

Leader's Guide

Session 3: Colossians 1:24–2:5

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: The mystery of God—the gospel—proclaims the good news of salvation through Jesus, roots us in the future hope of His return and coming glory, and compels us toward spiritual maturity in Christ.

Head Change: To know what it means to have Christ in us and how that truth impacts our lives.

Heart Change: To feel encouraged to pursue Christian maturity.

Life Change: To act in a way that reflects that Christ is in us.

OPEN

What’s your favorite mystery book, TV show, or movie? Why is that one your favorite?

In this session, we’re studying verses in Colossians that talk about the mystery of God. The good news is we don’t have to look far to figure out the mystery—it’s already been revealed to us through Christ.

READ

Read Colossians 1:24–2:5.

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GO DEEPER

Learn more about how the Gentiles have been brought into the family of God from the following verses: Acts 10:34–35, 44–45; Acts 11:15–18; Gal. 3:26–28; Eph. 3:1–6

Did the believers in the early church think Gentiles could be part of God’s family at first?

How did Peter’s experience change their minds?

Why would Paul encourage the church to be one in Christ? How might have unity been difficult for Jews and Gentiles?

How do we still face disunity today? What do these verses have to say about it?

God desires a unified and diverse people. As members of His family, we should strive to be unified as one. Each of us partakes in the mystery —Christ is in each of us. We can be united through Him.

The mystery of God is that Christ now unifies God’s people—both Jews and Gentiles—by being in them. Christ in us is the hope of glory—the hope that we will one day share in Jesus’s glory when He returns. Louie explained the difference between Christ and us and Christ in us.

How would you describe the difference between the two? Would you add anything to Louie’s explanation?

PEEK AT THE GREEK

The Greek word translated as “mystery” is *mysterion*. Our English word, mystery, implies there’s a secret that people have been trying to uncover but failed to do so. The Greek word *mysterion* speaks to a deeper meaning—it’s something previously unknown but God has disclosed it to His people. Through Jesus’s death and resurrection, God revealed the mystery of His redemptive plan that involves both Jews and Gentiles.

As Louie explained, having a Christ-and-us mentality makes us think we have to do all the work to be the perfect Christian. He used the illustration of a joint wrestling match. Sometimes we think we have to fight through life on our own and tag Jesus in when we're spent. **What is it like when you live out the Christ-and-you mentality? How does it impact your thoughts and actions?**

How does the Christ-and-you mentality fall short of the true gospel? What's the actual truth? (The actual truth is Christ in you.)

Louie described living as Christ-in-you as letting go of a rope. We sometimes strain to hold our faith in our own hands. But the reality is God is the one who's done all the work and He is the one to sustain us to follow Him every day. **How would you describe your attitude towards your relationships with God? Do you have an "and" mentality or an "in" attitude?**

What does it look like to walk in the reality that Christ is in you? How does it differ from living like it's Christ and you?

Does believing the Christ-in-you truth mean you stop everything you're doing? Why not?

Read verses 28–29.

What's Paul's goal for those he leads? (He wants them to be fully mature in Christ.) **Where does Paul find his energy to make that goal a reality?** (He finds his energy in Jesus.)

How does Paul's goal and source of energy prove that Christians aren't supposed to simply sit back and be lazy?

Louie took us to these two verses to show that just because Christ is in us doesn't mean we stop obeying and following Him. Our obedient actions shouldn't change much when we realize Christ is in us. Instead, our attitude changes: we obey because we know and love Christ and realize He is in us, not because we want to earn His favor or follow Him in our own power.

Who do you know who best represents a mature follower of Christ? What about them shows they are

mature?

For Paul, Christian maturity is a big deal. He’s already talked about how he prays the Colossians would grow in their faith in Colossians 1:9–12. He begins chapter two by explaining further what how he hopes the Colossians will grow. R

Read Colossians 2:1–5.

Even though Paul never met the Colossians (and the Laodiceans—church members from a neighboring town), he wanted them to know he cared about them and their spiritual growth. **What is Paul’s ultimate goal in the Colossians’ maturity?** (That they would not be deceived by arguments that sounded good but were actually lies.)

Verses 2 and 3 talk about the love, understanding, wisdom, knowledge, and unity that come with knowing Christ. **How might each of those things help someone stand up against false teaching?**

How have you grown in discernment since you first followed Jesus? What do you do to discern if something is true?

Paul ends this section by mentioning that the Colossians have a firm faith. **What does it mean to have a firm faith? What does a firm faith have to do with Christian maturity?**

As we grow in these truths—that there’s hope beyond suffering, Christ is in us, and we should be discerning—we will become mature followers of Jesus. **What are some practical ways you could pursue growth in your faith?**

How could you remind yourself this week that Christ is in you?

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LAST WORD

Paul’s words in this passage remind us of the hope found in the gospel message. In Jesus, we know there’s an end to suffering—one day He will return and renew all things. Through Jesus, we’ve been given understanding to the mystery of God. People of all nations can put their trust in Him and He lives in every believer.

With these truths in mind, we can embrace the challenge Paul gives to the Colossians to pursue maturity. We can stand firm in our faith and grow in knowledge, understanding, and wisdom. We can begin by internalizing the truth that Jesus is in us—we don’t have to strive to earn salvation or God’s approval. Instead, we obey from a place of love and an intimate relationship with God.

This week, take a moment to sit in the truth of the mystery of God. Ask Him to transform how you perceive the Christian walk and empower you to pursue maturity in Him. Let’s thank Him for all He’s done for us as we close this session.

LIVE IT OUT

Pray: Ask God to transform the way you think about following Him. Pray the truth that Christ is in you would settle into your heart and mind this week.

Write: Make two columns on a sheet of paper. On one side, write what it’s like to live with the Christ-and-me mentality Louie talked about. On the other side, write what it means that Christ is in you. Reflect on those differences this week.

Ask: Talk to someone you consider a mature Christian this week. Ask them what God has used to mature them as they’ve followed Christ. Take a moment to pray for them and their walk with Jesus.

Study: Read John 15 this week and take note of the attributes of Christ that appear in the text. As you study, pray God would grow you in the characteristics of Jesus.

Encourage: Share the truths discussed in this section of Colossians with another Christian this week. Encourage them that Christ is in them by talking about the mystery of God.

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