Sample pages from engage

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Connecting you with God's Word

Brand new Bible notes to get you plugged into **God's word**

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Time to get engaged!

Welcome to the sample issue of **engage**, the brand new Bible notes that will be bursting into the world every three months, grabbing you by the eyeballs and plunging you straight into God's life-changing word. Each issue will have...

✱ **DAILY READINGS** Each day's page will throw you into God's word, getting you handling, questioning and exploring God's message to you, and encouraging you to act on it and talk to God more in prayer.

✱ **STUFF** — articles on stuff relevant to young Christians: exploring issues like *self-esteem, money, sex, bereavement, looking after the planet, and war.*

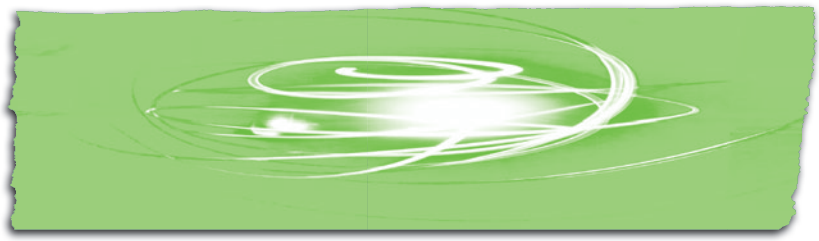
✱ **TRICKY** — tackling some of those mind-bendingly tricky questions that confuse us all. (*Don't all religions lead to God? Has science disproved Christianity? Why does God allow suffering?*)

✱ **ESSENTIAL** — articles on the basics we really need to know about God, the Bible, Christianity. *What's the Trinity all about? What is the gospel? Sin – the facts.*

✱ **REAL LIVES** — amazing true stories, revealing God at work in people's lives.

✱ **TOOLKIT** will give you the tools to help you wrestle with the Bible and understand it for yourself.

All of us who work on **engage** are passionate about God's word, seeing it at work in people's lives. Do you want God's word to impact your life? Then open your Bible, and start on the first **engage** study right now...



Colossians

Life to the max

Colin is a great guitarist. He's been practicing enthusiastically for hours every day for the last four years, and you can tell. But Sian's not so sure. She says to be a proper guitarist you need to have the right look, wear black all the time, know EVERY Jimi Hendrix riff and hang out with the right people. Following these simple rules, he can be a true guitarist. Colin thought he already was one!

The year is 60AD and the church in Colosse (in what is now Turkey) is packed with new Christians. They're full of enthusiasm for the message of Jesus, but people have been telling them that's not enough. *'Follow these rules and have these experiences if you want to be a true Christian'. 'Believing in Jesus is one thing, but to know God deeply and please Him fully you need something more.'*

Heard anyone say stuff like that? The young Christians in Colosse had, and it sounded attractive. In his letter to the Colossian Christians, Paul says 'HOLD ON GUYS! You don't need anything more to be a Christian; Christ is all you need.' A life based on faith in Jesus is the key for a full Christian life. That's the simple message of Colossians.

Paul's letter is a great read if you're a new-ish believer, as it's jammed with the truth of what it really means to be a Christian. And if you've been a believer a bit longer, Colossians is a great refresher course, spurring you on in the Christian life.

1 How to grow a Christian

How would you introduce yourself? How would you describe yourself in an email or letter to someone you've never actually met? Paul introduces himself as an apostle, someone sent by God to tell people about Jesus.

Read Colossians 1 v 1-4

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

How does Paul describe the Christians in Colosse (v2-4)?

They display the characteristics of growing Christians. They are…

- **Holy (v2)** — set apart for God
- **Faithful (v2)** — serving God, letting their faith in Jesus shine through their lives (v4)
- **Loving (v4)** —they showed great love for other believers (if you're a Christian, you're a *saint*!).

Read verses 5-8

Where did their faith and love spring from (v5)?

They trusted God and loved other people because they were sure that their sins were forgiven through Jesus. They had a sure hope that they'd live with God forever. This changed the way they looked at life — no longer grabbing the best for themselves, but living for God now, and serving Him, knowing that heaven was a sure thing.

How should the hope of eternal life affect the way you live?

What does Paul say the gospel is doing around the world (v6)?

The *gospel* is the great news that Jesus died in the place of sinners, so that they could have their sins forgiven. This great news was *'bearing fruit'* all over the world — many people were becoming Christians. The gospel was spreading, just as it had in Colosse since Epaphras first told them about Jesus (v7).

PRAY ABOUT IT

Ask God to help you grow as a Christian and become more holy, faithful and loving. Where do you want to see the gospel spreading and bearing fruit? Talk to God about it.

2 The knowledge

Before an exam, we cram our heads full of knowledge. Why? So we can answer the questions in the exam and pass it. Well, that's the theory anyway.

Read Colossians 1 v 9-11

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- *What has Paul been praying for the Christians in Colosse (v9)?*
- *Why? (v10)*

Paul has been praying that these guys will have knowledge — that they'll know what God wants of them so they can live lives that please Him. What a great thing to pray!

- *So how does God want His people to live (v10-11)?*

God wants us to bear fruit by serving Him in what we do (v10); constantly learning from God (v10); showing endurance and patience when we're given a hard time for living God's way (v11). But it's not down to us — God gives us the strength to do it (v11).

Read verses 12-14

- *What do these verses say God has done for us?*

Christians are God's children. They'll inherit eternal life with God. He's rescued them from sin *(the dominion of darkness)* so that they can live with Him forever, totally forgiven for all their sins. Pretty amazing stuff, eh?

Read v12-14 again, changing *'you'* and *'us'* to *'me'*. If we're Christians, Jesus has qualified us for eternal life and nothing can change that!

PRAY ABOUT IT

Pray v9-11 for your friends. And then for yourself. And thank God for the great inheritance Christians receive — forgiveness and eternal life with Him!

THE BOTTOM LINE

God rescues His children from darkness and helps them to live lives that please Him.

3 Numero uno

Who is the number one footballer in the world? Number one fashion designer? Number one influence in your life? Paul wants to tell us who's really number one…

Read Colossians 1 v 15-17

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- *Paul is talking about Jesus. How does Paul describe Him in v15?*
- *How was Jesus involved in the creation of the world (v16)?*
- *Why was the world created (v16)?*

Jesus is the *'firstborn over all creation'*. In Bible times, the son who was born first got special rights and privileges. He was number one. Jesus is in charge of the whole of creation! He is the creator of all things and everything was created for Him (v16). He's the one who holds the world together (v17)! Jesus is number one.

Read verses 18-20

Jesus is number one in the church — head of all God's people, Christians (v18). Jesus became human but He was fully God (v19).

- *Despite being God, what was Jesus prepared to do (v20)?*

Jesus lived as a human so that He could die on the cross in our place and be raised back to life (v18). It was the only way to make it possible for us to be at peace with God. People were telling the Colossian Christians they needed to do more than just believe in Jesus and be forgiven by Him. That's just not true! Jesus is enough, because He is Lord of everything. If you have Jesus, you've already got everything!

PRAY ABOUT IT

Read through the verses again, remembering who Jesus really is, thanking Him for all He's done.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Jesus is number one. Jesus makes it possible to be at peace with God.

4 Before and after

Seen those before and after ads? BEFORE: someone chubby photographed in terrible light, from a bad angle, looking miserable. AFTER: they look half the weight (and just happen to be in great light, in great clothes and smiling!).

Yesterday, Paul told us that Jesus is number one. He is all we need to make peace with God. Now Paul shows us the Christian's BEFORE and AFTER pictures.

Read Colossians 1 v 21-23

ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN

- *Before people become Christians, what's their relationship with God like (v21)?*
- *After having their lives turned around by Jesus, how does God now see them (v22)?*

Before someone becomes a Christian, they're an enemy of God. This is obvious from the way they disobey Him in their thoughts and actions (v21). But Jesus gave His body in death on the cross to take the punishment we deserve. If we trust in His death to put us right with God, then God sees us as holy and without guilt. Squeaky clean!

- *So what should Christians do in response to what Jesus has done for them (v23)?*

We're urged to continue in the faith, growing as Christians, not being tempted away from Jesus.

GET ON WITH IT

- *What specific things in your life do you need to change in response to what Jesus has done for you?*
- *How can you make it more obvious that you are an AFTER, not a BEFORE...?*

THE BOTTOM LINE

Fill it in yourself today. In less than 10 words, summarise what God has taught you today. Then pray about it.

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Don't stop now...

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