to a recipe, but sometimes, what seems strange or foolish to others has a real purpose and brings positive change. In a similar way, God's plan for saving humanity from sin seems strange or foolish to the world. His secret ingredient is His own unselfish love.*

When we show Christ's love in our relationships at

home and at work, we are different from the world around us. Others take notice — and we can point them to the forever, forgiving love of God.

Guide the Study

2. Review the Word List in the Study Guide. Review the Memory Verse several times together as a class, pointing out the contrasts of foolish/wise and weak/strong.

3. Transition to the image of strength and weakness prepared earlier. Ask: *What are these two people doing?* (Arm wrestling, an old game of "tug of war" for determining who is strongest) *If you were going to get these two people to stop fighting, whom would you go to first — the stronger or the weaker?*



Say: *Paul had heard about the problems in the Colossian church — husbands and wives were having trouble; children and parents weren't getting along; and working relationships between slaves and owners were a mess. Paul wanted the Colossian Christians to see that how they all treated each other should make them stand apart from the rest of their community. Paul knew that Christianity would not be very inviting to unbelievers if Christians were arguing and acting just like everyone else. If Christianity was going to make a difference in Colossae, it had to be transforming (changing) the relationships of the people in the church first.*

The same is true today. Unbelievers should be able to look at Christian families and like what they see — people being loved. People being respected and encouraged. People being forgiven. Unbelievers should look at Christian bosses and want to work for him/her. Today, we will ask ourselves if our families and our working relationships measure up to that. And together, we'll learn what the secret ingredients are to happy relationships!

4. Create this simple chart on the board but don't fill in the italicized words yet.

God's Plan for Our Relationships
Christ: Loves Unselfishly, Forgives, Saves, Equips, Protects, Guides, etc.

Ask: *For all our relationships in life, Jesus Christ is not just our Lord, but also our role model, our guide, our*

leader. What does He bring to this relationship? (List answers such as Jesus loves us unselfishly, saves us from sin, guides, protects, etc.)

Transition back to the Study Guide. Say: *Now let's consider Paul's words to married couples. But instead of speaking to the stronger husbands first, Paul spoke to the wives first.*

5. Ask someone to read Colossians 3:18-19 aloud. Use the information in the Study Guide section entitled, "Secrets for Wives and Husbands" to describe the condition of the family unit in Paul's day (first two paragraphs).

Add a row entitled Husbands and Wives to the chart. Teach/summarize the information in the rest of this Study Guide section about how married people were instructed by Paul to relate to each other.

God's Plan for Our Relationships
Christ: Loves Unselfishly, Forgives, Saves, Equips, Protects, Guides, etc.
Husbands and Wives: Love unselfishly, forgive, share, respect, work alongside, etc.

Ask: *What do each of these roles bring to the relationship?* (Add to the chart, being sure to point out that Paul wanted unselfish love to flow from their relationship with Christ into their relationship with each other. List other key concepts that the verses and the Study Guide content suggest.)

Optional discussion: Questions may arise about the meaning of *obey/submit* in verse 18. The Greek word is "hypotasso" (hoop-ot-AH-so); it comes from the Greek military term which means to arrange troops in a military fashion under the command of a leader. But in non-military use, it was a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden. This latter definition of cooperation and shared burdens illustrates a Christian marriage.

6. Next, move to Paul's "Secrets for Parents and Children." Ask someone to read verses 20-21 aloud. Say: *In verse 20, Paul again chose to speak first to the "weaker" person in the relationship—the children. They were still under the authority and care of their parents. When parents exercise their authority with the Christlike qualities of unselfish love and forgiveness, a child grows up learning how to show love and respect to others because he/she has experienced it firsthand at home. After that, Paul addressed men again in verse 21—fathers were guided to not "stir up, excite, provoke" their children so that they would be "broken in spirit, discouraged, lose heart."* (Greek meanings are in quotes.)

Follow by summarizing the content in that section as you add another layer to the bottom of the chart.

God's Plan for Our Relationships
Christ: Loves Unselfishly, Forgives, Saves, Equips, Protects, Guides, etc.
Husbands and Wives: Love unselfishly, forgive, share, respect, work alongside, etc.
Parents and Children: Love unselfishly, forgive children's mistakes, protect, guide, honor parents, etc.

Engage the class in listing the traits for these relationships, again emphasizing unselfish love and forgiveness which flow from a relationship with Christ.

If time allows: Expand the discussion to include how we are to treat children in general. Paul's words can apply to anyone who has authority over children. Ask: *Besides biological parents, who has authority over a child today?* (step-parents, foster parents, grandparents, teachers, policemen, coaches, etc.) *What good can happen when believers bless others' children with the secret ingredients of love and forgiveness?*

7. Next, describe the situation in the Roman world in which almost half of the population were servants/slaves. Refer back to the strength/weakness image.

Read aloud Colossians 3:22 to 4:1, then say: *Again, Paul wrote to the weaker person first. Paul did not call for slaves to roll over and be powerless, nor did he urge them to revolt against their owners. Instead, he said that the secret ingredients were to honor God by doing their best work and to work as if God were their boss.*

Fill in details on the last row of the chart.

God's Plan for Our Relationships
Christ: Loves Unselfishly, Forgives, Saves, Equips, Protects, Guides, etc.
Husbands and Wives: Love unselfishly, forgive, share, respect, work alongside, etc.
Parents and Children: Love unselfishly, forgive children's mistakes, protect, guide, etc.
Servants/Slaves and Owners: Love unselfishly, respect authority, work as if for the Lord, provide for those who work under you, etc.

Ask: *How would this kind of attitude change the place where you work or go to school? Do you see evidence of some people who are believers and others who are not by the way they relate to other people? What are some things we can do differently this week in our work relationships?*

Encourage Application

8. Close with the Secrets to Happy Relationships worksheet in the Study Guide. Work through the True/False questions together and the final three statements.

GIVE IN

F Accept the world's ways and live by a lower standard.

T Accept and agree with God's ways and obey Him.

GIVE UP

F Stop trying to do right.

T Stop acting and thinking in selfish ways.

GIVE VOICE

F Speak harsh words that shame and blame others for your troubles.

T Speak words that show God's love, grace, and mercy.

WE FULFILL GOD'S PLAN WHEN WE...

Look up to God's ways and His love.

Look in at your own life in the light of Christ's unselfish love for you.

Look out for the temptation to live like everyone else and not like Christ.

9. Close in prayer that we would all submit to God's authority in our lives, beginning with a relationship with Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Then, as His love and forgiveness pour onto us, we can add these "secret ingredients" to all the relationships in our life.

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Colossians:
Christ Is All We Need

Lesson 12: Secrets of Strong Believers

Lesson Focus

To lead adults to relate to others in the church and outside the family of God in a way that honors Christ.

Bible Text

Colossians 4:2-6

Memory Verse

"You must keep praying. Keep watching! Be thankful always." (Colossians 4:2)

Prior Preparation

- ♦ For Connect with Life #1, bring a drink dispenser to class and be prepared to offer coffee or tea.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #3, prepare bookmarks of the chant based on today's memory verse.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #7, introduce ways to pray for missions. Find content in an issue of *Missions Mosaic* (printed version or digital download available at <https://www.wmstore.com/missions-resources/adults/women-on-mission>) or visit the International Mission Board website (<https://www.imb.org/pray/>) for ideas. If you have an international class, print prayer requests for the regions of the world represented in your class. Print four or five of these current requests to be read aloud in class.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #10, prepare cards to hand out to volunteers in class. Write or print the following sentences, listing each on a separate card.
 - My garden is really beautiful this year. I have such lovely flowers.
 - My mother always beat her tomatoes with a broom to make them bloom.
 - Broccoli is my favorite vegetable.
 - Jesus said to consider the lilies of the field and how they grow.
- ♦ For Extra Teaching Ideas/Connect with Life, prepare a page for class members to list their prayer requests and praises. Use "Please pray for:" and "Please thank God for:" as column headings.

Connect with Life

1. As students enter the classroom, offer them a drink from a dispenser you have prepared. Don't force anyone to accept the offer, but give generously to those who will take it. Say: *I have devoted this dispenser to (coffee or tea). I never use it for anything else. It will only supply (tea or coffee). As believers, we are to be devoted to dispensing grace. The world will only experience God's grace when His children are devoted to prayer and are prepared to answer wisely at just the right time. And just like this dispenser, we never force God's grace on anyone. All of us must come to Christ freely without being forced.*

Guide the Study

2. Ask the class to stand and stretch with you. Instruct them to take a really deep breath and let it all the way out. Repeat this three times and allow the class to be seated. Use the first two paragraphs from the Study Guide section entitled "Keep Praying" as background information to compare breathing with prayer for strength and health. Or invite someone to read the paragraphs aloud for the class.
3. Invite someone to read Colossians 4:2. Hand out bookmarks of the chant below that you have prepared in advance. Use the chant to emphasize the memory verse. Divide the class into three groups. Group 1 reads the left line, Group 2 reads the italics line, and Group 3 reads the underlined line. The entire class should read the bold lines.

Keep praying.

Keep watching.

Keep thanking God.

Always pray to God.

Always watch for His hand.

Always thank Him for everything.

Pray at all times.

Watch at all times.

Thank Him at all times.

Never stop praying.

Never stop watching for His hand.

Never stop thanking Him.

Devote your life to prayer.

Devote your eyes to see Him at work.

Devote your heart to thankfulness.

Be always prayerful.

Be always watchful.

Be always thankful.

Keep on praying, watching, and thanking God for all He is doing around you.

4. Expand on the subject of praying deeply.

Ask: *Have you ever given up on a prayer? When have you prayed a long time before God answered your prayer?*

Be prepared to share from your own experience when God answered a prayer as you persistently prayed. Then say: *Keep praying.*

Ask: *Do you pray short prayers from memory? Or are you talking to your Father throughout your day as you see needs around you? Keep watching.* Use examples of praying all day from the Study Guide.

Ask: *How often do you say thanks to God? A thankful heart is a sign of a strong relationship with our Father. Keep being thankful.*

5. Ask students to call out things for which they are thankful. Write this list on the board, or hand out markers and invite students to come forward to write the list themselves. Examine the list. Look for deeper thankfulness.

Say: *Too often we are thankful for the same things over and over again. We are not seeing God's work in our every day lives and we are not thanking Him for working in us.* Give examples of deeper thankfulness: Avoiding an accident or injury. God's beautiful creations. His wisdom when I needed it.

6. Enlist a reader for Colossians 4:3-4. Say: *Paul challenged the believers to prayer beyond their own church boundaries, to think about their brothers and sisters in far off places.*

7. Introduce ways to pray for missions around the world via resources such as *Missions Mosaic* magazine or prayer content from the International Mission Board. Distribute copies to students who would be comfortable voicing a prayer. Write the IMB website address on the board: <https://www.imb.org/pray/>

8. Ask: *How should we pray for missionaries and believers in far off places?* Make a point that Paul did not ask for more comfortable living conditions, but for open doors to share the Gospel.

Ask: *Why do bad things happen to God's children?* Use the background information from the Study Guide section entitled "Pray for Open Doors" to emphasize that the grace and mercy of God can enter those places through His children. Or invite someone to read that section of the Study Guide.

Pause to read the prayer requests you have copied and invite someone to voice a prayer for each of these places and circumstances. Remember to pray for church planting here in the U.S. as well.

9. Read Colossians 4:5-6. Use the case studies at the bottom of this page to talk about how to live wisely among unbelievers.

10. Invite four people to come forward to begin a conversation. Hand each a card with a sentence written on it. The first person should start the conversation about gardening. Each person must then work the sentence on their card into the conversation.

11. After a few minutes, point out that manipulating the conversation to get our sentence in makes for a foolish conversation. Paul told believers to be wise and make their conversation wise and not foolish.

Encourage Application

12. Use Things to Think About as a discussion starter to emphasize that there are practical ways we can be devoted to prayer, to pray unselfishly, and to live wisely among unbelievers.

13. End in prayer for hearts to seek God, eyes to see Him at work, and lives to reflect His grace and truth to those around us who may not know Him.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Connect with Life

♦ As students enter, invite them to write down prayer requests and praises on a page you have prepared ahead of time. Allow the page to circulate the room as you continue the lesson.

Please pray for:

Please thank God for:

Guide the Study

♦ As you approach each section of the Scripture today, consider using these additional passages. Point out that Paul's advice to believers in Colossae was for all believers in all places and all times.

Colossians 4:2 — Ephesians 6:18

Colossians 4:3-4 — Ephesians 6:19-20

Colossians 4:5-6 — Ephesians 5:15-17 & 1 Peter 3:15

Jane was in a hurry. She had many things on her to-do list. The clerk in the store was very slow in bagging her items. Jane expressed her irritation, took the bags roughly, and left without saying thank you. How could Jane have used her time more wisely?

Mike had been a believer since he was a child. He had never taken a drink of alcohol or smoked a cigarette. When his co-workers talked about drinking or smoking, Mike lectured them about how God wanted their bodies to be temples of the Holy Spirit. He said that they would go to hell for the things they were doing. How could Mike have spoken more wisely?

James had been a believer for many years. One day a neighbor approached him as he was cleaning his flower beds. The neighbor asked, "James, what makes you such a good neighbor?" James answered, "Well, I don't really know. I guess I'm just a good guy." How could James have been better prepared to use this open door to share Jesus?

Teaching Guide

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English

*Colossians:
Christ Is All We Need*

Lesson 13: Secrets of Christian Friendship

Lesson Focus

To lead adults to recognize the blessings of Christian friends and to bless others with Christian friendship.

Bible Text

Colossians 4:7-18

Memory Verse

“So encourage one another with the hope you have. Build each other up. In fact, that’s what you are doing.”
(1 Thessalonians 5:11 NIRV)

Prior Preparation

- ♦ For Connect with Life #1, bring a children’s picture puzzle to class.
- ♦ For Guide the Study #2, prepare a handout like the chart seen on this page. Student handouts should have the Friends and Pronunciation columns filled in. The third and fourth columns should be left blank.
- ♦ For Extra Teaching Ideas/Guide the Study, prepare a simple outline of Paul’s life that highlights when and where he met these friends.
- ♦ For Extra Teaching Ideas/Encourage Application, find the list of “20 Things to Say to Encourage a Friend” at the website below. Prepare copies for your students.

<https://rachelwojo.com/things-to-say-to-encourage-a-friend/>

Connect with Life

1. As students arrive, hand out pieces of the puzzle to class members. Ask them to look at their pieces and try guess what the puzzle looks like. Then have each person place his or her piece in the correct place to complete the puzzle.

Ask: *Is it easy to tell what the puzzle is by looking at only one piece? How does seeing the pieces together make it easier to see the importance of each piece?*

How does coming together with other believers help us see more clearly what God is doing in each of our lives?

Say: *In today’s lesson, we will see how individual friends helped the ministry of Paul. And we will think about how our friends help us to be more effective as we serve Christ.*

Guide the Study

2. Begin a chart on the board like the one below, filling in the columns as you go through the lesson. Introduce Tychicus and Onesimus by writing their names in the first column. Write out the pronunciation, and practice saying those two names together.

Friends	Pronounced	Quality	My Friend
Tychicus	(TICH-i-kus)	Trusted	
Onesimus	(O-NESS-i-mus)	New believer	
Aristarchus	(Air-i-STAR-kus)	Faithful	
Mark	(Mark)	Second chance	
Justus	(JUST-us)	Encourager	
Epaphras	(E-PAA-frus)	Prayer warrior	
Luke	(Luke)	Able and willing	
Demas	(DEE-mus)	Learning	
Nympha	(NIM-fa)	Unselfish	
Archippus	(ARE-chip-us)	Called to serve	
Timothy	(TIM-o-thee)	Helpful	

3. Read Colossians 4:7-9 aloud and ask the class to follow along. Use the background information in the Study Guide section entitled “Paul’s Messengers” to explain the history of Paul’s friendships with these two men. Or invite a reader to read the appropriate paragraphs from the Study Guide section.

Ask: *What word would describe Tychicus? (trusted) Onesimus? (new believer)*

Say: *We all need a friend who can be trusted with the details of our lives. And we all need a friend that we have brought to Christ.* Invite students to write the names of their own friends in the fourth column.

4. Read aloud Colossians 4:10-11. Say: *The next three people listed are all Jews. Why would it be special for Paul to have Jewish friends? (They would understand him because he was also a Jew.)*

Practice the pronunciations of Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus. Use the Study Guide section entitled “Paul’s Team” to fill in the details on these men or have someone read the appropriate paragraphs aloud. Point out that Aristarchus was with Paul in some very difficult times, but he never left. We don’t know why Aristarchus was in prison, but we know that he was with Paul when a riot broke out in Ephesus, when Paul was arrested in Jerusalem, when Paul was shipwrecked, and when Paul was in prison.

Ask: *What quality would you list for Aristarchus? (faithful) Do you have a faithful friend?*

5. Say: *We know only one thing about Justus. Read verse 11 again and decide what quality we should list for him (encourager). Who is your encourager?*

6. Share the background information on Mark or read the third paragraph in the Study Guide section entitled “Paul’s Team.” Ask: *What does it mean to give someone a second chance? (See the Word List.) Has someone ever given you a second chance at friendship? Have you ever given someone a second chance? Why is this an important secret to Christian friendships? (Jesus made it possible for all of us to have a second chance at life that lasts forever. We need to be as forgiving and loving as Jesus.)*

7. Read verses 12–13, and practice the pronunciation of the name Epaphras. Give the background for this church planter or have someone read the fourth paragraph from the same Study Guide section.

Say: *Paul spent two verses explaining a friendship quality of Epaphras. What is most notable about Epaphras? (his prayer life) For Epaphras, prayer was a battle. He could be called a prayer warrior. Ask: Do you have a friend who goes to war in prayer for you? Are you that praying friend for someone?*

8. Invite someone to read verse 14. Say: *Paul said very little about these two men. Luke was well-known by believers because he traveled with Paul. He wrote the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. This is the only place where we learn that Luke was a doctor. It helps explain how he could write such orderly accounts of the lives of Jesus and the early church. What quality would you give Luke? (willing and able)*

Say: *Demas is another story. We know from 2 Timothy that eventually Demas would give up his faith in Christ and return to the world. This proves that Paul was a friend to people who were still learning about Christ. He did not surround himself only with strong believers. Why is this an important secret for Christian friendships? (We should all be seeking to lead others to follow Christ and helping them to grow in their walk with Him.)*

9. Read Colossians 4:15-18. Practice the pronunciations of the names Nympha and Archippus. Ask: *Have you ever been a part of a church plant team? What was your experience?*

10. Say: *It might be easy to start work for the Lord. Sometimes it is hard to finish it. Paul encouraged these two church planters in Colossae and Laodicea. Fill in the background on these two people from the Study Guide section entitled “Final Greetings.” Say: It is a generous thing to let a church meet in your home. Paul knew that they might be getting tired, and he encouraged them to stay strong. What qualities would you list for Nympha and Archippus? (unselfish and called to serve) Who is your unselfish friend? What servant of Christ is your friend?*

11. Say: *There is an unnamed friend in this list. Timothy was mentioned in the first verse of chapter 1. Explain how Timothy wrote the letter as Paul dictated it. Explain the significance of Paul’s signature to prove that the letter was from him.*

Encourage Application

12. Ask: *Were you able to identify a friend with each quality in your life? Are you being that kind of friend?* End in prayer.

Extra Teaching Ideas

Guide the Study

♦ As you go through the lesson, point out the times in Paul’s life in which he met these men. Make note that Paul made friends and kept them!

The Life and Friendships of Paul

32 AD — Saul’s life before he met Jesus (Acts 7:54-9:19)

- Jesus changed Saul’s life. (Acts 9:20-31)
- Barnabas introduced Saul as a new believer. (Acts 9:26-29)
- Barnabas encouraged Saul as he grew in faith. (Acts 13:1)

47-49 AD — First Mission Trip (Acts 13)

- Barnabas and Saul traveled with Mark.
- Saul took the name of Paul.
- Mark left and returned home.

49 AD — Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-35)

- Paul wrote Galatians.

49-51 AD — Second Mission Trip (Acts 14:36-18:22)

- Paul and Barnabas disagreed about Mark.
- Paul met Timothy.
- Luke joined Paul’s team.

52-57 AD — Third Mission Trip (Acts 18:23-21:14)

- Epaphras was saved when Paul preached at Ephesus.
- Epaphras went home to Colossae and planted a church.
- Silversmiths rioted and Aristarchus was dragged away.
- Paul wrote 2 Corinthians and Romans.
- Aristarchus and Tychicus joined Paul’s team.

58 AD — Paul arrested in Jerusalem (Acts 21:14-23:35)

- Paul moved to Caesarea. (Acts 24-26)

60 AD — Paul’s stormy trip to Rome (Acts 27-28)

- Luke and Aristarchus traveled with Paul.
- Paul’s team assembled at his house—prison.
- Paul wrote Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians.

?? — Paul’s release from prison

- Paul wrote 1 Timothy and Titus.

?? — Paul arrested again

- Paul wrote 2 Timothy.

64 or 68 AD — Paul beheaded in Rome

Encourage Application

♦ Use the list of “20 Things to Say to Encourage A Friend” as you discuss the questions in Things to Think About. End in prayer for powerful friendships!