

# Colossians

## New Life: Full and Free

### Introduction

In my first job out of college, I was having some difficulty with my work environment. It was a small company where everyone did what they could to get the job done. I was unhappy because I was never clear about what I was supposed to do, so I had a series of meetings with my boss to fine-tune my job description. Although she indulged my request, I get the sense now that my boss probably wasn't happy with my complaining.

In talking with my dad about the situation, he taught me something that helped me understand the problem in a different light. He said, "You don't work for a job description, you work for a person." My error was in my focus: I was trying to learn my job description and how it met my needs; instead, I should have been getting to know my boss and the things she wanted.

Often we make the same mistake in our spiritual life. We're looking for a good 'job description'—a set of religious practices that fit our needs and desires—rather getting to know Jesus and learning about His desires. In Him we have a rightful boss (actually, the Bible calls him our King). In this study we'll take a closer look at what it means that Jesus is the ruler in everything and how that impacts our relationship with Him. ~ A.G.

## You Are the Boss of Me

Col. 1:1–1:20

### Observe & Interpret

1. *Read verses 3-8.* Paul commends the Colossian church for their faith and hope in Jesus, for their fruit, their love for all the saints, and their spiritual heritage. If you were sitting in the church meeting where this letter was first read, how do you think you might feel to hear these compliments? What commendations might Paul give to your church or small group today?
  - Having *all* spiritual wisdom and understanding (v. 9)
  - Pleasing God in *every* way (v.10)
  - Bearing fruit in *every* good work (v.10)
  - Being strengthened with *all* power (v.11)
  - Having *great* endurance and patience (v.11)
2. *Read verses 9-11.* Paul subtly hints that even though their church is doing well, there is more to look forward to in the Christian life. What does each of the following superlatives tell you about the potential quality of our life in Christ?
  - Having *all* spiritual wisdom and understanding (v. 9)
  - Pleasing God in *every* way (v.10)
  - Bearing fruit in *every* good work (v.10)
  - Being strengthened with *all* power (v.11)
  - Having *great* endurance and patience (v.11)



## Study Notes

6. *Read verses 15-18.* Paul lists several very specific characteristics of Jesus. What do these characteristics tell you about his unique qualifications as our savior?

Jesus is:

- The image of the invisible God (v. 15)
- The firstborn over all creation (v. 15)
- The one by and for whom all things were created (v. 16)
- Before all things (v. 17)
- The one in whom all things hold together (v. 17)
- The head of the church (v. 18)
- The beginning and firstborn from among the dead (v. 18)

7. *Read verses 19-20.* Paul says that Christ is the “fullness of God,” and that God chose Christ to be our savior. We’ve experienced saviors who aren’t our lords (the fireman who saves a little child has no authority over that child). Why is it important that Jesus is both our Savior and Lord? What impact does this have on our relationship with Jesus?

## Study Notes

## Apply

8. At the end of his list of Jesus' qualifications, Paul implies that Jesus' resurrection from the dead was to ensure "that in everything he might have the supremacy" (v. 18). In our modern, "enlightened" culture, we often neglect to acknowledge the supremacy of Jesus in everything. In what areas of creation, society, or human existence do people not currently think of Jesus as supreme? (Examples might be particle physics, economics, dieting, psychology, world politics, your career, etc.) What would it look like for you to believe Jesus has total mastery in these areas? How would it affect your outlook and actions?
  
9. Paul uses an accounting image to describe how Jesus has put us in right relationship with God, saying Jesus "reconciled" all things to God (v 20). The *Encarta Dictionary* defines reconcile to mean "making two or more apparently conflicting things consistent or compatible, or to become consistent or compatible." What areas of your life are not consistent or compatible with God and need to be reconciled? What does it mean to you that these areas have already been reconciled through Jesus?
  
10. Looking back at the list of superlatives in question 2 (vv. 9-11), which one of these would you like to see more fully developed in your own life? Why does your choice stand out to you? Knowing what you do about Christ's supremacy, how does that encourage you to seek these qualities in your life?