



Lesson 7

Colossians 1:24-29

Day 1

KEEP IT IN PERSPECTIVE

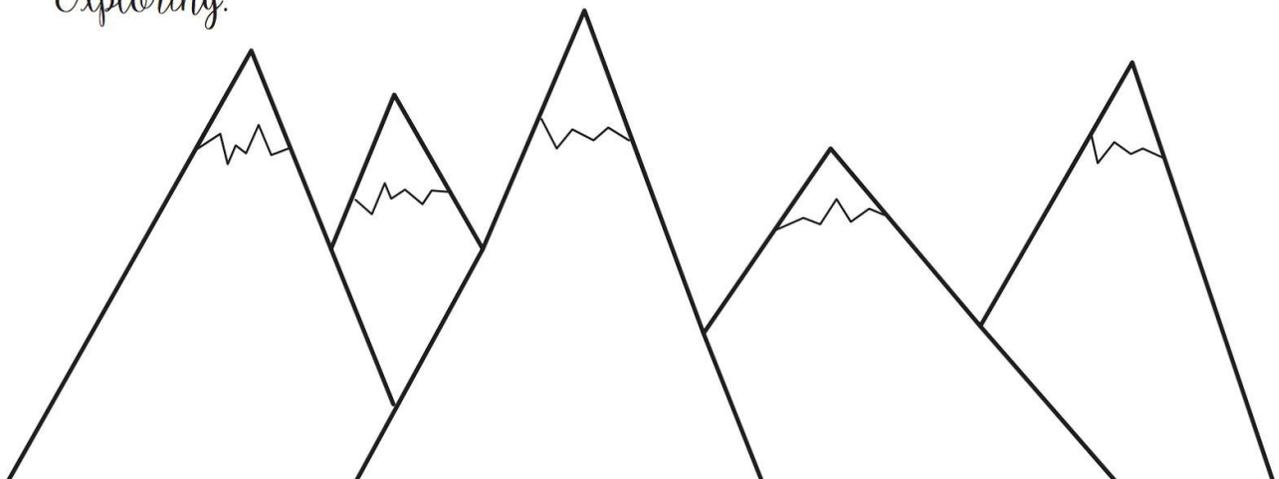
1. In the first row explain the paragraph in only one or two sentences. Think about how you would explain it to a 10 year old child. I usually ask myself, “Who is doing what (and why is he doing it)?” This is usually enough to get the main point of the thought into one or two sentences.

Chapter 1	Verses 1-2	Verses 3-12	Verses 13-23	Verses 24-29
Paragraph explanation	Paul greets the Colossians	Paul <u>thanks</u> God through prayer because of the Colossians salvation	God rescued us from darkness and reconciled us through the redemption of His Son’s death that we might be holy	

EXPLORING THE THEME

2. Look for the word: ESTABLISHED throughout all four chapters of Colossians. Write down the verses where you find this word and what you learn about it.

Exploring:



Day 2

3. Paul finishes his last thought (paragraph) in verse 23 with an encouragement to the Colossians to not move away from the hope of the gospel “of which I, Paul, was made a minister.” He believes that his ministry and sacrifice will be of benefit to the body of Christ so much so that he lives an others-oriented life for the sake of fulfilling that Great Commission. According to 1:24-29, in what specific ways does Paul minister and sacrifice?

4. In what did Paul rejoice according to Colossians 1:24? What do the following verses say about this same idea?

Romans 8:17

2 Corinthians 1:5

Philippians 4:11-12

1 Peter 4:13

GROWING IN RESPECT TO SALVATION

5. Write down some of your recent sufferings. Have they been for the sake of Christ and His people? Take time to pray now to rejoice in the sufferings that come with being a Christian.

6. Think about the last time you rejoiced in something. What was it? Evaluate your rejoicing in light of Jesus’s example in Hebrews 12:2-3.

Day 3

7. Paul makes an interesting statement that might sound strange to us (Colossians 1:24-25). He says that, “something is lacking in Christ’s afflictions.” What does that mean? To some, it may sound like Christ is deficient in something, but that doesn’t sound right! Look only at these two verses for the answers below:

- a) What kind of suffering was Paul enduring according to verse 24?
- b) Who was Paul representing in “doing his share?”
- c) What is Paul’s part in this job?
- d) What is Paul’s attitude?
- e) Why was Paul enduring physical suffering according to v. 25?
- f) Why was Paul rejoicing in his sufferings on behalf of the church according to verse 25?

8. Is Christ done being persecuted on behalf of His body, the church? Is Christ’s affliction complete? How did/does it continue according to the following verses?

Matthew 5:10-12

Matthew 10:16-23

1 Corinthians 12:26

9. Paul wanted to validate the gospel message with the same fruit that Jesus, Himself bore -- suffering. How could Paul claim that He was “doing his part” in the area of suffering? (See 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 for the answer)

10. Read these two excerpts about Colossians 1:24 from John Piper and John MacArthur. Be sure to highlight any interesting points or make notes at the bottom as you read.

<http://www.desiringgod.org/conference-messages/filling-up-what-is-lacking-in-christs-afflictions>

Christ has prepared a love offering for the world by suffering and dying for sinners. It is full and lacking in nothing—except one thing, a personal presentation by Christ himself to the nations of the world and the people of your workplace. God's answer to this lack is to call the people of Christ (people like Paul) to present the afflictions of Christ to the world—to carry them from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth. In doing this we "fill up what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ." We finish what they were designed for, namely, a personal presentation to the world of people who do not know about their infinite worth. But notice how Paul says this in verse 24: He says that it is in his sufferings and in his flesh—that is, his actual, suffering body that he does his share in filling up the afflictions of Christ. So Paul sees a very close connection between his sufferings and Christ's afflictions.

What this means, I think, is that God intends for the afflictions of Christ to be presented to the world through the afflictions of his people. God really means for the body of Christ, the church, to experience some of the suffering he experienced so that when we offer the Christ of the cross to people, they see the Christ of the cross in us. We are to make the afflictions of Christ real for people by the afflictions we experience in offering him to them, and living the life of love he lived. "I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake . . . filling up that which is lacking in the afflictions of Christ." Christ wills to have a personal presentation of his sufferings to the world. And the way he means to offer himself as a sufferer for the world to the world is through his people who, like him, are willing to suffer for the world. His sufferings are completed in our sufferings because in ours the world sees his, and they have their appointed effect. The suffering love of Christ for sinners is seen in the suffering love of his people for sinners.

I think what we see in Colossians 1:24 is the living out of Jesus' words in Mark 8:35, "Whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it." The pathway of salvation is the pathway of "losing one's life for the sake of the gospel." The point is that taking the gospel to people (across the office or across the ocean) ordinarily requires sacrifice and suffering, a losing of life or a denying of self. This is the way Christ means for his saving sufferings to be taken to the world, through the sufferings of his people. Suffering is God's strategy for completing the Great Commission. We have plenty of time in eternity to enjoy the benefits.

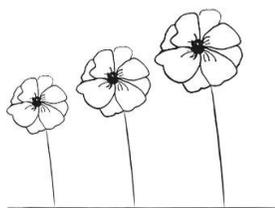
<http://www.gty.org/resources/print/bible-qna/BQ071112> by John MacArthur

The statement "in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church) in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions" has been the subject of much controversy. Roman Catholics have imagined here a reference to the suffering of Christians in purgatory. Christ's suffering, they maintain, was not enough to purge us completely from our sins. Christians must make up what was lacking in Christ's suffering on their behalf by their own suffering after death. That can hardly be Paul's point, however. He has just finished demonstrating that Christ alone is sufficient to reconcile us to God (1:20–23). To do an about face now and teach that believers must help pay for their sins would undermine his whole argument. The New Testament is clear that Christ's sufferings need nothing added to them. In Jesus' death on the cross, the work of salvation was completed. Further, the Colossian heretics taught that human works were necessary for salvation. To teach that believers' suffering was necessary to help expiate their sins would be to play right into the errorists' hands. The idea that Paul refers to suffering in purgatory is ruled out by both the general content of the epistle and the immediate context, as well as the obvious absence of any mention of a place like purgatory in Scripture.

Finally, *thlipsis* (afflictions) is used nowhere in the New Testament to speak of Christ's sufferings.

“In my flesh” refers to Paul’s physical pain. When he says, “I do my share on behalf of His body (which is the church),” he is indicating that the physical pain he endures at the hands of Christ-hating persecutors is the result of what he does to benefit and build the church. It was not his personality that offended and brought hostile injury to him, but his ministry for the Body of Christ.

In what sense were Paul’s sufferings filling up that which is lacking in Christ’s afflictions? In that Paul was receiving the persecution that was intended for Christ. Jesus, having ascended to heaven, was out of their reach. But because His enemies had not filled up all the injuries they wanted to inflict on Him, they turned their hatred on those who preached the gospel. It was in that sense that Paul filled up what was lacking in Christ’s afflictions. In 2 Corinthians 1:5 he wrote that “the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance.” He bore in his body the marks of the blows intended for Christ (Gal. 6:17; cf. 2 Cor. 11:23–28). He not only suffered for Christ, but also for the sake of the church (2 Tim. 2:10). Those who wish to represent Christ and serve His church must be willing to suffer for His Name.



GROWING IN RESPECT TO SALVATION

11. What is your part in filling up that which is lacking in the sufferings of Christ? Make a list of that which you do for Christ on a weekly basis. Are you rejoicing in these things?

Day 4

12. We see from Colossians 1:25 that Paul was made a minister (Gk 1249 *diakonos*). This is the same word as “servant/attendant” where we get our English word deacon. Paul was a servant of preaching the Word of God. List the characteristics you see about the Word of God from verses 26-27 and take time to thank God for each one.

13. What is the goal of gospel ministry, and how will be it be accomplished according Colossians 1:28 and 4:12? How does this relate to what Jesus wanted us to do in Matthew 28:19-20?

14. How is this ministry carried out to its end result in 1 Timothy 2:2 and Titus 2:3-5?

15. What is the difference between “admonishing” and “teaching” according to John MacArthur in his commentary on Colossians?

“Admonishing” (*noutheteo* Gk 3560) speaks of encouraging counsel in view of sin and coming punishment. It is the responsibility of church leaders and every believer. . . . “Teaching” (*didáskeō* Gk 1321) on the other hand refers to teaching positive truth. (p.79)

16. Do you have any relationships where you are practicing these two actions? If so, with whom?

17. These two actions are to be accomplished “with all wisdom.” What might admonishing and teaching look like practically according to the following Proverbs?

Proverbs 15:1-2

How does this look when you are teaching or warning?:

Proverbs 15:23-24

How does this look when you are teaching or warning?:

Proverbs 15:28

How does this look when you are teaching or warning?:

Proverbs 16:23

How does this look when you are teaching or warning?:

Proverbs 25:15

How does this look when you are teaching or warning?:

Proverbs 26:4

How does this look when you are teaching or warning?:

GROWING IN RESPECT TO SALVATION



18. Look through what you have learned from Proverbs in regards to how you are to teach and warn. Evaluate the teaching and warning you do in the lives of those closest to you. In which area(s) are you doing well? Which area(s) needs the most improvement, and with whom?

Day 5

19. According to Colossians 1:28, Paul proclaims Christ in order that others may be complete. This word for complete is *téleios* which means "consummated goal." This word has the idea of being made mature and/or consummated from going through the necessary stages to reach the end-goal (telos). This root (tel-) means "reaching the end (aim)." It is well-illustrated with the old pirate's telescope, unfolding (extending out) one stage at a time to function at full-strength (capacity effectiveness). How does this spiritual process of reaching the end-goal happen according to following verses:

Philippians 1:6

Ephesians 4:11-13

Hebrews 6:1-2

20. There is a centralized theme in Colossians 1:29 that is so powerful when someone takes the time to look up the words in the original language. Answer the question, "How am I to labor according to this verse?" Look up the word meanings and then re-write this sentence in your own words.

<http://biblehub.com/text/colossians/1-28.htm>

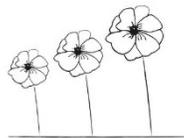
For this purpose also I *labor* (Gk 2872 *kopiaō*)

striving (Gk 75 *agonizomai*)

according to His *power* (Gk 1411 *dunamis*)

which *mightily* (Gk 1411 *dunamis*) *works* (Gk 1754 *energeoō*) within me.

21. According to Romans 8:11 and Ephesians 1:19-20, what kind of power is in you that can labor like Paul?



GROWING IN RESPECT TO SALVATION

22. Is your goal the same as Paul's in Col. 1:29? In which specific situations do you need to appropriate this power in your life?