

# JESUS CHRIST, OUR ALL IN ALL

## A Study of Colossians

### STUDY EIGHT

## Wherever, Whatever, Whenever, However . . . Christ!

*Colossians 3:15–4:1*

*Let the Word of Christ run and have free course in your life. Let it fill your life. Let it fill your thoughts. Let it be on your tongue. Let it be in the focus of your eyes. Let it shape your attitude about your situation and your circumstances. You see, the Word of Christ covers all of life.*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

**P**REVIOUSLY, Paul told the Colossians to live as they are in Christ: *NEW!* With new identities and new natures, they had new power to live in the image of their Creator. But Paul didn't end his instruction there.

Like a master artist training a protégé, Paul did not leave the Colossians guessing about how to paint their new lives. He took up his theological brush and daubed a few strokes of what life in Christ looks like—wherever we are, whatever we do, whenever the time, however we feel.

We look at those strokes in this study of the book of Colossians. Pastor Chuck Swindoll teaches us the wondrous truths of Colossians 3:15–4:1 that we ourselves might affirm with Paul, “It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20).



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

## Wherever, Whatever, Whenever, However . . . Christ!

*Colossians 3:15–4:1*



### PREPARE YOUR HEART

Let Pastor Chuck's prayer below become your own as you prepare your mind and heart for God's Word.

*Our Father, we invite You to invade every part of our lives. Deep within our hearts, begin there. Into our minds, fill our thoughts with those things that will ultimately bring us peace and direction, courage, encouragement. And as these things work together through the power of Your Spirit, we pray that You will serve as the ruler of our lives. Wherever, whatever, whenever, however—may Christ be preeminent, occupying first place in what we say, what we think, and what we do. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



### TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

“Paul wrote with a logical progression in Colossians 3. In the latter part of this chapter—the focus of this study—he explained *how* we set our minds on Christ, the giver of *new life*. Then Paul zeroed in on the Christian's home . . . a very difficult yet very important arena for the Christian to live out that new life.



### Observation: Ruled by Peace

Observe *Colossians 3:15–4:1*. Note a few observations below as you do.



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*Colossians 3:15–4:1*

*Colossians 3:15–17* addresses all Christians. Record a picture of what life looks like when one follows Paul's directives in these verses.

In *3:18–4:1*, Paul addresses specific life roles. List the five roles below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

*You cannot name a circumstance, a situation, something you're facing, a decision you need to make, that is outside the bounds of something His Word speaks to. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*

In a culture that dehumanized slaves and trivialized the value of women and children, Paul ascribed to them dignity as God's image-bearers. In Christ, all stand equal. In Christ, all stand free. In Christ, all have moral responsibility. In Christ, work carries divine weight. In Christ, the home receives an ordered unity motivated not by law or tradition or intimidation but by allegiance to King Jesus, by gratitude for His grace, and by love for one another.



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### Interpretation: Christ's Representative

During interpretation, we cultivate the garden of our mind, having received the seed of God's Word, that His words might bloom colorful thoughts of understanding and clarity with roots reaching deep into the soil of the heart. This aids our spiritual maturity. Also, as we move on, don't forget to grab those Bible study resources!

First, consider why obedience to Paul's commands in *Colossians 3:15–17* fosters our flourishing in the earthly roles we inhabit (*3:18–4:1*). How do these two paragraphs relate?

Even though Paul's command to wives (*3:18*) may sound like his command to children (*3:20*), he used different verbs for the commands and qualified them differently. How do these two commands and their qualifications differ, and why is that difference important?

*The presence of Christ is to be seen in my home and with my family. The presence of Christ is to pervade, is to permeate my home, my family. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



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Note Paul's commands to husbands (*Colossians 3:19*) and masters (*4:1*). What was he concerned about for them? Husbands and masters generally interacted with their wives and slaves with dictatorial authority in Paul's day. How did Christ transform the responsibility and attitude for these Christian husbands and masters?

Slaves receive the most attention from Paul, including commands (*3:22–23*), encouragement (*3:24*), and warnings (*3:25*). First, summarize Paul's statements for each category.

During Paul's time, slaves had no legal rights but existed as property and had little moral culpability. They lived in a realm beyond the reach of justice—but not according to Paul. Explain the significance of Paul's words to slaves based on this cultural insight.



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Regarding Paul's exhortations to slaves, think how such theological principles might apply to employees in the workplace in our day. Record one or two below.

*Workers, do as you're instructed to do without complaining. Be diligent even when you're unobserved. Realize that your employment reveals your commitment to Christ.*

—Pastor Chuck Swindoll

In summary, what does the life of Christ look like in us? In this passage, Paul presented four ways we portray the image of Christ:

- The peace of Christ ruling our hearts (*Colossians 3:15*)
- The message of Christ occupying our minds (*3:16–17*)
- The presence of Christ permeating our homes (*3:18–21*)
- The life of Christ guiding our work (*3:22–4:1*)

Jesus steps into every aspect of our lives. He purifies us with the fires of divine love. He burns away the dross that once corrupted how we treat other people. The life of God takes on a clearer display in our refined nature.



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### **Correlation: The Household in Ephesus**

Paul wrote similar instructions for Ephesian households in *Ephesians 5:21–6:9*. Read this passage a time or two, and consider how it relates to what Paul taught in Colossians. Record below three ways it complements what we learned above.

It is amazing to think how God designed marriage to symbolize Christ's union with the church! It's a good reminder that no random particle exists in our universe without reflecting the glory of God.



### **Application: Christ at the Center**

Paul told the Colossians that Christ is their life, the very center of their existence. After a deep study of this passage, Pastor Chuck encourages you with two applications to cling to as you make Christ the center of your life.

1. *Wherever and whatever*—Christ will eliminate the obstacles preventing you from doing His will. You need not fear or doubt because God is holding you.
2. *Whenever and however*—Christ will enable you to change. Remarkable wonders occur when you make Him preeminent in your life.

Let those truths encourage you. In what way is one or both important for you to remember and embrace?



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Now consider the role or roles you occupy which Paul addressed. For “masters,” think *boss*, and for “slaves,” think *employee*. Based on your study, in what area is Christ transforming you? How is the Spirit moving you to better reflect the Son? Consider this in terms of your attitude, speech, or actions.

Christ has given you a fresh canvas and equipped you with spiritual paint and a theological brush to design a beautiful and unique life—no matter your age or role—that exalts the Master Artist Himself who is making all things new.



**A FINAL PRAYER**

End this study with a prayer of petition and praise reflecting the truth you learned in Colossians 3:15–4:1.

