

Outline of the Book of Colossians

The book of Colossians, written by the Apostle Paul, addresses the supremacy of Christ and provides guidance for living a life that reflects this truth. Paul also warns against false teachings and emphasizes the importance of holding onto the gospel. Below is an exhaustive outline of Colossians, highlighting the dangers facing believers.

I. Introduction (1:1-14)

- A. Salutation (1:1-2)
 - 1. Paul's apostleship by the will of God (1:1)
 - 2. Greeting to the saints in Colossae (1:2)
- B. Thanksgiving and Prayer (1:3-14)
 - 1. Thanksgiving for the Colossians' faith and love (1:3-8)
 - 2. Prayer for spiritual wisdom and understanding (1:9-11)
 - 3. Giving thanks for redemption and forgiveness (1:12-14)

II. The Supremacy of Christ (1:15-23)

- A. Christ's Preeminence in Creation (1:15-17)
 - 1. Image of the invisible God (1:15)
 - 2. Creator of all things (1:16)
 - 3. Sustainer of all things (1:17)
- B. Christ's Preeminence in the Church (1:18-20)
 - 1. Head of the body, the church (1:18)
 - 2. Firstborn from the dead (1:18)
 - 3. Fullness of God dwelling in Him (1:19)
 - 4. Reconciliation through the blood of His cross (1:20)
- C. The Reconciliation of Believers (1:21-23)
 - 1. Reconciliation of formerly alienated and hostile minds (1:21)
 - 2. Presentation of believers as holy and blameless (1:22)
 - 3. Exhortation to continue in the faith (1:23)

III. Paul's Ministry for the Church (1:24-2:7)

- A. Paul's Labor for the Church (1:24-29)
 - 1. Rejoicing in sufferings for the sake of the body (1:24)
 - 2. Stewardship of God's mystery (1:25-27)
 - 3. Striving with God's energy for maturity in Christ (1:28-29)
- B. Concern for Spiritual Growth (2:1-7)
 - 1. Struggle for the Colossians and Laodiceans (2:1-3)
 - 2. Warning against deception (2:4-5)
 - 3. Exhortation to walk in Christ (2:6-7)

IV. Warnings Against False Teachings (2:8-23)

- A. Warning Against Philosophy and Empty Deceit (2:8-10)
 - 1. Danger of being taken captive by human traditions (2:8)
 - 2. Fullness of deity in Christ (2:9)
 - 3. Believers' fullness in Christ (2:10)
- B. Complete Salvation in Christ (2:11-15)
 - 1. Spiritual circumcision in Christ (2:11)
 - 2. Buried and raised with Christ in baptism (2:12)
 - 3. Forgiveness of sins and triumph over powers (2:13-15)
- C. Warning Against Legalism (2:16-17)
 - 1. Judgment concerning food, drink, and festivals (2:16)
 - 2. Reality found in Christ (2:17)
- D. Warning Against Asceticism and Angel Worship (2:18-19)
 - 1. Disqualification by false humility and angel worship (2:18)
 - 2. Holding fast to the Head, from whom the body grows (2:19)
- E. Warning Against Self-Imposed Religion (2:20-23)
 - 1. Death with Christ to elemental spiritual forces (2:20)
 - 2. Futility of regulations (2:21-23)

V. Living Out the New Life in Christ (3:1-4:6)

- A. Setting Minds on Things Above (3:1-4)
 - 1. Raised with Christ, seek things above (3:1)
 - 2. Setting minds on heavenly things (3:2)
 - 3. Life hidden with Christ in God (3:3-4)
- B. Putting Off the Old Self (3:5-11)
 - 1. Putting to death earthly nature (3:5)
 - 2. Putting off anger, malice, slander, and filthy language (3:8)
 - 3. Putting off the old self and putting on the new self (3:9-10)
 - 4. Unity in Christ, no divisions (3:11)
- C. Putting On the New Self (3:12-17)
 - 1. Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility (3:12)
 - 2. Bear with each other and forgive (3:13)
 - 3. Put on love, the bond of perfection (3:14)
 - 4. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts (3:15)
 - 5. Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you (3:16)
 - 6. Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus (3:17)
- D. Instructions for Christian Households (3:18-4:1)
 - 1. Wives, submit to your husbands (3:18)
 - 2. Husbands, love your wives (3:19)
 - 3. Children, obey your parents (3:20)
 - 4. Fathers, do not provoke your children (3:21)
 - 5. Slaves, obey your earthly masters (3:22-25)
 - 6. Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly (4:1)

- E. Further Instructions (4:2-6)
 - 1. Devote yourselves to prayer (4:2)
 - 2. Pray for Paul's ministry (4:3-4)
 - 3. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders (4:5)
 - 4. Let your conversation be always full of grace (4:6)

VI. Final Greetings and Benediction (4:7-18)

- A. Greetings from Paul's Companions (4:7-14)
 - 1. Tychicus and Onesimus (4:7-9)
 - 2. Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus (4:10-11)
 - 3. Epaphras, Luke, and Demas (4:12-14)
- B. Final Instructions (4:15-17)
 - 1. Greetings to the Laodiceans and Nympha (4:15)
 - 2. Read the letter in the church of the Laodiceans (4:16)
 - 3. Exhortation to Archippus (4:17)
- C. Benediction (4:18)
 - 1. Paul's personal signature and final blessing (4:18)

Dangers Facing the Believer Highlighted in Colossians

1. Philosophy and Empty Deceit (2:8-10):

- **Danger:** Being taken captive by human philosophy and traditions that are contrary to Christ.
- **Application:** Hold firmly to the fullness found in Christ, recognizing that all wisdom and knowledge are hidden in Him.

2. Legalism (2:16-17):

- **Danger:** Submitting to legalistic judgments concerning dietary laws, religious festivals, and Sabbath days.
- **Application:** Understand that these are shadows of things to come, but the reality is found in Christ.

3. Asceticism and Angel Worship (2:18-19):

- **Danger:** Being disqualified by false humility, ascetic practices, and worship of angels.
- **Application:** Hold fast to Christ, the Head, from whom the whole body grows and is nourished.

4. Self-Imposed Religion (2:20-23):

- **Danger:** Adhering to self-imposed religious practices that appear wise but have no value in restraining sensual indulgence.
- **Application:** Recognize that true spirituality comes from a relationship with Christ, not from man-made rules.

5. Earthly Focus (3:1-4):

- **Danger:** Focusing on earthly things rather than heavenly things where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

- **Application:** Set your minds on things above, living a life that reflects your heavenly citizenship.

6. Sinful Practices (3:5-11):

- **Danger:** Engaging in sinful behaviors such as sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed.
- **Application:** Put to death whatever belongs to the earthly nature and embrace the new self, renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator.

7. Relational Discord (3:12-17):

- **Danger:** Allowing relational discord and unforgiveness to disrupt the unity and peace in the body of Christ.
- **Application:** Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving as the Lord forgave you.

8. Family Dysfunction (3:18-4:1):

- **Danger:** Dysfunctional relationships within the household, leading to conflict and discord.
- **Application:** Follow God's design for family relationships, fostering mutual love, respect, and submission.

9. Neglect of Prayer and Wise Conduct (4:2-6):

- **Danger:** Neglecting prayer and failing to conduct oneself wisely toward outsiders.
- **Application:** Devote yourselves to prayer, be watchful and thankful, and make the most of every opportunity, letting your conversation be always full of grace.

Well-known Passages from Colossians

[Colossians 1:15-20 ESV] He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church.

He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

[Colossians 2:8-12 ESV] See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.

In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

[Colossians 3:1-6 ESV] If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming.

[Colossians 3:23-25 ESV] Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

[Colossians 4:2, 5-6 ESV] Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving...Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Conclusion for Colossians

By understanding these dangers and applying Paul's teachings, believers can safeguard their faith, live out their new identity in Christ, and foster a community marked by unity, maturity, and love.