



STUDY 7

# PARTNERSHIP IN CHRIST

COLOSSIANS 4:2-17

In this final section of his letter to the Christians in Colossae, Paul passes on some personal greetings, and gives some concluding instructions. But it isn't just a random selection of commands and "hellos". It's full of real-life examples of everything he's been saying in the letter. As we read, let's look out for important things we can be doing as a church to see everyone growing together.

## PARTNERS IN PRAYER

Read Colossians 4:2-6

1. According to these verses, how important is the role of prayer in the church?

2. Paul says our prayer should be characterised by being both “watchful” and “thankful”. From the letter as a whole, what’s the reason for these attitudes?

- 'Watchful' 1:21-23, 2:4, 2:8, 2:16-19

- 'Thankful' 1:3-6, 1:12-14, 2:6-7,9-15, 3:12-17

3. Paul said in 1:24-2:5 (week 3) that Jesus is such an all-sufficient “treasure” that everyone needs to know Him! Now that the Colossians know Jesus, what’s their role in helping other people come to know Jesus?

4. How can Christians 'be wise toward outsiders' (vv. 5-6)? What happens if we're not wise in how we interact with non-believers?

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## CO-WORKERS IN CHRIST

### Read Colossians 4:7-18

5. The letter ends with Paul passing on greetings from eight people who are eager to say 'hello'. What might this say about how Christians should relate to each other?

6. Make note of the descriptions, 'fellow servant in the Lord' (v7) and 'fellow workers for the kingdom of God' (v11). Do Christians usually think of themselves this way? Why/why not?

7. Back in 1:26-27, Paul said it was the job of all the Jewish Christians ("the Saints") to make Jesus known among the Gentiles. How would v11 have been discouraging to Paul?

How can we encourage each other in sharing Jesus?

How can we discourage each other?

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## STANDING FIRM TOGETHER

In these closing verses we see the importance of connecting positively with those outside the church. Our Christian lives are to be saturated with prayer and marked by a willingness to speak wisely to others about our faith.

But we also see a special kind of connectedness between Christians. We are, after all, brothers and sisters in his eternal family – that’s something to be enthusiastic about!

To finish our look at this letter, let’s look at what Epaphras prays for the Christians in Colossae:

*“He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.”*

8. What does ‘wrestling in prayer’ mean? Should we do that too?

9. Explain what you think each of these things mean:

*“stand firm in all the will of God”*

*“mature”*

*“fully assured”*

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## THE ONLY WAY TO GROW

Paul began this letter to the Christians in Colossae by giving thanks for their faith and love that spring from the hope they have through the gospel. Though they live in a society filled with different answers to life's big questions, believing the gospel of Jesus has brought about a big change in their lives and their outlook on life. Through the power and Spirit of King Jesus, God has been gathering his people together in Colossae and growing them!

But Paul knows the danger they face. The danger is that they'll be tempted to water down their Christianity by mixing in alternative answers to life's big questions, or walk away from Jesus altogether. The remedy Paul prays for is that they grow in their knowledge of God. He said,

*“. . . since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.”* (Col. 1:9-10)

Epaphras (who first preached the gospel to them) prays along the same lines – that they “*may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured.*” (Col. 4:12)

The secret Paul has shared with the Colossians is that knowledge of God and his *will is all found in Jesus*. Paul says *he tells people about Christ*,

*“...so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”* (Col 2:2-3)

*“He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.”* (Col 1:28)

The growth needed to keep going in Jesus is more knowledge... not of anything *in addition* to Jesus, but of *Jesus himself*.

Let's pray that we can be people who stand firm in the new life that the gospel brings and keep growing as we follow Christ together!

B.D.