

4. How might things look different if we acknowledged Christ's supremacy in our lives?
5. Take a moment to thank God that Christ "holds all things together" and is "reconciling all things" to God." Ask him to lead you into the peace and stability that comes from resting in his supremacy.



Any serious backpacker learns to travel light.

The last trip I was on, one of the guys, who could not have weighed more than 160 pounds showed up with a bulky pack that easily tipped the scale at ninety pounds. He must have borrowed the pack from a friend that was just shy of seven feet tall and who threw small cars around for exercise.

My friend looked like he was carrying a Hobbit House on his back. Among other things, he had four hardcover seminary text books, each of which was at least 400 pages long and enough trail mix to sustain the Prussian army for the entire "Thirty Year War".

Traveling light means you learn how to distinguish the essentials from the non-essentials. There are some things you cannot live without and some things that only weigh you down.

The same is true in life. There is a lot of noise out there that can occupy our head space and clutter our calendar, but very few things that deserve the time and attention we afford them.

Paul tells us that while there are a few essentials, there is only one absolute essential—Christ. In him we have more than we will ever know and all that we will ever need.

Colossians 1:15-20 is the "Hymn to the Supremacy of Christ." Like most songs it is easier to sing if we learn the rhythm. This particular song consists of an opening stanza, a bridge, and a closing stanza.

## STANZA I: CHRIST'S SUPREMACY IN CREATION

READ VERSES 15-16: One of the terms that might be slightly confusing in this hymn is the word "firstborn." Christ is "the firstborn over creation (v. 15)" and "the firstborn from among the dead (v. 18)." The phrase should not be taken to imply that there was ever a time that Christ did not exist. He was not born into the world, he is co-eternal with the Father. The "firstborn" in both Greek and Hebrew culture was the one who received all the wealth and honor due the Father. Paul's point is that Christ is first in rank and priority over everything in heaven and on earth.

1. What do you think Paul means when he says, "The Son is the image of the invisible God"?
2. How does Paul describe Christ's role in creation?
3. What do you think Paul means when he says, "all things have been created...for him"?
4. In what ways were you "created... for him"?
5. How should the fact that you were "created... for him" impact the way you live?

## BRIDGE: CHRIST'S SUPREMACY IN THE CHURCH

READ VERSES 17-18a: While verses 15-16 speak to the past (Christ's role in creation) and verses 18b-20 speak to the future (Christ's role in reconciling all things to himself), verses 17 and 18a speak to the present (Christ's continuing role in creation and the church).

1. What are the implications of the fact that Christ "holds all things together"?
2. If we can trust him to hold the universe together, what does that say about his ability to lead and direct our lives?
3. How might our lives be different if we more fully entrusted the details of our lives to him rather than trying to hold them together ourselves?

4. When Paul speaks of Christ as "the head of the body," he is highlighting Christ's role as the one who gives direction and life to the church.
  - a. What does it look like when we fail to acknowledge Christ as true head of the body?
  - b. How might things look different if we more fully acknowledged Christ's supremacy in the church?

## STANZA II: CHRIST'S SUPREMACY IN NEW CREATION

READ VERSE 18b-20. These verses affirm that God is doing something new through the death and resurrection of Christ. Everything is being brought to its fitting conclusion in him.

1. Verses 15 and 17 seem to indicate that Christ already reigns supreme in creation, how does his death and resurrection demonstrate his supremacy above and beyond the fact that "all things have been created through him and for him... and in him all things hold together?"
2. What does the fact that "all things will be reconciled to" God "through him" tell us about the current relationship between Christ and the world he created?
3. How will all things ultimately be reconciled to God?
4. As those who have already been reconciled (and will one day be fully reconciled), how can we more fully experience the peace he purchased for us on the cross?

## MAKING IT PERSONAL

1. What aspect of Christ's supremacy is most meaningful to you?
2. How often do you take the time to acknowledge Christ's supremacy in your life?
3. What is one aspect of your life where you particularly need to acknowledge Christ's supremacy?