

Week One: Wisdom for Life

OPENING:

- What was a prayer you or your parents prayed when you were young? What impact, if any, did it have on you?
- Background: Paul, writing this letter from prison (in Ephesus?) has not met these young believers yet (see Col 2:1). What kinds of things do you think he would want them to know about the good news of Christ?

STUDY:

- Read Col 1:1-8. Who are the characters mentioned in verses 1-2 and how are each described?
- What are Paul and Timothy thankful for in verses 3-8? How might this have been an encouragement to the Colossians?
- Who is Epaphras (v 7) and what has he done for the church community in Colossae?
- Read Col 1:9-14. Make a list of the things for which Paul and Timothy are praying (write them down).
- Talk about what each one would mean practically for these first century Christians.
- What would it look like for us to embody these prayers in our own lives today?
- Which of one thing on the list would you most hope for someone to be praying for you? Why?
- How do your prayers for others compare with Paul's intensity, thankfulness, and clarity?
- Paul and Timothy's thankfulness for the Colossian Christians leads them into prayer. For whom are you thankful today? How can you carve out time this week to pray verses 9-14 for them?

PRAY:

- Take time now to pray the list for each other in your group and for our church community.

Colossians 1:1-14 (NIV)

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

2 To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ:*

*Grace and peace to you from God our Father.**

Thanksgiving and Prayer

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people— 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel 6 that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace. 7 You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our* behalf, 8 and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.*

9 For this reason, 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, 10 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, 11 being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, 12 and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you* to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. 13 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Footnotes:

- * Colossians 1:2 The Greek word for *brothers and sisters (adelphoi)* refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family; also in 4:15.
- * Colossians 1:2 Some manuscripts *Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*
- * Colossians 1:7 Or *slave*
- * Colossians 1:7 Some manuscripts *your*
- * Colossians 1:9 Or *all spiritual wisdom and understanding*
- * Colossians 1:12 Some manuscripts *us*