

SERMON APPLICATION GUIDE

COLOSSIANS: KEEPING THE MAIN ONE THE MAIN THING

Colossians 1:3–8

DISCUSSION 1: THANKSGIVING

1. Why do we often grumble more than we give thanks and criticize more than we affirm?
2. What are some of the things in verses 3-8 Paul is thankful for?
3. Why do you think Paul would begin a letter by giving thanks to God for what He's done in them as opposed to rebuking them or warning them? How can we build gratitude, thanksgiving, and praise more into our prayer life, our bible study, and our conversations together as believers?
4. What's one circumstance in your life you find difficult, frustrating, or painful. Not to ignore or minimize the struggle or sorrow, but in the midst of this scenario what can you give thanks for?

DISCUSSION 2: FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE

1. Read Col. 1:3-6; 1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:5-6; Eph. 4:2-5; 1 Thess. 1:3; 5:8; Heb. 6:10-12; I Pet. 1:21-22. What are some things you notice about the connection between faith, hope, and love in these passages?
2. There's a relationship between our faith in God and love for one another. How do you think the two relate and influence one another? How (specifically) does walking with God help you in your relationships with other people in your life?
3. Which of the three fruits (faith, hope, love) are you stronger and weaker in? How so?

DISCUSSION 3: GOSPEL

1. How would you define or explain the gospel in one or two sentences?
2. How has hope in the gospel practically impacted your life recently?
3. The picture of the Church is that of a grace-receiving and grace-giving community. They receive grace from God (1:2), they learn the gospel of grace (1:7), and the gospel transforms them so they can give grace to one another (1:8). How does the gospel help us be a grace-giving and grace-receiving community? What are ways we can live this out together as a Small Group
4. What are some practical ways you can renew your awe of the gospel?

*Activity. Share with your group in 2-3 minutes (or if your group is too large break into groups of 3-4) how the gospel came to you. Who shared it with you, what drew you to Christ, how did you respond, and what changed?

FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

1. What does it mean to give thanks to God? What are reasons we can give God thanks today?

2. What is the gospel? What does it mean to believe in Jesus?
3. How does faith in God produce love for others? What are ways we can better love others today?

Additional Resources

- See the [video overview of Colossians](#) at bibleproject.com.
- Read alongside Colossians the book, *Finding Satisfaction in Christ: A Devotional Study of Colossians* by Dustin Crowe.
- **Faith, hope, and love together in NT:** Rom. 5:1-5; I Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:5-6; Eph. 4:2-5; I Thess. 1:3; 5:8; Heb. 6:10-12; I Pet. 1:21-22.
- **Thanksgiving:** Ps 35:18; 100:4; 109:30; Luke 8:39; Jn. 4:39; Eph. 1:16; 5:20; 2 Thess. 2:13-14.
- **Thanksgiving in Colossians:** Colossians 1:3, 12; 2:7; 3:15-17; 4:2.
- **Hope:** I Peter 1:4-5; Col. 1:23, 27; 3:4; Eph. 1:14, 18; Titus 1:2; Heb. 3:6.
- **Gospel:** Rom. 1:16-18; Rom. 3:19-26; Gal. 1:9; Eph. 1:13.
- **Loving one another:** Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37; 8:1-2; I Thess. 2:8.

Personal Study Questions

1. Summarize in one sentence the main idea you think Paul is highlighting in 1:1-8.
2. Read Col. 1:3, 12; 2:7; 3:15-17; and 4:2. What are some things you notice about when you should give thanks, to whom you should give thanks, and for what reasons should you give thanks?
3. What do you notice about the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in 1:1-8? For example, what actions are they doing, how are they relating to us, and what does it say about them?
4. Paul sees “hope” as a concrete, objective inheritance secured for us in the future. Look up Mt. 25:34; Eph. 1:12-14; Col. 1:12; Heb. 9:15; 1 Peter 1:3-5. What is the nature of our “hope” and “inheritance”? How might that help you endure the hardships of this life?
5. Think about who has been an Epaphras in your life, and who you might be an Epaphras for. Who are people in your life who need to believe in the gospel of Jesus Christ or need help in maturing in their faith? How can you pray for them? How can you intentionally love them and seek to share the gospel with them or help them grow as a disciple?
6. To get a picture of how the Church loved one another, research “**one another**” verses in the Bible. Here are a few places to start: Rom. 12:10; 14:19; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:9, 13, 16; I Thess. 4:18; 5:11; James 5:16. How can you or your family take steps toward serving, loving, caring for, and building up other members in your local church?

Ideas for Response

- Write out your own story (testimony) of how the gospel of grace came to you in such a way that you saw your sin and turned in faith to Christ. A good length is something that could be shared in 3-4 minutes.
- Begin a list of things you’re thankful to God for, including spiritual blessings. Start by writing down three things you want to thank God for.

- Make a list of three to five unbelievers in your life. Begin praying for them by name and ask God to allow you to be an Epaphras who shares the gospel with them (evangelism) and disciples them.
- Write out in 1-2 sentences how you want to apply what you've learned this week. Maybe it's a promise to cling to, a truth to believe, an action to take, or something you want to put off (fight) and put on (practice).