

## Colossians Lesson 4—Colossians 2:8-23

# Christ's Sufficiency



### Memorize the TRUTH!

See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. Colossians 2:8

### DAY 1: Colossians 2:8-10—Worldly Philosophy versus Christ

1. From this passage, how would you describe Paul's concern for the church at Colossae?

**Note:** The term "elemental spirits of the world" used by Paul here is obscure. In any case, we can see that Paul was emphasizing the centrality of Christ.

2. How is Paul's warning to the Colossians still relevant to believers today?

3. What truth from 1:19 was Paul reiterating in 2:9? Why is this truth so important to Christ followers' faith?

### DAY 2: Colossians 2:11-12—Circumcision and Baptism

4. What two religious practices did Paul use to illustrate the new life that followers of Christ have?

**Note:** Since the time of Abraham, Israelites had identified themselves by the ritual of circumcision (see Genesis 17:9-11). God had intended this rite to symbolize His work in people's hearts (see Deuteronomy 30:6). But over time, the Israelites had come to rely on outward acts more than inward heart change.

5. How did Paul describe the Colossian believers' circumcision?

6. Paul said that Christ's circumcision involves cutting something off. What does this imagery suggest about the extent of God's work in our lives? (See also Deuteronomy 10:15-16 and Philippians 3:2-3.)

7. How is baptism connected with death? How is it connected with being raised with Christ? (See also Romans 6:1-11.)



### Learn the TRUTH!

In Ephesians 4, Paul says more about the new life that believers have in Christ. He urged his readers to put off their old selves and allow God to make them new. He told them to speak truth with each other (4:25), use their words to give grace to others (4:29), relinquish bitterness and anger (4:31), be kind and tenderhearted, and forgive as God had forgiven them (4:32). This week, try to put one of these marks of the new life into practice. Plan to talk about your experiences with your small group.

### DAY 3: Colossians 2:13-15—A Debt Paid in Full

8. Paul said that the Colossians had been dead but then were made alive.

- a. Why had they been dead?
  - b. How did they come to life?
9. How would you explain what Paul meant by the “record of debt”?
10. By setting aside and nailing the debt to the cross, what else did God do? What might this include? (See also Colossians 1:16; 2:10; Ephesians 1:19-23; 6:12.)

#### **DAY 4: Colossians 2:16-19—Empty Religious Practices**

11. According to 2:16, what seems to have been happening that caused Paul concern for the Colossian believers?

**Note:** Hebrews 10:1 tells us that the law was “but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities.” Yearly sacrifices could never permanently pay the price for sin, but Christ “appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come” (9:11).

12. What do you think it means that the substance of the practices mentioned in Colossians 2:16-17 “belongs to Christ”?
13. To what did Paul compare Christ?
- a. Explain Paul’s analogy. (See also Romans 12:5 and Ephesians 5:23.)
  - b. How would realizing the truth of this analogy prevent the Colossians from believing false teachings?
14. How can we stay connected and hold firmly to Christ? What might that be like for you personally?

#### **DAY 5: Colossians 2:20-23—The Appearance of Wisdom**

15. How would you put Paul’s question in 2:20 into your own words?
16. From 2:22-23, what problems with man-made rules did Paul point out?
17. Why might people be drawn to rules that regulate behavior or give the appearance of moral goodness? List several reasons that come to mind.



#### ***Apply the TRUTH!***

From your answer to Question 17 above, choose one reason you listed and think of a truth from God’s Word that addresses this faulty motivation. Plan to talk with your small group about the perspective you gain as you do this.

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#### **DAY 6: Participate in Class**