

# Introduction to Colossians

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[ 0 : 00 ] I don't know if you're like me, when I get a new book, and I love books, but I'm really tempted to skip the introduction. I want to get to the meat. Why would I read the introduction?

And usually, when I read the introduction to a book, I find out there's actually stuff there that I need. Well, today is like the introduction to a book. We're going to introduce the series.

So I'm going to talk a little bit about history. I'm going to talk a little bit about theology. But what we want to do is use this as a foundation as we're looking ahead into the book of Colossians, because it is very, very relevant to church life in America today.

As we go through the book of Colossians, you're going to say, wow, Paul could have written this to the church on Derby Grange Road. That would be us. It's very, very relevant.

So today, as we go through the introduction, listen carefully. I'm sure there'll be some nuggets in here for you to take home with you. And remember, so we're going to be in Colossians chapter 3 briefly.

[ 1 : 03 ] But by way of introduction, I want to take you back down memory lane. A couple weeks ago, I mentioned two themes that I often bring up in my preaching. Those two themes are life is hard, and the gospel is greater than we can possibly imagine.

That's what Paul is talking about in the book of Colossians. We need to acknowledge the fact that life is hard. We go through little irritating things that just won't go away.

We go through big crises that are terrifying. We worry about our family. We worry about our friends. We're the victims of our own sin and poor choices.

We're the victims of other people's sin. We have to face the fact that we're finite. We're just not enough. We can't be all things to all people at all times.

We can't be in multiple places at once. We're not God. And so between the sin of our lives and the sin in our world, the brokenness out there, and the fact that we're finite beings, those two combine to make life really hard.

[ 2 : 09 ] It's important that we acknowledge that life is hard. It is what it is. But it's a tool that God uses to develop our character and to make us more like Christ.

And that's where the gospel comes in. The gospel is so much greater than we realize. It's so much greater than we can even begin to understand.

That's why we come back to it again and again and again and again. Because as we unpack what we have in Christ, what we receive when we put our trust in him as Savior because of his work on the cross, and then as he walks with us through life, what we discover is that Jesus is sufficient.

That's why the title of this sermon series is Christ All Sufficient, because that's the message that Paul is trying to get across to the Colossian church. He wants them to understand that Jesus Christ is enough.

Doesn't matter what you're facing. Doesn't matter the challenges that come into your life. Jesus is enough. And we need to learn to rest in that as well. Part of his message that we're going to see in Colossians as he talks about Christ is enough is he addresses a human temptation.

[ 3 : 30 ] How many of you have taught somebody how to drive? Right? Now, when you're teaching somebody to drive, be honest, how many times were you tempted to grab the wheel?

Because the knucklehead is driving off the road, or isn't paying attention, or is messing with the radio. First time our oldest son drove, when we got to our destination, Kara got out of the car, and I kid you not, she knelt down and kissed the pavement.

Because Josiah had a weird relationship with the brake. Where we would go and go and go and go and go, and the light's red, the light's red, the light's red.

And then he would stop. And the whole time I'm pressing my foot into the floor. Why? Because I want to take control. I want to be in charge.

And I come up with strategies to either manipulate the circumstances around me, or to manipulate God into giving me what I want. That's a very human response.

[ 4 : 38 ] Paul deals with that in Colossians. Because there was a heresy, a false teaching, that was appearing in the area around Colossae, the city of Colossae, that was encouraging people to take control.

That was encouraging people to take things into their own hands. And what Paul wanted them to remember is that Christ is all you need. Christ is sufficient. And then he explained how we take advantage of what we have in Christ.

So we're going to unpack that, not just today, but over the months to come as we go through the book of Colossians, because it's a very rich book. So you're in Colossians chapter 3.

Let's read the first two verses of that chapter together. These are really the key verses of Paul's epistle. Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your mind on the things above, not in the things that are on earth. That's going to be our focus in the months ahead.

[ 5 : 49 ] If you have been raised up with Christ, if you have put your trust in him, recognizing your own need of salvation, because of your sin, because of your finiteness, and you turn to Jesus, if that is true of you, keep seeking the things above.

That's going to be our theme for the weeks ahead. Let's pray together and talk about the city of Colossae. God, thank you that we have been raised with Christ, that it's as if it's already happened. We are secure in your care. We're secure because you saved us. We're secure because you have given us your Holy Spirit. And now, Lord, what we want to learn is how to walk with you, to experience all that you have for us in Christ.

God, I pray that you would help us to keep our eyes fixed on the things above, so that the things of earth grow strangely dim. We're able to live life the way you intended for us.

God, we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. So let's talk about the city of Colossae. Got a nifty map here for you. So this is actually a map of the seven churches in the book of Revelation that John wrote to.

[ 7 : 14 ] So let me get the aim right here. There we go. So you see them all here. Now you see Laodicea right here that I've got highlighted? See that valley right there? The Laodicea was the last of the churches that John addressed.

Colossae was right here at the end of the valley. It was kind of isolated. At the time that Paul was writing his letter, it was actually in decline. We believe that the church was planted there when, if you recall in Acts, Paul came to Ephesus.

In Ephesus, he found a fertile open field to share the gospel. He started meeting in the school of Tyrannus. And it says, as Paul was meeting with people, let me get this right, here in Ephesus, as Paul was meeting in Ephesus, the gospel spread all the way up to here.

Now just a side note, something that I love about God is even when we think that we've got a strategy figured out, we need to trust the Lord that he knows what's best.

If you think back to Acts chapter 16, I love Acts 16 because the apostle Paul is struggling to figure out what God's will is. That's encouraging to me because sometimes it's hard to figure out, God, what do you want me to do?

[ 8 : 36 ] So Paul was praying and he was seeking to go into this area here. And the Holy Spirit repeatedly said, no, no, no.

And then he got the call to go into Macedonia, which is off the map on here, and left the region. But then he came back ending up in Ephesus.

And in God's perfect timing, two things happened. Number one, as people came to Christ, one in particular man named Epaphras, they carried the gospel up. They followed this river and they brought the gospel here.

And all these churches were planted because of the work that God did to Paul in Ephesus. The other thing about what God does about having a plan, Bithynia is now in modern day Turkey and in Armenia.

God sent Bartholomew up there to Bithynia. He already had somebody in mind to go and serve in that area. The very first church was in Armenia.

[ 9 : 40 ] And Bartholomew planted that. So God had a plan. He knew what he was doing. But from Ephesus, we saw a major movement of the gospel. And the church of Colossae was one of the churches that was planted. So Epaphras came back to Ephesus and reported to Paul what was going on.

And what he reported was that there was a thriving church in Colossae. And that there was this heresy growing. At the time that Paul was speaking to Ephesus, Epaphras and Ephesus are hard to say interchangeably.

As he was talking to the man, he was no longer in Ephesus. He had been imprisoned and was in Rome. It was approximately AD 60 and death was imminent.

He was in prison and while he was in prison, he wrote four letters. The letter to the Ephesians, to the Philippians, to the Colossians and to Philemon. There's common themes to all four of those books.

They really build on each other. And they look as like looking at a diamond from different directions. And so Paul was writing to address specific issues that were important to each of those churches.

[ 10 : 51 ] And for the church of Colossae, the big issue was this false teaching that was gaining ground and gaining momentum. And so he needed to address that. The other thing we find about the Colossian church is that it disappeared.

As I was preparing my sermon this morning, I got to thinking, okay, Laodicea and Colossae were only 12 miles apart. Why did the Apostle John write a letter to Laodicea and not to Colossae? Probably because Colossae wasn't there anymore. Shortly after Paul wrote his letter to the Colossians, there was an earthquake. And the combination of a failing economy in Colossae and the earthquake caused the people to slowly but surely trickle away and end up in other cities around the area.

Now all that exists of Colossae is ruins. And so that church didn't live very long after Paul wrote his letter.

There's an important thing for us to be aware of in that. You know, if you drive around Dubuque, let's say you go out Asbury Road toward Asbury, there is a jumble coffee shop that's on the left and next to that is an old church building except it's not a church building.

[ 12 : 15 ] It was a nail salon. Soon it's going to be a pizza parlor because that church dissolved. There's a microbrewery down in Clinton that used to be a beautiful church but it dissolved.

That's a very real problem. Now in Colossae, I don't think they failed because they were, because the church declined because of heresy.

I don't think they fell into this trap that we're going to talk about over the weeks and months to come but the church dispersed. We need to be aware of what's going on in our church.

That's why we're having this family meeting today is to make sure that as a body we're continuing to keep the main thing the main thing. We need to guard ourselves. One of the charges that God has given to John and Tim and Jack and I is to protect our body from false teaching to make sure that we are united in pursuing Christ because if we don't there's a very real risk that this building will become a nice you pick but not a church.

We want to see that God's people continue to meet here and affect the community around us. And so Colossae disappeared. We don't see much about them after the fact but this letter despite the fact that the church didn't last is incredibly important because it speaks to things that we need to be aware of today.

[ 13 : 53 ] So we're going to focus the rest of our time on the Colossian heresy. The Colossian heresy I'm going to give you a quote. Go ahead and give me the next slide, Eliana. This quote is from a book I've been using a commentary on the book of Colossians by a man named F.F. Bruce.

The Colossian heresy evidently encouraged the claim that the fullness of God could be appreciated only by mystical experiences for which ascetic preparation was necessary.

It's a mouthful. The Colossian heresy evidently encouraged the claim that the fullness of God could be appreciated only by mystical experiences for which ascetic preparation was necessary.

Let me put that in layman's terms, if you will. The Colossian heresy was you need to grab the wheel. You need to take control. These mystical experiences were an active pursuit of visions, of being transported up through the heavens and they had this complex geography laid out, this map

of the heavens supposedly, and people would worship angels and call upon angels to partner with them to ascend up into the heavens and have mystical experiences.

And the way to get there was by ascetic practices. Asceticism is a practice of denying ourselves of things. So they set apart certain days as holy and they had, they denied themselves certain types of foods or they would forego sexual relationships for a time.

[15:27] But it was all about me. All about getting me prepared to make this climb to get into the presence of God.

It also created, interestingly enough, this really powerful arrogance among those who arrived or thought they had. I've had visions. I deny myself.

I am engaged in these mystical practices. And so it became this cult of trying to approach God and experience the fullness of God by one's own efforts.

Ultimately, that leads one completely away from the biblical gospel. And that's what Paul was preparing the Colossians for. Defend yourselves against this type of teaching. So I want to repeat these primary components of the heresy again.

Asceticism, which is rituals and self-denial. Angel worship to help angels guide them into the presence of God. And this mysticism, this mystical experience in order to get a higher knowledge.

[16:36] And the whole idea was because I've had this experience, you need to come to me because I'm the guru. That's how it works. We all have access to God.

We all have, and that's part of Paul's message to the Colossians. So Paul was giving them the tools to overcome the heresy. Eleanor, go ahead and give me the next slide. So FF Bruce goes on, Paul's answer to such a claim is that the fullness of God is embodied in Christ.

That's a theme you see repeated over and over and over again. You see it in Paul's epistles. We talked about it in recent weeks in the Gospel of John. The first couple verses of Hebrews.

And we're going to see it again in Colossians chapter 1 in a few weeks. Jesus is God with us. When we look at Jesus, we see God in a way that we can grasp and understand.

Paul's answer to such a claim is that the fullness of God is embodied in Christ so that those who are united to Him by faith have direct access in Him to that fullness.

[17:49] I want you to soak that in. You have direct access to the fullness of God through Christ.

You don't have to go on 40-day fasts. You don't have to observe certain rituals. You just have to come to Jesus and follow Him in the presence of God.

Those who are united to Him by faith have direct access in Him to that fullness and have no need to be submitted to the ascetic rigor which the Colossian Christians were being recommended to practice with its attendant spiritual dangers.

What are the spiritual dangers? Spiritual dangers are a distraction because ultimately it doesn't work. But if you get trapped into this mindset, what do you think you have to do?

You have to try harder. You have to try harder. You have to try harder. And pretty soon you're flogging yourself trying to figure out what did I do wrong so I can't get access to God. Again, it's all about me.

[18:57] And it's hopeless. It's hopeless. Let's look again at Colossians 3. Go ahead and give me the next slide, Eliana. Therefore, if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. Turn your attention away from asceticism.

Turn your attention away from ritual, the things that you think you have to do to earn a right to be in the presence of God. Everything that has to be done to give you access to God has already been done by Jesus on the cross.

What did the author of Hebrews say? That we can come confidently, boldly, to the throne of what? Grace. We don't have to do all this extra stuff to get access to God.

God. It's freely given. So let's talk about why would people fall prey to this stuff. I mean, if the gospel's true, and we believe it is, that we have free access to God, all we have to do is put our faith in the work of Jesus on our behalf, why would somebody be distracted by all the hard work that goes in with being ascetic, with denying yourself?

[20:24] Why would somebody do that? Well, there's an allure to it. It goes back to that idea of taking control. At the beginning of this message, I talked about those two themes that I come back to again and again.

Life is hard, and when life is hard, we want to take control and make it go the way we want it to go. We want our solutions, and when we don't get those, the natural sinful inclination of the human heart is to figure it out, to solve the problem.

We look at our own failures. Maybe we're inadequate as a husband or a wife. Our kids aren't growing up the way we hoped they would. We get fired from a job. We can't find a job.

There's more a month at the end of our money, and we feel these failures, and so we think, I've got to do something. False teaching, it's very attractive because it opens the door to me taking control and me being the one to figure out how to get to where I need to, dare I say, obligate God to give me what I want.

And there's just our sin. Our sin. The natural inclination of the human heart. A couple weeks ago, I talked about this concept of complicated problems versus complex problems.

[ 21 : 50 ] If you recall, the left side of our brain wants to solve everything as a complicated problem. A complicated problem is something that we can figure out. You can figure out how to fix your car.

You can figure out how to repair damage to your home. There's a lot of things in life that we can figure out, and God gives us the responsibility to figure those things out. But there are other questions that our right brain is more inclined to look at that are complex, that we just can't figure out.

There's not a checklist. There's not a formula. And so we have to walk with God, and as we walk with God through our disappointments, through our failures, through our sin, as we spend that time in relationship with Him, we learn how to live through these problems.

Life is primarily, the more important questions of life are complex, where we have to walk through them with God to find solutions.

But our temptation is to figure out ourselves, to take control. And false doctrine is very alluring because it answers the question, at least in the short term.

[ 23 : 06 ] Ultimately, what this is rooted in is false doctrine. It's false teaching. Or inadequate teaching, where people just don't know enough, and because they don't know enough, they fall prey to something that looks attractive.

You know, we talk over and over and over again about the importance of being in the Bible. I've recommended for the Paul, but numerous times, discipline yourself to read through the Bible every year.

Memorize it. Figure out ways to take the Word of God. Now, that's not a ritual. It can become that if we're not careful. But we spend time in God's Word to build our relationship with Him, to commune with Him, to get the right understanding of how this relationship with God works and actually is lived out in our lives.

Because that's the goal, is it's lived out. today. So we need to cultivate that relationship with God, lest we fall prey to that temptation to make life a left-brain, complicated thing that we just need to figure out.

So that's the allure of the false doctrine. Now, that was then, you think. Okay, that was first century Colossae. Like my little bottle contraption?

[ 24 : 30 ] Mark and Joanna got that for me because they got tired of watching me struggle with opening the bottle here up front. What Mark was really saying, he's concerned that my hands are weak.

We might think that what Paul is talking about is something that's way back then, 2,000 years ago, so what do I care? What does it have to do with me today? The truth, the gospel, is under attack from every side all the time.

And what's interesting is Satan isn't very creative, so the clothing may look subtly different, but the basis of the attack is always the same. It's very similar. It's some form of you can take control, you can figure it out, you don't, that Jesus stuff, maybe, okay, maybe you'll go to heaven, but in the course of your daily life, you're on your own, kid.

You've got to figure it out. And then when we don't have an adequate understanding of the gospel, we fall prey to those things. There is a false teaching that is running rampant, especially among younger people, 40 and under, that we need to be on guard against.

It is spread all over TikTok, it pops up on social media over and over and over again. It's this idea of deconstruction, the idea of deconstructing our faith.

[ 25 : 49 ] it's not new, it's just rinse and repeat of false doctrine and it's destroying lives. So we're going to take a few minutes and we're going to talk about what is deconstruction because I want

you to be aware of it and I want you to be aware of how to defend yourself and how to engage in conversation with people that are starting down that path to deconstruct their faith.

So what do I mean by that? Let me tell you first what I do not mean. It is very healthy when you're confused by something to go back to the Bible and question what you thought you understood about what the Bible teaches.

That's a healthy thing. My understanding of the Bible has grown as I've become more familiar with it, as I've been forced to study more in order to be prepared to teach, just experiences of my life, but my response to questions is to dig deeper.

What I'm working on is me, my heart, my understanding of what does God want me to understand. It's a dynamic conversation between me through the Holy Spirit with God and using the Bible. That's healthy. That's not what I'm talking about. The deconstruction that is sweeping through the world today, largely from people who grew up in the church is, I'm just going to throw this thing away.

[ 27 : 20 ] I was so hurt by the church I grew up at or my church is so out of touch with the political or social needs of the day or the old people are just so rigid and so whatever that this must be wrong and I have to start over.

And so the deconstruction there is not a look at yourself, in the light of what the Scripture says. James says to do that. He refers to the, James refers to the Bible as a mirror.

No, this is breaking the mirror and starting over. Who then is God at that moment? I am. I am God. Now at the beginning that feels really good because you know it's kind of inconvenient. Some of the stuff that God tells us we have to do or it's not real clear and it's hard for us to figure out.

It's a complex problem. We have to walk with God to understand how He wants us to live. What does it mean, Lord, to love you? How do I practice that? Well, that's a complex problem.

[ 28 : 28 ] We have to interact with Him. Well, how do I love these people? God, have you met these people? It's a complex problem. We walk with God to learn these things, to obey.

So these are inconvenient or we were taught them wrong. I went to a church once upon a time, it made me very angry and it's this type of thing that causes people to go down the deconstruction path.

This church did a great thing initially. It was a very conservative church and very inward-facing, very biblically literate congregation.

But a couple families had started going door-to-door in the neighborhood and inviting people, inviting young people to a midweek Bible study and pizza party on Wednesday nights at the church. Now, that church has been in that neighborhood for probably 50 years at the time that they started this process. When the church was built, it was a pretty affluent part of town. When the youth group started, there wasn't a single family whose door they knocked on that didn't have somebody that was in prison or had problems with the law, addiction.

[ 29 : 43 ] These were really seriously messed up families. And as they knocked on the door, kids came. So, Kara and I had not been, we're not at the church at this point.

It's part of the story. I got saved at this church. And then, Kara and I got married, we moved on. But I heard this youth group, they had 40 kids from the neighborhood coming into this church and these were unchurched kids.

To put it in context, as a youth pastor, if you get four kids in a year that are unchurched, unchurched, that's reason for celebration. That's unheard of. So, I thought, I gotta check this thing out because this church?

Really? They're bringing four? I can't even imagine it. So, I went in and I sat and oh my goodness, the teaching was mind-numbingly boring. It was so far above these kids' heads.

It was talking about philosophy and history and theology. But these kids sat through it, they endured it.

[ 30 : 54 ] Then they'd get together, they'd play basketball, they'd have some pizza and in between, adults from the church would talk to them and those kids started to come to Jesus. Now, as you can imagine, they looked a little weird.

Tattoos, earrings, facial piercings, multicolored hair, immodest dress, but they were coming to Jesus.

Because of the youth group, Kara and I went back with our kids and started serving in that church I was teaching Sunday school. I noticed an odd thing on Sunday morning. I had none of the

neighborhood kids. That's weird.

So then, I started really paying attention to who was coming on Wednesdays and I had only a couple of the church kids. This is beyond weird. Now it's problematic. And so I started asking the Wednesday night kids, why don't I see you on Sunday?

We're not welcome. We're not welcome. And I asked the church kids, why don't I see you on Wednesday?

[ 32 : 06 ] My parents don't think those kids are safe. It's dangerous for me to go on Wednesday nights. This is a church that faithfully preached the word of God.

Some of the best preaching I'd ever heard. Where I learned how to preach. And yet, it didn't reach their heart.

And you know what happens when people are exposed to that? They hear, love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And the second greatest commandment is to love your neighbor as yourself.

But they're not welcome. You know what young people do when they see that? They say, this must not be true. And they walk away. And I'm not just talking about the Wednesday night kids doing that.

I'm talking about the Sunday morning kids. Kids who grew up in the church and see this breakdown between what we teach and what we practice. We have to guard against that.

[ 33 : 04 ] We have to be determined to dig deep into the word of God. To study, not to build our brains.

That's part of the process. But to transform our lives so the gospel oozes out of our pores. So we don't have a Wednesday night program to reach unchurched kids.

We are a body of people who welcome others into and encourage them to meet this Jesus that we know and love. But that's, the root cause is deconstruction in the evangelical church.

And it's spreading like wildfire where we're seeing young adults. Actually, I wouldn't call a 40-something as a young, young adult, but you know what I mean.

I am 60 now, so I guess I can say that. Breaks my heart. But they see this breakdown between what the church says and what they read in the Bible and practice, and their response is to throw away the Bible and to find a different way.

[ 34 : 12 ] and then it starts to grow, it starts to spread. And this fault-finding mindset leads to a greater and greater split until biblical truth is completely abandoned and what becomes most important is my truth.

What do I believe? What do I understand? And I become God. And folks, we just weren't meant to be God. We can't do it.

We can't handle it. The end result of deconstruction is nihilism. Nihilism is the belief that life lacks intrinsic meaning.

It has no purpose, no objective value. It's hopelessness. It's despair. Because we're, someone who has deconstructed their faith has stepped off of the foundation.

What did Jesus say in Matthew 7? One man builds his house on a foundation of sand and the storm comes and it's crushed by the storms of life.

[ 35 : 24 ] Another man builds his home on a rock and that house stands despite the storms. Someone who's gone through this process of deconstruction has erected a structure on sand.

and at some point life is going to crush them because it's hopeless. The end result of deconstructing what the Bible teaches is despair.

Back in the middle and late 20th century there was a Presbyterian pastor who lived in Switzerland named Francis Schaeffer. And many of you have heard of Francis Schaeffer.

He had this compound in Switzerland called Labrie. I love this concept. He would invite people wherever would come. They didn't have to pay anything and they would just literally sit around and talk about truth and talk about the Bible.

And he would confront deconstructionism. He would confront the nihilism that was coming out of the despair caused by World War II.

[ 36 : 30 ] And he would confront it and the way he confronted it was by pushing people to the end of their belief system. And somebody asked him Francis if someone follows this path to its end it leads to despair and suicide.

Are you prepared to face that possibility? And his response was to my knowledge nobody has committed suicide because of being pushed to the end.

But if they're not pushed to the end they can't see that what they're understanding what they're believing in is empty it's waste it's a foundation of sand and then to be able to be guided into the truth they can't see the truth until they come to the end of that false belief.

So as we watch people today as they struggle with with the differences between what the Bible teaches and what Christian people practice as they deal with questioning how God is working in their own lives what's our response to that?

how do we handle that? Do we run away? Do we hide? It's too much? Because often times they're very angry judgmental ironically and it puts us on the defensive so should we just hide?

[ 37 : 55 ] Come into our holy conclave and just meet together and hope that some of them will be rescued? That's not what I read in my Bible Jesus said go so when we encounter these people what do we do?

I think number one is acknowledge the problem own it life is hard the church is not perfect we're full of hypocrites truth is the world is full of hypocrites we're all hypocrites to our own belief system but acknowledge that problem we have to own it take responsibility say you're right the church has failed but God has not do not confuse the people of God with God himself and we present the same gospel turn over a page you may not even have to turn it but look at Colossians 2 6 we're going to read verses 6 and 7 I love this phrase because this tells us how we should act toward the people around us who are questioning especially those who are deconstructing what they thought they believed therefore as you have received Christ

Jesus the Lord so walk in him having been firmly rooted and now being built up in him and established in your faith just as you were instructed and overflowing with gratitude it is so tempting for me to deliver a sermon on this right now I love these verses but I've already got it scheduled I'll resist temptation suffice it to say that you received Jesus by faith you recognized that you weren't capable of solving the problems of your life your sin problem the fact that your sin broke fellowship with God the only way to deal with it was because Jesus died on the cross for your sins he took the punishment that you deserved and then gave you his righteousness in place of your sins you accepted that by faith Lord I believe you turn from an old way to embrace a new way of walking with Christ we walk by faith as much as we were saved by faith and as we live that out as we engage in relationship with people who are searching for the truth who have fallen prey to false teaching continue to walk with

Jesus before them model to them what it really means go back to the Bible with them and explore how Jesus himself actually answers the problems that they see in the church and have hurt them and caused them to move away and as you do that perhaps we'll see some of those really deeply wounded souls coming to Christ because the alternative is horrible we don't want that now I'm excited as we go forward into Colossians we're going to look at the all sufficient Christ what I hope you see and this is your homework assignment is to pray this continually through the week as we dig into the book of Colossians that we would begin to see Jesus his love for us his sufficiency that means he's enough for everything that we would see that and that we would start to live that out by faith trusting in him and as we do so that people will be irresistibly drawn not to us but to Jesus living out his life through us pray that God would begin to do that work in your heart as we go through the book of Colossians because we're going to climb the heights there's such good stuff in there and if you feel like it start reading Colossians every week only four chapters you can do it let's pray together God we're so grateful for your sufficiency Lord Jesus you are enough we don't have to come up with rituals we don't have to deny ourselves in the sense of doing various activities to please you because we're already accepted if we're in Christ we already have the relationship with you we're already pleasing because when you look at us you see your son God I pray that we would be just enthralled with you that we would see you as you are and that we would order our lives around what we discover as we relate to you as we bring our lives into submission to you more and more every day

[ 42 : 57 ] God thank you too that we've got this time together to gather as a family to talk about your work in our midst to see how we're growing to talk about missteps along the way and how we're addressing those just all of this as a family of your people God thank you that we can enjoy a meal together and that this is a time for us to have fellowship and just to enjoy each other's company but also to make sure that we're working together to live out this life of obedience to you

and we pray these things in Jesus name amen so