

1. “If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above” (3:1). The Bible Project notes that ‘above’ refers to
 - A. our eternal futures with Christ in heaven
 - B. our future resurrections to meet the returning Christ
 - C. spiritual rather than merely material realities
 - D. the transcendent center of Christ’s reign over creation
2. Colossians’ liberal use of ‘all’ and ‘every’ strikes Work (and Powell) as most probably
 - A. the author getting carried away into reckless overgeneralization
 - B. hyperbole or exaggeration for rhetorical effect
 - C. reflecting universalism: the conviction that every last creature will be saved
 - D. referring to every ethnic group, not every individual
3. Philemon is
 - A. the missionary who evangelized Colossae
 - B. an escaped slave who became a Christian
 - C. an acquaintance of Luke who also sends greetings
 - D. one of Paul’s converts, from whom Paul is asking a favor
4. Work uses his cute little graph to describe Colossians’ eschatology as
 - A. focused on walking the green line, but mindful of the red one
 - B. focused on walking the red line, but mindful of the green line
 - C. paying balanced attention to how Christian belong to both old and new creation
 - D. too different from those earlier letters for that graph to describe it
5. Check all that apply: Among the themes that distinguish Colossians from Pauline letters we’ve read so far is
 - ☐ Christ as responsible for creating and recreating the universe he rules
 - ☐ a focus on ways new creation is already present in believers’ lives
 - ☐ Jesus as a ‘new Adam’ restoring fruitfulness to humanity
 - ☐ thanksgiving for how the church received the gospel with faith and hope
 - ☐ ways men and women should behave toward each other
6. Which quote is not from Colossians?
 - A. I appeal to you for my child, Onesimus, whose father I became in my imprisonment. Formerly he was useless to you, but now he is indeed useful to you and to me. I am sending him back to you, sending my very heart (1:10-12).
 - B. 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 (1:17-18).
 - C. In my flesh I am filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church, of which I became a minister (1:24-25).
 - D. Canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands, this he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him (2:14-15).
 - E. If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations—“Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch?” (2:20).
 - F. You have ... put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all (3:9-11).

1. Explore the christology of 1:13-2:22. Who is Jesus, according to Paul here? What claims are familiar to you? What surprises you?

2. How does the cross save us? See 2:11-17.

3. In your small groups, do a Bible “word study” on the terms ‘all’, ‘every’, ‘always’, ‘whole’, etc. throughout Colossians and especially the first half. (Bear in mind that some of these occurrences may just be ordinary uses of the terms rather than part of the pattern.) What is the effect of *all* :) these terms used together in the ways any of them are?

Some contend on the basis of 1:20 that Paul believes in ‘universalism,’ that every last person will be saved. I mentioned that I disagree. What conclusion does the text warrant?

4. Paul thinks the suffering involved in his ministry is contributing to Christ’s work. This is surprising language to evangelicals used to hearing how Christ’s sufferings are all-sufficient (and in 2:14 they are). How might the two be reconciled?

5. I like to preach 2:6-3:17 as a jail chaplain. (I preach it to myself too of course!) Use it to explore personal and social (family, college, etc.) implications of what the Bible Project video calls ‘the resurrection life’. Where do you see successes? temptations? failures? Be specific.

6. Many Christians emphasize the importance of *practices* for spiritual formation. Paul’s Galatians-like reasoning in 2:20-3:10 emphasizes inward versus mere outward transformation. What guidance do these passages offer for keeping specific Christian practices truly fruitful instead of empty formalities?

7. How does Christ’s effect on the relationships in Philemon apply to *your* relationships? How should it?

8. Many consider Philemon, along with texts such as Gal 3:28, to have helped slavery wither in the classical world as Christianity spread and deepened. How does Paul’s approach resemble, contrast with, or inform contemporary tactics to end such contradictions of the Kingdom?

9. Choose a favorite passage. Read it closely in context. What do you notice afresh?