



## Introduction

Within the last decade or so, “Gospel-centered” has become quite the buzzword within the Christian church. You can read books on “Gospel-centered” discipleship, take classes for “Gospel-centered” parenting, and learn how to use your finances in a “Gospel-centered” way. Yet often these practices and principles are nothing more than what came before just rebranded with the title “Gospel-centered”. This week, it is our desire to dig in, study, and learn what it truly means for our lives to be Gospel-centered, Christocentric, and cross-driven.

*“The only people who get better are people who know that, if they never get better, God will love them anyway.” –Steve Brown, A Scandalous Freedom*

*“The gospel-centered life is a life where a Christian experiences a growing personal reliance on the gospel that protects him from depending on his own religious performance and being seduced and overwhelmed by idols.” –Joe Thorn*

## Dig In: Colossians 1:9-23

We pick up in the middle of Paul’s prayer on behalf of the Colossians. The first part of his prayer (verses 3-8) is one of thanksgiving, but in the next section (verses 9-14), Paul begins to intercede on their behalf—that is, asking God to do something on their behalf. After his prayer, Paul moves into one of the most memorable passages in all of the New Testament. Church history tells us that many in the early church sang verses 15-20 as an early hymn due to its elevated prose and structure.

### Verses 9-14

**Q.** What are the three or four action verbs found in verses 12-13? What picture does this paint when it comes to salvation?

**Follow Up:** In what way were we “qualified”? In what way were we “delivered”?

**Q.** Of all the things Paul prays for the Colossians church, which one do you think we need the most? Why?

### Verses 15-19

**Q.** How does Paul describe Jesus’ authority in verse 16?

**Q.** What specific things does Jesus have authority over in your life?

**Follow Up:** What do you think it looks like to live in such a way that reflects Jesus’ authority over all things?

### Verses 20-23

**Q.** What does “reconcile” mean?

**Follow Up:** How does Paul describe who the Colossians were before they were reconciled?

**Q.** In what ways are you tempted to “move from the hope held out in the gospel” (verse 23)? What do we find hardest about the “gospel that you [have] heard” (verse 23)?

## Conversation Starters

**Q.** The argument could be made that Gospel-centered living requires one to have a life that is captivated by Christ. In your own words, what exactly does that mean?

**Follow Up:** What are things that quickly vie for our attention and affections that distract us from Christ?

## Connect the Dots

**Q.** Consider all that this week’s verses (inset) teach us about who Jesus is, what He’s done, and Paul’s prayers for the Colossians. What does this have to do with informing our ability to live a Gospel-Centered Life?

## Closing

To best summarize our study, let us borrow the words of Alex Kocman:

*“Gospel-centrality, rightly understood, emphasizes that **the whole of the believer’s life is lived under the shadow of the cross and in the warm glow of the empty grave.** Nevertheless, the risk remains that we become shallow in our own articulation of the gospel, emphasizing Christ’s initial works in regeneration and justification while speaking less and less about sanctification and glorification.”*

In your own estimation, looking at how you’ve approached your spiritual life and growth, what have you paid most attention to? Your **justification** (being made right with God) or **sanctification** (becoming more like Christ)? What would it look like to have a healthy balance of both?