

COLOSSIANS 1:1-14

Thanksgiving and Prayer

Memory Verse

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

Colossians 1:13

Real-life Problems

This world is not as it should be!

Just one glance at a current newspaper or newscast reminds us that there are plenty of bad things happening in our world today. Because Jesus has not come back for good to make all things new, there is still pain and sadness in the world (what Paul refers to as the "domain of darkness"). Satan and the powers of evil are still active in the world and, without Christ, we would be left in our sin and brokenness.

The Good News

Just as real as the presence of evil is the news of our rescue! Because of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we have been brought from our previous life of sin and "transferred" into God's kingdom. This means that we have eternal salvation and ultimate protection from Satan and his realm of evil.

I. Introduction

What's going on?

REMIND

Paul wrote to encourage believers to remain faithful to his original teaching about the gospel: Jesus reconciling sinners back to Himself. In this letter, Paul prays that the Colossians would turn from false teaching and that they would be reminded that Jesus is supreme and sovereign over the spiritual and earthly realm. This letter is also meant to show believers what it looks like to grow in maturity in Christ.

TODAY WE'LL LEARN

- 1) Because of Jesus, we have been rescued from our previous lives of sin and darkness and are now given an eternal inheritance and salvation in God's kingdom.
- 2) Part of living in God's kingdom means pursuing His knowledge about how we can walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. This knowledge leads to more lasting fruit than worldly knowledge or wisdom.
- 3) Belonging to God's kingdom also means belonging to a larger community of brothers and sisters in Christ.

Read

Read **Colossians 1:1-14** on your own.

II. Questions

A. WHAT?

1) What does Paul's tone in verses 3-8 seem to suggest about how he feels about the Colossians? Is he addressing them more as strangers or as friends?

2) Why do the Colossians have love and faith according to Paul in verses 4-5?

3) List some of the things Paul is thankful for about the Colossians' spiritual growth:

4) Now list some of the things Paul prays for the Colossians in verses 9-12:

5) What does it mean when someone is given an inheritance? According to Paul in verse 12, what have believers in Christ inherited?

6) How does Paul define "redemption" in verse 14?

B. SO WHAT?

1) Notice how Paul begins this letter by praying for the Colossians' spiritual growth. What does this tell us about how we can be praying for our Christian brothers and sisters?

2) Paul prays for the Colossians to have "spiritual wisdom and understanding." What does Paul seem to think that is?

3) What do you think it means to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord" (v.10)?

4) What is it that has "qualified" us for our inheritance in God's kingdom (v.12)?

5) Note the verb tense Paul uses in verse 13. What is significant about this?

6) How does "increasing in knowledge of God" lead to bearing fruit in every good work (v.10)?

C. NOW WHAT?

1) How do you think the "hope laid up for you in Heaven" affects your life here on earth?

2) What are some other kinds of "wisdom" we see in the world? How does our culture typically define "wisdom"? How is this different from spiritual wisdom?

3) How could you incorporate increasing in knowledge of God into your daily schedule? What would that look like for you?

III. Closing

Supporting Resources

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) Do you have areas of your life where you feel like you are living more in the "domain of darkness" rather than in God's kingdom? How might you allow God to transfer those areas of darkness to areas of light?

- 2) We've seen how Paul reminds us how important it is to pray for spiritual strength and growth for our brothers and sisters. Is there someone you know who needs prayers for encouragement right now? Take some time to write out a short prayer for them now.

- 3) What is an area of your life where you find it hard to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord"? Where do you feel that God wants to grow your knowledge of Him?

QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT WITH YOUR PARENTS

- 1) Show or describe to your child something you have inherited from a relative. What do you think I had to do to inherit this? How do you think it made me feel to be given something that I did nothing to earn?
- 2) Is there someone we can pray for together who needs prayers for spiritual strength? Why do you think Paul prayed for his brothers and sisters this way?
- 3) What is your favorite subject in school? How does it make you feel to know more about that subject? Are there ways you want to grow in spiritual knowledge? How might that be different than seeking knowledge in (x) class?

COLOSSIANS 1:15-29

Who is Jesus? What Has He Done?

Memory Verse

"For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."

Colossians 1:19-20

Real-life Problems

Separated from God

Have you ever felt left out by a friend group? Paul tells us that we were once "alienated" from the very God for whom we were made (v. 21). Our sin meant that we were separated from God, without hope of a relationship with Him. Our alienation was so severe that only Jesus could reconcile us back to God through His death on the cross.

The Good News

Because Jesus—God made flesh—took our sin on Himself on the cross, we can now be reconciled to a holy God. We have been transferred back to our rightful owner! This means even though we are sinners, we can experience the joy, peace, and hope of an abiding relationship with our perfect heavenly Father.

I. Introduction

What's going on?

REMINDE

Because Jesus has transferred us from the domain of darkness and given us an eternal inheritance in God's kingdom, we are freed to pursue a life of walking in a manner pleasing to the Lord, including continual growth in knowledge of God and His will alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ.

TODAY WE'LL LEARN

- 1) Jesus is God Himself in a human body. He not only made everything, but everything was created for His glory.
- 2) Because of our sin, we were, at one time, not able to be close to God, but because of Jesus' death on the cross on our behalf, we are able to be reconciled—or made up with—a perfectly holy God.
- 3) Now that we have been reconciled to God, we are invited to be united—made one—with Him for eternity—a relationship built on Christ living in us, just as we live in Him.

Read

Read **Colossians 1:15-29** on your own.

II. Questions

A. WHAT?

1) List specific things Paul tells us about Jesus in verses 15-19:

2) What words does Paul use in verse 21 to describe what we were like before Jesus?

3) According to verse 22, what is our status before God now that we have been reconciled?

4) What is the "mystery" Paul refers to in verse 27?

5) What does it mean to be a "firstborn"? How does Paul describe Jesus as a "firstborn" in verse 15?

6) What does the word "preeminent" mean?

7) What does it mean that the "fullness" of God dwelled in Jesus?

B. SO WHAT?

1) What does it mean that Jesus is the "image of the invisible God"?

2) What does it mean in verse 16 that "all things were created through [Jesus] and for [Jesus]"? Why might this have been especially helpful for the Church at Colossae to remember?

3) Why do you think it was important that Jesus had to die in his "body of flesh" in order to present us as "holy and blameless" (v.22)?

4) What does it mean in verse 27 that Christ in us is the "hope of glory"? How can Christ both dwell in heaven with God and in our hearts?

5) What does it mean to be "holy"? Would you consider yourself a "holy" person?

C. NOW WHAT?

1) Where are areas of your life that feel out of control right now? Are there rulers or authorities that seem to be out of Jesus' reach? How might Jesus' preeminence comfort you in those areas?

2) How might our union with Christ change the way we think about Him? How might it change how we think about ourselves?

3) This passage tells us important things about our identity in Christ. While we were once "alienated and hostile," Jesus' work of reconciliation allows us to stand before God as "holy and blameless." This seems almost too good to be true! How then can we be assured of our true identity in Christ? What are ways we can be reminded of our true identity?

III. Closing

Supporting Resources

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) Do you ever still feel like you are separated or distant from God? Is there a past sin that makes you feel like you could never reach true peace with God? How might seeing Jesus as the great reconciler assure you of your true standing before God?
- 2) Think about the original question of your closest human relationship and what makes that relationship special. How might God be calling you into a deeper relationship with Him? What are some things you can do to live into the reality of your oneness with Jesus?
- 3) After Paul reminds the Colossians that Jesus' work on the cross has now made them "holy and blameless" before God, He encourages them to remain "stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel" (v. 23). What are ways you might be "shifting" in your faith right now? Are there things in your life that you feel pull you away from the truth of Jesus? Take time to write about those things and ask Jesus to remind you of His truth. Ask that He would use your union with Him to keep you stable and steadfast.

QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT WITH YOUR PARENTS

- 1) Where are areas of your life that feel out of control right now? Are there "rulers or authorities" that seem to be out of Jesus' reach? What have we just learned about Jesus' authority over those areas?
- 2) Have you ever had a fight with a best friend? Did you make up? If so, how? What does this passage tell us about what Jesus has done to "make up" with us?
- 3) Think about the original question of your closest human relationship and what makes that special. How might you incorporate some of those things in your relationship with Jesus?

COLOSSIANS 2:1-15

Alive in Christ

Memory Verse

"And you who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of the flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands."

Colossians 2:13-14

Real-life Problems

False Teaching

While Paul is addressing the specific false teaching that was happening in Colossae, we are just as prone to being held captive by things that are not true. Paul calls this "philosophy and empty deceit" (v.8). Just as the Colossians did, so we too need reminding of the truth held out for us in Jesus.

The Good News

While it can be hard to quiet the lies that come from the world about what is true, Paul reminds us here that Jesus is the source of all the "treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (v.3). Because we have been filled with the Spirit of Jesus who is the "head of all rule and authority," (v.10) we are freed from the lies and false teaching that can sometimes hold us "captive" (v.8). We are now empowered by His Spirit within us to cling to what is true.

I. Introduction

What's going on?

REMINDE

Jesus, as God in human form, is ruling over everything; not one part of His creation is outside His control. Through His death on the cross, we have been brought back to Him so that we could live in united to Him for all eternity.

TODAY WE'LL LEARN

- 1) False teaching that can hold us captive does indeed exist in the world today, and often times it doesn't even appear false!
- 2) Yet, because we have been filled with the same spirit that raised Jesus from the dead, we have everything we need to combat philosophy and empty deceit.
- 3) Because we have been made alive with Christ, we get to experience the joy of daily walking with Him in our new way of life.

Read

Read **Colossians 2:1-15** on your own.

6) How does Paul describe our standing before the word "God" in verse 13? What about after?

7) What did Christ "set aside and nail to the cross" in verse 14?

B. SO WHAT?

1) Why do you think Paul cares so much about a group of people he has never even met in person?

2) Where does Paul say true wisdom and knowledge come from? Why might this be helpful for the Colossians to remember at this time?

3) What do the metaphors used in verse 6 suggest about how we should grow in our relationship with Christ?

4) Think about the circumcision/baptism illustration Paul uses in verses 11-13. What do both of these religious practices have in common in terms of spiritual "death" and "rebirth"?

5) If believers have been "filled in Christ" (v. 12), in whom "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (v. 3), what does that mean they too have been filled with?

6) How can we know what is really true when we are presented with teaching that "is not according to Christ" (v. 8)?

7) What does it mean that our "record of debt" has been canceled and "nailed to the cross" (v.14)?

C. NOW WHAT?

1) Can you identify with the Colossians who had fallen prey to false teaching that contradicted the gospel? What are some false teachings/plausible arguments that seem to hold you captive?

2) Think of a time when you faced a decision between doing what was right and what was popular. Describe what that was like. How might knowing that you have been made alive together with Christ and are filled "in him who is the head of all rule and authority" (v.10) helped in that circumstance? What are some ways you can remain rooted in Christ the next time you are faced with a hard decision?

3) What are some old ways of life God might be calling you to put off? How might you still be living as someone who is still dead in their sin?

III. Closing

Supporting Resources

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) Do you ever feel like God might still be holding a debt against you for a past sin you've committed? Ask God to remind you that all your debt has been nailed to the cross once and for all. Take some time now to write down some of those things you've done that you still feel hanging over your head and picture them being physically nailed to the cross once and for all.
- 2) Whose word do you tend to believe more than the Word of God? Your friends'? Your teachers'? Your parents'? The words given to you on social media? How is it sometimes easier to believe these "empty deceits" of the world rather than the truth of God's Word?
- 3) Does your relationship with Jesus feel rooted in Him right now? Do you feel the reality of being made "alive with Christ?" Or maybe there's a way you can daily practice "walking with Him" through reading His Word and prayer. Ask God how He might be calling you into deeper relationship with Himself.

QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT WITH YOUR PARENTS

- 1) Have you ever owed someone something, or been in debt to them? How did that make you feel? What did that do to your relationship with the person? What does this passage remind us about our debt to Jesus?
- 2) Can you identify with the Colossians who had fallen prey to false teaching that contradicted the gospel? What are some false teachings/plausible arguments that seem to hold you captive?
- 3) What are some old ways of life God might be calling you to put off? How might you still be living as someone who is dead in their sin?

COLOSSIANS 2:16-3:11

Let No One Disqualify You; Put on the New Self

Memory Verse

"For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you will also appear with Him in glory"

Colossians 3:4

Real-life Problems

Veering from the Truth

In this passage, we see Paul encourage believers in Colossae to stand firm against false teaching in their community. Just as false teachers were trying to distract with elemental teaching that did not point back to Christ, so we too battle self-made religion today. Like the Colossians, we run the risk of believing the lies that prioritizing religious rules can be a substitute for seeking to grow in relationship with Christ and His Word.

The Good News

Our new identity as people who have been raised with Christ means that we can know God and His truth intimately, allowing us to stand firm in the face of false teaching. We are hidden in Him, secure for all eternity. When we are tempted to believe false teaching, we can remember how we have been called to live as people who have been given a new self.

I. Introduction

What's going on?

REMINDE

It can be hard to distinguish false teaching from God's truth sometimes. The good news is that, as believers, we have been filled with God's spirit, the source of all true wisdom. Everything we could need to tackle false teaching lives within us! Even better, being filled in Christ means we get to experience the joy of daily walking with Him in our new life of being made alive in Christ.

TODAY WE'LL LEARN

- 1) Because we belong to Christ, the one who has triumphed over all rulers and authorities, we are freed from having to perfectly obey human-made rules rather than Christ.
- 2) Empty spiritual practices that are not rooted in God's truth cannot raise us to new life and give us a new identity like Christ can.
- 3) Because we have been raised with Christ and have been given a new self, we are called to daily seek the things that are above and turn our gaze from earthly things and focus on Christ.
- 4) One way we can do this is by seeking to continually grow in knowledge of Christ and His Word, the source of all truth and knowledge.

Read

Read **Colossians 2:16-3:11** on your own.

II. Questions

A. WHAT?

1) Paul begins this passage with the word "therefore" (v.2:16). What does this refer to?

2) According to Paul, what are some of the things the false teachers in Colossae were "passing judgement" about (2:16-18)?

3) What is the metaphor Paul uses in verse 19 to describe Christ and the church?

4) What value does Paul say the "regulations" made by the false teaching in Colossae do in stopping the "indulgence of the flesh" (v. 2:23)?

5) What does Paul encourage the Colossians to seek and set their mind on now that they have been raised with Christ (3:1-2)?

6) Paul talks about "putting off" and "putting on" in this passage. What are some of the things we are to put off? What about put on?

B. SO WHAT?

1) What does all of the false teaching Paul mentions seem to have in common? Is there a common emphasis? How is this different from what the Colossians had originally been taught about Christianity?

2) What are the two contrasting images we see in 2:17? What does this suggest about how Jesus is superior to the false teaching?

3) What do you think Paul means when he says that the false teaching has an "appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion [...] but was of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh" (v.23)?

4) Where does Paul tell us Christ is in 3:1? What does that imply about Christ's control of the universe?

5) What is the function of a head in a human body? What does it mean that Christ is the "head" (2:19)? How are we connected to the head as believers?

6) Why is it actually good news to know that "you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (v.3:3)?

7) What do you think it means that we are being "renewed into the image of our creator" (v3:10)? How does Paul say that renewal comes?

C. NOW WHAT?

1) What are some examples of empty human precepts and teaching you see in the world today? When are you most tempted to believe them? How have you seen that they really are of no value?

2) Pick one of the false teachings you just mentioned. What does it tell us to root our identity in? Do they encourages us live more into our old or our new selves?

3) What are some ways you can seek the things that are above in your daily life? What are some practices God might be calling you to put off as you grow in your relationship with Him?

4) What are some ways you can be renewed in knowledge into Jesus' image? How can you seek to know Jesus more in your daily life?

III. Closing

Supporting Resources

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) Where are you finding it the hardest to hold fast to Christ right now? What is a half-truth you are struggling to let go of? How does the truth of God's Word speak against that lie? Take some time to repent of the lies you are believing and ask Him to reveal His truth to you in a specific way.

- 2) What earthly practice do you find it hardest to put off? How do you feel that affects your relationship with Jesus? Again, write a prayer of confession to God and reflect on what God's truth says about your new identity in Christ.

- 3) Do you have a friend or relative who seems to live under certain false teaching about themselves? How can you encourage them with the truth of the gospel? How can you walk with him/her as members of the same body? What specific truth from The Bible might they need to hear today?

QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT WITH YOUR PARENTS

- 1) Where are you finding it the hardest to hold fast to Christ right now? What is a half-truth you are struggling to let go of? How does the truth of God's Word speak against that lie? Let's take some time to repent of the lies you are believing and ask Him to reveal His truth to you in a specific way.
- 2) What earthly practice do you find it hardest to put off? How do you feel that affects your relationship with Jesus? Can you ask Him for help in putting off and putting on?
- 3) Do you have a friend or relative who seems to live under certain false teaching about themselves? How can you encourage them with the truth of the gospel? How can you walk with him/her as members of the same body? Share a time someone supported you as fellow members of the Body of Christ.

COLOSSIANS 3:12-17

Put on the New Self

Memory Verse

"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him"

Colossians 3:17

Real-life Problems

Broken Relationships

Paul's words to the Colossians remind us that even though we are being more and more renewed in Christ's image, in our sin we still fail to always live into the identity of our new selves. We don't always love our brothers and sisters in Christ with spirits of kindness, humility, meekness, and patience (3:12). And we certainly don't always forgive as Christ has forgiven us! Without Jesus' work in us, we would never be able to put on these virtues as Paul encourages us to do here.

The Good News

Jesus gives us a new self! Because Christ has freely given us a new identity, or, a new self, we are enabled to live in a way that reflects His character. He offers us the joy of experiencing a life that is marked by forgiveness, kindness, humility, and dwelling in His Word. This new life is also one of seeing how much we have been forgiven and then showing a similar grace to others.

I. Introduction

What's going on?

REMINDE

Paul showed us more of what it looks like to live into our new identity as people who have been raised with Christ. Paul reminded the Colossians that whereas following a list of moral rules only offers a shadow, Christ is the substance. Now that we have been raised with Christ, we are called to daily seek the things that are above, turn our gaze from earthly things, and focus on Christ. One way Paul teaches us how to do this is by seeking to continually grow in knowledge of Christ and His Word.

TODAY WE'LL LEARN

- 1) Because we have been given a new identity in Christ as holy, beloved, and chosen, we are to live in a way that reflects who Christ has already declared us to be.
- 2) Part of living out our new identity involves a life marked by worship—spending time in God's Word and speaking and singing that truth back to others.
- 3) Believers all called to enjoy the freedom of doing everything in Jesus' name, not their own.

Read

Read **Colossians 3:12-17** on your own.

II. Questions

A. WHAT?

1) What are the words Paul uses to describe "God's chosen ones" in verse 12?

2) What are the things Paul tells us to "put on" in verse 12? What are some other ways of describing these words?

3) What does Paul tell the Colossians to do if someone has a complaint against someone else, according to verse 13?

4) How does Paul describe the peace that is supposed to rule our hearts in verse 15? From where does it come?

5) Where else have we seen Paul talk about "the body" in Colossians? What does he mean when he refers to "the body" in this lesson?

6) In verse 16, Paul describes some of the ways we are called to encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ. What are some of the ways Paul says we can do that?

7) What does it mean to "teach and admonish" (v. 16) one another with the Word of God?

8) What does it mean that we are to do all our deeds "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (v. 17)?

B. SO WHAT?

1) Why do you think Paul reminds the Colossians that they are "God's chosen ones, holy and beloved" (v.12) before he finishes telling them what they are to put on?

2) How does knowing how the Lord has forgiven us enable us to forgive others? From what have we been forgiven?

3) What do you think Paul means when he talks about God's peace ruling in our hearts? What does letting Christ's peace "rule" in our hearts look like?

4) Paul mentions thankfulness three times in verses 15-17. Why might this be important? What is he trying to emphasize here?

C. NOW WHAT?

1) What would it look like in your daily life to put on your new identity in Christ? How can you remind yourself that you are holy, chosen, and beloved as you begin each day?

2) What are some ways you can let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly? How can you incorporate the practice of speaking and singing the Word to yourself and others? What is one thing you could maybe change in your daily routine to make sure you are reading God's Word?

3) Think about the things you do on a daily basis—school, practice, etc. How might it look if you did those things in the "name of the Lord Jesus" rather than for anyone else?

4) Think back to the last time you felt really angry or anxious about something. How did you handle these emotions? Did any negative behavior come out of you feeling this way? How do you think it would have looked to have the peace of Christ rule in this situation?

III. Closing

Supporting Resources

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) Paul talks about the importance of forgiveness in this passage. Is there a relationship in your life right now where you are struggling to forgive someone as the Lord has forgiven you? How might God be seeking to redeem that relationship?
- 2) Similarly, think of a time when you wronged someone and they forgave you. What was that like? How did their forgiveness make you feel?
- 3) Who is someone who you could admonish or encourage with Scripture right now? Take a moment to pray to God about what verses they might need to hear.
- 4) Use this time to write out a prayer of thanksgiving to God. Where has He been gracious to you and blessed you beyond what you deserve?

QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT WITH YOUR PARENTS

- 1) What would it look like in your daily life to put on your new identity in Christ? How can you remind yourself that you are holy, chosen, and beloved as you begin each day? Is there a way we can do this together?
- 2) Who is someone who you could admonish or encourage with Scripture right now? Let's take a moment to pray to God about what verses they might need to hear.
- 3) What are some ways you can let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly? How can you incorporate the practice of speaking and singing the Word to yourself and others?

COLOSSIANS 3:18-4:1

Rules for Christian Households

Memory Verse

"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward."

Colossians 3:23-24

Real-life Problems

Broken Social Structures

This passage reminds us that because of sin, humans have the capacity to use positions of power to marginalize and oppress those beneath them. We need to repent of these tendencies and ask the Lord for His mercy. Paul's main concern here doesn't seem to be overturning the current political and social structure in Colossae; rather, he is seeking to help Christians think about how they can faithfully function even in the midst of broken power dynamics.

The Good News

While recognizing and mourning that passages like this have been used to justify sinful acts of oppression, Paul points us to the only hope we have: our true master in heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. This same Lord is the one who died on the cross for all the many sins we have committed against each other in the name of oppression. Because of Christ, there is redemption and restoration for both the oppressor and the oppressed.

I. Introduction

What's going on?

REMINDE

Because we have been given a new identity in Christ as holy, beloved, and chosen, we are to live in a way that reflects who Christ has already declared us to be. Paul shows us what it looks like to put on the new self we have been given in Christ: to seek to forgive others as He has forgiven us, to let His peace be on the throne of our hearts, and to allow His Word to shape how we talk to ourselves and others.

TODAY WE'LL LEARN

- 1) Paul shows what it looks like to live out of the new self in three specific social structures in Colossae: husband and wife, parent and child, slaves and masters.
- 2) All humans are made in the image of God and have been given equal dignity and value.
- 3) Since Jesus is Lord of heaven and earth, all believers are called to submit to His lordship in all of our relationships.
- 4) Sometimes, the Bible says hard things. We want to not avoid these things, but ask that the Lord would help us understand them with generosity and grace.

Read

Read **Colossians 3:18-4:1** on your own.

II. Questions

A. WHAT?

1) List the six specific groups of people Paul addresses in this passage. What specific rule is given to each one?

2) What phrase is mentioned in every one of these relationships?

3) What does Paul tell the slaves in Colossae they will receive as a reward in verse 24?

4) What do you think the word submit means? How does Paul use that word here?

5) What are Paul's instructions to husbands? Does this seem to contradict his instructions to wives?

6) What is a bondservant? What are the two kinds of masters Paul recognizes here?

B. SO WHAT?

1) Read Genesis 1:27. Now, read Genesis 3:15-16. What do these two passages tell us about God's original intention for creation and what happened after it fell?

2) Does submission mean women are of lesser dignity or value than men? Does the Bible suggest that women have a less important role in a marriage?

3) What about slavery? Why would Paul tell bondservants to obey their "earthly masters" (v.3:22)?

4) Why do you think it is significant that Paul tells bondservants they have an inheritance as a reward?

5) What do you think it means to obey "not by way of eye-service, as people pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord" (v. 22)?

C. NOW WHAT?

1) Paul's ultimate concern in this passage seems to be all Christians submitting to the true Lordship of Christ in all their relationships. How might this transform how we relate to our brothers and sisters in Christ?

2) Where do you see broken power dynamics in our world today? How can we be praying for the Lord to redeem these situations?

3) Why might it be important to not skip over passages in the Bible like this one? Are there any other passages in the Bible that you have trouble understanding?

4) Read Luke 4:18-19. What do these verses tell us about Jesus' heart for the oppressed?

III. Closing

Supporting Resources

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) This passage might bring to mind times you have felt oppressed, marginalized, or taken advantage of. Take some time now to pray that the Lord would heal these parts of you and ask that He would remind you that He is a God of justice, mercy, and love.
- 2) Similarly, this passage offers us an opportunity for us to repent of times we might have oppressed others or failed to speak up against an injustice. Approach the Lord now with a repentant heart and ask that He would show you the forgiveness He offers in Christ.
- 3) Let's turn to the William Webb quote again. He writes, "When reading the slavery texts, the contemporary Christian should awaken to the dimensions of justice left unfulfilled in the past and in our present context. There are still aspects of the biblical scene that require further redemption." Take time now to pray that the Lord would redeem existing social structures that seem broken. Ask Him to show you how He might be trying to use you and your gifts to work towards redemption and justice.
- 4) We saw in Genesis 1 that God created both male and female to reflect His image, granting them equal dignity and worth. Is this how you see yourself? What about how you see others? Take time now to list ways you see the image of God reflected in your gifts and in the gifts of others' in this Bible study.

QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT WITH YOUR PARENTS

- 1) Have you ever felt like you were taken advantage of by someone in authority? Take some time now to pray that the Lord would heal these parts of you and ask that He would remind you that He is a God of justice, mercy, and love.
- 2) Have you ever used a position of authority to mistreat someone? Or didn't speak up when you saw someone being wrongly treated? Let's repent and ask that Jesus would remind you of His grace and forgiveness for these sins.
- 3) Why is it important that we both ultimately serve our master in heaven?

COLOSSIANS 4:2-18

Further Paul's Parting Words

Memory Verse

"Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person."

Colossians 4:6

Real-life Problems

Gospel Isolation

In our sin, we can be prone to think that we can do life in our own strength. We can believe the lie that we are self-sufficient and don't need any help from God or others. But as Paul has been showing us in Colossians, we are dependent on the sufficiency of Christ! Not only that, but we need our brothers and sisters to come alongside us and partner as we seek to spread the gospel to others.

The Good News

In God's grace, we are not left to do life in Christ on our own! Like Paul mentions as he closes his letter, when we become united to Christ, we also become united to the larger fellowship of believers, or fellow servants of the Lord. Walking the Christian life with other believers reminds us that we are dependent on vertical help from God and horizontal help from others.

I. Introduction

What's going on?

REMIND

Paul addressed wives, husbands, children, slaves, and masters with how it looks to put on the new self in each of their relationships. We looked at how each member of a Christian household can best glorify the Lord as they seek to be obedient to the true master, Jesus Christ, the one who made everyone with equal dignity and value.

TODAY WE'LL LEARN

- 1) Being united to Christ means we are united to a larger community of brothers and sisters in Christ.
- 2) Walking with Christ cannot be done alone. We need our brothers and sisters in Christ to support us, encourage us, and pray for us.
- 3) Being in gospel community means praying regularly for our brothers and sisters in Christ, just as we see Paul doing here. This is a huge part of living out of our new selves!

Read

Read **Colossians 4:2-18** on your own.

II. Questions

A. WHAT?

1) In verse 1, what are the the three things Paul says should characterize how we pray?

2) Look back at Colossians 1:3-5. How does Paul demonstrate this type of prayer here?

3) What does Paul ask for prayers for in verses 3-4?

4) What does Paul tell the Colossians about their speech in verse 6? Why does he say to do this?

5) In verses 7-17, Paul lists the names of people he is partners in ministry with. List their names and the roles we know they had in helping Paul's ministry:

B. SO WHAT?

1) Why do you think Paul focuses on the importance of prayer in verse 1?

2) What do you think it means to "walk in wisdom toward outsiders" (v. 5)?

3) What do you think it means for speech to be "seasoned with salt" (v. 6)?

4) What does Paul listing all his ministry partners at the end of this letter tell us about the importance of supporting one another? Why might Paul be ending his letter this way?

C. NOW WHAT?

1) What are some "doors to the Word" you see in your life? Where might God be presenting you with an opportunity to share the gospel? List some potential partners that could help you do this.

2) Who is someone you can think of who seems to be on the outside in your school? How can you initiate conversation with them in a wise and gracious way?

3) How can incorporate a more steadfast time of prayer into your daily routine? Is there a time when you are usually alone that you could dedicate to prayer? Are there people in your life you could partner with in prayer, perhaps spending time praying together for brothers and sisters in Christ who you might not know?

III. Closing

Supporting Resources

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1) Is there a missionary you know or have heard of who, like Paul, is in chains, or suffering because of their faith? Take time now to pray for their protection and strength. Perhaps you can visit Joshuaproject.net and pray for the Unreached People Group of the Day as a small group. Even though we don't know these people, they are our brothers and sisters in Christ!
- 2) Think of the "door to the Word" you thought of earlier. What would it look like to share the gospel in that place? What obstacles do you face? Take some time now to pray to God about how He might be showing you a way through that door.
- 3) When do you find it the hardest to use gracious and seasoned speech? When is it the easiest?
- 4) Who is someone you consider a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord? How has the Lord used them to help you grow in your relationship with Jesus? Consider taking the time to send them an encouraging note or text this week.

QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT WITH YOUR PARENTS

- 1) Is there a missionary you know or have heard of who, like Paul, is in chains, or suffering because of their faith? How can we pray for their protection and strength? Visit joshuaproject.net with your child and pray for the Unreached People Group of the Day.
- 2) What are some "doors to the Word" you see in your life? Where might God be presenting you with an opportunity to share the gospel? List some potential partners that could help you do this.
- 3) Who is someone you can think of who seems to be on the outside in your school? How can you initiate conversation with them in a wise and gracious way?