

JESUS CHRIST, OUR ALL IN ALL

A Study of Colossians

STUDY FIVE

Counsel from a Concerned Apostle

Colossians 2:1–12

You do not need more if you have Christ. You are not missing anything because, with Christ, you have the very essence of God.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

THE cult leaders who intruded the Colossian church not only assaulted the faith of each Christian but, consequently, threatened cutting the church's bond of love. False teaching does that. It corrupts right practice. It breaks apart communities. Paul could not stand idly by to let this happen to the Colossian believers, so he wrote the letter we're focused on in this series.

After expounding the gospel, the supremacy of Christ, and his own ministry labors for the church in general, Paul addressed the erroneous doctrines in Colossae. False teachers had introduced mysticism, asceticism, legalism, and even astrology, which implied Jesus alone wasn't enough for salvation. Paul knew all too well that the added weight of "empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense" (Colossians 2:8) would deluge their simple faith in Christ and drown out their love for each other.

In this first of two sermons on Colossians chapter two, Pastor Chuck Swindoll details Paul's counsel that leads his readers back to Christ in whom the Christian has all he or she needs spiritually. Learning how Paul dismantled the falsities in his day will prove instructive for us to do the same in ours.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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PREPARE YOUR HEART

First, reflect on Pastor Chuck’s prayer below. Make it your own. A soft heart and open mind, which can come only from the Spirit’s prompting, must accompany our study. Bring these requests forward, knowing that the Lord delights in giving such gifts.

Father, thank You for the privilege of learning Your Word. May it mean something very significant to me as the days pass and times get hard and nights grow long. Remind me, Lord, that I am in Christ, and with Him I have “all things richly to enjoy.” In His matchless name I pray. Amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

The Colossians needed each other more than ever during the time when Paul wrote them. Paul cringed over Satan’s scheming in their midst. He wished he could be with them, but Rome had locked him down under house arrest. Even so, Paul *could* visit them through his pen.

At the beginning of chapter two, the Colossians learned they were receiving counsel from a man who had agonized for them even though they had not seen him face to face. Surely *that* got their attention!



Observation: Personal Encouragement

Begin by observing *Colossians 2:1–12*. Read slowly and thoughtfully, and note below your important finds.



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Colossians 2:1–12

Colossians 2:1–5

How did Paul express his emotional and spiritual attachment to the Colossians?

What outcome did Paul want his letter to produce among them? He mentioned this outcome in both positive and negative terms.

What could make that outcome a reality among the believers?



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Colossians 2:6–7

What responsibility did Paul lay upon his readers in *Colossians 2:6*, and how did he further explain it in *2:7*?

What did Paul say would mark the life of one who obeyed his command to “continue to follow” Jesus (*Colossians 2:6–7*)?

A marked sign of good health and strong growth is an overflow of thanksgiving.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Colossians 2:8–12

Specify Paul’s two descriptions of the false teachings and the two sources of these doctrines that threatened the church in Colossae (*Colossians 2:8*).

Descriptions

1. _____
2. _____



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Sources

1. _____
2. _____

How does *Colossians 2:9–10* clue us into the idea that the false teachers sought to enhance Christianity by adding to Christ?

How did Paul explain to the Colossians their completeness in Christ in *Colossians 2:9–12*?

Paul turned his audience's attention to the basics. By believing in Jesus, they were born anew. Next, they were not to swerve from the truth but stay on the spiritual path—centered on Christ, united in love.



Interpretation: Doctrinal Warnings

Now let's define more clearly what Paul meant with his references to false teaching and how our connection to Christ precludes the need for spiritual supplements. Remember to consult your Bible study tools. *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary* is Pastor Chuck's favorite dictionary. If you do not own a commentary on Colossians, Pastor Chuck has published *one* that would be a great addition to your library.



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Do a little research on [Colossians 2:8](#). Explain the substance of these false teachings Paul addressed, where they might have come from, and their worldview that stood contrary to the gospel. Consult [Constable's Notes](#) at [netbible.org](#) on Colossians if needed.

If you haven't learned it yet, learn, starting today, that those who would lead you astray do not do so by insulting you. They don't use words that are harsh and offensive. They're very persuasive. They appear to be very loving. They use words that describe "caring for you" and "interested in you" and "concerned that you may be missing what life is all about." They're here to tell you in their smooth and persuasive manner that "this is what you're missing." —Pastor Chuck Swindoll

Next, let's review what role circumcision had among the Jewish people and describe what Paul meant when he used it in reference to Christ and Christians ([Colossians 2:11–12](#)). Do so by looking up [circumcision](#) in your Bible dictionary. Paul wrote, "Christ performed a spiritual circumcision" (2:11). To what spiritual act was Paul referring (2:12)?



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One commentator aptly summarizes Paul’s intent for writing Colossians 2:1–12:

All the fullness of Deity dwells in Christ, and in him believers have been given the fullness of salvation through his death and resurrection. There is nothing we can do or need to do to achieve it for ourselves. No self-imposed discipline, solemn rites, or otherworldly visions will make us fuller members of the community of the saints (1:12), will deliver us more fully from [our] sins, or will more fully secure a better hope.¹



Correlation: Our Crucifixion with Christ

In Christ, we have all we need! All “the fullness of God” lives in Christ and *we are complete in Him* (Colossians 2:9). We are fully accepted by God, freed from sin’s control, and absolutely secure both now and forever. When God joins us to Christ through faith, we share in Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. Consequently, our old life is dead, and our new life has begun!

Read Paul’s declaration of our marvelous and mysterious union with Christ in [Galatians 2:20](#). In the space below, write down what it means to be crucified with Christ and the benefits of our co-crucifixion.

Before our conversion, sin dominated our lives, but after conversion, the Spirit removes sin’s power. ***What a grand truth to remember every day!***



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Application: Watering Our Roots

How do we harness Paul’s teaching about Christ to help us today? Pastor Chuck wrote four tips for applying the Scriptures to your life.²

1. *Think*: “When you apply the Scriptures, reflect on what is going on in your life.”
2. *Acknowledge*: “Identify any personal trouble spot in your life.” It could be sin or temptation, illness or loss, anxiety or depression.
3. *Ask*: “Bring up specific questions as you invite the Lord to probe within.”
4. *Pursue*: “Seek out paths that lead you to wholeness and spiritual health.”

Use these four tips now and create your own, specific application for Colossians 2:1–12. This, too, requires prayer, meditation, and sensitivity to God’s Spirit. Don’t lose heart if it’s difficult. Applying God’s Word takes patience and practice, and it’s worth it!

In his sermon, Pastor Chuck ends with three application points to help us remain grounded in gospel truth and knit together in gospel community.

1. *Once every week, affirm and encourage someone.*
2. *Once every day, think of something for which you are grateful.*
3. *Through the hours of the day, pause and remind yourself, “I am complete in Christ.”*

Keep these in mind as you go about your week. Perhaps you need to reach out to a friend right now. Go ahead. You’ll be glad you did.



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A FINAL PRAYER

To complete this study, record a prayer below. Thank Christ for your connection to Him, and ask Christ to strengthen you in your walk with Him.

ENDNOTES

1. David E. Garland, *Colossians and Philemon*, NIV Application Commentary Series, gen. ed. Terry Muck (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 139.
2. Charles R. Swindoll, *Searching the Scriptures: Find the Nourishment Your Soul Needs* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2016), 175, 176, 178. Visit sts.insight.org to learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study.

