



daily devos
RADIATE STUDENTS



WELCOME!

Dear Students,

Thank you for joining us for our fifth series of Daily Devos! Our team is so excited that you've jumped in with us to go deeper with God and study his Word. We're proud to offer series on James, 1 Corinthians, and Proverbs. If you missed any of those and are interested in studying those books of the Bible, you can visit our website and download those today.

The purpose of the Daily Devos is to get into the habit of spending time with God daily. We pray that you would also learn to continuously talk with God throughout your day and enjoy getting to know him deeper.

When you download (or print) your Daily Devos, here's what to expect:

- 1. Start by Praying:** "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:9). Ask God to speak to you through his Word. Talk to him. After all, it's a relationship!
- 2. Read:** If you do all the readings for all 14 days, you will have read the entire book of Colossians.
- 3. Reflect:** This is an explanation of the biblical passage for the day. It may include some teaching and illustrations, but it is meant to go deeper and get you thinking!
- 4. Respond:** This section has questions that you will want to answer. Don't just think about them, but really take the time to answer.
- 5. Real Life:** This involves taking your Daily Devos outside of your personal alone time and into your daily interactions with other people, through a missional moment or action step to really live out what we talked about.

This content will really be about what you take the time to put into it. You can skim the paragraphs in a minute and move on, or you can learn to enjoy taking your time digesting the Bible. We are praying for you, and we love you. Let us know what you think!

Love,
The RADIATE Staff

WEEK 1 | DAY 1

READ: Colossians 1:1-8

REFLECT:

Welcome to Colossians! This is a favorite book among our staff, and by the end of this two-week Daily Devos series, we hope that you will fall in love with this book too. To start our series, let's look at the background of Colossians in order to have a deeper understanding once we start reading it.



Quick Facts about Colossians

Author: Paul while he was in Roman prison

Genre: Letter

Date: 60 A.D.

Audience: the church in Colossae

Purpose: to combat false teaching with the truth that Christ is supreme and sufficient

Theme: Christ is complete; therefore, believers are complete in Christ

Colossians is not like the letter of 1 Corinthians, where Paul traveled to the church and spent time with the people. He actually did not start the church in Colossians and had not visited them when he wrote this letter.

Who was the faithful minister (1:7), man of prayer (4:12), and co-worker with Paul (1:7) that taught the Colossians the truth?

Epaphras established the church in Colossae as a missionary partner in Paul's network. He reached out to Paul for help in dealing with some false teachings brewing among the Christians in his small town. We hear the name "Paul" way more than the name "Epaphras" in sermons and Bible studies, right? He was just a faithful leader in a small town in 60 A.D. He was no Louie Giglio, Ravi Zacharias, or Paul, for that matter. He's not among the "famous" guys in Scripture.

Discipleship does not equal fame. Teaching the Bible, loving people, discipling new Christians, witnessing, and living out your faith among family and friends. This can all be done in a group of a thousand or of one. If God gives you a huge platform to share his truth - awesome! But no matter how big your stage is, be obedient to God and let him use you however he wants.

Pray:

God, I pray that I would be faithful to serve you no matter where you want to take me. I may preach on a stage to thousands, or disciple one person obediently. No matter how big my “stage” in life, I pray that I would focus on obedience rather than fame and pleasing you rather than pleasing people.

RESPOND:

Read Galatians 1:10 and Luke 16:10. What do these verses have to do with what we talked about today?

REAL LIFE:

Make a list of all the groups you’re a part of: family, friends, teams, classes, LifeGroup, etc. Pray for God to show you how he wants you to be obedient to him where you are now. We ought to dream big, huge, God-sized dreams for our lives. And at the same time, make sure you are faithful where God has you right now.

WEEK 1 | DAY 2

READ: Colossians 1:9-14

REFLECT:

Write in one or two sentences your definition of “prayer”.

Today is all about praying for your friends. When you read today’s passage from Colossians, there just a sweet, loving spirit about the way Paul talks to these people. And interestingly enough, like we said yesterday, he had never even met them, yet he loved them so much.

Do you remember in our 1 Corinthians series where we talked about milk and meat? (see the Daily Devos Week 1 Day 4 and 1 Corinthians 3:1-3). Part of growing in your walk with Christ is growing in your Bible reading and witnessing. But it also includes growing in your secret life of prayer.



There’s absolutely nothing wrong with, “Dear God, thank you for this day, thank you for this food, please bless it, amen.” Nothing. But here’s a question for you: Have you been praying it for years? Is that the only way you pray? Focus on learning to develop your prayer life to a deeper communion with God. Not just praying over the food and over prayer requests. Look at how Paul prayed for the Colossians:

Pray that they may...

- Know God’s will (1:9)
- Be wise and understanding (1:9)
- Live a life that pleases God (1:10)
- Grow in their knowledge of God (1:10)
- Rely on him for strength and patience (1:11)
- Overflow with joy and thankfulness (1:12)

What if someone prayed that for you? If you take nothing else away from today, we want you to see how kind and meaningful it is to pray for your friends. And you can pray for them to have a good day and pass their test, for sure. But take some bigger bites, and pray specific prayers for someone’s faith. That is a real act of service and kindness toward someone.

WEEK 1 | DAY 3

READ: Colossians 1:15-23

REFLECT:

Today we will talk about why Paul wrote this letter. Look at the heading of this passage. It may be a bold phrase that looks like a title. What is it? _____



Syncretism is a word for a belief system that is basically made up of an assortment of beliefs and practices. You take some teachings of Jesus. Add little Judaism. A little paganism. A dash of Greek nationalism. A pinch of Gnosticism. And boom! You've got yourself a combo number one from the heresy drive-thru in the small town of Colossae. They let outside influences, culture, and worldly thoughts affect their views of Christ.

Imagine a person walking along a straight line in the road, but his body rotates one degree to the left. A few feet later, still walking, he rotates one more degree to the left. It may not look different at first, but the farther he walks, the more obvious his mistake. Sooner or later, he's not on the line anymore. Then eventually, he's not even close.

Paul is writing to the church saying, hang on a second! If your view of Christ is wrong, we're not talking about Christianity anymore. Christ is central, supreme, and enough. And Paul is setting the record straight after the Colossians turned ever so slightly off course, making big theology mistakes over time.

If you are a Christian, he's right there in the name! Few other places in the Bible do we get such a compact and thorough description of King Jesus. If we wanted to, we could spend all 14 days here unpacking how majestic and expansive he is. Christ is the focus of our affection, devotion, and attention. Let's look at some false teachings that were seeping into the minds of the people in Colossae; then we'll look at how Paul argues those false teachings with Jesus.

False Teachings in Colossae: Matter is evil. Since Jesus was matter, he couldn't have been God, because he would have been evil.

Paul's Response: Jesus is the image of God; he is God.

False Teachings in Colossae: Jesus is one of many ways and beliefs.

Paul's Response: Your knowledge and salvation is complete in Jesus; he is all sufficient and all you need.

WEEK 1 | DAY 4

READ: Colossians 1:24-29

REFLECT:

“To them God _____ to make known how great among the _____ are the riches of the glory of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the _____ of glory. Him we proclaim, warning _____ and teaching _____ with all wisdom, that we may present _____ mature in Christ.” Colossians 1:27-28 (ESV)



Gentiles are anyone who is not a Jew. Paul says in Galatians 1:15-16 that he feels that he was saved for the purpose of sharing the Gospel with the Gentiles. He was really among the first to share the Gospel with non-Jews. He felt entrusted by God with this special calling to preach Jesus to them (Galatians 2:7-8). Then there's the Colossian church, which was made up of a hodgepodge of beliefs, some Jewish and Gentile ideas included.

Here are three important highlights from our reading today:

- 1. God CHOSE to make Christ known (v. 27).** He actually wants people to know Jesus. It's not like he's holding back. In fact, the Greek word for "know" is "gnos", and the word for knowledge comes from this root word. One false belief of the day was called Gnosticism, which taught that only through secret knowledge can you get to God. So the use of this word "know" here was intentional; the readers would have recognized it. We CAN know the truth, and we DO know the truth. His name is Jesus.
- 2. Christ in you is the HOPE of glory (v. 27).** All our hope can be put in Jesus. Even in the most bleak, dark, seemingly hopeless situation, Christ in you gives you hope that you'll at least be with him in heaven one day.
- 3. EVERYONE needs to hear the Gospel (v. 28).** Because we can/do know the truth, we have to share it with everyone! It's been said before that not sharing the Gospel is like finding the cure for cancer and not telling anyone about it. The church is God's Plan A for getting the word out. He is counting on you to tell.

WEEK 1 | DAY 5

READ: Colossians 2:1-7

REFLECT:

In two or three sentences, write about the time you gave your life to Jesus. Describe how you felt in the following days and weeks. Really capture the tone of the event. Were you excited? Were you curious to know as much as you can? Were you unable to contain the news of what Jesus did for you?



To be a Christian means you have received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and surrendered to following him with your life. And when life is over, you will be with him in Heaven forever.

If you received him, are you walking in him? Verses six and seven in particular point to the fact that Christianity is not simply a free pass for NOT going to Hell. You don't make a one-time decision, then you get to live however you want until you go to Heaven.

Christianity is also not morality police. It's not the mark on your agenda or the points off of your participation grade. It's not your performance review at work, and it's not time out in the corner if you're mean. In the same way that you can't earn your relationship with God, you can't work to keep it. It is an everlasting, ongoing relationship with your Savior, the one you received. "Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him..."

Paul uses an interesting double-metaphor for your life in Christ: Both rooted and built up, while walking. Imagine a healthy, stout tree...walking around! It's a silly, yet effective image.

Grow both deep and tall, and go where the Lord takes you. You're not just a tree with deep roots and short stump; that's like a person who has a lot of head knowledge but not a lot of evidence of a relationship with Jesus. You're not to be a tree with shallow roots but tall branches; this is a person who has all the passion in the world but not a lot of depth or understanding of God, who could be blown over quickly. Grow in your walk with Christ, going wherever he chooses to take you, and be like a strong tree!

WEEK 1 | DAY 6

READ: Colossians 2:8

REFLECT:

Do you have a favorite quote? If so, write it here:

Below are some inspirational quotes or teachings from the world we live in. They are lines that our culture feeds us that you have most likely heard before or seen modeled to you. A few of them are fine. Some of them are downright wrong. But be careful that any one of them seep into how you view God. Are they “empty philosophies” and “human traditions”? We have to be so careful about what content we are allowing into our minds. It’s fine to have positive, inspirational sayings from outside of the Bible that motivate us. But we have to filter everything through the lens of Scripture.



As long as it isn't hurting anyone, it's probably fine. Are you ever faced with a “should I do that” moment? Does it end with this quote? Remember, David was broken over his sin, because it hurt God (Psalm 51:4). It’s absolutely not true that you can sin without hurting at least One.

Life is Good. Sure. Sometimes. But sometimes it’s not. A truer statement would be that life is hard, but God is good.

If it feels right, it must be right. Circle back to Proverbs here, and see what Proverbs 14:12 says about this.

You do you. It’s true that he made us all unique, sure. But this phrase seems to be most commonly used to write someone off and give them a free pass to “be yourself” in sin. Meanwhile, Jesus said we need to deny the self (Matthew 16:24-26). Submitting to his authority means you can’t do you.

Don't waste your time on people that don't benefit you. This sentiment is everywhere right now. Did any of the people Jesus spent time with benefit him? Don’t treat people like stairs to get where you want to go. Treat everyone, no matter how beneficial they are to you, with respect and kindness.

WEEK 1 | DAY 7

READ: Colossians 2:9-15

REFLECT:

Strap in, students. Today's Daily Devo is the best news you could ever hear. Before you go any further. If you haven't yet, take a moment to pray. Pray that God would speak to you, open your ears to what he wants to say, and give you a heart to receive his Word.

Look back at Day 1 of the Daily Devo series. What did we say is the purpose of the letter to the Colossians? To combat false teaching with the truth that Christ is _____ and _____.

The Colossians had a hard time believing that Jesus was enough. That he was all they needed. That he was not just one of many. Verses nine and ten of today's reading would be shocking for them to hear: that Jesus is both fully God and fully man. He didn't decrease his Godhood to increase his manhood, like a sliding scale. He was both, at the same time, fully. You can see examples of when Jesus made these claims in the box below.



Examples from the Gospels where Jesus claims to be equal with God: His name is Emmanuel, which means God with us (Matthew 1:22-23). The wind and waves obeyed his command, like their Creator's (Matthew 8:23-27). He raised people from the dead (Matthew 9:18-26; Luke 7:11-17). He declared himself the one to be worshipped on the Sabbath day (Matthew 12:1-8). Jesus read people's thoughts (Luke 7:39-40). Demons were scared of him (Mark 1:21-28). He forgave sins (Matthew 9:1-8).

C. S. Lewis popularized the idea that Jesus's claims to be God make him either a liar (he wasn't really God even though he claimed to be), a lunatic (he wasn't really God even though he thought he was), or Lord (he really is God). You can trust him that he is truly the Lord! And the only way to a relationship and eternal home with God (John 14:6).

Today's passage goes on to say that he cancels the record of your debt when you are forgiven! Your sin is nailed to the cross. He made you alive. Louie Giglio says often, "Jesus didn't come to make bad people good. He came to make dead people alive." Think about that. When you accept the free gift of salvation from Jesus, you were dead...and now you are alive! Second Corinthians 5:17 says, "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!" That's such amazing news.

WEEK 2 | DAY 1

READ: Colossians 2:16-23

REFLECT:

Today mirrors Week 1 Day 6. That was a Part A. This is Part B. If Part A was warning us about empty/worldly philosophy, today is warning us about self-made religion. Here are some phrases that have seeped into our Christian thinking that are simply not right.



Don't be too pushy with what you believe/don't offend anyone.

Always remember eternity may be on the line for someone. What if the person that first told you about Jesus felt this way? The gospel will offend people (1 Peter 2:7-8; 1 Corinthians 1:18; 2 Timothy 3:12). It hurts to hear that you will go to Hell if you don't have Jesus. But it's the truth.

What goes around comes around/you reap what you sow.

This is a dangerous take on karma. A pillar of Christian belief is actually that you don't get what you deserve...praise God! I deserve death, but Jesus died that death for me so I could live. On a smaller scale, it's incredibly dangerous and hurtful to view someone's hard times as though they probably deserved it. Job didn't deserve his suffering (Job 1:1-12), so this is not a foolproof belief system.

Everything will work out for good.

Almost. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Speak your truth.

If you're a Christian, please stop saying this. The very nature of the word "true" means that there is one absolute correspondence to what is and what is not. Truth is not relative. There can't be "your" truth and "my" truth. There can be your perspective and my perspective. I can speak my mind, perspective, side of the story, or frame of reference. But there is one truth. I cannot speak "my" truth unless it's THE truth.

How does it make you feel/Follow what your heart tells you.

Not even close. Proverbs Daily Devo reference, Part 1 Week 1 Day 3. See the following verses: Proverbs 4:23, Jeremiah 17:9, and Matthew 15:18-19.

WEEK 2 | DAY 2

READ: Colossians 3:1-4

REFLECT:

Today is all about having an eternal perspective. The world you see and the life you live...it's all temporary.



How much truth do you pour into your mind?

Because we spent so much time over the last few days looking at what the world says, we want to spend the bulk of today focusing on what God's Word says. If nothing else today, take away the fact that we have to fill our minds with truth from God. Don't let the voices you hear loudest and most often be ones that just tell you whatever you want to hear. Fill your mind with God's truth.

Here are several verses regarding an eternal perspective:

Psalms 90:12 "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom."

Psalms 116:15 "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

Ecclesiastes 5:15 "As he came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came, and shall take nothing for his toil that he may carry away in his hand."

Isaiah 40:8 "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever."

Matthew 10:39 "Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."

Philippians 3:14 "I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

1 John 2:17 "And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever."

WEEK 2 | DAY 3

READ: Colossians 3:5-14

REFLECT:

How kind is our God that he doesn't just tell us what to do and leave us hanging?! For example, in the first part of Acts, he tells us he wants us to be his witnesses and then gives us the Holy Spirit to empower us to that end. In Colossians 2, he tells us to get rid of any human/empty/worldly philosophy, and then tells us about Christ. And in Colossians 3, he tells us what to take off, but right after that he tells us what to put on instead.

Anytime you see a list like this in Scripture, don't be tempted to assume you fall on the "good" side. You're the one reading the Bible, trying to get closer to God, spending time with him, yes. But you're the sinner in need of a Savior. So are they, but God wants to talk to you. Be careful that you come to the Bible with humility and not pride.



Isaiah 61:3 says, "...provide for those who grieve in Zion - to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of his splendor."

Just like a jacket, he takes off the old one that is tattered and torn, but he puts a new one on you, a beautiful one. Receive it. You are not too dirty or too far gone to receive his new jacket.

The focus is on who you are. Take off those old actions. Put on these new character traits. This goes hand-in-hand with yesterday's teaching on eternal perspective. Who you are is more important than the popular type of sneakers everyone is going to want for Christmas.

Put to death: what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry, anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth, lying.

Put on then: compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another, forgiving each other; above all LOVE.

WEEK 2 | DAY 4

READ: Colossians 3:15-17

REFLECT:

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts”, “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly”, and “do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ”. These are three key phrases from the reading today, and we are going to break down the differences between them.

Let rule, let dwell, and do.



Quick English Lesson: The first two are passive verbs, and the third is an active verb. Passive verbs communicate action being done TO something rather than by something. Instead of me throwing the ball, the ball is thrown TO me. I get my hair cut by that person. I let the deliveries arrive at my house. In these examples, I am not the one throwing, cutting, or arriving.

Passive language does not mean passive living. You could make the excuse to just go about your business, like okay, I will just live my life on my own terms and hopefully peace will rule and the word will dwell. No! You have to receive it like a ball, delivery, or haircut. “Let” just means, while you worship, while you learn, let it soak all the way down. Wait. Be patient. It will happen, but you do need to let it.

Then “do”! That’s about as active a verb as they come. And don’t just do things or do your schoolwork and chores...do “everything” for Jesus. This is the point we made above: let peace rule and the word dwell, while you do everything for Jesus. It’s not an excuse to be lazy and hope that peace rules and the word dwells. Peace comes from God alone, so it means refusing to look for peace and satisfaction anywhere else. The Word of God is your source of truth, and we have to actively ignore the messages from the world while we let the messages from God dwell richly in us.

Then “do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ”.

WEEK 2 | DAY 5

READ: Colossians 3:18-25

REFLECT:

Copy verses 17 and 23 in the blank below. Circle the words that repeat.

Fun Fact: Did you know that the New Testament was written originally in Greek? When you hear someone say “the original language” or something along those lines in a sermon, Bible study, or LifeGroup lesson, they are not just trying to impress you...well maybe they are. But a lot of times teachers and preachers bring up the original language because sometimes the English translation isn’t as clear. Maybe English doesn’t give exactly the right emphasis as correctly as the original translation does. That doesn’t mean the Bible we hold in our hands currently can’t be trusted. It just means sometimes we have to do a little research to have a greater depth of understanding.



Whatever you do. Whatever. This word “whatever” in its original language literally translates “every which any ever”. “Whatever” is not just a relaxed way to say who cares. It’s a pretty good baseline description for every-which-any-ever. And it’s in this chapter twice, so you know it’s important!

It’s as if to say anything, in any place, anywhere, every time, with every person, all of the talking, thinking, and doing. Do it “heartily” for the Lord. It doesn’t sound like you get a break, even in hard times, even when you’re sad, even when you’re bored, or even when you’re tired.

“Heartily” here is the same word as “soul”. It’s saying do every-which-any-ever with soul, with all the life in your bones.

WEEK 2 | DAY 6

READ: Colossians 4:1-6

REFLECT:

Sometimes God's word is so rich that you may read a passage and have a sort of eyes-glazing-over kind of moment. Does this ever happen to you? There is SO much to digest, you end up taking in none of it. Today's passage is incredibly rich. It may be easy to read this one, check it off the list, and move on. But because there's so much there in each and every phrase, let us just unpack this one phrase-by-phrase.

1. *"Continue steadfastly in prayer"*: Never stop praying. Do you?
2. *"Being watchful in it with thanksgiving"*: Stay alert and constantly thanking God. How thankful are you?
3. *"Pray also for us"*: Pray for your Christian friends. Have you put Day 2 of this devo series into practice?
4. *"That God may open to us a door for the Word"*: Pray that God paves the way and leads you where he wants you to take the Word. Do you look for openings to share?
5. *"To declare the mystery of Christ"*: The Gospel is called a mystery; it was mysterious to the Gentiles until God used Paul to tell them about it, and it can be mysterious at times trying to fully grasp God's love. Who are you declaring the mystery of Christ to?
6. *"On account of which I'm in prison"*: He was in jail for preaching the Gospel. Would you be willing to go to jail for the Gospel?
7. *"That I may make it clear which is how I ought to speak"*: He was clear with his intentions, message, and relationships. How clear are you about the Gospel?
8. *"Walk in wisdom toward outsiders"*: You should be wise about how your life reflects Jesus toward non-believers. Are you carefree or wise about how you portray God to non-believers?
9. *"Making the best use of the time"*: Don't waste your time. How purposeful are you with your time?
10. *"Let your speech always be gracious..."*: Pretty self-explanatory. How gracious is your speech, especially toward non-believers?

WEEK 2 | DAY 7

READ: Colossians 4:7-18

REFLECT:

Scroll or flip all the way back to the first day of this series. Who did we focus on that day?

Does anyone else tend to just sort of skip over these types of verses, where Paul or someone else is naming names, and it seems like it has little to do with you? Today we will circle back to Epaphras and also focus on one man mentioned in this section: Demas.

Verse 13 in this passage in the New Living Translation says about Epaphras, “I can assure you that he prays hard for you.” Wow. Think about having such a heart for people that not only do you pray really hard for them, but the people around you are confident that you pray really hard too? That’s such a cool legacy, and that’s the kind of leader you want if you’re the Colossian church!



Demas is mentioned three times in the Bible, including in our passage today. Philemon 24 calls Demas a “fellow worker”, and he’s listed among two Gospel writers, Mark and Luke. He’s in good company. We can assume that Demas traveled with Paul, planting churches and sharing the Gospel alongside him. He heard and shared the Gospel often, so it looks like he started out really well in his ministry.

Today’s passage is interesting: Luke gets a description, but Demas does not. Here is a “beloved physician” and this other guy. Maybe we’re just reading into it. Maybe Paul is just reminding the Colossians which Luke he’s describing, and they know which Demas he’s referring to. Regardless, Demas is still involved in ministry at this point in the New Testament.

Then in 2 Timothy 4:9-10, Paul writes toward the end of his life: “Do your best to come to me soon. For Demas, in love with this present world, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica...” This dude straight up deserted Paul! Paul doesn’t share when, where, why, or how. But he was out.

People don’t always remember how you start, but they will always remember how you finish. Finish well. Don’t desert your friends or abandon God’s ministry for your life. Stay the course.

