

TO THE SAINTS

Colossians 1:1–2

*¹ Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
² To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colosse: Grace to you
and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

—Colossians 1:1–2

Read Colossians 1:1–2

Have you felt the sting of rejection? Whether it is relational, a job, an event, or even trivial—rejection hurts! Perhaps you lacked a certain skill, experience, the right qualifications, or you simply didn't have the look the rejecters wanted. Such experiences can leave us feeling unwanted, insecure, and depressed. Being disqualified from any profession, group, or relationship is devastating!

Paul the apostle wrote the epistle of Colossians to a group of believers who were being told they lacked the qualifications to truly be Christians. False teachers had infiltrated the fellowship in Colossae and made the people feel that they were unqualified to have a relationship with God. These infiltrators claimed that the work of Jesus on their behalf was insufficient for the Colossians to be used for God's purposes, let alone have God's favor. The view held by most Bible scholars is that Epaphras, pastor of the church in Colossae, visited the apostle Paul while he was deposed in a

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.

—1 Timothy 1:12–15

Roman prison. Epaphras was noted by Paul as a man of prayer (Colossians 4:12–13). No doubt, he shared with Paul the issues that were threatening the believers in the church. In response, Paul penned a letter to these believers where he unequivocally declared their fully qualified standing with God through the accomplishments of Jesus Christ. Rules, rituals, keeping certain feasts, holy days, philosophies, or methodologies could not—and never could—qualify anyone to God. However, the work of Jesus Christ was so substantial, so earth-shattering, so hell-crushing, and so powerful that He has by His blood qualified us to God. His accomplishment alone is able to forgive sins, cleanse hearts, transform natures, and by faith in His work, bring anyone into an intimate relationship with God as Father.

In the epistle to the Colossians, Paul declared the greatness of the person of Christ who is *the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation* (Colossians 1:15), and also the greatness of Christ's accomplishments through His death on the cross.

Even if you have been rejected or made to feel disqualified by others, know this: you have been qualified to be God's child through faith in the person and accomplishment of Jesus Christ for you! There are still some today who add unbiblical stipulations to our service to God. Those who insist on adding certain rituals, methodologies, rules, diets, philosophies, and observances are missing the wondrous and powerful supremacy of Christ and what He has done for us. So, don't be intimidated by those, even today, who try to make you feel unqualified, disqualified, or even outside the realm of Christ's reach. You have been thoroughly qualified to God through Jesus!

Let the supremacy of Jesus Christ and His accomplishment on your behalf fill your heart and mind with awe as you begin your study in Colossians.

1. Briefly share any facts you know or have read about Paul the apostle.

a. What do you think gave Paul the authority to write this letter to the Colossians?

2. What do you find significant about the following phrases from Colossians 1:1:

a. *Apostle of Jesus Christ*

b. *By the will of God*

3. Why do you suppose Paul made special mention of Timothy as:

a. The co-author of the epistle

b. *Our brother*

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

An apostle: Paul calls himself an apostle, a word whose root means “to send.” The Greek word was first used for a cargo ship or fleet, but later denoted a commander of a fleet. The New Testament employs the word to signify an approved spokesman sent as a personal representative.¹

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“Paul, an apostle,” one who is ordained, a representative, one who is sent by Jesus Christ.

—Pastor Chuck Smith

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Why does Paul refer to himself as an apostle? Because, having never met Paul, the Colossians needed to know that he and his message were authorized by God.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Saints: The Greek term means “holy people.” The essence of “holiness” is being set apart to God. All believers are saints, not because they are perfect, but because they belong to God.²

4. Using Colossians 1:2, share your thoughts on Paul’s description of the members of the church in Colossae as:
 - a. *Saints*

 - b. *Faithful brethren*

 - c. *In Christ*

5. Note how in Colossians 1:2 Paul began this letter by reminding the believers of God’s disposition toward them. What do the following words convey to you about God’s disposition toward you:
 - a. *Grace*

 - b. *Peace*

6. What is your greatest takeaway from Colossians 1:1–2?



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Colossae was located about 100 miles inland from Ephesus (part of modern-day Turkey). At one time, Colossae was one of three prosperous cities on the Roman trade route. However, by the time of Paul's writing, the Roman road had moved to bypass Colossae, turning it into a rural and insignificant small town.