

## Day 1

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

## *Jesus' Commission of Paul's Servanthood*

**Colossians 1:24-29** [The Message (MSG); a paraphrase]

[The remaining six verses of Chapter 1 are reproduced, below. Sometimes, a different version/translation will help us to better understand the intent of the author, the Apostle Paul.]

<sup>24-25</sup> I want you to know how glad I am that it's me sitting here in this jail and not you. There's a lot of suffering to be entered into in this world — the kind of suffering Christ takes on. I welcome the chance to take my share in the church's part of that suffering. When I became a servant in this church, I experienced this suffering as a sheer gift, God's way of helping me serve you, laying out the whole truth.

<sup>26-29</sup> This mystery has been kept in the dark for a long time, but now it's out in the open. God wanted everyone, not just Jews, to know this rich and glorious secret inside and out, regardless of their background, regardless of their religious standing. The mystery in a nutshell is just this: Christ is in you, so therefore you can look forward to sharing in God's glory. It's that simple. That is the substance of our Message. We preach Christ, warning people not to add to the Message. We teach in a spirit of profound common sense so that we can bring each person to maturity. To be mature is to be basic. Christ! No more, no less. That's what I'm working so hard at day after day, year after year, doing my best with the energy God so generously gives me.

<sup>24</sup> Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

Q1. The Apostle Paul is in a prison in Rome. How could Paul “rejoice” in his suffering?

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### Lesson 3: Colossians 1:24-29 & 2:1-3



*According to tradition this was Paul's prison cell in Rome, Italy.*

*The ancient Carcer Tullianum (or the Mamertine Prison) was a maximum-security prison. For many centuries the Roman Government confined their enemies within, while they awaited execution. According to tradition, both Apostles Peter and Paul were held here before they were martyred for their faith.*

© Todd Bolen/BiblePlaces.com. <https://www.bibleplaces.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Mamertine-Prison-ancient-cell-of-Pauls-imprisonment-tb0517173512.jpg>

Q2. (Verse 24) Did Paul consider his suffering insignificant when he compared it against Christ's crucifixion? Why?

Yes? } Why?  
No? }

Q3. The Apostle Paul is a man of God, a missionary, a teacher, a preacher! As such, how did the blessed Paul suffer? What hardships did he experience? (Hint: Where is Paul as he writes this Letter to the Colossian Church? See the first paragraph of the *Introduction* on page 2, Colossians Lesson/StudySheet 1.)

Where was Paul when he wrote this Letter to the Colossians?

How did Paul suffer during his ministry? (What hardships did he experience?)

#### **2 Corinthians 11:22-28** [NIV-1984]

[Paul lists his Jewish credentials (verse 22) and then follows with the hardships he had experienced while proclaiming the Gospel of Christ Jesus during his missionary journeys.]

<sup>22</sup> What anyone else dares to boast about — I am speaking as a fool — I also dare to boast about. Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. <sup>23</sup> Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more.

I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. <sup>24</sup> Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one.

<sup>25</sup> Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night

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and a day in the open sea, <sup>26</sup> I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. <sup>27</sup> I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked.

<sup>28</sup> Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches.

### Q4. Should a Believer expect hardships?

Yes? } Why?  
No? }


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 Jesus in His 'Sermon on the Mount' (Matthew 5:10-12 ↓) promises persecution in this world for we who believe in His saving grace.

The world is under Satan's management. Satan lost you when you came to believe in the saving grace of Christ Jesus; and Satan shouts, "One is too many! No more!" Satan does not want you or I to be successful in our ministries. Satan hates to lose and does not want to lose more souls — through our efforts and Christ-like examples — to the Redeemer Christ Jesus. Satan will use subterfuge, roadblocks, and outright persecution to thwart, blunt, and — his best outcome — stop our ministries, and to 'teach us a lesson'.

Of course, you and I want to be successful in our ministries, because we want everyone to experience the joyful, loving embrace of our Savior Christ Jesus of Nazareth. We want our loved ones, our spouse, our children, our grandchildren, our BFFs (best friends forever) to be in Paradise with us for all eternity.

Prayer, Bible Studies, and continued obedience/action are the best shields to turn aside Satan's hostility and malignant strategies. We must always remember to clothe ourselves with the "Full Armor of God" as described in Paul's Letter to the Ephesians 6:10-18 (see [Lesson / StudySheet #12: Ephesians 6:10-24](#)).

 "We can measure the effectiveness of our ministry by the hardships we suffer: an effective ministry will face persecution, and an ineffective ministry — well, Satan needs to do nothing." [Unknown]

### Matthew 5:10-12 [NIV-1984]

[From the *Sermon on the Mount*]

<sup>10</sup> "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

<sup>11</sup> "Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

### 2 Timothy 3:12 [NIV-1984]


[Paul in his Second Letter to Timothy reemphasizes the worldly persecution of Believers.]

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted

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### Day 2

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

<sup>25</sup> I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness — <sup>26</sup> the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. <sup>27</sup> To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Q5. [Verse 25] Whom does Paul serve?


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Q6. [Verse 25] How was Paul selected/appointed to be a “servant”?

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Q7. [Verse 25] What is a “commission”?

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 com·mis·sion (noun)

[© 2003-2024 Farlex, Inc. <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/commission>]

1. a. The act of granting certain powers or the authority to carry out a particular task or duty.
1. b. The authority so granted.

Q8. [Verse 25] Who selected/appointed Paul to be a “servant”?

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**John 10:30** [NIV-1984]

[Jesus declared:]

“I and the Father are one.”

Q9. [Verse 26] Who or what was “the mystery that has been kept hidden”?

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Q10. [Verses 26 & 27] How was “the mystery . . . kept hidden for ages and generations”? (Hint: questions 10 & 11 are similar.)

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Q11. [Verses 26 & 27] Our Holy Bible is divided into two sections: the Old and New Testaments. Was “the mystery” ever fully revealed in the Old Testament?

Yes? } Thoughts?  
No? }

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Q12. [Verse 26] How was “the mystery . . . disclosed to the saints”? (“Saints” in this context refers generally to all Believers at this time of Paul’s writing.)

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Q13. [Verses 26 & 27] Is belief in the saving grace of Christ Jesus a mystery, shrouded in secrecy, to be shared with only a select few (like an exclusive country club)?

Yes? } Why?  
No? }

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### Matthew 23:1-4 [International Children’s Bible (ICB)]

[Jesus accused the Pharisees and teachers of the law of hypocrisy. By the way, the following verses 23:1-4 are a sample of Jesus’ accusations against them. Jesus had much more to say against them as recorded in Matthew 23.]

<sup>1</sup> Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his followers. Jesus said, <sup>2</sup> “The teachers of the law and the Pharisees have the authority to tell you what the law of Moses says. <sup>3</sup> So you should obey and follow whatever they tell you. But their lives are not good examples for you to follow. They tell you to do things, but they don’t do the things themselves. <sup>4</sup> They make strict rules and try to force people to obey them. But they themselves will not try to follow any of those rules.

Q14. Are churches, today, effective in their outreach to the unchurched? Or are they pharisaical? Or something in-between?

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phar·i·sa·ic, also phar·i·sa·i·cal, adjective

[© 2003-2024 Farlex, Inc. <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/pharisaical>]

1. Pharisaic also Pharisaical: Of, relating to, or characteristic of the Pharisees.

2. Hypocritically self-righteous and condemnatory.



Per a Gallup Poll, dated March 25, 2024:

“Two decades ago, an average of 42% of U.S. adults attended religious services every week or nearly every week. A decade ago, the figure fell to 38%, and it is currently at 30%. This decline is largely driven by the increase

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in the percentage of Americans with no religious affiliation — 9% in 2000-2003 versus 21% in 2021-2023 — almost all of whom do not attend services regularly.


“Still, most religious groups have also seen a decline in regular attendance at religious services over the past two decades. . . .

“Bottom Line: On any given weekend, about three in ten U.S. adults attend religious services, down from 42% two decades ago. Church attendance will likely continue to decline in the future, given younger Americans’ weaker attachments to religion.

“Specifically, more 18- to 29-year-olds, 35%, say they have no religious preference than identify with any specific faith, such as Protestant/nondenominational Christian (32%) or Catholic (19%). Additionally, young adults, both those with and without a religious preference, are much less likely to attend religious services — 22% attend regularly, eight points below the national average.” [Copyright © 2024 Gallup, Inc. All rights reserved. Dated: March 25, 2024. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/642548/church-attendance-declined-religious-groups.aspx#:~:text=Nearly%20All%20Faiths%20Seeing%20Declines,over%20the%20past%20two%20decades.>]

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### Day 3

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<sup>28</sup> We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. <sup>29</sup> To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

Q15. [Verse 28] Why would Paul have to “admonish” anyone?

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 We must remember that Paul is so singularly focused on spreading the Gospel of Christ Jesus that almost everything else in his life is pushed aside. The exception might be his tent-making vocation which he uses to fund his austere lifestyle and far-reaching ministry.

#### Acts 17:11 [NIV-1984]

Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

 Doctor Luke wrote both the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles as guided by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit emphasized the wonderful example of the Thessalonians (Acts 17:11 ) as they compared Paul’s words to the Old Testament Scriptures and ensured that Paul’s words were in harmony with Scripture. We, who believe, are to do likewise. We are to compare all we hear or read against the foundation of Scripture. We must not accept these StudySheets as Biblical, without comparing them against Scripture. The same is true about preachers’ teachings, revisionist teachers who loudly claim they are “Christian” while promoting an askew Biblical teaching, and advice from fellow church-goers. Scripture must be our foundation. Our attitudes, our deeds, our words must harmonize with Scripture — we must follow the example of Christ Jesus.

The Apostle Paul encountered great evil in his missionary journeys. Frequently, after he had planted a church, ensured that it was strong, and then travelled to another village in desperate need of hearing the Gospel of Christ

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Jesus, Satan would send in ‘disciples’ (e.g., Judaizers) to the fledgling church. The Judaizers would preach a twisted gospel — an enticing gospel that claimed salvation came from following Jewish laws, plus Christ Jesus. Many of Paul’s Letters were written to combat those erroneous teachings, to rebuke the Believers for accepting the perverted teachings of the Judaizers, and to vociferously argue that Paul’s original teachings were correct because he was preaching and teaching those words and concepts that he obtained directly through revelation from Christ Jesus Himself.

#### **Galatians 1:12** [English Standard Version (ESV)]

[In Paul’s Letter to the Galatians, he referenced the manner in which he received the Gospel of Christ Jesus:]

For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ.

Q16. [Verse 29] Who/What is the source of Paul’s “energy”?

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Q17. [Verse 29] Why is “His energy . . . so powerful” in Paul?

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Q18. [Verse 29] What can you or I do (as Believers) to approach the same level of “energy” that was “so powerful” in Paul?


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## Lesson 3: Colossians 1:24-29 & 2:1-3

### Day 4

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

### Chapter 2

<sup>2:1</sup> I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea [Lāy-ōh-dī-see-ăh], and for all who have not met me personally.


Q19. Paul declared, “I am struggling for you”. What is his struggle?

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 Various Biblical translations translate “struggling” as “great conflict (KJV)” or “contending (NIV-2011)” or “trying very hard (ICB)”. Sometimes the translations from the original manuscripts are easy; sometimes discerning the writer’s original intent and then choosing the correct meaning in today’s English is difficult. (For example, the Greek language had nine (9) different words for the English word “love”! See [Greek definitions for “love”](#).)

The commentator Albert Barnes provides this insight: [The Greek word which is translated as ‘struggling’] “refers here to the anxious care, the mental conflict, the earnest solicitude which he [Paul] had in their behalf, in view of the dangers to which they were exposed from Judaizing Christians and Pagan philosophy. . . [a]nd for them at Laodicea, for [the] Christians there, who were exposed to similar danger. Laodicea was the capital of Phrygia, in Asia Minor, and a little south of Colossae. . . There was a[n early] church . . . planted there — the ‘lukewarm’ church mentioned in Revelation 3:14. Being in the vicinity of Colossae, the church there would be exposed to the same perils. . . [T]he rebuke of Revelation 3:14, showed that the fears of Paul were well founded, and that the [arguments] of the false teachers were too successful.” [©1834, *Notes on the Bible* by Albert Barnes. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/colossians/2-1.htm>]

Q20. Since the Colossians and the Laodiceans are complete strangers to him, why would Paul claim, “I am struggling for you”? [Personal: would you “struggle” for a complete stranger?]

Why would Paul claim to ‘struggle’ for you?

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Would you ‘struggle’ for a stranger? Yes? No? Why?

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### Day 5

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

<sup>2</sup>My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, <sup>3</sup>in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Q21. Who is “they” whom Paul references?

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Q22. Was the early church “united in love”?

Yes? }  
No? } Why?

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#### **Acts 4:32-37** [NIV-1984]

[The early church faced persecution, but the Believers had one mind, one goal, and shared the love of Christ Jesus with one another.]

<sup>32</sup> All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had.

<sup>33</sup> With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. <sup>34</sup> There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales <sup>35</sup> and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.

<sup>36</sup> Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means Son of Encouragement), <sup>37</sup> sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles' feet.

Q23. How would you describe the future church – the ‘New Jerusalem’ of Revelation 21 – under Christ Jesus?

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#### **Revelation 21:1-4, 10-14, 18-23** [NIV-1984]

<sup>1</sup> Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. <sup>2</sup> I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.

<sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> He

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will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." . . .

<sup>10</sup> And he [an angel] carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. <sup>11</sup> It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. <sup>12</sup> It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>13</sup> There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. <sup>14</sup> The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. . . .

<sup>18</sup> The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. <sup>19</sup> The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, <sup>20</sup> the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. <sup>21</sup> The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.

<sup>22</sup> I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. <sup>23</sup> The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

Q24. How might people come to understand the “full riches of complete understanding”?

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Q25. We discussed this previously — what is the “the mystery of God”?

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Q26. How would you describe “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”? Are these “treasures” still hidden?

Describe “all the treasures”?

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Are “treasures” still hidden? Yes? No? Why?


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### Day 6

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

Q27. Please reread the text Colossians 1:24-2:3. Do you have any lingering questions? Comments?

Yes? }  
No? } Why?

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