Leader's Guide

Session 8: Colossians 4:2–18

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: Those with a complete view of Jesus as their foundation live lives of prayer and faithfulness, which results in holy actions toward both the family of God and unbelievers.

Head Change: To know what it means to be faithful to God in all circumstances and on a daily basis so that we can apply it to our lives today.

Heart Change: To feel devotion to God regardless of external situations.

Life Change: To practice faithfulness through prayer, witness, and practical obedience every day.

OPEN

Describe someone in your life who is faithful—maybe to their work, spouse, or convictions. What do they do that shows they are faithful?

As we close this series, we're going to see some reallife examples of faithfulness to Jesus—our supreme Lord and Savior. All believers are called to daily faithfulness to God and this session will show us what that looks like.

READ

Read Colossians 4:2–18.

WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Louie's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how Louie answers the following questions.

What's unique about Paul's request for prayer?

What can we learn from Tychicus and Mark?

Show Session 8: Colossians4:2–18 (18 minutes)

DISCUSS

As we move into the last chapter of Colossians, it's important to remember the central points of the book. **How would you summarize the book of Colossians and its main points?** (Some main points include: Jesus's supremacy over all things, the truth of the gospel and its importance, putting on the new self in Christ, etc.)

We've discussed the supremacy of Christ throughout this study and how that truth applies to every aspect of our lives. Louie encouraged us to pay attention to how Paul closes his letter because we can see tangible examples of what it looks like to keep Christ supreme in your life.

Read verses 2–6.

What does it mean to be devoted to prayer? Who do you know who practices devotion to prayer?

What does it look like to be both watchful and thankful in prayer? (We should be watchful for God's answers to our prayers and thankful that he both hears and answers our prayers.)

Louie pointed out how Paul doesn't ask for the church to pray for his escape. Instead, he asks for prayer to be a faithful witness of the gospel. Louie also shared Randall's story—he asked for prayer for his doctors, nurses, and family rather than healing. **When you're in a difficult situation, what do you pray for? How do Paul and Randall's perspectives challenge you?**

How would your prayer life change if you focused your prayers on being a faithful witness rather on changing your circumstances? What would be the same?

Paul tells the Colossians to be wise and gracious in interactions with those who aren't believers. He says to make the most of every opportunity. **How would you describe your interactions with nonbelievers generally? What could it look like in your life to make the most of every opportunity you have with nonbelievers?**

Paul gives us a clear picture of what it means to be faithful to God—it involves prayer and witness. **If you consider your walk with Christ, how would you say you're doing**

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in these areas? What might be holding you back from walking in faithfulness?

Paul shifts his letter in verse 7 from practical instruction to greetings. The Colossians would have known these people and their backgrounds—some of them were even from Colossae—but we'll have to do a little digging to find out more about them. What we do know is the people Paul mentions each embody different aspects of faithfulness to Christ.

Read verses 7–9.

Louie talked about Tychicus—how God used his small faithful action of delivering the letter of Colossians for a greater purpose. **What is one modern day example you can think of someone who shows small, daily faithfulness to God?**

Why do you think our culture tends to glorify the "big" actions and belittle—or ignore—the "small"? What does God value? (God values continued faithfulness to Him, no matter what that looks like on a daily basis.)

What could faithfulness look like in your life—in your work, home, school, neighborhood, or church?

Seemingly small acts of faithfulness to God change us and impact the people around us, often in ways we'll never fully see or understand. As those under the supremacy of Jesus, we focus our gaze on our future hope, not on present circumstances.

GO DEEPER

Learn more about Onesimus in the following passage: Phlm. 8–20

According to verse 16, what was Onesimus? (He was Philemon's slave, or bondservant.)

?Looking at verse 15, what did Onesimus do? (He ran away.)

What does Paul tell Philemon to do about Onesimus? (He says to receive him because he is a brother in Christ.)

What do Philemon and Onesimus show us about reconciliation for the people of God?

Onesimus wronged Philemon. But now as a brother in Christ, Paul urges Philemon to receive Onesimus into the community of believers. In Christ, we can seek reconciliation with other Christians. Our love for each other is a witness to the world of the One who loves us.

Verse 9 mentions Onesimus. We learn in Philemon that Onesimus was a slave who ran away from his master, Philemon. Now a believer, Paul urges the Colossians to welcome him into the church. This theme of reconciliation continues in the next few verses.

Read verses 10–11.

Louie gave some background on Mark. Mark abandoned Paul and Barnabas on a missionary journey. Barnabas decided to Mark a second chance, but Paul went his own way without them. You can read the full story in Acts 15:36–41. In this passage in Colossians, Paul tells the Colossians to welcome Mark, showing there's been a change in both Mark and in Paul. Louie pointed out how God redeemed and used Mark regardless of his past.

What sorts of things can keep us from welcoming people into the church?

How does the supremacy of Christ relate to this idea of reconciliation?

Jesus has reconciled us to the Father through His death and resurrection. He now reigns supreme over all and empowers us by the Spirit to be unified as the body of Christ. We saw this theme in chapter three— we put on the new self not just for our own sake, but also for the sake of the Church, out of love and reverence for Christ.

What does it look like to be welcoming to other believers? When has someone welcomed you? How did it make you feel?

In addition to prayer and witness, faithfulness to God also plays out in how we treat each other. We can seek reconciliation and welcome brothers and sisters into our lives. Verse 11 talks about the Jewish Christians in general and the way they comforted Paul in prison. **When has another Christian comforted you? How can you be a source of comfort to other Christians?**

The way we treat each other matters. Our actions not only communicate God's love for each other, but also for those who don't yet know Him.

Read verses 12–18.

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We learned back in Colossians 1:7–8 that Epaphras was the one who told the Colossians about Jesus. He continues to pray for them—for their endurance and maturity. **If you've led someone to Christ, what kinds of things do you pray for them now? What do you pray for other believers, in general?** It's clear that we should pray for each other—for our faith, endurance, and maturity. **What's one thing you'd like prayer for?**

Leader: *Consider pausing here and taking a few minutes to pray for the requests brought up by your group.*

The closing of Colossians reminds us that this letter was written not just for the church in Colossae, but also for other churches in the surrounding areas. Paul concludes by reminding the Colossians of his situation in prison.

Looking back on the book of Colossians, what's one thing you want to remember from this study? How could you apply it to your life this week?

LAST WORD

The question we walk away from Colossians asking is: How will we respond to the supremacy of Jesus Christ? His supremacy and sufficiency demands a response. We must allow Him to reign over all areas of our lives—from our work, to our family, to our friendships.

We begin by reminding ourselves of the full gospel. Jesus has conquered sin and death, set us free, and rules over all things. By faith in Him and in the power of the Spirit, we put on the new self, unify with other Christians, and love each other. It all boils down to the word we discussed in this session: faithfulness. We can pursue faithfulness every day, in both the small things and in the big.

As we close this series, ask yourself how you will respond to Jesus's supremacy. Will you give Him authority over all things in your life? Will you faithfully follow Him wherever He leads? Let's close by praying God would empower us by His Spirit to live as faithful witnesses to Him.

LIVE IT OUT

Pray: Pray that God would build you up in faithfulness this week. Ask Him for opportunities to obey Him by praying for other Christians, being a witness to nonbelievers, and comforting others.

Read: We see in Colossians 4:16 that this letter was read aloud to the believers in Colossae. Carve out time to read the entire book of Colossians out loud to yourself or listen to the audio version. Write down what you learn through that process.

Welcome: Welcome another Christian into your home this week. Consider how you could use the time you spend together to serve them.

Witness: Tell someone about what you learned in this study of Colossians. Encourage another believers in the truths from this book or tell a nonbeliever about Jesus.

Thank: Thank a Christian who has been influential in your walk with Jesus this week. Ask how you can be praying for them and take a moment to pray for them.