



# THE SCROLLS

Helping one another mature so we can impact our world for Christ

**This week's belief: Single-mindedness**

For the week of August 22nd, 2005

## Beliefs

T rinity  
S alvation by  
G race  
A uthority of Bible  
P ersonal God  
I dentity in Christ  
C hurch  
H umanity  
C ompassion  
E ternity  
S tewardship

## Practices

W orship  
P rayer  
B ible S tudy  
S ingle-mindedness  
B iblical Community  
S piritual Gifts  
G iving My T ime  
G iving My Money  
G iving My Faith  
G iving My Life

## Virtues

L ove  
J oy  
P eace  
P atience  
K indness/Goodness  
F aithfulness  
G entleness  
S elf-Control  
H ope  
H umility  
F orgiveness

## Spilling Secrets

*"The man stared at him, perfectly immobile except for the glint in his ghostly eyes. 'You and your brethren possess something that is not yours.' The curator, the sole guardian of one of the most powerful secrets ever kept, felt a surge of adrenaline. How could he possibly know this?"*

You may recognize this passage from *The Da Vinci Code*, Dan Brown's popular mystery novel. This fictional story concerns secrets, secrets that have supposedly been hidden for centuries.

We all like to be in on the secret. C.S. Lewis calls it the desire to be part of the inner circle. The churches in Colossae and Laodicea had been visited by those who claimed to have such secrets, special knowledge about God that the apostles were not sharing. These false teachers offered a path to God's inner circle. Paul wrote, in part, to assure believers that knowing Christ is all that is required to know God, to be in His inner circle, and to receive everything God has to offer.

## se-cret – Something known or shared only by the initiated

### Monday – Paul's Purpose

Please read Colossians 2:1-5 and pay special attention to verse 1 and the beginning of verse 2.

1. Paul describes his goals in verses 2 and 5. This goal, though, will be the fruit of his struggle (or "agony" as the New Living Translation puts it) described in verse one. How do you think the churches responded to learning that Paul felt so strongly?
2. Later in the letter, 4:12-13, Paul reveals that a friend has also been lifting up these churches in prayer. How do you feel when you find out people have been praying for you? Do you ever pray for people you may not know that well?
3. Paul made sure the church in Colossae knew it was not alone in its problems. Does your misery love company, or would you rather suffer alone? What does your answer say about your view of being a member of the Body of Christ, the Church?

### Tuesday – Hidden Treasure

Please read Colossians 2:2-4 and 1 John 2:24-27.

1. Notice Paul's use of words like understanding, mystery, hidden, knowledge, and arguments. Why might he use such powerful language?

**Text Insight** – Gnosticism (from the Greek word for knowledge) became prominent in the second century of the church, but both Paul and John addressed its early version. The Gnostics taught that there was some secret knowledge about God that only they could pass on, and it went beyond the apostles' teaching.

2. Have you ever run into a modern version of Gnosticism? What was it?
3. What does Paul say to reassure his readers? How are John's words comforting to his audience?
4. Paul writes about riches and treasure. John gives those items names. What are they?

### Wednesday– Spirit Led

Please read Colossians 2:3 and Isaiah 11:1-5

1. What does Paul say Jesus possesses? What does Isaiah say the Messiah (or Christ) would possess?
2. Is Isaiah describing the same riches that Paul writes about? Some? None?
3. Yesterday's passage from 1 John showed that believers can rely on the Holy Spirit to guide them in the truth. What does Isaiah say about the Holy Spirit?

**Going Deeper:** Isaiah talks about the role of the Messiah (Christ) as judge. If we are to be like Christ, how will you rely on the Holy Spirit (use the riches of Christ) to fulfill Isaiah's concept of justice?

### Thursday– The Truth, The Whole Truth, and Nothing But The Truth

Please read John 16:7, 16:12-14

1. What does Jesus promise his disciples? What do you think they could not bear to know while Jesus was with them? Why?

**Text Insight** – Before Jesus' time, the Holy Spirit did not dwell permanently in those who belonged to God. In fact, in John 16:7, Jesus tells us he had to leave before the Holy Spirit could come.

2. What names does Jesus give for the Holy Spirit in verses 7 and 13? How does knowing those names help you understand the Spirit's role?
3. In Colossians 2:2, Paul says that believers should be confident that they have full understanding of Christ. How do Jesus' words in John 16 support this?

## Friday – Wisdom and Knowledge

Please read Colossians 2:3

1. What treasure is hidden in Christ? Why would Paul describe it as hidden? Is it possible that Paul was being sarcastic, in response to the supposed superior and secret knowledge of the false teachers he and John wrote about?
2. If you could choose anything as a treasure, something you don't already possess, what would it be? Why?
3. Are wisdom and knowledge worth treasuring? Does your answer differ from society's values? If so, how? If not, why?

## Saturday – Paul's Purpose, Our Response

**Editor's Note:** When I was a kid, my cousin taught me how to tell dead-end jokes. These are jokes that go on at length, but end up going nowhere. No punch line, no point, nothing. They're silly, but not particularly funny. I liked telling them; I'm not sure anyone liked hearing them. Paul, thankfully, had a point to his writing.

Please read Colossians 2:1-5.

1. What was Paul's purpose in writing this passage of his letter to the church?
2. Paul starts off with his personal struggle (or agony) for the churches receiving false teaching. What goal does he say he is trying to reach? (See verses 2 and 4.)

**Text Insight** – The cities of Colossae and Laodicea were in a region heavily influenced by Greek culture. That culture put a high value on persuasive speaking and fine oratory. Paul points out the danger of false but persuasive arguments.

3. In verse 5, Paul finishes this passage with encouraging words. Why do you think he did so? How might these particular words be the right ones for these churches in light of what Paul just wrote about?
4. Firm faith and orderliness: Can you have one without the other? How does your life reflect these twin virtues that Paul valued highly enough to point out? Do you think Paul was talking about spiritual discipline (church fellowship, prayer, reading the word, etc.), personal conduct (for example: upright living, a well-ordered family), or something else?



### Small group Discussion

*This section is designed for Home Groups and Small Groups who would like to discuss the Scrolls together. Begin by reading the introduction, "Spilling Secrets" and Col. 2:1-5.*

1. Some people love to be in on secrets. Why do you think this is attractive?
2. What do you spend time pursuing? Is that your treasure? (Look at Jesus' words in Matthew 6:19-21.)
3. If you find your life hard to understand, do you rely on the Spirit to guide you into all truth? (See John 16:12.)
4. Is a firm faith a product of an orderly life, or is orderly living a sign of firm faith? (Col. 2:5.)
5. Have you ever been deceived in spiritual matters by someone (a person, a book, a TV or radio program)? How did it affect your faith?

### Family Time with Kids

*Families can use these kid-friendly questions to help your children learn what you studied this week. Begin by reading Colossians 2:1-5.*

1. Make a list of four things you are struggling with right now. How do you normally deal with these difficult times? Have you ever tried prayer? If not, give it a try now. Even better ask your parents or friends to pray with you. Please read Colossians 2:1 Paul talks about struggling too.
2. Have you ever done something you did not want to do because your friends pressured you? Explain. What did it feel like when you did this? Give an example of a time when a friend, a magazine article or a TV show has negatively affected your faith in Christ. Paul talks about being influenced by the world around us. If you have accepted Christ in your heart do not be deceived by false teachings. The Holy Spirit lives in you and will guide you as you grow up.
3. Unscramble each of the clue words. Copy the letters in the numbered cells to other cells with the same number.

BEBLI RIGNAED    

9	7	6	8	3	15				

RIGNAPY    

13	4	5							

IRCESVE    

1	14	11	16						

HIORWPS    

10	12	2							

						T	U													
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	7	14	15	16	1			

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