

# Colossians

## Living like a prisoner for Jesus 4:2-18



University of Michigan

### Contents

- I. Introduction
- II. Diving In
- III. Making Application

### Hints and Highlights

1. Paul closes the letter with some final thoughts, asking them to pray opportunities to speak about Christ. This is the focus of the book—Jesus. He then closes with some updates on common friends.
2. As the semester winds down take advantage of the holidays. Host a group Christmas or end of the year party. Have people bring their friends.

## Introduction *(choose the option that best fits your group, or create your own)*

### Option 1:

*Have everyone tell a story about a time they got in big trouble (with parents, boss, friends, etc.) What did they do? What consequences did they suffer?*

### Option 2:

*What are the hardest words you ever had to say? What makes them so significant? So difficult?*

### Option 3:

*What is the greatest injustice you have ever encountered? What makes something feel unfair?*

- What makes the difference between a right response to hard circumstances and a wrong one?

Paul is in prison for the Gospel? Yet despite this, he focuses on making a difference in people's lives.

## Diving In

### Read 4:2-6

1. Take a moment and jot down the list of commands Paul has for the Colossians. What are some common themes you notice in what Paul is asking them to do? Why do you think he focuses so much on prayer?
2. Why do you think prayer is important for a follower of Jesus? Why is prayer so vital? What do you think it means to devote yourself to prayer? How does watchfulness and thankfulness impact prayer?
3. How would you describe Paul's prayer requests? Why do you think Paul is in prison? What strikes you as unusual about Paul's request? (he never asks for his release) Why do you think he prays for God to open a door for his message? For him to proclaim the message clearly? What are some things this tells you about evangelism?
4. What do you think he means by being wise toward outsiders? By making the most of every opportunity? How does this relate to evangelism? What does it look like to season your conversation with grace? What do you think the image of seasoned with salt means? (see sidebar) Why should you know how to answer everyone?

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Hints and Highlights

1. Paul shows great humility in asking the Colossians to pray for him. What are some things you as a leader can ask the Community Group to pray for you?
2. Both prayer and evangelism show dependency on God. We cannot do either one without yielding to Jesus.
3. Looking at the lives of the people Paul mentions makes for a challenging study. You may not have time to do all of them. If you are running short of time focus on Demas, Mark and Tychicus.
4. Once again the fact that Onesimus was a slave does not mean a biblical endorsement of slavery. (See 1 Cor. 7:21 to see how Paul wanted slaves to seek their freedom if the opportunity presented itself.)

*(Continued from page 1)*

### *Read 4:7-18*

1. How would you describe Paul's closing? What are some things that strike you about it?
2. How does he describe Tychicus? What are some things we learn about him? What is his role? How do you think he will encourage them? Why? You can have them read Acts 20:4, 2 Tim. 4:12, and Eph. 6:21. What else do we learn about Tychicus? What kind of person do you think he is?
3. What are some things we learn about Onesimus? How does Paul describe him? You can also have them read Philemon 10-18. What are some other things we can learn about Onesimus?
4. How would you describe Mark? Look at Acts 15:36-40. Then read 2 Tim. 4:11 (which was written later) What happened? (people grow)
5. What are some things we learn about Aristarchus from these verses? (make sure to look at both v. 10 and 17)
6. How does he describe Epaphras? What kind of a person do you think he is?
7. Who is Luke? (wrote the book of Acts) Look at Demas. Read 2 Tim. 4:10. What happened to Demas? What is the warning for us?
8. What are some other things you notice in Paul's closing? Why do you think he closes in this way? Why do you think Paul puts this in?

### *In Summary*

1. How would you summarize Paul's requests?
2. What are some things we learn about prayer?
3. What are some things we learn from the examples of the people Paul talk about?
4. What are some things we learn about living like a prisoner for Jesus?

## Making Application

Jesus is not just a hobby. Paul shows us how to live like a prisoner for Jesus.

1. What are the things that I pray about most? How are they similar or different from what Paul asked the Colossians to pray about?
2. How would I describe my devotion to prayer? What are some ways we can encourage each other to pray? Pair them up and have them pray for each other.
3. Which of the examples do I most want to be like? Demas? Mark? Tychicus? Or another? What are some ways I can help become more like this person?
4. What are some ways I can live more like prisoner for Christ? What would it mean to live like that?