

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide
A Few Good Friends – Colossians 4:7-18 (SB 03.20.2022)

COLOSSIANS

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

Look at any great man or woman and you'll find a team of people standing behind them holding them up and allowing them to do what they do. You've heard the saying, 'It takes teamwork to make the dream-work.' Well, it's true. As good as he was, even Michael Jordan couldn't have won all those championships without Scottie Pippen. Ministry isn't a solo sport either. It's a team effort. Paul may have been the front man, but his ability to do what he did was made possible by the many people who supported him. He understood that. It's why he closed most of his letters with personal greetings and exhortations. All told, in his letters he mentions over 100 different people who helped him in various ways throughout the course of his ministry. He mentions 16 people by name in Romans 16 and another 10 in this chapter. These individuals are the unsung heroes of the New Testament. They may not be household names to you or me or have books of the Bible named after them, but they are famous in heaven and each one of them played a vital role in helping Paul fulfil his ministry. Today, as we consider this snapshot of Paul's friends, we'll get a sense of the kinds of friends we ought to be looking to surround ourselves with as well. Let's get into our study...

1. What spoke to you from Pastor Daniel's sermon this week?
2. Name someone God put in your life at a certain time for good reason. Explain.
3. Respond to the following statement: The Christian life is not meant to be lived alone.

Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ COLOSSIANS 4:7-9

Throughout our lives, God gives us people who minister to us by leading us to faith or helping us walk in faith. Sometimes we don't recognize the value of those relationships immediately, but we can all look back and recognize the importance of working together for the sake of the gospel. Paul was perhaps the greatest evangelist who ever lived, and he still needed the comfort, help, and community of other believers. He wanted all believers to know that same comfort, help, and community and to understand that gospel living takes more than one.

1. Paul was in prison and couldn't go to Colossae himself, so he sent Tychicus and Onesimus. According to these verses, why did he chose these two individuals? What did he send them to do?
2. We can all likely name numerous people we would consider beloved brothers and sisters in the faith. What does it mean, though, in our context today to be a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord?
3. Is there another part of the country or world where you feel a strong connection to other believers? If so, how did that bond develop? If not, what steps can you take to learn about gospel activity in another part of the world?

Paul didn't just write a letter to the believers in Colossae, though that was certainly one way he could offer comfort, help, and a sense of community. He went further, desiring to make sure the believers

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there were informed about gospel ministry in other locations and that they continued as partners in the faith. Since Paul was in prison and couldn't go personally, he sent two of the most faithful servants he knew. Tychicus and Onesimus would tell them what God was doing and would encourage the believers to join in the gospel work.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ COLOSSIANS 4:10-14

1. What phrases did Paul use to describe the six men in these verses who sent greetings to the believers in Colossae?
2. What do you think was the purpose of Paul naming each person who sent greetings?
3. How can the knowledge of the love and prayers of a believer who lives far away be an encouragement? When have you experienced this?
4. Based on these verses, what would you say was Paul's view of Christian community?

These men had served alongside Paul for the sake of the gospel and also as brothers who sought to bring him comfort. Among them were a fellow prisoner, fellow workers and servants, and devoted men of prayer. Not only were they partners to Paul; they also were disciple-makers who wanted to aid in the spiritual growth of the Colossian believers. Naming them was meant to serve as encouragement to the church in Colossae, identifying specific faithful people who stood cheering them on from afar.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ COLOSSIANS 4:15-18

1. What hopes and expectations did Paul have in sending his greetings and letter?
2. What do you think was his motivation in saying, "Remember my chains"?
3. From the conclusion of this letter, would you say Paul viewed each church as more isolated or connected? Explain.

Clearly, Paul viewed all believers as part of one body. That's how he treated them. Though his letter was specifically written to the church at Colossae, his desire was that it, as well as other letters he'd written would be passed around from church to church. They were connected to one another in the unity of the Spirit and in purpose. In many cases, they also shared common struggles. Together, though, they would be better equipped and encouraged to fight the good fight and do the work God had called them to do.

Applying God's Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

Paul said, 'Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose.' {Philippians 2:12-13a} Any time I need to be reminded of what a good work ethic looks like I just think of John Wesley. He was a Methodist preacher from around 100 years ago. He was a hard worker. Over the course of his 40-year ministry, he traveled over 250,000 miles on horseback, preached over 40,000 sermons, wrote 400 books and learned 10 languages. At 83, he was annoyed that he couldn't write more than 15 hours a day without hurting his eyes. At 86, he was ashamed because he couldn't preach more than twice a day. He thought he was getting lazy because he had an increasing tendency to lie in bed until 5:30 in the morning. I don't think we need to keep his pace, but all of us should strive to be hard workers.

1. Based on today's passage, what is something you can do to be a more effective co-laborer with other believers?
2. Who is a comfort and help to you in living out your faith? What can you do to show your appreciation to him or her?

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3. Who is another group of believers outside our normal circle of friends that we can seek to encourage in the faith? How will we do this?

PRAYER – Thank God for the comfort, encouragement, and community found in the body of Christ. Ask Him to help you look for ways you can work together with others for the sake of the gospel.

*“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”
(1 John 2:15)*