

# Full Life in Christ

**Bible Background • COLOSSIANS 2:6–15**  
**Printed Text • COLOSSIANS 2:6–15 | Devotional Reading • ROMANS 8:31–39**

## Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: EXPLORE Paul’s message describing a full life in Christ; EXPRESS thanksgiving for God’s forgiveness through Jesus Christ; and REMAIN rooted in faith by continuing to pursue an understanding of life in the fullness of Jesus Christ and be thankful to Him.

## In Focus

Tamika heard that all religions lead to God and even if you did not accept Christ into your heart, you are still saved because Jesus saves everybody. At least, that’s what she’d heard.

One day, Tamika was at a Bible study class at church when someone raised a question about salvation. In the midst of the discussion, she said, “Everyone is saved already and no one will go to hell. Therefore, you don’t have to confess Jesus as your Lord, or study the Bible, or be concerned about living for Him; just be a good person. No other religion believes in hell like us, so some Christians must be wrong.”

Tamika’s feelings emanated from the death of her very close friend, and she knew that he had not accepted Christ as his Lord and Savior. Tamika had never shared her faith with her friend. Therefore, because her friend was such a good person, she refused to believe that he would not go to heaven because he had not made Jesus the Lord of his life.

*In today’s lesson, Paul deals head-on with traditions and philosophies that threaten to unsettle the budding church in Colosae. Like this church, we, too, need to be exhorted.*

## Keep in Mind

“And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power”  
(Colossians 2:10, KJV).

## Focal Verses

**KJV Colossians 2:6** As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:

7 Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

8 Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

9 For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting

off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

13 And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

14 Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

15 And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

## The People, Places, and Times

**Gnosticism.** Gnosticism comes from the Greek word *gnosis*, meaning “knowledge.” The Gnostics separated matter from thought. They concluded that matter was evil and formulated the idea that the possession of knowledge was the only requirement for salvation. This is why they did not want to attribute humanity to Jesus Christ because to them, material things were evil. Paul stresses that in Him (Jesus Christ as He appeared on Earth) “dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (from Colossians 2:9, KJV). Jesus was truly God in the flesh (John 1:14). As a result of their philosophical concepts—that the body is evil, for example—the Gnostics ignored or diminished the significance of the historic facts of the ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ because it was so apparent. To them, all the secrets of God were in the mind or only appeared within an immaterial identity.

**Circumcision.** Circumcision is the cutting off of the foreskin. Jewish baby boys are circumcised at 8 days old. Mosaic Law mandated this. (Leviticus 12:3). Circumcision marked males as a belonging of God, and it was supposed to be more than an outward sign, signifying complete devotion to God (Deuteronomy 10:16). When Gentiles began turning to Jesus, a big discussion arose as to whether Gentile Christian men needed to be circumcised. Paul pointed out that uncircumcised Gentiles had come to Christ simply by grace through faith. No one came to Christ through anything else. Because no one was able to keep the law to perfection, it was obvious that the law, including circumcision, did not save anyone. Today, many baby boys are circumcised, though not necessarily for religious reasons. Studies have shown that circumcised males are less likely to get sexually transmitted diseases when exposed to them and other potential conditions. As a result, circumcision is sometimes done as a preventative measure.

## Background

Throughout his ministry as the spiritual father of the Gentile church, Paul wrote letters of correction, gave instructions, and built up the faith of the body of Christ. It was especially important for him to do this in locations whose congregations had not yet met him. In the letter to the Colossians, his purpose was to refute heretical teachings (including a form of Gnosticism) that were influencing believers and thereby causing confusion. Paul's references to circumcision, food regulations, and feast days indicate that this heresy involved Judaistic tendencies. Instead of refuting the false teachings point by point, Paul gives encouragement in laying out a clear argument that all things are fulfilled in the person of Christ. He stresses that all wisdom and spiritual understanding can be found in the God-Man, Christ, who redeemed them and now holds authority over all things.

### At-A-Glance

1. Warnings Against Strange Teachings (Colossians 2:6–8)
2. Fullness of Life in Christ (vv. 9–10)
3. Believers Are Complete in Christ (vv. 11–15)

## In Depth

### 1. Warnings Against Strange Teachings (Colossians 2:6–8)

Paul warns members of this part of the family against deception: Arguments that may sound rational on the surface run counter to what they had accepted by faith in Christ. When the Colossians encounter arguments that oppose Christ, he does not want these children of God to lose heart or abandon their grounding. Therefore, Paul affirms that they have received Christ Jesus as Lord and should live their lives planted, rooted,

and established in Him alone. As Paul told the church at Ephesus, their spiritual growth needs to develop so they are not “tossed to and fro ... with every wind of doctrine” (from Ephesians 4:14, KJV). As Peter does in 1 Peter 5:9–10, Paul implores the Colossian and Laodicean churches to stand firm, stick to what they have been taught, and continue to have a thankful heart. Sternly but lovingly, he warns them not to be captivated by philosophy and rhetoric fashioned in human traditions and seated in worldly ideology. Paul then alludes to what he has heard from Epaphras and Timothy concerning the messages disseminated among these congregants. The information is believed by scholars to be a mixture of Jewish tradition and Gnostic philosophy. One of the enemy's greatest tricks is to distort the truth of God by planting a seed of doubt. If the devil, through strange doctrine and heresy, can catch members in isolation, he does his greatest damage. Thus, to help them assist in each other's spiritual growth and to stay grounded in the faith, Paul tackles the issues by encouraging believers to remain faithful and stay connected.

### 2. Fullness of Life in Christ (vv. 9–10)

Paul continues this discourse with his church family in Colosae by reemphasizing what he said in chapter 1 in a slightly different manner. In Colossians 1:15–20, he details that Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God and that all things in heaven and on Earth were created by Him and for Him. In doing this, he emphasizes the supremacy of Christ over any other religious figure or ideology. He places Christ in His rightful position as head of the church and explains that it pleased the Father that all the fullness of God dwell in Him (1:19). Paul revisits this point in chapter 2 by informing believers that Jesus Christ came in the flesh and is fully divine (2:9). This church family is exhorted to stand firm and know that because of its faith in Jesus Christ alone and because people in that family live for

His glory, they are complete in His fullness. He alone is above all rule and authority in heaven and on Earth. Because of their connection to Christ, they have access to the fullness of God the Father by the Holy Spirit. Ministry is at its best when a leader can point the way through the power of the Word to build a community of believers confident in the Son of the Living God.

### 3. Believers Are Complete in Christ (vv. 11–15)

Every Jewish male was circumcised to show devotion to God. But although a man may have been circumcised as a baby, he may not try to please God when he is an adult. Just as Deuteronomy 10:16 says, God desires real devotion, not just an outward sign. When we put our complete trust in Jesus Christ as Savior, Paul says we have hearts that are circumcised. Circumcision cuts off a piece of flesh, but receiving Jesus Christ as Savior means Jesus Christ has cut away our old sinful nature. Paul says the rite of circumcision is something like baptism. When we are plunged into the water, our old sinful selves are buried with Jesus. Then we are raised to life by the power of God, through our faith in Him. Paul says it's also like a piece of parchment containing a list of a person's debts. When the debts are paid, the writing is erased. Again, this is just like what Jesus did for us. Imagine all of our sins written on parchment and Jesus erasing them all. In fact, the record of our sins has been nailed to the Cross and no longer exists. The physical act of baptism is not what washes the sins away, just as physical circumcision does not make a man good. Instead, it is our trust in Jesus for His death on the Cross to pay the penalty for our sins. Colossians 2:15 gives us one more picture. When a Roman general had an especially great victory over his enemies, he held a parade. The general and all his proud soldiers marched in front. In the back, pulled by a rope, were the vanquished enemies.

This is the picture that Paul paints for us. Christ, our Savior, has triumphed over His foes.

### Search the Scriptures

1. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so \_\_\_\_\_" (Colossians 2:6).

2. "\_\_\_\_\_ up in him, and \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_, as ye have been \_\_\_\_\_, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (v. 7).

3. "For in him \_\_\_\_\_ all the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ bodily" (v. 9).

### Discuss the Meaning

1. What does it mean to walk in Christ Jesus as you have received Him?

2. What can we do as believers to keep ourselves from getting caught up in vain deceit and traditions that have nothing to do with Christ?

3. If Jesus is the Lord of your life, and He is acknowledged as the supreme authority in your life, what does it mean for you to be complete in Christ?

### Liberating Lesson

Jesus Christ, who is the fullness of God, put an end to all disputes of power and authority. In today's world, which is rampant with humanism, we as Christians can rest assured of our completeness in Him. We must be encouraged by the fellowship of the saints that as we are met with opposing views, we can stand on the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As a community of believers, it is incumbent on us to join with spiritual leadership in building up the body of Christ by remaining confident that Jesus is who He says He is. Also, in our hearts, we must stand guard against any attempts of the enemy of our souls to cause distractions, distortions, and confusion. We can only be effective in sharing love and winning souls for Christ by being steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

## Application for Activation

1. Seek in your own life to draw closer to the Lord by further study of what it means to be complete in Christ, who is the fullness of God.

2. God may be on your team, but do you have Him actually playing in the game of your life? Examine areas where you need to give Christ supreme authority.

## Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

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## Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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## Say It Correctly

Circumcised. SIR-kuhm-sized.

Spectacle. SPEK-ta-kuhl.

## Daily Bible Readings

### MONDAY

Those Touched by Jesus  
(Matthew 8:1–4)

### TUESDAY

Those Called by God  
(Acts 2:37–42)

### WEDNESDAY

Those Who Are in Christ Jesus  
(Romans 8:1–5)

### THURSDAY

Those Who Live in the Spirit  
(Romans 8:6–11)

### FRIDAY

Those Who Love God  
(Romans 8:26–30)

### SATURDAY

Those Kept in Christ's Love  
(Romans 8:31–39)

### SUNDAY

Those Who Have Received Christ Jesus  
(Colossians 2:6–15)