

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

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Colossians

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Colossians

1 *I,* Paul, *write this letter to you,* and Timothy our fellow
believer *is with me*. God sent me to represent the Messiah
Jesus, because that is what God chose to do. 2 *I send this letter* to
you who are God's people and faithful fellow believers united
to the Messiah, *who live* in *the city of* Colossae. *May* God our
Father and the Lord Jesus the Messiah *continue to* be kind to
you and make you peaceful.

3 We pray for you very often. *When we do,* we thank God, the
Father of our Lord Jesus the Messiah, 4 *because* have learned
that you trust in the Messiah Jesus and that you love all
God's people. 5 *You do these things* because you are confidently
waiting for everything that God is keeping for you in heaven.
You first learned about all that God has for you when you
heard the true message, *which is* the good news about the
Messiah. 6 Just as you heard and believed this good news *in
Colossae*, increasing numbers of people in many places are
also hearing and believing it. These people are living in a
different way now, just as you have been living in a different
way since you first learned *about it* and truly experienced how
God acts kindly *toward us*. 7 This is what Epaphras told you
would happen. He works with us for the Messiah, and we love
him. He faithfully serves the Messiah as our representative.
8 He told us that you love *all God's people*, just as God's Spirit
has empowered you to do.

9 Because of everything that Epaphras told us, since the
time when he first told us *about you*, we have joined him in
consistently praying for you. *When we pray for you,* we ask God
to show you everything that he wants you to do and *to make
you* able to understand everything that God's Spirit *is teaching
you*. 10 *We have been praying that you know what God wants* so
that you can live in a way that honors the Lord and pleases him
in every way. *When you live this way, you will be* doing every
sort of good thing and continually knowing God better. 11 *As
you live this way,* God will greatly strengthen you to be able to
patiently endure in all situations, and to do so joyfully. God
can strengthen you greatly because he is gloriously powerful.
12 *Then you will continually* thank *God our* Father, *because* he
has made you worthy to take part in everything that he has to
give to his people when they are with him.

13 God our Father has delivered us from the evil one, who
used to control us, and he has given us to his Son, whom
he loves, so that now we can obey his Son. 14 Because we
are united to his Son, God has set us free; *that is,* he has
forgiven our sins. 15 God's Son perfectly reveals who God is,
even though no one can see God. The Son existed before God
created anything, and he has first place over everything that
God has created. 16 *You can know that the Son existed before
anything else existed and has first place over everything* because
the Father and the Son together created everything that exists.
This includes everything in heaven and everything on earth,
and everything that we can see and everything that we cannot
see, *including the spiritual beings* such as thrones, dominions,
rulers, and authorities. The Father and the Son together created
everything, and everything exists to honor the Son. 17 The Son
existed before any of creation existed, and he sustains and
connects all of it. 18 In regard to the church, *that is, all believers,*
he rules over it as people's heads rule over their bodies. He
made it possible for the church to begin *when he was* the first
person to live again after dying*, never to die again*. Because of
these things about him, he is greater and more important than
anything and anybody else. 19 *The Son rules over everything*
because the Son is fully God, just as the Father gladly willed
him to be. 20 *God the Father* also *gladly chose to work* through
the Son to reconcile to himself everything *and every person
that he created* in the whole universe. *God did this* through his
Son when his Son died on the cross, which made everything
peaceful between God and his creation.

21 Before *you believed in the Messiah*, you did not want to be
close *to God*, and you were hostile *to him* because everything
you thought and did was evil. 22 But *that has all changed* now
that you believe in Jesus! God the Father has repaired the
relationship between himself and you *by working* through his
Son when his Son became human and died. *God the Father
repaired the relationship* so that you can dwell with him as
people who are completely free from sin. 23 *This is all true
about you* as long as you continue confidently to believe *in the
Messiah*, and as long as you do not give up confidently hoping
for God to do what he has promised in the good news that you
heard and that people all over the world have heard. I, Paul,
serve God *by proclaiming to people* this same good news.

24 At the present time I suffer cheerfully *because it is* for
your benefit. I am suffering physically to complete *my part of*
the suffering that the Messiah began on behalf of *his people,* the
church, which is like the Messiah's own body. 25 God called
me to serve his church, and he appointed me *specifically* to
carry out his plan that concerns you. *My part of this plan is* to
proclaim *to you non-Jews* the full message from God. 26 God
kept this message a secret, concealing it from people for a
long time. But now he has made the message known to his
people. 27 God has been wanting to tell his people this very
glorious message that was secret, which applies to non-Jews
as well as to Jews. The secret is that the Messiah is united to
you *non-Jews*, which means that you can confidently expect to
become glorious beings like the Messiah. 28 *This is the Messiah*
whom we announce *to everyone*. *When we talk about him,* we
warn and teach each person as wisely as we can. *We do these
things* so that each of these people may become spiritually
mature in each person's union with the Messiah. 29 I work hard
in all that I do in order to accomplish that goal. *I can do this*
because the Messiah is powerfully enabling me to do it.

2 *I write these things* because I want to inform you about
how hard I am working. *I work hard* for you, for the
fellow-believers who live in *the city of* Laodicea, and for all
fellow-believers who have not met me in person. 2 *I work this
hard* in order to encourage all of you *who have not met me* so
that you unite yourselves together with love for each other. *I
want you* to completely and confidently understand the secret
that God had previously kept hidden. *This secret is about* the
Messiah. 3 The Messiah is the one who knows all of God's
wonderful, wise plan. 4 I am telling you about this secret in
order that no person who argues persuasively will be able to

convince you to believe what is not true. 5 *You can know that those who argue persuasively are wrong* because I care about you and think about you, even though I am not with you in person. I am very happy to see that you are behaving properly and that you firmly believe in the Messiah.

6 Now *that I have told you the truth about the good news*, I want you to behave in a way that fits with how God has united you to the Messiah. You should keep behaving as you did when you accepted the Messiah Jesus the Lord. 7 *Behaving in this way includes* staying firmly united to him, just as a plant's roots hold it firmly in place. *It also includes* depending completely on him, just as a house stands on its foundation. *It also includes* confidently trusting the Messiah, just as Epaphras taught you, and giving thanks more and more.

8 Be on the alert so that no one who tries to lead you away from the truth will succeed. Anyone who tries to lead you away will use human thinking that is meaningless and deceptive. *Such a false message comes* from what older generations teach younger generations and from what humans normally think about the world, not from the Messiah. 9 *I mention the Messiah* because he, a human, is fully God. 10 In addition, you have everything you need since God has united you to the Messiah, who rules over *the spiritual beings, including* every ruler and every authority. 11 When God united you to the Messiah, it was as if God the Father had circumcised you. I do not mean that a human physically cut flesh off you. *Rather, instead of cutting off flesh,* God removed your weak and sinful parts. *God* circumcised *you in this way* through what the Messiah accomplished. 12 *Here is another way to understand what God has done for you:* when they baptized you, it was as if *you died and* people buried you *because God the Father included you* when *the Messiah died and* people buried him. And it was as if God the Father brought you back to life *because he included you* when he brought the Messiah back to life. *This happened* because you believed that God the Father works powerfully, particularly when he brought the Messiah back to life. 13 You used to be spiritually dead, because you *often* sinned against God and because you were non-Jews *and not part of God's people*. But God the Father brought you back to life spiritually *because he included you* when he brought the Messiah back to life. *This means that* he has forgiven us for all the wrong things we have done against him. 14 It was as if God had an official list of the debts we owe*, which are our sins*. *When he forgave us,* he wiped out that list of sins that counted against us, and he prevented it from coming between us and him. God accomplished this when *the Messiah died on the cross, as surely as if* he had nailed the list to the cross. 15 Moreover, God defeated the spiritual beings that rule the world, and he publicly showed *that he defeated them*, just as if he had paraded them around as prisoners. *God did this when the Messiah died* on the cross.

16 Because of these things *that God has done for you*, do not worry about what other people say you should do. *They may have opinions* about what to eat and what to drink. *They may have opinions about* what special days to observe, including days for worshipping God, days for celebrating when there is a new moon, or days for resting. 17 *God used* these things *to* point to what he had planned for the future, which is the coming of the Messiah himself. 18 *You will meet some people* who enjoy pretending to be humble and worshipping angels and who love to talk about *amazing* things that they have seen. They act like they are great—although without good reason, because they think only in human ways. Do not listen to these people who are trying to take away what God has ready to give to you. 19 *These people* are not remaining loyal to the Messiah. It is he who leads the church, just like people's heads lead their bodies. The head directs how the whole body, each and every part, receives what it needs and how it works together. In this way the body grows. Just like that, the Messiah directs the church so that it grows as God wants it to grow.

20 It is as if you have died, *because God included you* when the Messiah died. *This frees you* from the spiritual beings that rule this world. So, you should not obey the rules *that these people have given to you*. *Doing so would mean that* you were really still part of this world. 21 *These rules include commands like these:* "Do not feel *certain things*!" "Do not try *certain foods*!" "Do not take hold of *certain things*!" 22 All such rules concern things that perish when people make use of them. Further, people*, not God,* teach and require *these rules*. 23 Following these rules may seem to be a wise thing to do for people who worship God the way they want to, who pretend to be humble, and who treat their bodies badly *as part of their religion*. However, *following these rules* will not help you stop sinning.

3 To return *to what I said before*, it is as if God brought you back to life *because he included you* when he brought the Messiah back to life. *Because of this,* I want you to stay focused on what is in heaven, since the Messiah is there. He sits next to God the Father on the throne *and rules everything*. 2 I want you to desire what *God has ready for you* in heaven, not what *you could have here* on earth. 3 *You should think this way* because it is as if you have died. You are spiritually alive only because God has united you to the Messiah in close relationship with himself, and this cannot be seen *on earth right now*. 4 You are alive because God has united you to the Messiah. *Therefore,* when *he returns again to earth and* everyone sees him, at that time you will be with him. Then, everyone will see that you too have become glorious *beings like him*.

5 Because *this is your destiny*, think of the desires you have to do evil things in this world as enemies that you must kill. *The evil things that you might desire include* having improper sex, doing impure things, enjoying wrong emotions, desiring evil things, and wanting more than you need, which is the same as worshiping another god. 6 Because people have these desires, God is angry with them and will punish them. 7 You, just like them, used to have these desires to do evil things. *That was* when you acted out these desires. 8 But now *that you have believed*, you must stop behaving in all evil ways. *These evil ways include* acting in angry ways, being angry with others, desiring to hurt others, talking bad about others, and speaking shameful words. 9 You must not tell lies to one another. You are not the person you used to be, a person who normally behaved in these evil ways. 10 You are a new person now, *a person* in whom God is working to make you know him more. *You are now a person* who is like God, who turned you into this new person. 11 Since *you are all new people*, *it is not important* whether anyone is a non-Jew or a Jew, or whether anyone is circumcised or not, or whether anyone is a foreigner or an uncivilized person, or whether anyone is a slave or not.

Instead, it is the Messiah who is most important, and God has united him to all *of you*.

12 God has chosen you, he has set you apart as his own
people, and he loves you. Because of these things and because
you are new people, you must always behave properly *towards*
others. *This includes* caring about them, being kind to them,
not being proud, not behaving harshly, and taking a long time
to become angry. 13 You must not easily become irritated with
one another. When you blame other people for the things they
have done, you must forgive them. You should imitate how
the Lord forgave you by *forgiving one another*. 14 Finally, *what*
is more important than everything *I have said* so far is that
you love one another. By doing this you will unite yourselves
together, just as God has called you to do.

15 You must make the peace which the Messiah has given
you a primary factor when you choose what to do. *You must*
do this because God has chosen you to have peace as he unites
you closely together, as closely as if you were one person's
body. Also, you must give thanks to God. 16 You must focus
completely on the message about the Messiah as you think
and act. You must teach and instruct one another very wisely
using songs from the Scriptures, songs about Jesus, and songs
that the Holy Spirit has given to you. You must thankfully and
sincerely sing to God.

17 Whenever you say or do anything, *you should behave* in
every situation *as people who* represent the Lord Jesus. Also,
you should thank God, *who is our* Father. *You can do this only*
because of *the work of* the Messiah.

18 Wives must treat their husbands as the leaders *in their*
families, since this is appropriate behavior for those whom God
has united to the Lord. 19 Husbands must love their wives and
not treat them harshly.

20 Children must obey their parents in every circumstance.
This pleases God *and is appropriate* for those whom God has
united to the Lord. 21 Fathers must not make their children
angry. Otherwise, the children may feel like giving up.

22 Slaves must obey those who are their masters in this
world in every circumstance. *They should obey* not just when
their masters are watching, which is how those who want
to please only humans behave. Instead, *they should obey their*
masters sincerely because they treat the Lord with reverence.
23 You must do whatever work you have to do diligently, as
if *you were working* for the Lord instead of for merely human
masters. 24 *You must obey and serve in this way* because you
know that the Lord will justly repay you by giving you what
he has kept for you. *Remember that* the Lord Messiah is *the real*
master for whom you are working. 25 *You must remember who*
the real master is because God will punish anyone who does
wrong in proportion to those wrong actions. *This is because*
God does not judge people based on how they look or who
they are but on what they have done.

4 Masters must treat their slaves justly and fairly. *You who*
are masters must do this because you know that you too
serve a Master*, one who is* in heaven.

2 Pray *to God* persistently. Pay attention when you pray, and
give thanks *to God*. 3 When you are praying, pray for us too.
Pray that God will make it possible for us to freely proclaim
our message, which is the secret about the Messiah that we
now share with others. Because *we proclaimed* this message, I
am now in prison. 4 *Pray* that I am able to explain the good
news clearly, since this is what God has called me to do.

5 Behave wisely around those who do not believe in the
Messiah. Take advantage of every opportunity *you have to do*
this. 6 *When you talk with them,* you must always speak in a
pleasant and interesting way. *When you do this,* you will know
the best way to respond to each person.

7 Tychicus will tell you everything that has been happening
to me. *He is* a fellow believer whom I love, who helps me
faithfully, and who serves together with me as a man whom
God has united to the Lord. 8 I am sending Tychicus to you *with*
this letter because I want you to know how we are doing and
because Tychicus will help you live confidently. 9 *I am sending*
him to you with Onesimus, who is a faithful fellow believer
whom I love. He is from your group. Tychicus and Onesimus
will tell you about everything *that has been happening* here.

10 Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, and Mark, who
is Barnabas' cousin, send their regards to you. You already
know that you should welcome Mark if he visits you. 11 Jesus,
whom you may know by the name Justus, also *sends his*
regards. These men*—Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus—*are the
only Jewish believers who are working with me for the sake
of God's kingdom. They have encouraged me *in this work*.
12 Epaphras, who is from your group *and* who serves the
Messiah Jesus, sends his regards to you. He prays earnestly
for you very often. *He prays* that God will make you able to
be what God has called you to be and to be sure of everything
that God wants *you to do*. 13 *You know that he prays this way*
for you because I can personally affirm this about him. *I tell*
you that he works very hard for you, for the people *who live* in
the city of Laodicea, and for the people *who live* in the city of
Hierapolis. 14 Luke the doctor, whom I love, and Demas send
their regards to you.

15 Give our regards to the fellow believers who live in
Laodicea, to Nympha, and to the group of believers *that meets*
in Nympha's home. 16 After the person who reads this letter
to you finishes it, send *it to Laodicea* so that someone can read
it to the group of believers there, too. Also, *ask for* the letter
I sent to the believers in Laodicea so that you too can read
it. 17 *You must* tell Archippus to make sure that he completes
the task that God gave him to do when God united him to the
Messiah.

18 I, Paul, send my regards *to you*. I am writing *these last*
words myself *instead of having my scribe write them*. You must
not forget that I am in prison. *I pray that God will* be gracious
to you.