

BIBLE CHALLENGE

A 1 week study of the books of Colossians, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus

Monday:

Read: Colossians 1:1-23, 2:16-23

What to look for:

- Colossians is very similar in character to Ephesians.
- Apparently Paul is writing to oppose false teaching among the Colossians, though he never spells out specifically what that teaching is or who is responsible for it. Likely it had to do with some combination of a continued holding to dietary and ceremonial laws, angel worship, and a common heresy of the day – the idea that faith in Christ was not enough; a special, secret knowledge was also required. Paul tells the Colossians that all anyone could ever ask for is found in the person of Jesus. There is no need to look elsewhere.
- Our 21st century American culture is not all that far removed from 1st century Colossian culture. The spiritual gold standard is a relativistic “believe whatever you want as long as you’re sincere and it works for you”. But Paul’s words are clear and bold. 2:17 – what is true and real has come and is found in Christ. What is essential is holding tightly to Christ who is the head (2:19). This stands against the “believe what you want” approach to faith.

Tuesday:

Read: Colossians 2:20-3:17

What to look for:

- Paul argues that the motivation for holy living is not to control evil desires (2:23), but because Jesus is our new life (3:4), and we have already begun to live that new life and thus are becoming more and more like him (3:10). What’s more, God has chosen us and loves us and is making us holy (3:12).
- Love is what makes all the virtues Paul lists something more than simply an ethical shopping list. Love is the binding agent that pulls them together into a unified whole.

Wednesday:

Read: 1 Timothy 1:1-17

What to look for:

- 1 Timothy, along with 2 Timothy and Titus, is often referred to as one of the “Pastoral Epistles”. They are addressed to individuals rather than congregations and give instructions concerning the pastoral care of churches.
- Paul is again addressing a misuse and misunderstanding of the law on the part of some teachers (1:3-4). Paul responds that one of the appropriate uses of the law is to restrain sin. (1:8ff)
- Note Paul’s once sentence summary of the message of the gospel in 1:15.

Thursday:

Read: 2 Timothy 2:1-26

What to look for:

- The two letters to Timothy have about them a somewhat more structured view of the church than do Paul’s early letters. IN these letters Paul is concerned about instructing the leaders of the church on matters concerning the preservation of the church’s teachings, rejection of false doctrine, maintaining good order and good worship, the appropriate selection of qualified leaders, and nurturing godly lives.
- Paul always brings things back to one central thought – remember Jesus (2:8)

Friday:

Read: Titus 2:1-3:11

What to look for:

- The name Titus appears fourteen times in Paul’s letters. In the book of Galatians we meet him as Paul’s best example of how a gentile could become a Christian. Paul relied in many circumstances on his trusted associate, Titus.
- Paul’s central teaching in this letter is that confused belief leads to immoral behavior. Belief and morality arise from the good news of what God does in human lives; our moral behavior is rooted in the salvation God has worked out for us. Paul instructs Titus to teach his people that their lives should have a Christian character about them even as they live in an environment that is not conducive to it.