

- SEPTEMBER 12 -
COLOSSIANS 1:1-14
LEADER GUIDE

Small groups at Faith Fellowship are designed to provide the context and resources to help every person at Faith Fellowship take their next step as disciples of Jesus, even if their first step is their next step. Consider these questions and ideas to help you take your next step as a disciple.

Interact with the Passage

Read Colossians 1:1-14 this week by using the H.E.A.R. method in your ESV Scripture Journals. Engaging the text in this way will help you better understand and discuss the Scripture with your small group.

- **Highlight:** Read and observe everything in the passage.
- **Explain:** Based on your reading, discover what the passage means in its context.
- **Apply:** Understand how the meaning of the passage affects your life.
- **Respond in Prayer:** Pray God's word back to him, asking to believe, share, and put the Bible into practice in your life and relationships.

Feel free to interact with the Scripture at your own pace throughout the week. Remember to interact with the Scripture and think through the discussion questions before you're small group meets. In small groups, we'll discuss what we learned from the Scripture the previous week as well as our answers to the discussion questions together.

Leader Notes

Below you will find a brief commentary on Colossians 1:1-14. Consider also the main idea as well as these three key outcomes for your group.

- **Main Idea:** In light of Jesus's grace, faithfulness, and the outpour of His love through the Spirit, we should allow the Spirit to mature us in faithfulness back to Christ.
- **Head Change:** To know the truth of the gospel and how it directly relates to us.
- **Heart Change:** To feel adoration for Jesus because of all He's done for us.
- **Life Change:** To pursue Christian maturity through transformed actions, attitudes, and mindsets.

Leader Extras

This Sunday, you will receive a copy of the easily accessible commentary *Colossians and Philemon for You*. We hope that this helpful resource will aid you in your preparation and study..

Leader Notes - Colossians 1:1-14

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother.

Note: If your group is unfamiliar with Paul and Timothy, spend some time reviewing who they are with your group. Consider reading Acts 9:1-31 for Paul's story and Acts 16:1-5 and 1 Timothy 1:1-2 for information about Timothy.

² To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Saints (v. 2): Those who have been separated from sin and set apart to God

Faithful (v. 2): a word used in the New Testament exclusively for believers

³ We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you,

God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (v. 3): this designation is often used to show that Jesus was one in nature with God, as any true son is with his father. It was an affirmation of Christ's deity. (See Romans 15:6; 2 Corinthians 1:3; Ephesians 1:3, 3:14; 1 Peter 1:3)

⁴ since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints,

Love that you have for all the saints (v. 4): one of the visible fruits of true faith is love for fellow believers (John 13:34-35; Galatians 5:22; 1 John 2:10)

⁵⁻⁶ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth,

The Gospel (v. 5): this term is from the Greek word *euangelion*, from which we derive the English word *evangelize*. It literally means "good news." It was often used in Classical Greek to speak of the report of victory brought back from battle. The gospel is the good news of Jesus his victory over Satan, sin, and death. It is also the good news that we, too, can triumph eternally over those enemies through Him. Scripture describes the gospel with several phrases. Acts 20:24 calls it the "gospel of the grace of God." Romans 1:9 designated the "gospel of his Son." 1 Corinthians 9:12 as the gospel of Christ. And revelation 14:6 as the "eternal gospel."

The hope which is laid up (v. 5): the believers hope is inseparable from faith

In the whole world (v. 6): the gospel was never intended for an exclusive group of people; it is good news for the whole world. It transcends all ethnic, geographic, cultural, and political boundaries.

Fruit (v. 6): refers to the saving effect of gospel preaching and to the growth of the church

⁷⁻⁸ just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf ⁸ and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

Epaphras (v. 8): The likely founder of the church. What's interesting about Colossians is Paul didn't plant this church—Epaphras did. Paul writes to a church he's never met before, but still expresses deep care for them.

Leader Notes - Colossians 1:1-14 (continued)

⁹ And so, from the day we heard, we have not ceased to pray for you, asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

The knowledge of His will (v. 9): this is not an inner impression or feeling, deep and thorough knowledge of the will of God that is finally completely revealed through the word of God (Ephesians 5:17; 1 Thessalonians 4:3; 5:18).

Spiritual wisdom and understanding (v. 9): spiritual modifies both wisdom (the ability to accumulate and organize principles of Scripture) and understanding (the application of those principles to daily living).

¹⁰ so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him: bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Walk in a manner worthy of the Lord (v. 10): this is a key New Testament concept which calls believers to live in a way that is consistent with his identification with the Lord who saved them.

Bearing fruit in every good work (v. 10): spiritual fruit is the by-product of a righteous life. The Bible identifies spiritual fruit has leading people to Christ (1 Corinthians 16:15), praising God (Hebrews 13:15), giving money (Romans 15:26-28) living a godly life (Hebrews 12:11 and displaying holy attitudes (Galatians 5:22-23).

¹¹⁻¹² being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Qualified us (v. 12): the Greek word means "to make sufficient," "to empower", or "to authorize." God qualifies us only through the finished work of the Savior. Apart from God's grace through Jesus Christ, that people will be qualified only to receive his wrath

Inheritance (v. 12): literally, for the portion of the lot. Each believer will receive his own individual portion of the total divided inheritance, an allusion to the partitioning of Israel's inheritance in Canaan (see Numbers 26:52-56; 33:51-54; Joshua 14:1-2).

In the light (v. 12): Scripture represents light intellectually as divine truth (Psalm 110:130), and morally as divine purity (Ephesians 5:8-14). The Saints inheritance exists in the spiritual realm of truth and purity where God himself dwells (1 Timothy 6:16). Light, then, is a synonym for God's kingdom (John 8:12; Revelation 21:23; 22:5)

¹³ He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,

Delivered us (v. 13): Greek term means "to draw to oneself" or "to rescue" and refers to the believers spiritual liberation by God from Satan's kingdom, which, in contrast to the realm of light with truth and purity, is the realm of darkness with only deception and wickedness (1 John 2:9, 11).

Kingdom (v. 13): in its basic sense, a group of people ruled by a king. More than just the future, millennial kingdom, this everlasting kingdom speaks of the realm of salvation in which all believers live in current in eternal spiritual relationship with God under the care and authority of Jesus Christ

¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Redemption (v. 14): the Greek word means to deliver by payment of a ransom and was used to freeing slaves from bondage. He refers to Christ from believing sinners from slavery to sin.

Open It Up

- Think about a time when you were less mature than you are now—maybe a story from your childhood, school days, or first day at a job. What did you do or say that showed your immaturity? As we grow in Christ, our habits, attitudes, and words change. We become more and more like Jesus the longer we follow Him. As we're going to discover in this study on Colossians, a mature faith begins with full submission to the supremacy of Jesus.

Discussion Questions

- What stood out to you in your interactions with Colossians 1:1-14 this week?
- Paul wrote Colossians from prison alongside Timothy. He penned the letter to correct some wrong theology circulating in the church in Colossae by emphasizing the supremacy of Jesus. What do you think of when you hear “the supremacy of Jesus”? How would you define supremacy?
- How would you describe a life fully submitted to the supremacy of Jesus? What would it look like? What's appealing to you most about that kind of life?
- Read Colossians 1:3-8. According to these verses, how did those in Colossae hear the gospel? Who shared it with them?
- What's interesting about Colossians is Paul didn't plant this church – Epaphras did. Paul writes to a church he's never met before, but still expresses deep care for them. What kinds of things does Paul point out about the church in these verses? How do you tend to express your love for God's people?
- Read Colossians 1:9-14. Paul mentions for the second time that he and Timothy pray for the church in Colossae. He specifically says they never stop praying for them. When has someone modeled this kind of prayer life for you?

Leader Extra: Read more what Paul says about living a worthy life in the following verses: Rom. 16:1-2; Eph. 4:1-3; Phil. 1:27-28; 1 Thess. 2:9-12 Consider the following questions to take your group deeper into the text.

- **According to these passages, what kind of attitude characterizes a worthy life? What do these verses say about how we should treat other people?** When Paul asks believers to live a worthy life, he is telling them to live a life that matches the salvation they've received.
- **How do the actions mentioned in these verses reflect a changed life in Christ?** In Christ, we are forever changed. He frees us from sin and death and brings us into relationship with God. But being saved doesn't mean we can do whatever we want—as Christians we should conduct ourselves in a way that reflects the grace we've received. In Christ, we are forever changed. He frees us from sin and death and brings us into relationship with God. But being saved doesn't mean we can do whatever we want—as Christians we should conduct ourselves in a way that reflects the grace we've received.

- According to verse 9, living worthily begins with God filling us with His knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. To Paul, following God begins in the mind and heart, and then expresses itself through action. What has it looked like in your walk with Christ to grow in knowledge, wisdom, and understanding? How have you seen your mind mature?
- Consider verses 13-14. What does it mean to you that you've been rescued from the kingdom of darkness? How does that truth relate to living a life that's worthy of God?
- Living a life worthy of God is only possible through Jesus. He made a way for us to be reunited with God and gives us the Holy Spirit so we can grow in maturity. That's not to say we have to strive to be perfect in our own power. Rather, the Spirit fills us and gives us all we need to pursue maturity in Christ—all beginning with the knowledge of God. When did you first hear and understand the gospel message? Since then, how has the gospel helped you mature as a believer? How has the Spirit played a role in your maturity?

Wrap Up

To be a mature follower of Christ is to know God and His gospel so fully that it permeates every inch of our lives. It's a life full of the Spirit and characterized by love, hope, and faith. Living this way begins with the simple truth that God has delivered us from sin and death by the work of His Son. We are now under His rule, free to follow Him wherever He leads.

The Colossians had fallen away from the true gospel, adding to it and making Christianity like an exclusive club. They had forgotten the simple truth we read in verses 13 and 14 of chapter one. As we go about this week, let's remind ourselves of the truth of the gospel. Let's pray God would reveal to us the ways we've added to the gospel message as we study Colossians.

We also talked about what it means to live a life worthy of God in this session. A worthy life looks like a transformed heart, which overflows into how we treat other people, what we say, and our attitude towards the things God asks us to do. It begins with God giving us the knowledge of Himself through the Spirit. This week, let's ask God to help us know Him better and reflect what we know about Him through your actions

Faith at Home this Week

- **Home:** In your Faith at Home envelope, consider the first Idea Card and do the Lego Time activity with your kids, grandkids, nieces or nephews. Use a fun activity like building a Lego satellite to tell them about the supremacy of Christ and God's overview effect. Use phrases like, "*How big God is, how creative God is, how much must God love us, etc.*"
- **Hospitality:** As an expression of gratitude to God, choose one way to show someone God's love this week. Help your spouse with something on their to-do list, send a friend flowers, or mow the neighbor's lawn. As you do, pray for the person you're serving.

- **Hammers:** When you pray this week, thank God for delivering you from sin and death. Pray for His Spirit to show you what it means to live a life that reflects the salvation you've received as you study Colossians.