**1. Motivate**

What would we learn about you from your recent calls or social media interactions?

* list of friends

A video introduction is available. View it at <https://watch.liberty.edu/media/1_x5t8brxr>

If you have no Wi-Fi where you teach, best to download to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/y2pufezw>

* political leanings
* stories from the past
* nostalgic views of home town
* recipes
* clever handyman tricks
* videos of sports fails
* videos of close calls
* encouragements, congratulations from friends
* Far Side and Calvan & Hobbs cartoons

**2. Transition**

We all have a variety of friends and interests.

* We like to follow people we know and share our views
* This week we look at God’s challenge to pray for the salvation and spiritual growth of these same people.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Thankful for Other Believers

Listen for why Paul prays.

Colossians 1:3-6a (NIV) 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 the saints-- 5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel that has come to you.

What is the nature of the prayer with which Paul began his letter to the Colossians?

* thanksgiving
* joy
* encouragement

What moved him to pray with such gratitude?

* he had heard of their faith in Christ
* he came to know about the love they shared with each other
* he realized it was based on their faith and hope

What was the source of the hope Paul saw in the Colossians?

* hope and assurance of heaven
* the Truth of the gospel
* they had responded to the preaching and teaching of God’s Word

How might your prayer life be different if you focused on thanking God for other believers?

* more than just praying for yourself, your family
* more than praying for the list of sick people you know
* when we *thank* God, we focus on what He has done and is doing
* we learn to trust Him to continue to work in the lives of people you see growing and contributing to the growth of the church

When have you been thankful and encouraged by the prayers of others?

* they prayed when our family went through a health crisis
* people who supported us in prayer when we were out of work
* people prayed when we struggled with a rebellious teen
* the time we prayed for a family member’s salvation
* when the church was discouraged over a community loss and people joined together praying for God’s healing (spiritual, emotional)
* when we pray for the eventual recipients of the Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes

What do you find appealing about the way Paul started his letter to the Colossians?

* opens with gratitude
* gives praise to God for His working in their lives
* sites their faith – says it’s well enough known that he’s heard about it
* affirms their hope, love, and faith

Why do you suppose Paul praised a group of Christians he had never met?

* he was glad for their testimony
* wanted to affirm them
* positive reinforcement is a good strategy
* certainly better than beginning with complaints and criticisms

When we pray for those with whom we share a common faith in Christ Jesus, what kinds of things can we be thankful for?

* their positive Christian example
* the kindness they show to everyone
* their hard work in various church ministries
* how they helped us in a specific situation
* the song they sang, the testimony they gave, the Bible lesson they taught, their continued prayer support

3.2 Those Who Minister And Spread the Gospel

Listen for whom to pray for.

Colossians 1:6b-8 (NIV) All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. 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.

What effect does the gospel have when it is faithfully declared? What action words did Paul use to define the response of the Colossians to the gospel?

* bearing fruit
* growing
* understand God’s grace
* learn Truth
* lives are changed for the good

What is the importance of each of these actions to functioning effectively as a Christian?

* Bearing fruit: God’s Spirit will produce in us the Fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control
* Growing: our faith and our Christian experience must be one of growth and maturing
* Understanding and learning: we learn more and understand better as we read, meditate on, and apply God’s Word to our lives

How did Paul help the Colossians know that what had happened in their city was not just a regional phenomenon?

* this spiritual fruit and receipt of Truth was happening all over the world
* we know from the Gospels that it would spread from Jerusalem to Samaria, and on the most distant parts of the world
* that has happened … the exact opposite side of our world is off the coast of Chile in South America … there are evangelical churches in many cities of Chile

Why is it important for us to pray for those who spread the gospel?

* they are on the “battle front” spiritually
* we are the support “troops”
* we support them in prayer – trusting God with them for strength, courage, sufficiency, protection as they preach, teach, and do the work of discipling
* when an army is cut off from it’s supply, it will run out of everything it needs to continue to be effective

What are specific things we can pray for ministers, church leaders, and missionaries?

* love, compassion
* health, strength, courage, wisdom, safety, integrity, self-control
* opportunities, contacts
* financial needs to be met
* favor with the government officials where they work – visas, travel, permissions to build facilities
* for their children to get a good education and be able to adjust to schooling in a foreign country, to returning home to a different culture, wisdom in choosing a college

Take a moment to pray specifically for the staff and leaders of your church.

* Thank God for their continued work and ministry.
* Echo Paul’s prayer that they would be filled with the knowledge of God’s will and strengthened with all power according to His purposes.

Colossians 1:9-12 (NIV) For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. 10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may 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, and joyfully 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

 3.3 Spiritual Growth of Believers

Listen for prayer for the Colossian church.

According to verse 9, what is the focus and desire of Paul’s continued praying for the Colossians?

* they be filled with knowledge of God’s will
* spiritual wisdom
* understanding

According to verse 10, what are evidences that one is living life that is worthy of the Lord and that brings Him pleasure?

* please God
* bearing fruit
* growing in the knowledge of God
* strengthened with God’s power

What does verse 11 tell us will be the results of being strengthened with God’s power and might?

* endurance
* patience
* joy

How does praying regularly and specifically contribute to our spiritual growth?

* God answers those prayers
* we learn to depend on God, not on ourselves or other human help
* we learn to see God’s power at work
* Consider the song *Learning to Lean* <https://youtu.be/TELDaBM-YXc?t=28>

Based on these verses, what are some specific things our group can pray for this week?

* physical health
* spiritual health, growth
* hunger and desire for God’s Word
* protection, wisdom, guidance, power in ministry for the pastor and church staff
* courage to apply God’s Truth to our lives
* our government (local, state, federal)
* our schools, the teachers, our children and grandchildren in those schools
* outreach ministries – locally, around the world
* personal witness – that we be salt and light to those around us
* family, friends, neighbors who need Jesus
* revival in our own lives, in all groups of our society

Check out the Practical Suggestions page for ways you can make your prayer life more purposeful. <https://tinyurl.com/y3whe3nc>

Use the last page as a handout so your learners can take home the application points of this week’s lesson.

Morning prayer.

Application

* Prayer is like a muscle; if you don’t use it, it atrophies and gets weak.
* If you never or rarely pray, commit to begin each day in prayer this week.
* Before you get moving each morning and before you pick up your smart phone, pause and pray.
* Pray that God would strengthen and use you throughout the day. Pray for your pastor and leaders in your church. Then pray for believers around you.

Deeper prayer.

* Commit to a regular time of prayer each day that is not rushed or hurried.
* Carve out an extended time of prayer where you can sit quietly and talk to God without the demands of your next appointment.
* Keep a journal of your prayers. Over time, you can look back and see how God answered them.

Focused prayer.

* Created a detailed list based on the three ways this session identified that we can pray for each other.

* List people in your life for whom you want to pray these specific prayers.

patience
please
power
pray
praying
qualified
reason
saints
servant
Spirit
spiritual
spring
stored
strengthened
thank
told
truth
understanding
understood
will
wisdom
word
work
world
worthy



|  |
| --- |
| askingbearingendurancefaithfaithfulFatherfellowfillfruitgloriousgoodgospelgracegrowingheardheavenhopeinheritanceJesusjoyfullyknowledgelearnedlovemightminister |

Well, I see this Bible Study is about prayer. Don’t be like the atheists … they don’t have a prayer! Humph! You know the drill – find the words, they go in all directions, hand in the book report before Tuesday, wear a mask … all that stuff. Use the QR code for help and other important assignments.

