It’s All About Jesus!

DEVOTIONAL: 21 DAYS THROUGH COLOSSIANS
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INTRODUCTION: IT’S ALL ABOUT JESUS!

PAUL WROTE HIS LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS while he was in prison, with the hope of encouraging and challenging these believers to center their life on Jesus. Amid problems of heresy and false teachings, Paul gives one of the fullest expressions of Jesus’ deity, supremacy and how that should impact their everyday life. Namely, that all of life should be rooted and built up in the life, work and person of Jesus.

Life is too short to spend it wandering aimlessly. Colossians is a reminder that Jesus is the only one who is worthy of following and a challenge to live a life of faithful service to Him.

Over the next 21 Days, you will have the opportunity to read and focus on the entire book of Colossians.

Each day consists of four devotional elements:
A few verses from the Book of Colossians;
A devotional thought based on the verses for the day;
A reflection question;
And a short prayer.

Our hope is that each of these readings would prime the pump for God to work in your heart so that you are encouraged and challenged to live a life that is all about Jesus!
COLOSSIANS: IT’S ALL ABOUT JESUS!

DAY ONE: COLOSSIANS 1:1–8

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, 2 To God’s holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ: Grace and peace to you from God our Father. 3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God’s people— 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel 6 that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace. 7 You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, 8 and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

PAUL BEGINS THIS BOOK by thanking the Lord for the Colossian believers because they were known for their faith in God and their love for others. Their hope was built on Jesus and they could not help but live a life that produced the fruit of their transformation. In other words, everyone around them knew that they knew Jesus. If you are a follower of Jesus, then you are called to live in the same way. Every thought, every word and every action should demonstrate the Jesus you follow so that the good news may spread all around you.

Do others know that you know Jesus?

PRAY: Lord, help me follow You so closely that they see You more than they see me.
For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

PAUL’S PRAYER FOR THE COLOSSIANS is both an encouragement and a challenge to all believers. Your ability to live a life that brings worship and honor to the Lord is dependent upon your relationship with the Lord. The closer you are to God, the more strength you have to bear godly fruit, grow in godly knowledge and patiently endure this life with thanksgiving. This prayer is a reminder that while the inheritance of eternal life will come, your current waiting is purposeful and can be used to glorify God as you seek to cultivate a relationship with Him.

What are some ways you can grow in your relationship with the Lord?

PRAY: Lord, show me where I can grow in my relationship with You so that I may worship You more and more with the way I live.
DAY THREE: COLOSSIANS 1:12–14

13For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

JESUS IS THE ONLY ONE who has the power to forgive because He is the only one who could defeat the dominion of sin and death. Every person in this world understands that there is brokenness all around them. However, they don’t know how to fix the problem. Every effort to find fulfilment, purpose and salvation apart from Jesus is a vain attempt that only leads to further darkness. You were created to live in the Kingdom of God but sin cast you into exile. Jesus is the only one who can restore your citizenship.

Do you look like a citizen of God’s Kingdom?

PRAY: Lord, thank You for rescuing me from darkness and bringing me into Your light. Help me live as a citizen of Your Kingdom.
DAY FOUR: COLOSSIANS 1:15–17

The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

CHRISTOLOGY IS THE STUDY OF THE LIFE, work and person of Jesus. The life of Jesus teaches about His perfect obedience to be the perfect sacrifice for sin. The work of Jesus teaches that salvation was accomplished in His death and resurrection. The person of Jesus teaches that Jesus’ divinity and humanity were both necessary to bring salvation. Paul is writing to these believers to be encouraged by solid Christology: Jesus is the perfect, visible reflection of God. Firstborn does not indicate Him being created but denotes His position as supreme one over all creation. In fact, the next verses show that He is the Creator of all things and that all things find their beginning and their purpose in Him. This means that you were created by the hand of Jesus and for the glory of Jesus! You have no life apart from Him.

How do these Christological truths effect your everyday life?

PRAY: Lord, You are worthy of all worship! Teach me to find my life and purpose in You.
DAY FIVE: COLOSSIANS 1:18–20

18 And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

PAUL CONTINUES HIS CHRISTOLOGICAL FOCUS by declaring Jesus as both ruler and rescuer of all things. The fact that Jesus rules over the church means that the church exists to make much of Jesus, which is drastically different than the church existing for the comfort of its members. Jesus also rules over the dead, meaning that He alone defeated death. He is the head and life of His people! Additionally, the fullness of God dwelled in Him and as a result He was able to save humanity. If Jesus was not God, He would not have had the power to save. If Jesus did not take on flesh, He would not have been the perfectly obedient substitute. But because He was both God and man, you can have peace with God through Jesus Christ.

Does your life display Jesus as both ruler and rescuer?

PRAY: Lord, thank You for rescuing me. Be the ruler of my life and help me follow Your leading.


Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO PERSEVERE in the Christian life is to remember who you once were apart from Jesus. Without Jesus, you remain an enemy of God. With Jesus, you become a part of the family of God. Like an adoption, your familial status does not rest in your abilities but in the love and mercy of Jesus. He is the one who clothes you with righteousness; He is the one who makes you holy and set-apart; He is the one who sustains your salvation. In the midst of trials, persecution, wanderings and doubts, turn to Jesus because He is always constant and true.

How does your spiritual adoption help you persevere in the faith?

PRAY: Lord, continually remind me that while I was Your enemy, You are the Savior and Sustainer of my salvation.
DAY SEVEN: COLOSSIANS 1:24–2:3

24Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. 25I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—26the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord’s people. 27To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. 29To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. 2My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, 3in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

THIS PASSAGE UNPACKS what a life in service to King Jesus looks like: It’s a life that makes much of Jesus regardless of the earthly consequences. Over and again, Paul suffered for the name of Jesus. Why would he go through all of that? Because Paul understood just how glorious God’s salvation through Jesus was, is and will be! Paul’s dedication to the Gospel should challenge you in your walk with Jesus. As a servant of Christ you are called to “strenuously contend with all the energy” to make much of the name of Jesus. You are called to encourage and love others in the name of Jesus. And you are called to seek and proclaim the good news of Jesus so that others may also grow in their walk with Jesus.

How would you evaluate your labor for the Lord?

PRAY: Lord, captivate me with Your salvation so that I may serve You wherever I go.
DAY EIGHT: COLOSSIANS 2: 4–10

*I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments.*  
*I For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.*  
*I So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.*  
*I See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.*  
*I For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,*  
*I and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.*

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A PROCESS. Once the salvation of Jesus has been planted in your life, you are commanded to grow in your knowledge, faith and love of Jesus. Reading Scripture, spending time in prayer, gathering with God’s people and pursuing other spiritual disciplines are like water to the roots of the Gospel. They each help you grow up and mature in your relationship with Jesus so that you can flourish in His way and stand firm in the midst of false beliefs and ways of life. For because Jesus was fully God, you can only fully have life in Him.

Am I growing in my relationship with Jesus?

PRAY: Lord, convict me of the areas in my life that are stifling my spiritual growth so that I may turn away from them and grow in my relationship with You.
11In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self-ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, 12having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. 13When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. 15And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

**CIRCUMCISION WAS THE PHYSICAL** sign of God’s covenant with His people in the Old Testament, showing Israel’s special relationship with God. This passage is one of many in the New Testament that explain Jesus as the fulfilment of God’s covenant to His people. Rather than talk about the need for physical alterations and external actions, Paul says every person needs a spiritual transformation to be a part of God’s people. Only Jesus can do this. In salvation, Jesus takes your dead, uncircumcised heart and resurrects it. You stood rightfully condemned before God and you were cut off from the people of God. But Jesus humiliates what once condemned you and now reigns as the triumphant king.

**How do these truths help foster a greater devotion to Jesus?**

**PRAY:** Lord, You are the great and triumphant one! Teach me to stand in Your truth and grace so that I may walk in a life of devotion to You.
Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

THERE WERE SOME IN COLOSSAE who were trying to achieve a higher spiritual status by continuing to observe Jewish festivals and dietary restrictions. Additionally, they looked down on others who did not participate. But Paul argues that the Law in the Old Testament was a shadow that was always designed to point us to Jesus, for He fulfilled the Law. In other words, every story, rule and regulation from Genesis through Malachi is cohesive in revealing humanity’s need for Jesus. Only through a relationship with Jesus will you gain a closer relationship with the Lord. Your pursuit of spirituality begins and ends in Christ.

How do these verses speak to your freedom in Christ?

PRAY: Lord, forgive me for the times I have made my salvation one of rules and regulations. Help me develop a closer relationship with You.
**DAY ELEVEN: COLOSSIANS 2: 18–23**

18 Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. 19 They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow. 20 Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: 21 “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”? 22 These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. 23 Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

**THERE ARE ALL SORTS OF DISTRACTIONS** that come up when you are trying to follow Jesus. Some of the Colossians were distracted by their pursuit of knowledge and spirituality that were detached from Jesus himself. Instead, their intellect and alleged spiritual experiences led them to be arrogant, proud and overconfident in themselves. The result was catastrophic: their pride kept them stuck in their sin. As you mature in Christ, be on your guard against the leaven of the religious elite (Matthew 16:6; Luke 12:1): there will always be the temptation to think of yourself as better and more spiritual than other Christians around you. But this self-worship is spiritually crippling. A true relationship with Jesus is one of humility and grace.

**How often are you distracted by spiritual arrogance?**

**PRAY:** Lord, convict me in the places I’ve grown prideful and too self-assured. Humble me and keep me focused on You.
Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

**PAUL SHIFTS GEARS TO FOCUS** on some of the practical implications of the work of Christ in the life of a believer. As you believe in Jesus, you are united with Him in His life and in His death, both now and in the future. In the present, Jesus gave you a new heart and a new mind. Your command is to set your greatest desires, loves, thoughts and motives on what is honoring and pleasing to Him. Every time you choose to dwell on Him and follow His way, you are walking by faith and experiencing a glimpse of the future glory that is awaiting for all those hidden in Christ.

**What are some ways you can set your heart and your mind on Jesus?**

**PRAY:** Lord, You have given me a new heart and a new mind. Teach me to set them both on You.
COLOSSIANS: IT'S ALL ABOUT JESUS!

DAY THIRTEEN: COLOSSIANS 3: 5–9

5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices...

AS YOU ARE UNITED WITH CHRIST IN HIS LIFE, so also you are united with Him in His death. This means that you have access to Jesus’ resurrection power to defeat the sin that rages inside of you. Prior to salvation, you were enslaved to sin. Now, Jesus works in you to kill your sin. Sin is a big problem because it breaks down our relationship with God. If you aren’t careful, you can allow sin to linger and slowly but surely your life will be marked by spiritual decay. Therefore, as John Owen famously said, “Be killing sin or it will be killing you.” Fight sin with the Word of God and flee from temptation with the power of God (1 Corinthians 10:13).

What sin(s) need to be put to death in your life?

PRAY: Lord, help me be united with You in your death so that I can cling to Your Word and Your power to kill the sin that is inside of me.
...And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

As a believer, you are being renewed into the perfect image of Jesus which means that you see every other person on the planet the way Jesus sees them: image bearers who need a Savior. Jesus transcends all cultural, racial and socioeconomic barriers to call His people to be different and set apart from the rest of the world. When the world chooses to be selfish, Christians choose to be selfless. When the world chooses to be angry, Christians choose to be patient and forgiving. When the world chooses hate, Christians choose love. Jesus transforms your relationships with others.

Are your relationships with others modeled after Jesus’ love for you?

Pray: Lord, move me to love others like You have loved me.
COLOSSIANS: IT’S ALL ABOUT JESUS!

DAY FIFTEEN: COLOSSIANS 3: 15–16

15Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

WHEN JESUS RULES YOUR HEART, your life is marked by peace and gratitude. One of the best ways to keep Jesus on the throne of your life is to continually worship Him with other Christians. Church was never intended to save you or be a part of the Christian “to-do” list. The true purpose of corporate worship has always been to center on the teaching of God’s Word so that you are constantly reminded of His truth. And as you gather, you naturally encourage one another as you give Him praise and thanksgiving. God did not leave you by yourself, join in worshipping alongside of His people.

How often do you worship with other believers?

PRAY: Lord, thank You for not leaving me alone. Surround me with others who will encourage me to worship Jesus.
And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. 

Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 

Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. 

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. 

Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

This passage is a reminder that if you are a believer, then Jesus is Lord over every aspect of your life. Whatever you do in this world is an opportunity to worship Jesus. Paul gives two initial everyday spheres where you can be faithful: in marriage and in family. Wives worship the Lord when they treat their husbands with respect. Husbands worship the Lord when they love their wives like Christ loved the church. Children worship the Lord when they honor their parents. Parents worship the Lord when they nurture their children. You can’t segment worship into a once-a-week event. Every moment is a call to live faithfully and obediently so that whatever you do or say will bring glory to God.

Do you see everything in your day to day as an opportunity to worship Jesus?

Pray: Lord, show me the areas of my life where I am trying to keep You at a distance. Teach me to do everything in a way that is worship to You.
22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, 24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. 25 Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism. 1Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

THE CALL TO ACTION IN THIS PASSAGE is continuing what was said in previous verses, namely that everything you do is an opportunity to worship the Lord. In this context, Paul now addresses slaves, which should be understood as servants: those people who work for someone. He also addresses masters: those people who oversee workers. He argues that both roles ultimately report to the Lord. Regardless of your position or job, your work has the opportunity to be worship to the Lord. To do this, let your work be done with honor, integrity, sincerity and diligence.

Do you view your work as worship?

PRAY: Lord, continually remind me that my work can be worship to You. In everything I do, may I work as though working for You.
DAY EIGHTEEN: COLOSSIANS 4: 2–4

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

IT IS EASY TO BE BLINDED BY EVERYDAY LIFE and fail to see God work all around you. Paul urges these Colossians to pray specifically for Gospel awareness and readiness. Prayer awakens you to live according to God’s Word. Prayer helps you stay connected with the Lord so that you can make the most of every opportunity. Prayer reminds you of your dependence on Him as you go. God is the only one Who has the power to save. God opens the hearts of others to be receptive to His message, and your responsibility, in both your words and actions, is to proclaim Jesus with clarity as the Lord works.

How often do you pray like this?

PRAY: Lord, go before me and make me aware of all the opportunities I have to live a life that clearly points others to Jesus.
DAY NINETEEN: COLOSSIANS 4: 5–6

5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

IF YOU ARE A FOLLOWER OF JESUS, then you are always representing Jesus to others. You can’t take a day off from being a Christian. Every interaction you have with others is an opportunity to display the fruit of God’s working in your life. Both how you act and how you speak communicate what you believe about Jesus. Use these as an evaluation point in your life: if others looked at your actions, would they see Jesus? If others heard your conversations, would they hear Jesus?

Do your actions and words represent Jesus to others?

PRAY: Lord, continually remind me that I represent You wherever I go. In my actions and conversations, let me shine your light in the darkness.
7 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. 
8 I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. 
9 He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here. 
10 My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him: if he comes to you, welcome him.) 
11 Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me.

IN HIS CONCLUDING WORDS TO THE COLOSSIANS, Paul lists out several people who provide examples of a life in service to Jesus. The ministries of Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark and Justus were marked by singular devotion to God and encouragement both to Paul and other believers. It’s a false idea to think that only church leadership are those who do the work of ministry. Being a part of God’s people means that you have a role to play and God wants to use you to minister to others. Though not all of us are called to be a pastor, all of us are called to be faithful servants.

Do you view yourself as a servant of Jesus?

PRAY: Lord, show me where I can join Your ministry and serve You.
DAY TWENTY-ONE: COLOSSIANS 4: 12–18

12Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. 13I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. 14Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. 15Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house. 16After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea. 17Tell Archippus: “See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord.” 18I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

IN THE FINAL VERSES OF THE LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS, Paul continues to highlight other servants of Jesus. The example of Epaphras should challenge you to both pray hard and work hard for the Lord. The example of Archippus should challenge you to see your life as continual opportunity for ministry. And the example of Paul should challenge you to serve Jesus no matter the cost. As this devotional comes to an end, this book should challenge you to live a life in faithful service to Jesus, because it truly is all about Him.

How has the Book of Colossians impacted your walk with Jesus?

PRAY: Lord, thank You for Your Word. Teach me to walk faithfully in it.