

Colossians Bible Study

4:2-18

Questions will be posed and space will be allowed for a written response. Make every effort to answer the questions before looking below for the answer. **The answers will be in bold print.**

In verses 2-6 Paul gives the Colossians some instructions on prayer and shares with them some specific prayer requests.

1. In verse 2, Paul tells the Colossians to “devote yourselves to prayer.” As we pray earnestly for many deeds, for what do all Christians need to be “watchful and thankful”?
2. Paul, no doubt, looked forward with hope to the time of his release from prison. Yet Paul does not ask the Colossians to pray for his release or for anything for himself. In verses 3-4, for what specific requests does Paul ask the Colossians to pray?
3. As you ponder Paul’s instructions to the Colossians, what does this tell you concerning your prayer life for those who proclaim the Gospel (i.e., pastors, missionaries, Christian teachers)?
4. Paul concludes his instructions to the Colossians with some directions on how they are to relate to “outsiders” – those who do not believe in Christ (vv. 5-6). In his instructions, Paul says that the way we live and what we say are powerful pictures of Christianity for those who do not know Christ. In verse 6, Paul states that all our conversations should “be always full of grace, seasoned with salt.” In what ways is salt beneficial?
5. Think about your lifestyle and about your daily conversations with others. For what help can you ask God so that Christ can be seen more clearly in your words and actions and so that all with whom you come in contact can see the joy you have as a child of God?
6. Paul ends his letter to the Colossians by introducing them to its messenger, by sending greetings to them from a number of other Christians present with him in Rome, and by relaying several others greetings and instructions. What information does this text give you concerning the following men?
Tychicus (See also Acts 20:4; Ephesians 6:21-22.)

Onesimus (See also Philemon 10-16.)

Aristarchus (See also Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2.)

Mark (See also Acts 15:36-39; 2 Timothy 4:11.)

Jesus Justus

Epaphras (See also Colossians 1:7; Philemon 23.)

Luke (See also Acts 16:10; 28:16.)

Demas (See also 2 Timothy 4:10.)

7. What is striking to you concerning the number of people who sent greetings to the Christians at Colosse?
8. After ascribing to the authenticity of this letter (v. 18), Paul ends with the benediction, "Grace be with you." In light of all Paul wrote to the Colossians in this Epistle and in light of all we face in this world as Christians, what is so wonderful about this blessing?

Paul presents to the Colossians and to us a beautiful explanation of Christ's person and work. We do not need to turn to ourselves, to angels, or to anything else. Jesus is our true God and Savior. This "grocery list" of concluding instructions shows that the Gospel is not an abstract idea. It is the essential truth that transforms individual lives, such as those mentioned here, and continues to transform one person after another. • Dear Father, thank You for the individuals You use to proclaim to me the Gospel of forgiveness in Christ. Continue to use me to bring that saving message to my relatives, friends, and acquaintances. Amen. (TLSB)

Some Answers to the above Questions:

1. All Christians need to be "watchful" (alert) to the needs that God wants us to bring to Him – our own needs and especially the needs of others. We also need to be watchful concerning temptations and dangers that may threaten our faith. God invites us to ask for His help to fight these attacks. Being thankful also involves recognizing the goodness God provides. We are to thank God in our prayers for the many blessings He gives us.

2. Paul asks the Colossians to pray that God would open a door for the Gospel message so that others would know Christ came into the world to save sinners ("the mystery of Christ"). Paul also asks for the Colossians to pray that God would give him the wisdom and words to proclaim the Gospel clearly. In all of Paul's requests, his chief concern is that the Gospel be proclaimed to as many people as possible.

3. Pastors, missionaries, and Christian teachers need our prayers so that they can proclaim the Gospel message clearly and effectively.

4. Salt makes food taste better. When our conversations are "seasoned with salt," they are wholesome and interesting to the hearer.

As salt is used to make food more appealing, these other references would suggest that having one's speech seasoned with salt means having one's speech characterized by those things (such as forthrightness, sincerity, tact, and eloquence) that make one's conversation more readily "palatable" to the hearer. (CC)

5. Answers will vary.

6. Tychicus – the encouraging messenger sent by Paul to deliver this letter to the Colossians and who also delivered Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Tychicus accompanied Paul through Macedonia on their missionary Journey. Paul calls him "a dear brother, faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord" (v. 7).

Onesimus – "our faithful and dear brother" (v. 9). An escaped slave of Philemon who became a Christian, Onesimus was to help Tychicus tell the Colossians about Paul.

Aristarchus – a Macedonian Jew from Thessalonica. He was with Paul at the riot at Ephesus (Acts 19:29) and accompanied Paul to Rome. He is called a "fellow prisoner" by Paul not because he is imprisoned but because he volunteered to be with Paul and assist him during the apostle's imprisonment.

Mark – a cousin of Barnabas who turned back during Paul's first missionary journey. This led to a falling out between Mark and Paul for a time. Paul later praise Mark as being a helper to him (2 Timothy 4:11), thus indicating a reconciliation. He later wrote the Gospel named for him.

Jesus Justis – a Jew who was a comfort to Paul.

Epaphras – pastor of the Colossian congregation, who was greatly concerned about their welfare. He traveled to Rome to share his concerns with Paul. He was another "fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus" (Philemon 23).

Luke – a physician, as well as the author of the Gospel that bears his name and the Book of Acts. Luke accompanied Paul on a number of missionary journeys and was also with Paul in Rome.

Demas – a Christian worker who later deserted Paul.

7. The greeting of these men to the Christians of Colosse indicates the closeness between Christians in individual congregations in the early church. Christians at this time had a loving concern for one another,

despite the fact they had never met. This closeness also gives us an example of the concern we should have for other Christians today.

8. Grace is the undeserved love God gives us Christ Jesus and is the most basic of all Christian blessings. God's grace changes our hearts and gives us new, eternal lives.