



THE ONLY WAY TO
GROW



THE SECRET TO PERSONAL GROWTH FROM COLOSSIANS



INVITE

Inviting others
to follow Jesus
with us



GROW

Growing more
like Jesus



LOVE

Loving with a
servant heart



SEND

Sending and
supporting
ambassadors for
Jesus

THE ONLY WAY TO GROW

THE SECRET TO PERSONAL GROWTH FROM COLOSSIANS

Like most of us, you probably want to ‘grow as a person.’ Be more disciplined. Make better use of your time. Have better relationships. Get better at your job. Worry less. Cook more and increase your culinary skills. Take more control of the house and garden. Understand more about the world around us. Have more wisdom for living life well.

This desire for “growth” has spawned a whole industry of self-help books, documentaries and websites. It explains the massive interest in people like psychologist Jordan Peterson and organisation/tidying up consultant Marie Kondo. It also explains why many people come to Jesus. Because Jesus died for our sins and rose to give us new life, he offers the power to be freed from sinful habits and grow more and more like him.

The question is, once you’ve come to Jesus, how do you keep growing? Is it enough to just “trust and obey”? Or do you need to add something else? Maybe some more advanced Christian teaching, beyond the truths about Jesus? Or maybe there are some extra rules that you need? Maybe you should mix and match growth strategies from Jesus, Peterson and Kondo, getting the best of both worlds?

Paul wrote to the new Christians in the Greek city of Colossae because he wanted to share with them *the secret of how to keep growing*. We’re fortunate that in this series, as we study that letter together, we’ll find out what that secret is. We’ll get to think through and discuss how we put it into practice in our lives, so that we can keep growing too. Let’s pray that through this series God would teach us to keep growing as Christians throughout our whole lives.

For this study we're pleased to welcome new members to our study-writing team - Bruce Dickson (Clayfield Presbyterian Church), Jayesh Naran (Ithaca Presbyterian Church), and Matthew Viney (Wavell Heights Presbyterian).

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STUDY 1

GOSPEL GROWTH

COLOSSIANS 1:1-14

The apostle Paul planted churches all around the Mediterranean, but hadn't yet been to the Greek city of Colossae. One day though, he meets a guy from Colossae called Epaphras who has already done Paul's job for him! Epaphras has started a church in his hometown, and he tells Paul it's going well. But Paul has seen first hand what can go wrong in churches after a good start! So he writes to the Colossians to help them keep going... and keep *growing*...

If you had the chance to talk with someone who'd just become a Christian, what's the most important thing you'd want to tell them about the next ten years?

FRIEND OF "SINNERS"

To see what Paul wants for the new Christians in Colossae, **read Colossians 1:1-14.**

1. The “gospel” is the good news about Jesus. The one who died for sin is king! What has this **gospel** been *doing* among the Colossians and throughout the world? (1:6, 10)

2. What’s the *process* by which the gospel achieved this effect? (1:5-7) What concrete actions were needed?

3. What *powered* this process to make it effective? (1:9) Why was that power needed?

4. With that good start in mind, what's the thrust of Paul's prayer for the Colossians? Trace his logic by filling in the blanks....

⁹ We continually ask God to _____
 through _____,
¹⁰ so that you may _____:
 bearing fruit in _____, growing in _____,
¹¹ being _____
 so that you may _____,
¹² and giving _____ to the Father, who has _____ to
 share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light.

5. Consider the following statements:

"Once you've believed in Jesus, God accepts you just as you are. You don't need to keep growing."

"A Christian needs to grow, and to do that they need more than the gospel. The gospel's a good start, but true growth relies on more advanced teaching and practices."

From Colossians 1:3-14, what do you think of these two statements? What truth do they contain and what error? How would you improve both statements?

FRIEND OF "SINNERS"

Paul thinks it's great that the Colossians have heard the gospel and believed it! He thanks God for that (1:3-4). This belief in Jesus has fully qualified them to be part of God's forgiven people (1:12-14). But the blessings of belief in Jesus don't end with forgiveness! The same gospel also produces *growth*. Growth in *understanding of God and his will*, which leads to a *radically changed life* (1:9-10). So it's actually not enough to believe the gospel and then forget about it. You have to keep trusting Jesus, so he keeps changing you (1:11). If this is Paul's prayer for the Colossians, we shouldn't be surprised to find it's also his goal for the letter overall...

Colossians is short, so **read the rest of the letter together in your group (1:15-4:17)**. As you do, take note of any verses that repeat the key ideas you've seen at the beginning - verses about continued belief in Jesus and growth.

