

The effectual calling of God is again seen in 2:8,9 which summarizes 1:3-2:22. The following verse (2:10) anticipates the second half of the book (4:1-6:20).

Colossians 1:15-20 expounds the absolute supremacy of Christ--the point that Paul wants the Colossian Christians to understand most clearly. Christ is the only source of true wisdom (2:3); our resurrection in him is the basis for our lifestyle as Christians (3:1, 17).

Study Tips:

Both of these books are relatively short and can easily be read through at one sitting. Read Ephesians a second time in a different version or a paraphrase to notice things that normally "slide by" due to familiarity. Read about Ephesians and Ephesus in a Bible dictionary or encyclopaedia. Read it again noting key thoughts and words. Try to grasp the flow of Paul's thought--how does his argument move, change, and return to the topic?

What can you discover about Paul's addressees from Ephesians? What can you learn about Paul? Using a concordance, look up all the references to Ephesus in the New Testament. What further light do these shed on Ephesians? Paul lists many commands in 4:1-6:20. What are they? Why does he write these particular commands? How would obedience to them change the church?

Read Colossians several times, alternating your normal version with another for fresh insight. Read about Colossians and Colossae in a Bible dictionary or encyclopaedia. List all the verses that apply to Paul's main theme; state that theme in your own words. Compare Colossians to Ephesians. What are their differences, their similarities? What do you think their relation is? Why? How does Paul's exposition of Christ's preeminence relate to his several commands? How do they work together to show Christ as Lord in all of life?

Further Study:

GOD'S NEW SOCIETY by John R.W. Stott is part of the excellent series The Bible Speaks Today. This is the best work on Ephesians. EPHESIANS by Francis Foulkes is a helpful commentary in the Tyndale series. FULLNESS AND FREEDOM by R.C. Lucas is another good volume in The Bible Speaks Today. It covers both Colossians and Philemon. COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON by Herbert M. Carson is helpful on both of these books. There are plenty of commentaries, devotional studies, and insight books on the christological epistles in general