

# HEARING THE WORD



NIGEL BARGE

**Colossians**  
Work Book

# Hearing the Word Colossians Work Book

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*Nigel Barge, April 2018*

## Scripture Quotations taken from

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## Resources

The *New Bible Dictionary* 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, published by Inter Varsity Press  
The *New Bible Commentary* 21<sup>st</sup> century edition. A commentary on every Bible book, IVP

[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)

# *Hearing the Word: A Tool for Bible reading*



**LOOK** – What does it *say*?

- 1) The Text
  - a) What questions does it raise -  
*Who, What, When, Where, Why, How?*
  - b) What surprises you?
- 2) The Context?
  - a) the surrounding text
  - b) the Book of the Bible
  - c) the whole Bible
  - d) the place in the Bible Story



**LEARN** – What does it *mean*?

- 1) What type of writing is it?
- 2) Answer the questions
- 3) Summarise the passage



**LISTEN** – What is the *message*?

- 1) Which is the main point?
- 2) Which is the key verse?



**LIVE** – How should we *respond*?

- 1) What does it show about God,  
(Father, Son, Holy Spirit) :
  - a) His nature and character?
  - b) His grace\*
  - c) Jesus / his salvation\*\*
- 2) What should I do?

\* God's undeserved generosity is evident throughout the Bible, and it is perfectly expressed in Jesus.

\*\* The Bible, from 'the fall' onwards, describes God's plan of salvation through his Son. Thus, *all* the Scriptures speak in some way of Jesus (Luke 24:27).

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# READING 'LETTERS' IN THE BIBLE

In seeking to hear the Word of God throughout the Bible, we need to take into account the *type of literature* in which each part is written. The New Testament (from now on, 'NT') contains letters written by five Apostles to various parts of the church of their day. They are part of the Word of God, authoritative for the church then, *and* for the church for all time.

Since Colossians is *a letter*, we need to remember that letters are:

- a) *Relational*. A letter is addressed to a particular person or group of people and its contents apply to them. So in the Bible, we must first remember that Paul (or James/Peter/John/Jude) is addressing named individuals or churches, in the first century. It is only once we have grasped what they are saying to *them, then*, that we may generalise as to what God might be saying to *us, now*. The two will *always* be consistent.
- b) *Occasional*. Letters are one side of a 'conversation' between two people. They refer to matters in which details of situations and people are assumed to be common knowledge. A third party reading a letter needs to 'read between the lines' to work out the other side of the story. We have to understand the situation to which this Bible letter was written, so as to grasp how the writer was addressing *it*. Only then may we ask how God might apply this Word to our own circumstance.
- c) *Dated*. Letters are written at a particular time and place, and within a particular culture. So in the Bible, the letters of the first century are expressed within the habits and traditions of that day. In discerning what God might be saying to us, now, we need to separate any instructions which are 'time-bound' from principles that are *timeless*.
- d) *To be read as a whole*. When we open a letter from a friend nowadays, we read the whole thing. We recognise it as a single communication whose contents are all related. So with letters in the Bible: every part must be viewed in the context of the whole letter. Thus, it is best practice to read a Bible letter *right through*, before analysing its parts.

## COLOSSIANS Introduction

### The people

Colossae, Hierapolis and Laodicea were a group of three towns close together, in the Lycus Valley in *Phrygia* (an area in modern-day Turkey), situated about 100 miles from Ephesus (see map, p4).

### The history

500 BC Colossae was a prosperous city, the centre of the local wool trade.

- c200 BC Antiochus the Great settled c 2000 Jews from Mesopotamia and Babylonia in Colossae to bring stability.
- 133 BC Kingdom of Pergamum (inc. Colossae) given to Roman Senate and became a Roman State. Laodicea was capital – it increased, Colossae decreased and faded in significance (There has been no contemporary archaeological dig of the area.)
- c30 AD Jews had travelled to Jerusalem for the harvest festival of Pentecost; in the crowd listening to Peter when the Holy Spirit inspired the first believers were some from *Phrygia*, the region around Colossae (Acts 2:10).
- c60 AD Paul's letter to the church in Colossae

### **The church**

The place seems insignificant. The planter would appear to have been Epaphras (1:7; 4:12,13) who remained as overseer for the region. The people were mainly Gentiles, not Jews (cf 1:21,27; 3:5). Paul lived for two years in Ephesus (Acts 19:10) just 100 miles away, yet never visited it. Nonetheless, amongst the many letters Paul wrote, this one is the Word of God

### **The date and context**

Paul writes to the church in Colossae c 60 AD. It is thought that the first Gospel to take written form (as opposed to being spoken by eyewitnesses) was Mark's Gospel, before the destruction of the Jewish Temple in AD 70. If so, it was possibly written for the Church in Rome under persecution.

Two points should be noted

- 1) the Gospel was taken to the church in Colossae not by an Apostle but by Epaphras (who had learned it from Paul).
- 2) there was no collected New Testament when 'Colossians' was written. The only Scriptures they had were the Hebrew Scriptures 'the Old Testament'. To most of them, non-Jews, this would all have been completely new.

### **The Occasion**

Paul wrote *Colossians* 'in chains' (4:18) but it is not certain where he was at the time. It seems most likely he sent it *with* the letter to *Philemon* about Onesimus (4:9), plus *Ephesians*. (Colossians 4:7-8 and Ephesians 6:21-22 have 32 identical *Gk* words.) If written from Rome, it was probably about AD 60.

### **The religious situation**

Despite the generally positive state of this church there was a challenge. No specific false teachers are mentioned. Scholars have 44 theories about what the problem was or might have been! This has led some to suggest that there was no one particular heresy. (Given that Scripture is God's Word, if it were important to know the particular heresy, you might expect it to be clear?!) If

this is the case, it may have been that this young church was surrounded by all manner of spiritual views and teachings.

Contemporary religious life was a ‘mishmash’. In this declining, unfashionable backwater of perhaps c 100,000 people, there were different strands:

- 1) The cult of the emperor. This demanded that any worship was permissible, provided it included that of the worship of the emperor.
- 2) Local religions. Some of these had practices confusingly like the early church – the cult of Mithras had an initiation ceremony like baptism. Mithras was referred to as *gk* ‘Logos’ (Word). In fact Christians regarded it ‘as a mockery of their own faith’ (Henry Neil).
- 3) Jewish observance. There were probably a few thousand Jews locally. But, following hundreds of years of Jewish exile, local practice was very confused. A contemporary Jewish lady was both an honorary ruler of the synagogue *and* a priestess of the imperial cult !
- 4) Greek philosophy. Many Greeks thought God was spirit, and good, while anything material, like the world and the human body, were to be shunned as evil. Both of whom would have found the Incarnation, God becoming man, very puzzling!

### **The message ‘...Christ in you the hope of Glory’ (1:27)**

Paul’s desire is to ground the church in Jesus, stressing three things:

- a) Jesus is God  
*the mystery, the fullness of the Godhead lived in him (1:19)*
- b) Jesus is sufficient  
*no religious discipline can bring you nearer to God (2:20-23)*
- c) Jesus is the authority for a Christian’s life (3:17)  
*our whole lives are lived in Him and for Him*

### **The subject - ‘Jesus’!**

The title given to each section might demonstrate this by including His name

E.g. 1: 1 – 14	Servants of <b>Jesus</b>
1:15 – 18	The Supremacy of <b>Jesus</b>
1:19 – 23	Life through <b>Jesus</b>
1:24 – 2:5	Suffering with <b>Jesus</b>
2 :6 – 24	Dead and alive with <b>Jesus</b>
3: 1 – 4	Seated with <b>Jesus</b>
3: 5 – 16	Life (- ve & +ve) in <b>Jesus</b>
3:17 - 4:1	Submitting to <b>Jesus</b>



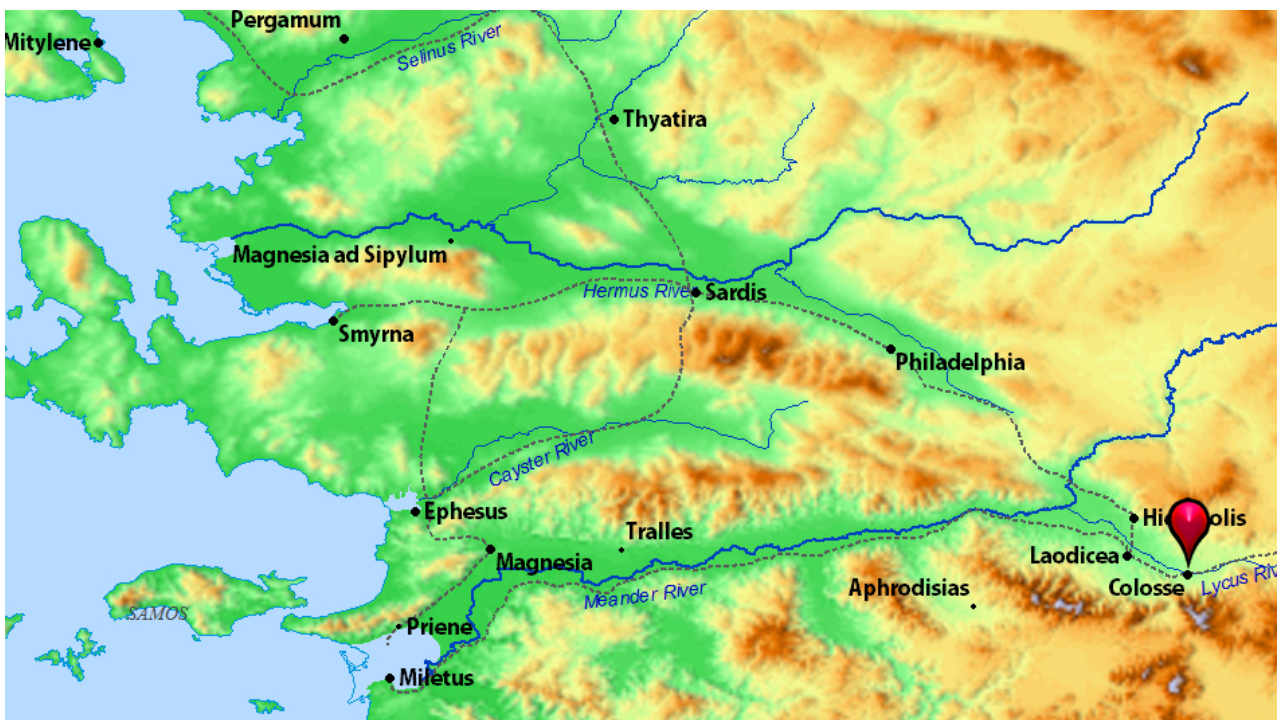
4: 2 – 6                      Depending on Jesus

4: 7 – 18                    Following Jesus

## MAPS



Paul wrote to churches in South Galatia, Corinth, Thessalonica, Rome, Ephesus, Colossae and Philippi.



Paul wrote to the churches in Ephesus and Colossae.

(John, in Revelation, was given messages for the churches in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea – not Colossae.)

## God has been gracious to you

### Background and Word List

Paul is writing to people he has never met. They know and trust Epaphras, (Paul's 'dear fellow servant') who had preached Jesus to them, and had told Paul about them. Paul greets them warmly and thanks God for their faith in Christ Jesus and the love they have for all the 'saints', i.e. other Christians. At the outset, Paul needs to state his authority for writing to them (*see* v1).

1	<i>Paul</i>	A Jew who believed in Jesus - sent to preach to the non - Jews (Acts 9:15)
	<i>apostle</i>	means 'a person sent' (by Jesus) Also used to refer to the founders of the church
	<i>Timothy</i>	church leader / co worker with Paul
2	<i>holy</i>	those 'set apart' by God and for God
	<i>faithful</i>	believing
	<i>Colossae</i>	Town in Asia Minor ( <i>see map p4</i> )
	<i>grace</i>	Greek <i>charis</i> , the favour of God
	<i>peace</i>	Greek <i>eirene</i> transl. of OT <i>shalom</i> : healthy harmony
4	<i>saints</i>	Gk <i>hagioi</i> , holy ones, <i>ie</i> reckoned holy by being in Christ, not by level of holy behaviour attained.
5	<i>hope</i>	objective sense of something given
	<i>stored up</i>	Kept securely
	<i>gospel</i>	Good news
6	<i>understood</i>	Greek <i>epi-gnosis</i> , intensive word, knowledge deeper than mere mental grasp
7	<i>Epaphras</i>	Church planter / Paul's co worker
13	<i>dominion</i>	rule
14	<i>redemption</i>	to 'buy back' a thing once owned; pay ransom for a slave

### Bible Connections

1	<i>a standard format for letters</i>	<i>eg</i> Philippians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1
	<i>Apostle of ... by the will of God</i>	<i>see</i> Acts 9:15; 13:2
2	<i>grace and peace</i>	<i>cf</i> Numbers 6:22-27
3	<i>other prayers of Paul for churches</i>	<i>see</i> Ephesians 1:17; 3:16
	<i>hope</i>	<i>see</i> 1 Peter 1:4; 2 Timothy 4:8
6	<i>bearing fruit</i>	<i>see</i> John 15:4; Galatians 5:22
9	<i>God's will</i>	<i>cf</i> 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:16-18
12	<i>inheritance of the saints</i>	<i>see</i> Ephesians 1:11,14,18

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

What surprises or confuses you?

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible – surrounding passage, individual book, whole Bible, or Bible story – might help you understand this passage?

# LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?

- 2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?
- 3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

## **LISTEN**

- 1) What is the lesson or the main point?
- 2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? v.

## **LIVE**

- 1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
  - a) His nature and character?
  - b) His grace?
  - c) Jesus and His salvation?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## Jesus is the divine saviour

### Background

Many Greeks imagined God as Spirit, entirely different from Matter; they presumed the created world (being material) was made by something far removed from God. Paul puts the spotlight on Jesus Christ, stating the world was created through him, and God was *in* him as he did so. A spirit being (as they thought) could not suffer, but God was in Christ, whose physical suffering on the cross brought about reconciliation, enabling true peace with God.

### Word List

- 15 *image* exact representation.  
18 *church* the body of believers.

### Bible Connections

- 15 *image of God* see John 14:9; Hebrews 1:3  
*first born over all creation* see also John 1:1-3  
16 *creation* see Genesis 1:1; John 1:1  
17 *all things hold together* see Hebrews 1:3

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Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## Receive the saving grace of Jesus

### Background

Paul now gives a highly personal application of the great truths in 1:15-18 - Jesus' divinity, creativity, authority and leadership.

Having established that Jesus is God, he then shows how He was therefore in a unique position to 'reconcile' God and human beings.

Believing in this we are called to continue in our faith in Jesus and His Gospel.

### Word List

- |    |                      |   |
|----|----------------------|---|
| 19 | <i>for</i>           | <i>Gk oti</i> = because. Ie because Jesus is God, creator, sustainer, leader – God was pleased.....         |
|    | <i>fulness</i>       | the main idea is of completeness or totality.   |
| 20 | <i>reconcile</i>     | restore harmony between.<br>Greek is aorist tense <i>ie</i> it is a decisive act.                           |
| 21 | <i>minds</i>         | not just the mind but the way it works but the process of understanding and intellect                       |
| 22 | <i>physical body</i> | spiritually neutral – (not <i>gk sarx</i> , which refers to flesh and humanity opposed to God)              |
| 23 | <i>creature</i>      | In OT means 'all living things'. In NT only used once, here, outside the book of Revelation (4:7; 5:13 etc) |

### Bible Connections

- |    |                           |   |
|----|---------------------------|---|
| 18 | <i>Head of the Church</i> | <i>see</i> Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 5:23 |
| 20 | <i>reconciliation</i>     | <i>see</i> Romans 5:9,10; 2 Cor 5:18                        |
|    | <i>Cross and curse</i>    | <i>see</i> Galatians 3:13                                   |
| 21 | <i>enemies of God</i>     | <i>see</i> Romans 5:10                                      |
| 22 | <i>without blemish</i>    | <i>see</i> Ephesians 5:27                                   |
| 23 | <i>hope</i>               | <i>see</i> Hebrews 11:1                                     |



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- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

# Study 4      ‘Proclaim the mystery –      1:24-2:5

## Christ in you the hope of Glory’

### Background

Paul now gives a highly personal application of the great truths in 1:15-23.

The ‘messianic woes’ (Rom 8:18-25) are experienced by the Messiah, then by his followers in the time between this present (evil) age (Gal 1:3) and the age to come - (the resurrection and Jesus second coming). These are the birth pangs of the new age. (Rom 8:22). Thus his people, during this time, share in His sufferings (Jn 15:20,21; Phil 3:10)

His commission, to convey and explain ‘the mystery’ (v26) is that the gospel of Jesus Christ is for the Gentiles as well as the Jews, *see* Ephesians 3:2-6. This may have countered a Jewish ‘lobby’ but also a Greek one that sought ‘wisdom and knowledge’ rather than ‘mystery’. (cf 1 Cor 1:22b)

### Word List

1:24	<i>Christ’s afflictions</i>	Hostile opposition but ever used of the Cross
1:26;27; 2:2	<i>Mystery</i>	a secret that would remain as such but for revelation
1:27	<i>Gentiles</i>	non Jews
	<i>Christ in you</i>	<i>Christ in/ among (cf ‘among the gentiles’) you (pl)</i> <i>Nb different from believers being (in Christ)</i>
1:29	<i>labour</i>	a strong word
	<i>struggling</i>	<i>gk agon</i> – a struggle or fight - word indicates single-mindedness
2:1	<i>Laodicea</i>	A city about 12 miles west of Colossae, one of the seven churches in Revelation ch 2-3. (Map p 4)

### Bible Connections

#### Ch 1

24	<i>suffering with/ for Jesus</i>	<i>see</i> John 15:18ff; Rom 8:17; Phil 3:10
25	<i>commission</i>	<i>see</i> Acts 9:15, 13:2. Galatians 1:1,11,12; 2:9
28	<i>perfect in Christ</i>	<i>see</i> Ephesians 5:27

#### Ch 2

1	<i>Laodicea</i>	<i>see</i> Revelation 3:14
2	<i>united in love</i>	<i>see</i> Ephesians 4:2ff
2-3	<i>Jesus, the wisdom of God</i>	<i>see</i> 1 Corinthians 1:24
4	<i>fine sounding arguments</i>	<i>cf</i> Genesis 3:1f; Romans 16:18
5	<i>present in spirit</i>	<i>see</i> 1 Corinthians 5:3-5

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  - b) His grace?
  - c) Jesus and His salvation?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## Chose to live freely, in Christ

### Background

Paul urges these new Christians to continue to grow and develop in their faith. He introduces a word of warning in v8 by calling on them to be constantly vigilant and not be taken in by false philosophies/world views.

In the OT, God gave Abraham a promise, and a sign to show a man covered by that promise: circumcision. In v11 Paul uses the word metaphorically; it had been replaced by the sign of coming under the new promise: Baptism.

In Colossae, other religions also practised circumcision, observing festivals that worshipped other gods and angels on special days, avoiding some foods.

In v15 Paul uses a vivid picture to show how Jesus has conquered all the powers of evil. A Roman general who was triumphant in battle would strip his foes and lead them into his home city as captives behind his chariot in a victory procession. In the same way, Christ has broken the power of sin

Nb Christ is - on (8), in (9), by (11), with (13).

### Word List

8	<i>basic principles</i>	Elemental spirits <i>i.e.</i> deities the local people thought of as having local power
11	<i>circumcising</i>	Literally, removing male foreskin, as a sign of faith in God's promise to Jews
14	<i>written code</i>	The Law given by Moses.
15	<i>powers &amp; authorities</i>	Ungodly beings with power in spiritual realm.
16	<i>religious festival</i>	Holy day
	<i>New Moon celebration</i>	Jewish festivals
	<i>Sabbath day</i>	Seventh day of the week / day of rest
18	<i>worship of angels</i>	This may refer to a local practice of fasting that was thought to induce visions.

### Bible Connections

6	<i>growing in Christ</i>	<i>see</i> 2 Peter 3:18
8	<i>captives of philosophy</i>	<i>see</i> 1 Corinthians 1:20ff
9	<i>fullness of deity</i>	<i>see</i> Hebrews 1:1-3; John 1:1
11	<i>circumcision</i>	<i>see</i> Genesis 17:1ff
	<i>Non-physical – of heart</i>	<i>see</i> Deuteronomy 10:16
12	<i>buried/ raised with Jesus</i>	<i>see</i> Romans 6:3-6
13	<i>forgiveness of sins</i>	<i>see</i> Psalm 130; 1 John 1:9
14	<i>cancelled code (fulfilled law)</i>	<i>see</i> Matthew 5:17
15	<i>powers</i>	<i>see</i> Ephesians 6:12
17	<i>shadow of things to come</i>	<i>see</i> Hebrews 9:9; 10:1
19	<i>the body</i>	<i>see</i> 1 Corinthians 12:12
22	<i>ritual cleanliness</i>	<i>see</i> Luke 11:39

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What questions does the passage raise?

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- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.



# Study 6      Remember, you are now      3:1-4

## eternally hidden in Jesus, in Heaven

### Background

In ch. 1-2, Paul has laid the foundations of what the Christian faith teaches (doctrine). This is what a Christian 'is' in Christ. Now he starts to say, '**Be** what you have been made in Christ'. He applies the doctrine to everyday life, like building an ethical superstructure on those doctrinal foundations. Being 'raised with Christ' means having a new aim in life, a new attitude of mind, which leads to new patterns of behaviour, instead of living by lists of rules like those mentioned in 2:16-23.

This section, 3:1-4, though short, is the hinge of the book, as Paul turns from doctrine to apply it to practice.

### Word List

- |   |                                 |  |
|---|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 | <i>at the right hand of God</i> | place of holiness, intercession and power        |
| 4 | <i>glory</i>                    | Radiance of God's being / his immediate presence |

### Bible Connections

- |   |                                  |                                     |
|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | <i>Christ seated with Father</i> | Ephesians 1:20f                     |
| 4 | <i>appearing with Jesus</i>      | 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18; 1 John 3:2 |

# LOOK

## 1) The Text

What questions does the passage raise?

What surprises or confuses you?

## 2) The Context

What other parts of the Bible – surrounding passage, individual book, whole Bible, or Bible story – might help you understand this passage?

# LEARN

1) How do you answer the questions the passage raises?

- 2) How do you resolve issues that surprised or confused you?
- 3) Give an overall 'picture' of the passage in a few sentences.

## **LISTEN**

- 1) What is the lesson or the main point?
- 2) Which verse best sums up the message of the passage? v.

## **LIVE**

- 1) What does it show about God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit)?
  - a) His nature and character?
  - b) His grace?
  - c) Jesus and His salvation?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## For Christ sake, change your clothes!

### Background information

The Christian is a new person on the inside, but is still living in his or her physical body. They must therefore contend with their old nature, which Paul calls the 'flesh'. In chapter 3, he uses two vivid metaphors to show what needs to happen to our bias towards sin: the first (v5) is, 'Put to death the old nature' Cf Matthew 18:8ff. The other is in v9.

For a description of a 'church service', see Pliny (61-113 AD), Roman governor of Bithynia, reporting the activities of the Christians to Trajan, the Emperor. In it he said, 'they meet at dawn to sing a hymn to Christ as God.'

### Word List

5	<i>earthly nature</i>	Humanity's self-centred character and tendency to rebel against God, inherited from Adam and Eve who first disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden. Cf In Adam and In Christ (1 Corinthians 15:22)
	<i>idolatry</i>	Worshipping anything or anyone but the God of Israel / Jesus.
6	<i>wrath of God</i>	God's righteous anger.
8	<i>malice</i>	Greek word is a general one for wickedness.
9	<i>old self</i>	the self-centred nature they had in Adam.
	<i>new self</i>	transformed nature given as we believe in Christ.
11	<i>barbarian</i>	foreigner, alien to Greek culture, 'uncivilised'.
	<i>Scythian</i>	from the northern reaches of Asia, 'savages'.
12	<i>chosen people</i>	covenant people, the new Israel
	<i>holy</i>	set apart
	<i>dearly loved</i>	as chosen people they are the objects of God's love
15	<i>one body</i>	ie the Church
16	<i>psalms/hymns</i>	Poems in the Bible set to music: in OT, eg Psalms; in NT, hymns like the <i>Magnificat</i> (Luke 1:46-55).
	<i>spiritual songs</i>	sacred songs possibly on themes other than direct praise to God or Christ.

### Bible Connections

5	<i>earthly ways</i>	see Galatians 5:19-21
6	<i>wrath of God</i>	see Romans 1:18; 2:5
10	<i>image of creator</i>	see Genesis 1:26
12	<i>God's chosen people</i>	see Deuteronomy 7:6; 1 Peter 1:1; 2:4
	<i>Godly conduct</i>	see Galatians 5:22-26
14	<i>unity in love</i>	see Ephesians 4: 2f
15	<i>peace of Christ</i>	see Philippians 4:7
16	<i>hymn</i>	see also Matt 26:30; Mark 14:26

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Now underline the application of the Main Point.

- 2) What should I do?

Now underline the application of the Main Point.

## Christians, treat one another as in Christ

### Background information

A Jewish population of about 2000 from Mesopotamia and Babylon had been settled in the area around 200 BC by the emperor, Antiochus the Great. Their religious identity was very confused: e.g. a Jewish lady was known to be simultaneously, honorary ruler of the synagogue and a priestess of the imperial cult. (Inscriptional evidence nos 530 and 559 – Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia*, Oxford 1897).

In this situation, Paul seeks to explain to those who are faithful brothers in Christ (1:2) the relationships that are at the very heart of society – the family.

Hellenistic society had Household Codes for ethical behaviour in the family. But for believers, *every* human relationship must be considered from the standpoint of our basic relationship with Christ *ie 'in the Lord.'*

The extra space given to the relationship of slaves and masters may be because of the issues raised by the return of the runaway slave Onesimus, who was travelling with Tychicus as he delivered this letter to the Colossians. (4:7,9: *See also* the book of Philemon.) In the first century many slaves were merely property, with no civic or other right. The Roman penalty for a runaway slave was crucifixion! Paul's emphasis is that a slave is a person.

Children became adults, in Paul's Jewish culture, at their 'Bar mitzvah' at the age of about 12 years old. From this time marriage was possible and adult employment was expected. NB Only BOYS had a Bar mitzvah.

### Word List

18	<i>love</i>	Greek <i>agape</i> , <i>ie</i> love that seeks primarily the good of the beloved.
24	<i>slave</i>	<i>gk doulos</i> Earthly slaves could not inherit property (vs 24)
4:1	<i>masters</i>	<i>gk kurios</i> lord
2	<i>devote</i>	<i>lit 'continue steadfastly'</i> - implies diligence and persistence.

### Bible Connections

18	<i>submission</i>	Romans 13:1ff; Ephesians 5:21ff; 1 Peter 3:1.
20	<i>pleases the Lord</i>	'find out what pleases the Lord' - only once in rest of Bible: Ephesians 5:10
24	<i>Lord Christ</i>	God (1:10) Messiah (1:1-4)

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## Pray the truth of Christ is spoken out

### Background information

Paul's final instructions cover the need to continue in prayer and the call to let every little part of our lives commend Christ to others.

Non-Christians then also used the phrase, '*conversation be full of grace*,' but they meant speech that sparkled, full of witty or clever remarks. Here it means speech that emerges from the heart of people who have been transformed by grace, God's undeserved love,

### Word List

3	<i>mystery of Christ</i>	the gospel is for the Gentiles too <i>see</i> 1:26,27; 2:2
	<i>in chains</i>	a prisoner of the authorities, whether held in an actual prison or under house-arrest.
3/4	<i>proclaim</i>	means 'make manifest or reveal'
5	<i>outsiders</i>	non-Christians.
6	<i>grace</i>	Undeserved favour, (cf 'find the positive?')
	<i>conversation...</i>	everyday speech, not just when consciously proclaiming the message of Christ.

### Bible Connections

3	<i>open a door</i>	Acts 14:27;
	<i>proclaiming</i>	Ephesians 6:19-20
	<i>in chains</i>	Acts 21:33
6	<i>seasoned with salt</i>	Mark 9:50; Ephesians 4:29
	<i>giving an answer</i>	<i>see</i> 1 Peter 3:15; Act 8:34-35

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**Background information**

In his final greetings Paul repeats his warm feelings and fellowship with them all.

We cannot be certain about 'the letter from Laodicea' referred to at the end of 4:16 since we do not have one by that name.

One person, Tychicus, delivered both Colossians (4:7) and Ephesians (6:21) and his route from Ephesus would have taken him *via* Laodicea (*see* map p4).

**Word List**

8	<i>our circumstances</i>	lit 'know how we are'
11	<i>comfort</i>	<i>gk paregoria</i> – comfort or exhortation
13	<i>Laodicea</i>	large city about 12 miles west of Colossae, Roman capital of a political district of 25 towns
	<i>Hierapolis</i>	large city about 6 miles from Laodicea, a famous spa
18	<i>grace</i>	undeserved gift

**Bible Connections**

7	<i>Tychicus</i>	<i>see</i> Acts 20:4; Ephesians 6:21
9	<i>everything...here</i>	<i>see</i> Acts 28:17ff (?)
	<i>Onesimus</i>	<i>see</i> Philemon 10
10	<i>Aristarchus</i>	<i>see</i> Acts 19:29; Philemon 24
	<i>Mark and Barnabas</i>	<i>see</i> Acts 15:36
12	<i>Epaphras</i>	<i>see</i> Philemon 23
	<i>stand firm</i>	<i>see</i> Ephesians 6:11,14
14	<i>Luke</i>	A doctor, who travelled with Paul from Acts 16:10 onwards. Writer of Luke's Gospel, and of Acts.
	<i>Demas</i>	<i>see</i> Philemon 24; 2 Timothy 4:10
15	<i>house church</i>	<i>see</i> 1 Corinthians 16:19
17	<i>Archippus</i>	<i>see</i> Philemon 2

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# Sharing the Word

## Use

'Hearing the Word' can be used alone, with one other person, or in a group

## Preparing for a group

Time put in alone beforehand will greatly benefit time spent together.

Work through the stages - LOOK, LEARN, LISTEN, LIVE.

Write down your own questions and answers \*

## A format

If you have 45 mins together, you might like to try dividing it up like this.

(If longer or in a large group, you can extend the times)

- 1) Drink, bite to eat, chat (10 mins)
- 2) A Bible reading ( 2 mins)
- 3) A Bible study
  - a. Any questions? (Whether answer is known or not!) ( 2 mins)  
(Don't answer any, till all questions noted!)
  - b. Any relevant cross references? ( 2 mins)
  - c. Discussion of answers (13 mins)
  - d. Conclusion (10 mins)
    - i. A Key verse and Main Point?
    - ii. What does it show about God / Jesus?
    - iii. What should I do?
- 4) Sharing (Trials and joys – family, work, self) ( 5 mins)
- 5) Prayer ( 1 min)

## Remember!

As we gather round God's Word

- a) Listen to the views of others
- b) Make room for the novice. They can join in too when you start by listing 'Any questions'
- c) Don't let the 'knowledgeable' dominate. Encourage everyone to think for themselves.
- d) Try to include others' especially, 'seekers' in your sharing together.

\* The **process** is explained and practised in a four-hour course, suitable for all, called '**An Introduction to 'Hearing the Word'**'. Email: [office@tpc.org](mailto:office@tpc.org)





## ***“I can read the Bible for myself!”***

To show that the Bible is accessible to all,  
the Rev Nigel Barge, minister of Torrance Parish Church,  
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The Manual explains the basic principles of Bible reading,  
teaches them by means of an interactive course,  
and practices them on a single passage, Mark 10:35-45,  
Participants follow in a Workbook: *Hearing the Word - Introduction*,  
which includes the next six passages in Mark,  
so they may follow on for themselves.

As the principles apply equally to all, the course will both  
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