

Principles of Colossians 1:3-8

- Thanksgiving is an integral part of a healthy prayer life [Dan 6:10; 2 Cor 1:11; Eph 1:16; Phil 4:6; Col 4:2; 1 Thess 1:2; 1 Tim 2:1; 2 Tim 1:3; Phlm 4].
- Believers should communicate with God in prayers throughout the day every day [1 Sam 12:23; Luke 18:1; Eph 6:18; Col 1:9; 1 Thess 5:17].
- As our faith increases through spiritual growth, it should be expressed outwardly in ἀγάπη love for all believers, regardless of whether or not we like them or find them to be pleasant [Eph 1:15].
- Our faith in God's promises results in a living hope (confident expectation) of the imperishable inheritance reserved for us in heaven [1 Pet 1:3-4].
- That hope is based upon the truth of God's word which is the good news (gospel) for everyone, believers and unbelievers alike.
- The good news of God's word has spread throughout the world and is causing spiritual growth and bearing fruit (spiritual productivity) through believers with ears to hear [Luke 8:15].
- The true message of salvation is a message about God's grace [Eph 2:8-9].
- We are unable to gain God's favor through any merit of our own [Gal 2:21; 3:21].
- True Christianity relies upon the provision of Jesus Christ's death on the Cross.
- This is true in regard to how we are saved and how we are to live [1 Pet 1:17-19; Heb 9:13-14].
- As believers, we will benefit by fully understanding God's matchless grace [John 1:16-17].
- God uses faithful servants as His fellow-workers to proclaim the gospel of grace [Rom 10:14-15].
- Pastors, evangelists, etc. must be serving Christ to truly proclaim the grace of God [Gal 1:6-10].
- This message of grace, when united with faith, produces in us a love that is unlike anything the world understands – the type of love God loved us with when He sent His Son to die for us [Rom 5:8].
- To exhibit this type of love, we must be walking by means of the Holy Spirit [Rom 5:5; 15:30; 2 Cor 6:1-10; Gal 5:16, 22].
- Our spiritual walk is a walk of faith [2 Cor 5:7] which produces a lasting and living hope in our souls, but the greatest work of the Spirit in us is love [1 Cor 13:13].

Principles of Colossians 1:9-12

- We should pray unceasingly for the spiritual wellbeing of our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- One very important way we can pray for others is by asking God to fill them up with the full knowledge of His will [Ps 143:10].
- A believer who does not desire to know the will of God is a fool [Eph 5:17].
- In order to come to know the will of God we must acquire spiritual understanding which leads to spiritual wisdom [Jas 3:13-17].
- Spiritual understanding is obtained as the Holy Spirit communicates the word of God to our soul via our human spirit [1 Cor 2:12-13].
- The purpose for having spiritual wisdom and the knowledge of God's will is so that we might walk in a manner worth of the Lord [1 Thess 2:12].
- This stems from a desire to please God, bearing the fruit of the Spirit in all of the good works which God prepared for us to do [Eph 2:10; Titus 2:14].
- All of this is necessarily interconnected with the process of being matured spiritually by our knowledge of God [Rom 12:1-2].
- God empowers us with divine capability, according to His infinite power, to accomplish the good works which He has assigned to us [1 Cor 12:4-7].
- As we diligently study God's word and run the race set before us, we will attain steadfastness and the ability to wait on the Lord with joy [Heb 12:1-3].
- A believer who is maturing in the faith will become more and more thankful for God's abundant grace and will express that to Him [1 Thess 5:16-18].
- One huge thing we can be thankful for is that we have an imperishable inheritance waiting for us in heaven [Acts 20:32; 1 Pet 1:3-5].
- We could never earn this inheritance, but God made us adequate to partake of this inheritance the moment we placed our faith in Jesus Christ.

Principles of Colossians 1:13-14

- Because of the fall of man, all of us were born hopelessly trapped in the domain of darkness.
- God, in His great mercy, rescues every person who places his faith in Jesus Christ from this hopeless estate [Eph 2:3-9].
- But God does not stop there – He transfers every believer into the kingdom of His Son.
- This is not a reference to the Millennial Kingdom, but rather to the dominion which the Father has entrusted to Christ [1 Pet 4:11; 5:11; Rev 1:4-6].
- We have been rescued out of one sphere of existence (darkness) and placed into a completely different sphere (Light) [Eph 5:8; 1 Pet 2:9].
- In order to do this, we had to be purchased out of the bondage of slavery to sin by the very blood of our Savior Jesus Christ [Rom 3:24].
- This redemption involves the forgiveness of our sins, without which we would be unable to dwell in the kingdom of God's Beloved Son.
- This redemption, possible because of the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross, is what qualifies us to be partakers of the eternal inheritance.
- Through this redemption, we have been set free from the old sin nature and have the capacity to walk in righteousness [Rom 6:5-7; 11-13].

Principles of Colossians 1:15-20

- Jesus is the visible manifestation of the invisible God who shows us and explains the Father [John 1:18; 14:9; 2 Cor 4:4; Col 1:15; Heb 1:3].
- The begetting of Jesus' human soul and spirit to be joined together with His deity marks the beginning of time in God's A to Ω plan [Ps 2:7; Heb 1:5; 5:5].
- The end of time in God's A to Ω plan occurs when God the Son hands over the kingdom to God the Father [1 Cor 15:24-28] and takes on the title of Eternal Father to all of us [Isa 9:6 cf. Heb 2:11].
- The last enemy (death) is abolished at the Great White Throne [Rev 20:14] so the eternal state begins with the New Universe [Rev 21:1-4].
- The miraculous conception of Jesus [Matt 1:18-20; Luke 1:35] marks the joining together of His human soul and spirit with His human body.
- Prior to His 1st Advent, the pre-incarnate Christ made appearances many times in the O.T. [Gen 16:7-13; 18:1-22; 22:10-17; Ex 3:2; 13:21-22; 14:19 (cf. 1 Cor 10:1-4); 40:34-38; ...].
- All things come from and through God the Father [Rom 11:36; 1 Cor 8:6] by and through God the Son [John 1:3, 10; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2].
- This includes the angelic realms of creation.
- Most importantly, all things have been created for the Son to bring Him glory [Col 1:16; Heb 2:10].
- Jesus Christ existed before all things [John 1:1; 8:58] and He now preserves and protects the creation He made [Col 1:17; 2 Pet 3:7].
- The Church is made up of a body of believers with Jesus Christ as their head [Eph 1:22-23; 4:15-16; Col 1:18, 24; 2:19].
- Jesus Christ is the first (and only) one to receive a resurrection body designed for glory [1 Cor 15:20, 23; Col 1:18; Rev 1:5].
- All of these things – creator and maintainer of the universe, head of the Church, and first fruits of the resurrection – elevate Christ to have first place in everything [John 5:23; Phil 2:10; Col 1:18].
- In eternity past when the Father planned for the hypostatic union, He made the decision that His Son would be fully human without diminishing His deity in any way [Col 1:19; 2:9; 1 John 4:2].

- The Son became human so that we might be reconciled to God through His death on the cross [Rom 5:1, 10-11; 2 Cor 5:18-21; Col 1:20].
- This reconciliation includes things on earth (believers in Jesus) and things in heaven (the holy angels), but not things under the earth (unbelievers and fallen angels), although they will acknowledge Christ to His glory [Phil 2:10-11; Rev 5:13].
- It is important to note that creatures are reconciled to God – it is not a meeting in the middle.
- The creation itself will also benefit from this reconciliation [Rom 8:19-22].
 - The creation will undergo a renovation in preparation for the Millennial reign of Christ [Isa 11:5-9; 35:1-2, 5-7; 65:20, 25; Amos 9:13].
 - After that, this universe will be destroyed and replaced by a new universe in preparation for the eternal state [2 Pet 3:10-13; Rev 21:1].

Principles of Colossians 1:21-23

- Everyone, including the nicest person you have ever met, is born alienated from God [Eph 2:12].
- In addition, unbelievers are inherently hostile toward God [Psalm 82:15; Rom 1:30].
- When believers indulge fleshly desires and/or make ourselves friends of the world, we show hostility towards God [Rom 8:7-8; Jas 4:4].
- The hostile mind results in outward deeds of evil [Matt 5:27-28; John 3:19-20; 7:7; Gal 5:19-21].
- In order to reconcile unbelievers to God, it was necessary for Christ to come in the flesh [1 Tim 2:5; Heb 2:17; 1 John 4:2].
- The man, Christ Jesus, had to die to facilitate mankind's redemption [Eph 1:17; 1 Pet 1:18-19].
- Christ's death provides for our sanctification...
 - Positional [Acts 26:18; 1 Cor 1:2; 6:11; 2 Th 2:13; Heb 10:10].
 - Temporal [John 17:17; Rom 6:19; 1 Th 4:3-7; 2 Tim 2:21; Heb 10:14].
 - Ultimate [Eph 5:25-27; Phil 3:21; 1 John 3:2; Jude 24-25].
- Even though we have sin natures, we are able to be seen by God as blameless right now (temporal sanctification) as we persevere in the faith.
- Note that it is persevering in the faith, not working really hard to try to please God.
- Persevering in the faith requires humility and the diligence to completely rely upon God.
- Paul took his role as a servant of the gospel very seriously [1 Cor 9:23; Eph 6:19-20; 1 Thess 2:4; 1 Tim 1:11].
- We should all be servants of the gospel in our role as ambassadors for Christ [2 Cor 5:20].
- The gospel message carries with it the very power of God [Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 1:18, 23-24].

Principles of Colossians 1:24-27

- Jesus Christ suffered during His life here on earth during the 1st Advent [Mark 9:12; Luke 18:31-33; John 7:7; 15:18; 18:19-23; 19:1-3].
- His suffering (physical and mental) during His life on earth was part of the work the Father gave Him to do [John 17:4], but it did not contribute toward paying the penalty for our sins.
- It was the spiritual death of Jesus on the Cross that satisfied His Father's demand for justice.
- The suffering of Jesus continues today (even while He sits at His Father's right hand [Col 3:1; Heb 8:1]) through the suffering of His Body [2 Cor 1:5; Phil 3:8-10; 1 Pet 4:12-16].
- Paul suffered in His ministry and rejoiced that he was able to share in the sufferings of Christ.
- When any member of Christ's body suffers, all members suffer as does Christ [1 Cor 12:24-26].
- Paul was a servant of the Church and knew that suffering is part of following Christ [2 Tim 3:12].
- As a servant of the Church, Paul was given a stewardship to make the word of God fully known.
- The idea of Paul disclosing full knowledge of the word of God flew in the face of the Colossian heresy which said that only an exclusive group could have such "fullness" of knowledge.
- A significant part of Paul's ministry was the unveiling of the mystery that is the Church.
- The Church had not been revealed to anyone in the past ages and generations.
- It was God's specific purpose for this mystery to be revealed to believers, in particular the Gentiles.
- There are many distinctions which make the Church unique in God's plan, but one of the most important is that Church age believers are indwelt by Christ (and the Holy Spirit).
- Knowing that God has taken up permanent residence in us should give us confidence that one day we will be in glorified bodies in His presence.

- Other distinctions of the Church...
 - The Church is identified with Christ [Rom 6:3].
 - There is no distinction between Jews and Gentiles [Rom 3:22; 10:12; Gal 3:28; Col 3:11].
 - The Church has its citizenship in heaven [Phil 3:20].
 - The blessings of the Church are in the heavenly places in Christ [Eph 1:3].

Principles of Colossians 1:28-29

- The Apostle Paul worked hard – even to the point of exhaustion – proclaiming Christ to the world while teaching and admonishing believers.
- We also must labor in this life, but it is God in His matchless grace who is at work in us to accomplish His will [1 Cor 15:10; Phil 2:13].
- As with all legitimate Bible teachers, Paul’s purpose in teaching and admonishing believers was to see them mature in the faith and not remain infants in Christ [1 Cor 3:1; Eph 4:14; Heb 5:13].
- Paul’s target audience was every believer, not the “spiritually elite” as with the pre-Gnostic heretics the Colossians had encountered.
- All of God’s word is profitable in enabling all believers to mature in their faith [2 Tim 3:16-17].
- Paul charged pastor-teachers today to continue to preach the word of God [2 Tim 4:1-2].
- If this preaching is successful, God’s wisdom is conveyed so believers might apply it to their lives.
- To accomplish this, Bible teachers must work hard at studying and teaching the word, yet always rely upon the power of God [1 Cor 2:3-5; 2 Cor 4:7].
- God will provide the strength we need to handle any situation and accomplish the work He has for us to do [2 Cor 12:9; Eph 3:14-21; Phil 4:13].

Principles of Colossians 2:1-3

- Paul wanted the believers in the churches at Colossae and Laodicea to recognize how hard he had been working on their behalf.
- He hoped this would encourage these believers knowing that he cared so much about them even though he had never met them in person.
- Paul heard that the believers in these churches had the unity which comes from knowing the love of Christ and expressing it toward one another.
- This ἀγάπη (agapē) love is at the core of any healthy church as it is the source of true fellowship within the body of believers at a local church.
- In addition to encouraging these believers, Paul desired that they would obtain the spiritual riches which come from having the full assurance of understanding in regards to God's truth.
- We are not supposed to *think* that God's word is true – we are supposed to have full confidence in God and His word [2 Pet 1:3-10].
- As we learn, believe and dwell upon God's word, the Holy Spirit enables us to come to a full knowledge of Christ Himself who is the mystery hidden in ages past.
- Our Savior possesses all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge that we need to live righteously in this lost and dying world.
- Knowledge is critical for believers to mature in the faith, but knowledge is not the end goal.
- Knowledge w/o love is worthless [1 Cor 8:1; 13:2].
- We should be diligent to grow until we obtain God's wisdom which can be applied (in the sphere of love) to whatever circumstances we might face.

Principles of Colossians 2:4-5

- Paul did not want the believers in Colossae (Laodicea and elsewhere) to be deceived by smooth-tongued hucksters who make convincing arguments about false things [2 Cor 11:3].
- This includes, but is not limited to, the pre-Gnostic heretics who (among other things) were denying the hypostatic union of Christ.
- The way to avoid being deceived by these hucksters is to be firmly grounded in the truth of the Scriptures because persuasive arguments are powerless against God's truth.
- In addition, the Holy Spirit helps us spot these spirits of error [1 John 4:1-3].
- Even though Paul had never met these believers, he knew about their well organized churches and the strength of their faith in Christ.
- These believers were always on Paul's mind and in his prayers and it gave him great joy to know that, because of their discipline and faith, they had not been snookered thus far.

Principles of Colossians 2:6-7

- There is only one way to be saved and that is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ [John 3:16; 14:6; Eph 2:8-9].
- The moment someone places his faith in Jesus Christ, that person receives Him [John 1:12-13] and, as a result, has Him [1 John 5:11-12].
- Just as we have received Jesus Christ by grace through faith, we are to live out our daily lives as believers by grace through faith [2 Cor 5:7].
- Once we are saved Jesus is our Lord, but as believers we must choose to recognize Him as Lord in our hearts [1 Pet 3:15].
- At the moment of our salvation God firmly rooted us in Christ our Savior.
- In this agricultural metaphor nourishment comes through the roots, so Christ is the source of our spiritual strength and vitality.
- Christ is the cornerstone of our faith and all of our spiritual growth is built upon Him [Eph 2:19-22].
- As we grow spiritually we become more and more established in the doctrines of the Christian faith.
- The teaching of God's word is essential for our spiritual growth [Acts 20:32; Col 1:28; Heb 5:12].
- Thankfulness is a distinguishing characteristic of a maturing believer who truly grasps God's grace.

Principles of Colossians 2:8-10

- Believers must be on the alert for those who would attempt to take them captive through empty deception which has the appearance of wisdom.
- This deceptive philosophy is based upon the traditions of men and the fundamental principles of Satan's world system rather than Christ.
- Believers are supposed to be taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ [2 Cor 10:5].
- This means we are in the midst of a battle between God and Satan that is taking place in our souls.
- The word of God is our handbook for combat in this spiritual warfare [2 Cor 10:3-4].
- We can either follow God's teaching or listen to Satan's empty, deceptive philosophy of humanism, subjectivism, rationalism, naturalism, etc.
- In order to avoid being taken captive by Satan's lies, believers must be well versed in the armor which God supplies for the battle [Eph 6:11-17].
- One of the deceptive tactics of the pre-Gnostic heretics was to question both the deity and humanity of Christ.
- These heretics would even go so far as to reduce Christ to an angel who only appeared to have a physical body.
- Paul made sure the Colossian believers knew that Jesus was completely God in character, essence, nature, etc. and fully human.
- In chapter one he had already emphasized the begetting of Jesus' human soul and spirit which established the hypostatic union in eternity past.
- Here in chapter two Paul emphasizes that Jesus also has a very real human body in which all the fullness of His Deity dwells.
- Christ's natural body which was the result of the virgin birth has been replaced by a resurrection body in which He will dwell forever [Luke 24:39].
- Being fully God, Jesus is able to make us full (complete) through our position in Him which occurs the moment we place our faith in Him.
- We do not become God (or a god) when we are born-again, but by God's grace we are able share in the fullness of Christ.
- Jesus, not just as God, but as a human also, is the head over every ruler and authority that exists in the created world [Col 2:15].
- This includes the false teachers that have been misleading the Colossians believers as well as the false teachers we see in the world today.

Principles of Colossians 2:11-12

- Physical circumcision was a sign of inclusion in the Abrahamic covenant [Gen 17; Acts 7:8].
- Physical circumcision was mandated for the children of Israel in the Mosaic Law [Lev 12:3].
- But even for Israel there was a circumcision more important than the physical one [Rom 2:28-29].
- We are included in the spiritual aspects of the Abrahamic covenant through faith [Rom 4:1-13].
- At the moment of faith in Jesus Christ a spiritual circumcision takes place.
- This spiritual circumcision involves the disarming of the sinful flesh we dwell in [Rom 6:5-7].
- We have, in effect, been buried with Christ and raised with Him which enables us to live in an entirely new way [Rom 6:1-4].
- Victory over sin in our daily lives is by grace through faith, not through legalism.
- Our sin nature has not been eradicated, however.
- We can grant power to our otherwise powerless sinful flesh by making poor choices [Jas 1:13-15].
- It is up to us to see ourselves in a new way and consider ourselves as dead to sin [Rom 6:11-14].
- If we do, then the power of God who raised Jesus from the dead will help us avoid sin [Rom 8:11-13].
- This continual cleansing from the power of sin in our lives is possible only because of Jesus' sacrificial death on the Cross [1 John 1:7].
- Should we succumb to sin, the blood of Christ also provides for restoration to fellowship through confession of sin [1 John 1:9].

Principles of Colossians 2:13-14

- Salvation is an act of God on behalf of those who believe in Jesus while they are still spiritually dead in Adam and living in their sins, indulging the lusts of the flesh [Eph 2:1-9].
- Through nothing more than simple faith in Jesus the believer is regenerated spiritually, being made alive together with Christ [Titus 3:5].
- This new life which the believer has in Christ is eternal life which cannot be lost [John 3:16-18, 36; 1 John 5:10-12].
- All of this is possible because at the moment of salvation God freely forgives the penalty of our sins which is eternal condemnation (separation from God) [Rom 6:23; 8:1, 38-39].
- This gracious act of forgiveness is something we could never earn or deserve [Acts 10:43; 13:38-39; Eph 1:7] and should inspire us to forgive others also [Eph 4:32; Col 3:12-13].
- As unbelievers we were buried under a debt of righteousness before God that was impossible for us to pay.
- The Mosaic Law exposed the indebtedness of unrighteousness [Rom 3:20; 4:15; 5:20; 1 Cor 15:56; Gal 3:10].
- This debt, along with the record of our debt, has been cancelled out by the saving work of Jesus on the Cross [Gal 3:13; 4:4-5].
- In Jesus' life He fulfilled the Law [Matt 5:17] and because He died for our sins we are now able to have the requirement of the Law fulfilled in us [Rom 8:2-4].
- By His wound (His death on the Cross) we who believe have been healed, so we ought to live a life alive to righteousness [1 Pet 2:24].

Principles of Colossians 2:15

- Jesus was hung on the Cross with the intent of making a public display of Him and in an attempt to show that He had no real power [Matt 27:39-43].
- Human beings brought about the crucifixion, but the true forces behind them were the heavenly rulers and authorities [Matt 26:3-4; John 13:2, 27].
- Their evil plan completely backfired...
 - The victory of the Cross stripped any and all power away from the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places [John 12:31; Heb 2:14; 1 John 3:8].
 - These disarmed heavenly rulers and authorities were disgraced as Jesus Christ made a public spectacle of them in His victory procession.
 - The people's attempt to kill Jesus was thwarted when He gave up His own life [Luke 23:46].
- Since Jesus summarily defeated the forces of evil on the Cross, we should turn to Him to resist their tactics rather than trying to rely on legalistic observance [Eph 6:11-17; Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 5:8-9].

Principles of Colossians 2:16-17

- We should not allow anyone to judge us in regard to what we eat or drink.
- This matter is between the believer and the Lord [Rom 14:1-4].
- These things have been created by God to be shared in by those who believe [1 Tim 4:3-5].
- The teaching that forbids eating and drinking is the doctrine of demons [1 Tim 4:1].
- But Christ has already disarmed the fallen angels and demons, so we are free from their power.
- The believer can, therefore, ignore such demonic “wisdom” [Jas 3:15].
- This liberation for the believer today also applies to holy days and festivals [Rom 14:5-6; Gal 4:9-10].
- This includes the observance of the Sabbath day which was a day of rest for Israel we are supposed to experience every day [Ex 20:8-11; Heb 4:1-11].
- All of these things were simply a shadow of the reality that would be Christ [Heb 10:1-14].

Principles of Colossians 2:18-19

- False teachers lead believers away from the Head (Christ) and into other forms of worship, including the worship of angels.
- The worship of angels is strictly prohibited in Scripture [Ex 20:3-5a; Rev 22:8-9].
- Instead, the proper role of the angels is to direct their own worship toward God [Heb 1:6; Rev 7:11].
- Some forms of this mysticism are legalistic, demanding observance of rules which can sometimes promote asceticism.
- The rules of the Mosaic Law served a purpose in God's plan, but the Law was always intended to be a mere shadow of the reality that is Christ.
- False teachers often have the appearance of humility which can be used to attract followers.
- Believers can be easily seduced by these false teachers if they don't know the Word of God.
- Sadly, believers who get drawn into this false worship are allowing these false teachers to rob them of eternal rewards [Rev 3:11].
- We must be careful to avoid false humility which is actually spiritual arrogance.
- For example, it seems humble to say, "I would never dare to say that I know that I am going to heaven. Only God knows if we will qualify. I find it appalling that some people claim to know that they will go to heaven when they die."
- This is actually a very arrogant, self-centered statement that presumes that going to heaven depends upon our merits rather than God's grace.
- The Bible makes it very clear that we can know that we have eternal life [1 John 5:11-13] and that salvation is by grace through faith, not as a result of our works [Eph 2:8-9].
- The life of the believer should be characterized by a connection to the Head of the Body from which all spiritual growth comes [Eph 4:14-16].
- Christ is not only the source of our spiritual growth, He is also the One who enables us to bear spiritual fruit in our lives [John 15:1-5].
- These false teachers, seeking to come in touch with some "higher" power, have no connection to Christ and, as a result, no access to real power.
- In the proper working of the Body of Christ, some "ligament" believers help to stabilize others in their faith and some "tendon" believers motivate others to action [Acts 11:21-24; Heb 10:23-25].
- In either case, we are to help build up our fellow believers by helping them stay focused on Christ [Heb 12:1-2].
- With our minds centered on Christ, we will be protected from unprincipled men who would cause us to stumble into error [2 Pet 3:17-18].

Principles of Colossians 2:20-23

- The moment we place our faith in Jesus Christ we are identified with His death [Rom 6:3].
- Our death with Christ has freed us from the fundamental principles of this world.
- However, our old self longs for our old life which was occupied with the things of this world.
- Some worldly principles promote asceticism – the denying of any form of physical pleasure.
- In the Colossian church this was rooted in a pre-Gnostic belief that anything physical was evil.
- The belief was that if food or physical contact gave pleasure to the body, then this must be evil.
- In the name of religion, these pre-Gnostics developed rules for Colossian believers to obey.
- These rules consisted of man-made taboos that are not mentioned in the Bible.
- In their misguided attempt to please God, some Colossian believers had submitted to these rules.
- Many churches today impose similar “clipboard” rules and regulations on their members.
- Biblical prohibitions ought to be obeyed, but these man-made taboos are of no value.
- At best, these taboos distract believers from the true spiritual service of worship [Rom 12:1-2].
- At worst, these taboos actually inflame the desires of the flesh.
 - A good example of this is the celibacy imposed upon Catholic priests.
 - Paul spoke of the benefits of remaining unwed, but also of the dangers [1 Cor 7:8-9].
- God has given us many things that are designed to bring us pleasure without sin.
 - Marital relations between husband and wife.
 - A meal that we find delicious.
 - Driving on a nice day in a convertible.
 - And so on...
- People are drawn to religiosity – asceticism, legalism, ecstaticism, etc. – which draw away from the focus on knowing Christ through God’s word.
- This religious observance seems to display humility, but it is only a show and takes us away from being oriented to God’s grace.

- Fasting is a valid biblical practice that helps the believer to focus his thoughts on God [2 Chr 20:3; Ezra 8:21-23; Dan 6:18; Acts 13:2-3; 14:23].
- Fasting to focus on the Lord and grow spiritually is a good thing.
- Fasting to try to gain the approval of God is not.
- Asceticism uses self-induced misery and legalism uses a system of works, both in a vain attempt to gain God's favor.
- Ecstasism substitutes intense emotional experiences for the true joy believers are able to experience when resting in God's love.
- Since we have been freed from the precepts of the world in our identification with Christ, we should not submit ourselves to such precepts even when they are imposed by "godly" men [Mark 7:1-13].
- These ordinances may appear to contain wisdom, but they don't line up with Scripture [Gal 2:4-5].

Principles of Colossians 3:1-4

- Through their identification with Jesus Christ, believers have already...
 - died together with Him [Rom 6:8; Col 2:20].
 - been buried together with Him [Rom 6:4].
 - been raised together with Him [Eph 2:6].
 - been seated together with Him [Eph 2:6].
- Jesus is presently in heaven at His Father's right hand [Lk 22:69; Rom 8:34; Heb 1:3; 10:12; 12:2].
- Given that we are positionally already with Christ in heaven, we ought to focus our thoughts on heavenly things and strive for them rather than the things of this world as we did when we were unbelievers [Phil 3:18-20; 2 Cor 4:17-18].
- This world is under the control of Satan who is the great deceiver [John 12:31; 2 Cor 4:4; 1 John 5:19; Rev 12:9].
- If we know this, then we should not unduly focus our attention on the things of this world which can be an encumbrance to our walk [Heb 12:1].
- The moment we placed our faith in Jesus Christ, we died to our old life [Rom 6:6; Gal 2:20].
- The life we now live is eternal life which has been secured together with Christ by God the Father [John 6:37-40; 10:27-29].
- As believers we should take hold of the eternal life we now live [1 Tim 6:12-19].
- We should be looking for Christ's return [Titus 2:11-14], but while we wait [Phil 3:20] our lives should be all about honoring Christ [Phil 1:21].
- When Christ returns [1 Thess 4:16-18], we will receive our bodies of glory [1 Cor 15:42-44] and will be with Him in glory [Jn 14:2-3] and behold His glory [Jn 17:1-5, 24].

Principles of Colossians 3:5-8

- Understanding the doctrine that our minds are to be focused on the heavenly things where Christ is, we should think of the members of our earthly body as dead to sin [Rom 6:11-13].
- As unbelievers we were given to all sorts of evil behavior – immorality (sexual and otherwise), sinful passions, lusts, etc. [Mark 7:21-23]
- We can all recognize the sinfulness of immorality, lust, unrestrained passions, etc., but just as harmful is greed – an insatiable desire for things – which is a form of idolatry because it involves the worship of things rather than God.
- As believers we ought to realize that our flesh has been disarmed through the circumcision of Christ at the moment of our salvation [Col 2:11].
- This will produce a mindset which will result in a real change in our conduct, but first comes knowledge, understanding, belief and wisdom.
- Believers are not subject to the wrath of God...
 - At the moment of faith in Jesus Christ the believer is freed from God's eternal wrath [John 3:36] and the wrath of the Tribulation [1 Thess 1:9-10].
 - During their lives, believers who commit sins will find themselves under God's hand of Fatherly discipline rather than His wrath [Heb 12:4-11].
- Unbelievers are subject to the wrath of God...
 - At the Great White Throne judgment unbelievers are under God's wrath because they have rejected His only provision for salvation – Jesus Christ.
 - During their lives, unbelievers are under God's wrath because of their behavior which is the product of their slavery to their sin nature.
- We should never forget the nature of our lives as unbelievers so that we might avoid becoming arrogant about who we have become in Christ.
- We must realize that sinful behavior of our past has no place in our lives now and can have real and potentially lasting consequences [1 Cor 6:18].
- A change must take place from within us through the working of the Holy Spirit which results in a mental attitude that puts aside mean-spiritedness, anger and rage.
- These mental attitude sins can manifest outwardly in foul language and the denigration of others.
- If we find ourselves succumbing to the sins of our former manner of life, we need to recognize that we are sinning, repent (change our mind about our sinful behavior) and confess [1 John 1:9].
- After we have confessed our sins, we should forsake our transgressions [Prov 28:13] and walk by means of the Spirit [Gal 5:16].

Principles of Colossians 3:9-11

- We need to realize that in the Body of Christ we are members of one another, so we should lay aside all falsehood [Eph 4:25] and speak the truth to one another in love [Eph 4:15].
- This is part of growing up in all aspects into Christ who is full of grace and truth [John 1:14; 14:6].
- The damage caused by lying and deceit made this an important principle for the people of Israel as well [Le 19:11-12; Ps 34:13; Pr 4:24; Ze 8:16-17].
- Lying, as with all other sins, is the outworking of our old sin nature which was disarmed by Christ at the moment of our salvation [Col 2:11].
- We should volitionally strip off and discard the worthless sin nature within us which is being corrupted [Rom 6:6; Eph 4:22].
- When we have removed the old self we should clothe ourselves with the new self which was created in righteousness [Eph 4:24].
- Our new self was created at the moment of our salvation [2 Cor 5:17], but requires a daily renewal of knowledge [Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 4:16; Eph 4:23].
- This is a renewal which can only be performed by God Himself [Ps 51:10; Titus 3:5] as we are being conformed to the image of Christ [Rom 8:29].
- One of the most powerful things about the Church is that, in Christ, our genealogy, religious background, culture, financial status, etc. all become utterly meaningless [Rom 10:12; 1 Cor 12:13; Gal 3:28; 5:6].
- These differences mean nothing because Jesus Christ means everything [Phil 3:7-9].
- We know that the Holy Spirit dwells in every believer, but Jesus Christ also dwells in us [John 17:23; Rom 8:10-11; Eph 3:17].
- As we abide in Christ and He abides in us, we bear fruit for the Lord [John 15:5] and become more and more Christ-like every day [Gal 2:20].

Principles of Colossians 3:12-14

- As born-again believers in the dispensation of the Church, we have been chosen by God to receive special blessings [Eph 1:3-4].
- We have been set apart by God as a special body of people where all of our differences (race, skin color, culture, etc.) have become meaningless.
- Everyone is the object of God's love [John 3:16; Rom 5:8], but those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ are beloved by God [Rom 1:7] and cannot be separated from that love [Rom 8:38-39].
- Given that we are chosen, holy and beloved, we should behave in a manner worthy of these things [Eph 4:1; Phil 1:27; Col 1:10; 1 Thess 2:12].
- In order to behave this way we should clothes ourselves with...
 - mercy [Rom 12:1; 2 Cor 1:3; Eph 2:4; Phil 2:1].
 - kindness [Gal 5:22; 1 Pet 3:8-9; 2 Pet 1:5-8].
 - humility [Eph 4:1-3; Phil 2:3-4; 1 Pet 5:5].
 - considerateness [Gal 6:1; Titus 3:2; Jas 1:21; 3:13].
 - patience [2 Cor 6:6; 2 Tim 3:10; 4:2].
 - love [John 13:35; 15:9-13; 17:26; Rom 5:5; 12:9; 13:10; 14:15; 1 Cor 8:1; 13:1-8, 13; 16:14; 2 Cor 5:14-16; 8:7-8, 24; 13:14; Gal 5:6, 13, 22-23; Eph 1:15; 3:14-19; 5:1-2; Phil 1:9-11; Col 1:3-4; 1 Thess 1:2-5; 3:6-8, 11-13; 2 Thess 1:3-4; 1 Tim 1:5; 4:12; 2 Tim 2:22; Heb 6:10; 10:24; 1 Pet 4:8; 2 Pet 1:5-7; 1 John 2:4-5; 4:7-12, 16-18; 5:3].
- These character traits of the maturing Christian contribute to unity and peace within the Body of Christ [Eph 4:1-3].
- This unity forms a critical bond between believers in a local church which stems from like-mindedness in regard to the truths contained within God's word [Rom 15:5-6; 1 Cor 1:10; Phil 2:1-2].
- That bond is a necessary component of a healthy local church where every member is being built up in the faith [Eph 4:14-16].

Principles of Colossians 3:15-17

- Jesus Christ gives His peace to those who believe in Him [John 14:1, 27].
- That peace, operating within the sphere of love [Col 3:14], should serve as a guide in each of our hearts with regard to the choices we make.
- A body of individual believers who are guided by His peace will be at peace with one another.
- The Body of Christ, as a whole, was called by God to be unified in peace and love [Eph 4:1-6].
- This is a unity which comes about as believers mature in their faith [John 17:23; Eph 4:11-16].
- When Christ's peace governs our view of the world around us, we will no longer be negatively affected by the circumstances of our lives.
- When our happiness is not controlled by the circumstances of life, we will not waste our precious time on this earth in self-pity.
- Instead, we will appreciate all of the blessings which God has graciously granted to us and will display a heart attitude of thankfulness [Ps 105:1; 106:1; 1 Thess 5:18].
- An integral part of all of this is that we allow the word of Christ to dwell in abundance in our souls.
- For this to happen we must first hear His word and unite it with faith [Rom 10:17; Heb 4:2].
- We then must meditate upon the word we have heard and believed [Ps 119:15, 48, 97, 148].
- In this way, we prevent our thoughts from being clogged up with the things of this world [Mark 4:18-19; Rom 12:2; 1 John 2:15].
- As we grow in our own faith we are to teach and admonish one another in all wisdom [Col 1:28].
- This is not limited to pastors, but applies to every member of the Body of Christ [Rom 14:19; 15:2].
- An important part of this process of edifying others is singing songs to one another that are based upon God's word [Eph 5:19]...
 - Psalms from the Bible.
 - Christian hymns that contain God's truth.
 - Other songs that have valid spiritual content.
- These edifying songs should be sung as an expression of the gratitude we have in our hearts for all that God has done for us [Eph 5:20].

- Whatever we say or do in our daily lives should be done in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to the glory of God [1 Cor 10:31; 1 Pet 4:11].
- Our ability to express our thankfulness to God the Father through our speech, our actions, our songs, etc. is made possible through the blood of Christ [Eph 2:17-18; 3:11-12].

Principles of Colossians 3:18-21

- Within God's creation, He has established a divinely instituted order.
 - Mankind is lower than the angels [Heb 2:7-9] (for now [1 Cor 6:3]).
 - Animals are subject to mankind [Gen 1:28].
 - Wives should be subject to husbands [Col 3:18].
 - Children should be subject to parents [Col 3:20].
- The wife's submission to her husband is not in any way an indication that she is inferior [1 Pet 3:1-7].
- Men (and women) are commanded to submit to other believers [Gal 5:13; Eph 5:21; Phil 2:3] which is a matter of humility [1 Pet 5:5], not inferiority.
- When a wife has submitted to the Lord, she should submit to her husband as unto the Lord [Eph 5:22].
- When a wife does not submit to her husband, the marriage becomes unbalanced and unpleasant [Prov 21:9, 19].
- A wife who honors the proper order which God has designed for marriage is a blessing to her husband from the Lord [Prov 12:4; 19:14].
- The husband is to love his wife just as Christ loves the Church [Eph 5:25].
- This love is sacrificial, integrity love which in no way depends upon the lovability of the object.
- In marriage, the two become one [Gen 2:24], so in loving his wife a husband is, in effect, loving himself [Eph 5:28].
- When a husband loves his wife in this way, he will not harbor bitterness toward her [Eph 4:30-32].
- God's design for marriage is that husbands would love their wives and that wives would submit to their husbands and respect them [Eph 5:33] as is fitting in the Lord [Col 1:18].
- God's design for the family is that children would please the Lord [Col 3:20] by obeying their parents in the Lord [Eph 6:1].
- An integral part of this design is that fathers do not exasperate their children [Col 3:21], but raise them in the discipline/instruction of the Lord [Eph 6:4].
- All discipline should be given in the sphere of love for the good of the children to train them in righteousness [Heb 12:7-11].
- All believers can lose heart [Heb 12:3], but when parents go beyond the realm of discipline and provoke their children to frustration they are especially susceptible to this [Col 3:21].

Principles of Colossians 3:22-4:1

- If we are employed, we are to do our work as unto the Lord rather than for our boss [Gal 1:10].
 - In doing so, we should regard our boss as worthy of honor so that the name of God and His word will not be spoken against [1 Tim 6:1].
 - This is true even when we have a boss who is unreasonable [1 Pet 2:18].
 - We should not show any less respect if our boss is a fellow believer [1 Tim 6:2].
 - Our work should be done wholeheartedly, not merely as a show so that it can be seen be our earthly boss [Eph 6:5-6].
 - We are not to try to please men, but rather God who examines our hearts [1 Thess 2:4; Heb 4:13; Job 34:21; Psalm 33:13-15; Jer 32:19].
 - It is the Lord who will reward those who do their work as unto Him [Eph 6:7-8; Heb 11:6].
- As believers, we have an imperishable inheritance reserved for us in heaven [1 Pet 1:4].
 - This is set aside for those who have been sanctified through faith in Jesus Christ [Acts 20:32; 26:18].
 - The Holy Spirit is given as a pledge [Eph 1:13-14].
 - Every believer has been qualified to share in the inheritance of the saints [Col 1:12].
- Each individual believer has a portion of his eternal inheritance which is made up of rewards.
 - Gold, silver and precious stones [1 Cor 3:11-15].
 - Crowns [2 Tim 4:8; Jas 1:12; 1 Pet 5:4; Rev 4:9-11].
- Rewards are promised by God when we do the good works He prepared for us to do [Eph 2:10], but they are given in grace, not earned.
- Knowing these things, we should be motivated by our gratitude to serve the Lord [Rom 14:6-8] for His glory in everything we do [1 Cor 10:31].
- If we are doing our work as unto the Lord and our boss treats us badly, we can take solace knowing that he will receive the appropriate consequences of his actions from the Lord [Eph 6:9].
- If we are the boss, we should lead as unto the Lord and grant those under our authority justice and fairness.
- The boss needs to realize that he does not have unlimited authority because he must answer to his Master in heaven [Eph 6:9; John 13:13].

Principles of Colossians 4:2-4

- Prayer is an essential component of a healthy spiritual life [1 Thess 5:17].
 - When praying we should be spiritually alert, offering our prayers in the power of the Spirit [Eph 6:18].
 - Our prayers should include petitions for other believers, especially those who preach the word [Eph 6:19-20].
 - Our level of devotion to prayer is a reflection of our devotion to Christ [2 Cor 11:3].
 - Prayer should be an expression of the gratitude in our hearts for all that God has done for us [1 Thess 5:18] even when making requests [Phil 4:6].
- Corporate prayer is an essential component of a healthy church [Acts 2:42; 20:36].
 - Praying together is a part of the process by which a body of believers at a local church are built up in their faith [Jude 20].
 - Men are to pray together with a spirit of unity, putting their faith on display [1 Tim 2:8].
- When we pray, we do not need to worry about what words to say to God because the Holy Spirit intercedes for us [Rom 8:26].
- We should pray for ministry opportunities for ourselves and others, recognizing that it is God who opens these doors [Acts 14:27; 1 Cor 12:5; 16:9; 2 Cor 2:12; Rev 3:7-8].
- We should also pray that those who proclaim God's word will be able to do so boldly and with clarity [Acts 4:29-31; 2 Cor 4:1-2; 1 Thess 2:2].
- Our lives are a witness for Christ, but in order to communicate the gospel it is necessary to speak [Acts 4:18-20; Rom 1:14-17; 1 Thess 2:3-4].

Principles of Colossians 4:5-6

- The way we conduct ourselves around unbelievers matters [2 Cor 1:12].
 - We want to make the most of every opportunity we have to show Christ to others [Eph 5:15-16].
 - Our actions in public should put God's wisdom on display [Jas 3:13, 17].
- In this letter, Paul has emphasized the importance of spiritual wisdom [Col 1:9; 2:1-3].
 - This wisdom begins with instruction [Col 1:28].
 - This wisdom develops as the word dwells richly within us [Col 3:16].
 - If we lack wisdom, we can ask God for it [Jas 1:5].
- We should be prepared to be a witness for Christ at all times [2 Tim 4:2].
 - Our feet should be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace [Eph 6:15].
 - In this way, we will always be ready to answer anyone who asks to give an account for the hope that is in us [1 Pet 3:15].
- It is important that our speech be gracious, especially around unbelievers [Ps 39:1].
 - Our words can do great harm [Jas 3:5-6].
 - Therefore, we should guard our mouths [Ps 34:13; Pr 13:3; 21:23] with the help of God [Ps 141:3].
 - Our words should bless, not curse [Rom 12:14].
 - Our words should edify [Eph 4:29; Rom 14:19].

Principles of Colossians 4:7-9

- Paul knew that he could not do everything in his ministry alone.
 - Paul surrounded himself with men whom he could trust to be his fellow-workers in ministry.
 - Paul looked at things from the spiritual perspective, so Onesimus being a former slave did not affect Paul's view of his faithfulness.
- Paul chose Onesimus to be one of his couriers and, in the process, was sending him back to Philemon [Phil 15-16].
- The gospel had transformed Onesimus' life, but Paul knew that he needed to make things right with his former master [Phil 17-18].
- Tychicus and Onesimus were to deliver this letter and report everything about the circumstances Paul and Timothy found themselves in.
 - Paul did not try to keep everything private, but wanted these believers to know about what was going on in his life.
 - As we have seen, Paul desired their prayers and he wanted them to know what to pray for.

Principles of Colossians 4:10-14

- Paul mentioned three fellow-workers of Jewish background who had been a help and a comfort to him in his ministries.
 - Aristarchus: a fellow prisoner
 - Mark: author of one of the Gospels, a cousin of Barnabas, and also called John
 - Jesus: also called Justus
- Aristarchus was Paul's traveling companion.
 - He was dragged into the theater during the riot of the silversmiths at Ephesus [Acts 19:29].
 - He accompanied Paul to Jerusalem with a collection for the Jewish saints [Acts 20:4].
 - He remained on with Paul on the journey to Rome [Acts 27:2] where he was imprisoned [Col 4:10].
- Mark and Paul had a hot/cold relationship.
 - Mark helped on Paul's first missionary journey [Acts 12:25; 13:5], but then deserted him [Acts 13:13].
 - Because of this, Paul did not want to have Mark as part of his team anymore [Acts 15:36-39].
 - After some time passed, Paul began to think more highly of Mark [Col 4:10-11; Philem 24; 2 Tim 4:11].
- Jesus' Latin name of Justus was probably given to him because he was loyal to the Law and a man of a fine reputation.
- These three Jewish men supported Paul which is significant in light of what had happened in Antioch [Gal 2:11-21 cf. Phil 3:1-7].
- From this we can learn about Paul's character.
 - Paul did not abandon his Jewish brothers in Christ because of what happened at Antioch.
 - Paul ultimately set aside Mark's act of desertion and included him in his ministry activities.
 - Paul's criteria for those who would be his fellow-workers focused on their current spiritual walk.
- Paul then mentions Epaphras, a believer from the Colossian church.
 - Epaphras truly cares about the believers in the Lycus valley, prays for them, wants them to grow up in the faith and be confident in God and His plan.
 - His love for these believers has motivated him to work hard on their behalf, even though he is away.
- Paul also mentions Luke and Demas.
 - Luke is a physician who authored one of the Gospels as well as the book of Acts and joined Paul on his 2nd missionary journey at Troy [Acts 16:10].

- Even though Demas eventually fell away due to the attractions of the world, Luke remained faithful to Paul [2 Tim 4:10-11].
- All of these men sent their warmest greetings of love to the Colossian believers, even though some had never been to Colossae.
- Likewise, we should care other local churches with whom we are like-minded, support them through prayer and look for opportunities to participate with them in various ministries [2 Cor 8:3-5; Phil 1:3-5].

Principles of Colossians 4:15-16

- Paul extended his love to the believers in the Lycus valley by sending his warmest greetings.
 - He extended a special greeting to Nympha, a Christian woman he held in high esteem.
 - Nympha hosted a house church in her home which was a common practice in the early Church (most church buildings didn't exist before the 3rd century).
- Paul expected that this letter will be read publicly in the church at Colossae and Laodicea.
 - The letters written by the apostles were intended to be circulated [1 Thess 5:27].
 - Although the message was intended for the Colossian believers, it would benefit other believers as well, including believers today.
- Paul also wanted the Colossian believers to read a letter that would come from Laodicea.
 - This letter was quite possibly what is now our N.T. Book of Ephesians.
 - If not, it was a non-canonical letter that Paul wrote which contained messages for these churches, but was not inspired by God to be part of the Bible.
 - Many letters were written by the apostles during this time that were never meant to be part of the canon of Scripture [1 Cor 5:9; 2 Cor 2:3-4, 9; 7:8, 12].
 - These letters were important to the churches that received them, but were not for all believers.

Principles of Colossians 4:17

- We must all keep our minds on the ministries which we have been given.
 - We can easily be distracted from our ministries by the details of life [Luke 8:4-15; Heb 12:1-2].
 - All of the real ministry opportunities we have are given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ [1 Cor 12:5].
 - No one receives a ministry from the Lord because they are a “superior” believer – all ministries are given by God’s grace [1 Cor 3:10; 1 Pet 4:10].
 - By grace we receive ministries and by grace we labor in them [1 Cor 15:10].
- When God gives us a work assignment, He expects us to see it to completion [2 Tim 4:5].
 - God can accomplish all of His purposes without us, but He has prepared work specifically for each of us to do [Eph 2:10].
 - If we fail to continue in the ministries God has given us, we will suffer loss of rewards [1 Cor 3:11-15].
 - If we fight the good fight of faith [1 Tim 6:12] and finish the course, there is a crown waiting to be given at the Judgment Seat of Christ [2 Tim 4:7-8].
 - It is important, then, to run the race in a way that we will receive the prize [1 Cor 9:24] and finish strong.

Principles of Colossians 4:18

- Even though Paul dictated his letters, he wrote with his own hand as well [1 Cor 16:21; Gal 6:11; Philem 19; 2 Thess 3:17].
 - This was a personal touch which showed his deep care and concern for the recipients of the letter.
 - This was also his way of assuring the recipients that the letter was from him [2 Thess 2:2, 15].
- We should all remember to pray for those who are imprisoned for their faith [Heb 13:3].
- We all need daily grace to live the victorious life.
 - It is God who is at work in us accomplishing the works given to us [1 Cor 2:6; Phil 2:13; Heb 13:21].
 - No small part of this process is the way God's word performs a work in us [1 Thess 2:13; Rom 12:2].
 - Furthermore, without God's grace in confession, we would all be stuck waking in the flesh [Psalm 32:5; Prov 28:13; 1 John 1:9].
 - This grace is available to us only through the blood of Christ [Eph 1:7].