**1. Motivate**

What is something you own, but never use?

* a gun
* some medications sitting in the medicine cabinet for a long time
* a cast iron skillet
* some old paint brushes
* a trunk in the attic
* photo albums that are rarely viewed, sit on the shelf
* a lot of books that just decorate the shelves

A video introduction to the lesson is available. View at <https://tinyurl.com/5x4r2fat> . If you don’t have wi-fi where you teach, it is best to download the video file to your computer from <https://tinyurl.com/7uwhch9d>

* an out of date digital tablet
* some out of date computers
* certain tools that sit in the toolbox
* a few pots and pans that just take up room

**2. Transition**

Consider that as believers, we have a personal relationship with Jesus, the very Creator of the Universe.

* Do you make the most of that relationship?
* We should be involved in the encouragement and building up of one another in Christ.

**3. Bible Study**

3.1 Godly Character and Fruitfulness

Listen for Paul’s prayer list.

Colossians 1:9-14 (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. 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.

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

What can we learn about praying for others from Paul’s prayers for the Colossians?

* pray for specific spiritual strengths
* pray for more than just, “bless my kids” or “be with Mrs. Jones in the hospital”
* trust God for His power at work in specific ways in people’s lives
* declare God’s promises for specific needs

For what things does Paul give thanks to God?

* that we share in the inheritance of the saints
* we are included in the kingdom of light (the realm where God’s light overpowers the darkness)
* we are rescued from that dominion of darkness (where spiritual darkness rules)
* we are brought into the kingdom of the Son (where Jesus rules)
* we have redemption from sin – the ransom has been paid to free us from the penalty and power of sin
* we have been forgiven of our sinful condition and actions

What are some ways in which our prayers are not specific?

* “God bless “ (fill in the name)
* “Bless the missionaries out in their mission field”
* “Help Mrs. Jones to feel better.”
* “Please fix the mess in our government”
* “Bless those folks in Ukraine in that war”
* “Help me at school tomorrow.”

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* – find a recording, post words to sing together

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

3.2 Firmly Grounded in Christ

Listen for status with God

Colossians 1:21-23 (NIV) Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 22 But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation-- 23 if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

According to Colossians 1:21, what does it mean to be alienated from God and enemies in your mind because of your evil behavior?

* we were alienated from God implies we were His enemies
* we acted against Him
* our evil thinking resulted in evil behavior
* those evil attitudes and actions were the result of our sinful condition

How does Colossians 1:22 describe the reconciliation between believers and God through Christ's death?

* where we used to be enemies of God, now we have been lovingly adopted into His family
* Jesus’ physical death paid the price, took the judgment against *our* sinfulness
* the judgment against us has been paid
* we are now considered holy, separated from sin, justified
* no accusation against us for sin is now possible

In what ways does the concept of hope play a role in the Christian faith, particularly as outlined in Colossians 1:23?

* this is more than “I hope our team wins” kind of hope
* this is “we now really have HOPE of forgiveness” – Jesus, the Hero of the story has come to the rescue
* it is made effective by one’s faith in what Jesus has done
* when you take the *fact* of Jesus work of redemption as *Truth, personally* for you

How does Paul's emphasis on the gospel's proclamation to all creation challenge us in our evangelism and outreach efforts? (Note a discussion of verb tense <https://tinyurl.com/Greek-Verb-Tense> for “*has been* proclaimed”)

* this is a powerful Truth that Paul is speaking of
* this is a life changing Truth
* not only can it change our lives, but it can also change the lives of people close to us and people around the world
* when we think of the Great Commission – this Truth is something that is a blessing, a benefit to share with people
* it’s more than just a responsibility to preach the Gospel, it is a blessing we can bring to others
* once they receive it, they will be glad they did

3.3 Encourage Others

Listen for opportunities to help others

Colossians 1:24-29 (NIV) Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. 25 I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness-- 26 the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. 27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. 29 To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

Paul had never met the Colossian Christians; how could he have suffered for them?

* he was in prison for his role in advancing the gospel among the gentiles
* agonize over them in prayer
* concern for their spiritual growth
* anxiety over the problems they faced
* dealing with false teachers in the church
* he suffered in taking the gospel to those who took the gospel to them

Why do you think that suffering, such as Paul endured as he wrote this letter, often serves to advance the gospel?

* forces people to choose
* somehow it makes our faith something valuable, worth hanging on to, no matter what
* validates the sincerity of the one preaching the message
* when something is forbidden, people will want it all the more
* when a movement is driven “underground,” somehow it is perceived to be desirable
* if others are against it, then it must be a threat to them and indeed be powerful and worth pursuing

The Good News of Jesus Christ’s work of redemption is to be the main message of the church. What are some ways, besides preaching, that the church can proclaim the message of Christ?

* benevolent ministries – a person cannot hear the gospel message if their hungry stomach is growling loudly
* summer camp ministries
* film ministries – from Billy Graham films to, the *Jesus Film*, to recent movies like *Courageous*.
* children’s Bible clubs, Royal Rangers
* Samaritan’s Purse Operation Christmas Child ministry
* Christian versions of scouting, (Christian Service Brigade, Awana)
* Drama presentations, seasonal musical presentations
* door to door witnessing
* seminars for families, for finances, for addiction recovery
* mission trips

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

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Evaluate.

* Assess your own spiritual maturity.
* Identify areas of strength and areas for improvement.
* Ask God to help you grow closer to Him.

Model.

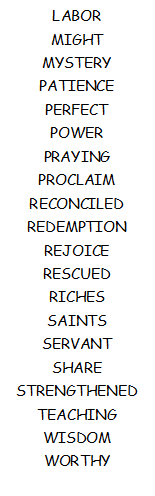
* Identify a new believer you will befriend and model spiritual maturity to.
* Plan regular times to meet together for encouragement and growth.

Lead.

* Volunteer to lead a discipleship class at your church.
* Or, substitute for someone else so they can have a break and you can grow in your faith.

Word Search

A cartoon of a person with glasses

Description automatically generatedA close up of a word

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Well humph … looks like you survived the eclipse! Can you survive this puzzle? You get a break … no backwards words, just to the right, down, and diagonal. Find all the words and your teacher has a prize for you, maybe. There’s a lot of theology in these words … they come from your current Bible study. Wouldn’t hurt for you to read the passage again … humph! Help (and the Crossword and the color page) are found at <https://tinyurl.com/7uwhch9d>