

To the Colossians

Asp's Suggested Paraphrase (ASP)

Chapter 1

⁽¹⁾ From: Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by God's will, and Timothy, our brother.

⁽²⁾ To: The holy and faithful family of faith in Christ, who are in Colosse.

We wish you guys grace and peace from God, our father.

⁽³⁾ We give thanks to God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. We're praying for you guys all the time. ⁽⁴⁾ We heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love you guys have for all of God's holy people, ⁽⁵⁾ on account of your hope stored up in heaven. This is what you guys heard before, in the word of truth, the Good News. ⁽⁶⁾ This is what's developing in all of you — just like what's also developing throughout the whole world — bearing good fruit and growing into a bumper crop. It's been like this with you guys ever since the day you all heard and recognized God's true grace. ⁽⁷⁾ Just like you guys learned it from Epaphras, our beloved co-laborer. He faithfully advocates for you guys as a servant-leader. ⁽⁸⁾ He has also made it clear to us that you guys love with a Spirit-filled love.

⁽⁹⁾ And because of this, ever since the day we heard about these things, we haven't stopped praying for you guys, asking that you might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual comprehension. ⁽¹⁰⁾ Our goal is to walk in a way that is worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him — bearing good fruit in every endeavor and growing into a bumper crop, bursting with the knowledge of God. ⁽¹¹⁾ We also pray with power that you guys are being empowered with God's glorious strength, leading to all patience and endurance. With joy. ⁽¹²⁾ Thank God!

Our Heavenly Father has paved the way for you guys to share in the inheritance of his holy people, living in the light. ⁽¹³⁾ He is the one who rescued us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his beloved Son. ⁽¹⁴⁾ We have our redemption in him, the forgiveness of our sins. ⁽¹⁵⁾ He is the visible image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ⁽¹⁶⁾ We know that he is the means by which everything was created — in the heavens and on the earth, the visible things and the invisible things. Thrones... Kingdoms... Rulers... Authorities... Everything was created through him and for him. ⁽¹⁷⁾ He has been in existence since the inception of everything else, and he holds it all together. ⁽¹⁸⁾ He is also the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead — making him first in everything. ⁽¹⁹⁾ For in him, all of the fullness of God found its happy home. ⁽²⁰⁾ And through him and in him, God reconciled everything, both on the earth and in the heavens, making peace through the blood from his crucifixion.

⁽²¹⁾ You guys used to be strangers — even enemies — both in your attitudes and your evil actions. ⁽²²⁾ But now, he has reconciled you to himself at the cost of his own flesh, his death, in order to present you guys as holy and blameless. With him by your side, all charges against you are dropped, ⁽²³⁾ as long as you guys persevere in the faith and fortify yourselves. Stay strong. Don't drift from the hope of the Good News you guys heard. It's been publicly proclaimed in all creation to everything under the sun — and it's why I, Paul, do what I do as a servant-leader.

⁽²⁴⁾ Now I rejoice when I suffer for the sake of you guys. It's my way of throwing my lot in with Christ, enduring affliction in my body for the sake of his body, the church. ⁽²⁵⁾ I became a servant-leader for the church because that was the responsibility given to me by God: to make the word of God fully known to you guys. ⁽²⁶⁾ It was a mystery, concealed through the centuries and through the generations — but now it is revealed to his holy people. ⁽²⁷⁾ They were the ones God wanted to show the riches of the glory of this mystery among all the peoples of the world. It's Christ living in you guys, the hope of glory. ⁽²⁸⁾ We proclaim this hope — instructing all of the people and teaching them with all wisdom, in order that we might present all of the people complete in Christ. ⁽²⁹⁾ This is what I'm striving to accomplish, making every effort with his energy energizing me with his power.

Chapter 2

⁽¹⁾ You see, I want you guys to know how seriously I've been struggling on your behalf, as well as for the Church in Laodicea. Even for all those who have never seen me face-to-face. ⁽²⁾ I want their hearts to be encouraged and united in God's love. And I want them to know all the wealth of wisdom that we comprehend in the mystery of God: Christ. ⁽³⁾ He is the hiding place for all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁽⁴⁾ I'm saying this so that you guys won't be deceived by anybody or any artful arguments to the contrary. ⁽⁵⁾ For even if I'm not with you in person, I'm with you guys in spirit. And I rejoice to know that you guys have your act together and have a firm faith in Christ.

⁽⁶⁾ So, just as you guys received Christ Jesus as your Lord, you guys must continue to walk in his ways. ⁽⁷⁾ Keep letting your roots grow deep, growing taller and stronger through faith in him — just like you guys learned how to overflow with thankfulness. ⁽⁸⁾ Keep your eyes out for anyone who might try to prey upon you through philosophical musings and sleight-of-hand that amounts to nothing. These things stem from human tradition and the base instincts of the world instead of from Christ. ⁽⁹⁾ You see, all of the fullness of God lives in him, in bodily form. ⁽¹⁰⁾ And you guys find fulfillment in him, too. He outranks all kings and authorities.

⁽¹¹⁾ In him, also, you guys were circumcised in a way — not with human hands or human flesh, but [actually by cutting away your sin nature to receive] a “circumcision of Christ.” ⁽¹²⁾ You guys were buried together with him in baptism. And you guys were raised up together with him by faith, energized by God with the same energy that raised Christ from the dead. ⁽¹³⁾ You guys were dead in your sins and avoidance of your purification processes. But God made you guys come alive, together in him, freely forgiving all of our sins. ⁽¹⁴⁾ He cancelled the record of our debt that had been officially held over and against us — and he whisked away all of that paperwork from the middle of our desks to nail it to the Cross. ⁽¹⁵⁾ He stripped away the leverage of the rulers and authorities, and he made an example to them for all the world to see — leading a victory parade against them, in him.

⁽¹⁶⁾ So no one should be judging you guys for what you're eating or drinking, or how you're celebrating holidays, or new moon ceremonies, or the Sabbath. ⁽¹⁷⁾ These things are a shadow of what's coming — but the real thing is Christ. ⁽¹⁸⁾ No one gets to disqualify you guys because of their masochistic obsessions or cultish fixations on angels. They make a show of their “visions,” propping themselves up on the flimsy foundation of what's in their human heads,

⁽¹⁹⁾ even while they fail to hold onto *the* Head, from which the whole body stays together with its connective tissues, united and growing with a God-given growth.

⁽²⁰⁾ If you guys died together with Christ, leaving your base worldly nature behind, why would you go on living your lives according to worldly regulations? ⁽²¹⁾ “You really shouldn’t be eating that,” or “You really shouldn’t be tasting that,” or “You really shouldn’t even be touching that.” ⁽²²⁾ These are all things that are spoiled or consumed, these rules and regulations from human beings. ⁽²³⁾ This sort of stuff might seem sincere and wise — self-made religion, self-inflicted punishment, self-control-to-the-extreme regarding one’s body — but they’re not helpful when it comes to dealing with a person’s evil desires.

Chapter 3

⁽¹⁾ So, if you guys were raised up together with Christ, you guys need to seek out higher purposes in keeping with Christ’s elevated position: seated at God’s right hand. ⁽²⁾ You guys need to set your minds on things above, not on the things of earth. ⁽³⁾ For you guys have died to the things of the earth, and your lives are hidden together with Christ, in God. ⁽⁴⁾ When the time comes for Christ to appear — the true life of you guys — then you’ll also appear, together with him, in glory.

⁽⁵⁾ So you guys have to put the earthly parts of you to death: sexual immorality, unholy living, sinful passion, evil desires, and greed — which is idolatry. ⁽⁶⁾ These things are the reason why the wrath of God is coming upon the descendents of disobedience. ⁽⁷⁾ You guys used to walk in these ways, back in the life you once lived. ⁽⁸⁾ But now, you guys need to push all of those things aside: raging anger, simmering anger, bad behavior, bad-mouthing, and bad words coming out of your mouths. ⁽⁹⁾ You guys must not deceive one another. You guys are peeling off the old identities and activities ⁽¹⁰⁾ and clothing yourselves with the new — being renewed as you learn how to become more like your Creator. ⁽¹¹⁾ In him, there is no “Greek” or “Jew,” “circumcised” or “uncircumcised,” foreigner, slave, or free-man — but everything comes back to Christ. And Christ is everything.

⁽¹²⁾ So, since God has chosen you guys to be his holy and beloved people, you guys need to clothe yourselves with deeply-heartfelt sympathy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ⁽¹³⁾ Keep on bearing with one another and forgiving each other when you might encounter points of disagreement. Just like the Lord forgave you guys, you also need to respond in the same way toward each other. ⁽¹⁴⁾ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which brings it all together in perfect unity. ⁽¹⁵⁾ And let the peace of Christ preside in your hearts. You guys were called to be one body, too. Be thankful, as well. ⁽¹⁶⁾ Let the word of Christ dwell extravagantly within you guys. Teach each other and coach each other in all wisdom. Sing with hearts full of grace from God: Psalms... Hymns... Spirit-filled songs... ⁽¹⁷⁾ And in all of this — whatever you guys might say or do — let it all be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the father through him.

⁽¹⁸⁾ To the married women: you guys must submit to your husbands, as is in keeping with the Lord. ⁽¹⁹⁾ To the married men: you guys must love your wives with a godly love, and you guys must not bring them bitterness.

⁽²⁰⁾ To the children: you guys must listen to your parents in all things, for this is in keeping with the Lord. ⁽²¹⁾ To the fathers: you guys must not cause your children to resent you, in order to keep them from getting discouraged or disillusioned.

⁽²²⁾ To the working classes: you guys must listen to your corporate bosses in all things — not like people-pleasers making a show of compliance, but with integrity because you fear the Lord in your hearts. ⁽²³⁾ Whatever you guys might do, put your souls [as well as your sweat] into it, like you're working for the Lord and not for people. ⁽²⁴⁾ You guys know that you'll receive your reward from the Lord: an inheritance in the domain of the Lord Christ, your true boss. ⁽²⁵⁾ For the one who does wrong will get repaid with wrong, without any sense of God playing favorites.

Chapter 4

⁽¹⁾ To the corporate executives: you guys must be righteous and equitable to the working classes under your supervision, knowing that you guys also have a “Boss” in heaven.

⁽²⁾ Keep diligently praying, staying vigilant and full of gratitude. ⁽³⁾ While you're at it, pray for us, too: that God might open doors for us to share about the mystery of Christ. It's for his sake that I'm imprisoned. ⁽⁴⁾ So pray that I might clearly articulate the message God has compelled me to share. ⁽⁵⁾ You guys need to walk in wisdom, capturing the moment, when you mingle with outsiders. ⁽⁶⁾ Let your words always be gracious, punching up the flavor of your conversations to know just the right answer to every question thrown your way.

⁽⁷⁾ If there's anything you guys want to know about me: ask Tychicus. He is a beloved brother, a faithful servant-leader, and a co-laborer in the Lord. ⁽⁸⁾ I sent him to you guys so that you all might know about what's happening with us — and that he might encourage your hearts. ⁽⁹⁾ Onesimus is with him: [another] faithful and beloved brother, who is cut from the same cloth as you guys. They can tell you guys what's happening here.

⁽¹⁰⁾ Aristarchus, my cellmate, sends his greetings to you guys. So does Mark, Barnabus's cousin. (He's the one for whom I sent those instructions to welcome him warmly, if he comes your way). ⁽¹¹⁾ Jesus (a.k.a. Justus) also sends his greetings. These guys are my only co-workers for the Kingdom of God who are also Jewish — and they've definitely provided the camaraderie I've needed. ⁽¹²⁾ Greetings from your very own Epaphras. He is a servant of Christ, always contending for you guys in his prayers in order that you might be set — complete and convinced in everything God wants for you guys. ⁽¹³⁾ For I know from personal experience that he's put himself through the wringer for you guys, as well as for the churches in Laodicea and Hierapolis. ⁽¹⁴⁾ The good doctor Luke sends his greetings to you guys. And Demas does, too.

⁽¹⁵⁾ You guys have to pass along our greetings to the family of faith in Laodicea, as well as to Nympha and the church who gathers at her house. ⁽¹⁶⁾ And when you guys finish publicly reading this letter, swap with the church in Laodicea so you can each publicly read each other's letters. ⁽¹⁷⁾ Also, remind Archippus for me: “Make sure that the ministry you received from the Lord gets activated and achieved.”

⁽¹⁸⁾ I'm signing this letter in my own handwriting: *Paul*.

Remember my chains. Grace be with you guys!