

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, Dec. 26, 2010

Passage: Col. 4:7-18

Memory Passage: 1 Corinthians 12:12

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Col. 4:7-18.** As you read, record your insights (if you are not sure what to record, start by answering the who, what, where, when, and why questions).

(b) Divide this list of names into three groups. (There are certain similarities between the names, how they are addressed, what is said to them, their heritage & background, etc., that should help you divide the list.) What criteria did you use to divide the list into groups? What similarities did you see? What about differences?

(c) How would you answer this question, posed by someone you are discipling: “Paul was writing to specific people, at a specific time, with specific instructions, so what does this passage have to do with me? How should I apply it to my life?”

(d) *Family:* **Read Col. 4:7-18.** Have your family turn to the maps section of their bibles, or use one bible in the center of your table, and show them where the following towns are and explain why they are important to our study of Colossians: Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis, Thessalonica (Aristarchus’ hometown), Jerusalem (Mark’s hometown), Rome (where Paul was in prison) and Ephesus (the probable place where Epaphras was saved). (The best map will probably be one that shows Paul’s missionary journeys.)

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Col. 4:7-8.** What three characteristics does Paul use to characterize Tychicus? In what types of activities do you imagine Tychicus was actively involved to earn such praise? What does v. 8 reveal about Paul’s love and concern for the Colossians?

(b) Think of people in BCC that fit one or more of these descriptions. How have you benefited from their life & ministry? Spend some time in prayer thanking God for these men and women, their impact on your life, and asking God to increase both their passion for and influence with the gospel in our church.

(c) Were you able to write the names of several people in the last question? If not, why not? Are any of the following statements true of you: I am not connected to the body life of the church so no one gets a chance to minister to me; I don’t want anyone to be close enough to me to serve me; I never think about serving others so I don’t realize when people are serving me. If any/all of these are true, spend some time right now repenting of your pride or selfishness and asking God to make you a servant in the likeness of Christ.

(d) No matter what your responses were to the last question, how can you be more active in serving others so that they can give the kind of description of you that Paul gave of Tychicus?

(e) *Family:* **Read Col. 4:7-8** and teach your family these verses, explaining what each of the three characteristics mean in v. 7, and how Tychicus bringing news of Paul would encourage the Colossians’ hearts. Then ask your family to share ways that they have been encouraged by each other, and ways they have been encouraged by others in our church. You might need to “encourage” them by reminding them of specific ways as you stimulate discussion. Then spend some time brainstorming ways that members of your family can be a greater encouragement to each other and others in our church (make a list, or have family members who read/write make a list as you lead in this discussion to help remind everyone of these acts).

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Acts 13:1-13 & 15:36-41.** The “John” referred to in these passages is the “Mark” referred to in Col. 4:10. What do you learn about John Mark in these passages? What do you think happened to cause him to desert Paul & Barnabas? Have you ever had a time in your life when you “deserted” other believers in life or ministry? Have you ever felt “deserted” by others in life or ministry? How did you respond or how were you treated as a result?

(b) **Read 2 Timothy 4:11.** What does Paul think of John Mark now? What do you think happened between Acts 15 and 2 Timothy (which was Paul’s final letter)? What might Barnabas (whose name means “son of encouragement” and was John Mark’s cousin) have had to do with this?

(c) What lessons are there for you to learn from John Mark’s life concerning failure? Reaction to other’s failure? Restoration? Usefulness after one’s failure? How to treat others when they fail? The role of encouragement in the body?

(d) *Family:* Begin by explaining that when Paul went on his first missionary journey with Barnabas, John Mark was with them to assist them. But a little ways into the journey John Mark left them and returned home. Then **Read Acts 15:36-41** and explain the disagreement that Paul and Barnabas had. Then, tell your family of a time in your life in which you did fulfill an

obligation, or made an unwise decision that affected other people in a negative way, but that God used for good in the end. **Read Romans 8:28 & 2 Tim. 4:11** to show that God restored John Mark to fellowship and useful service even though he abandoned Paul & Barnabas, and encourage them that God is able to redeem their failures as well.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Col. 4:7-18.** Notice the role of encouragement (v.8) and comfort (v.11) in Paul's greeting. Why do you think that the Colossians knowing how Paul & his companions are would be a comfort to the Colossians?

(b) Why do you think Paul was comforted by Aristarchus, Mark, & Justus? What was it about their life & ministry that comforted Paul? When believers give a report of "how they are," what makes one report encouraging and another not encouraging to the hearer? (Think of how you were encouraged to hear Caleb Lucien's report of how he and his family are.)

(c) Think of your own response to the often-asked question, "How are you doing?" Would your typical response be an encouragement to the ones who hear your answer? Why or why not? What ways might you change your day-to-day ministry that would result in the answer being an encouragement to others (I am not suggesting that our goal is to bring encouragement to others, but when our goal is to be on mission with Christ, living a gospel-centered life and engaging in gospel-centered ministry, the reports of how we are doing are centered upon God and his miraculous work so all glory goes to Him).

(d) *Family:* As a family, write a letter to a special relative or close friend who will not be with you at Christmas. At the end of the letter, guide your family in how they might write greetings like Paul did in Colossians. Include words of encouragement from each family member, greetings from local friends, neighbors or church members that the recipient of the letter might know, encouraging situations where God has worked in your family, etc. Then have everyone sign the letter and mail it.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) As you **read Colossians** (yes, all of it!). What did you learn during our study of Colossians about the following topics & doctrines: The supremacy of Christ? Prayer? The goal of Paul's (and therefore our) ministry? Walking in Christ? Legalism & asceticism? Living a Christ-centered life? Mortifying (killing) sin? Putting off the old self and putting on the new self? Life in the Christian family?

(b) Write down the changes you notice in your life as a result of studying Colossians (consider the areas you looked at in the last question). Spend some time praising God for His work of sanctification in these areas.

(c) Now consider areas in which, during the last 6 months of studying Colossians, you made commitments to Christ to begin or stop a behavior, change, grow, be obedient, repent, or submit to Him more fully, but have forgotten, neglected or refused to continue in grace (remember that the original conviction was grace as well!). Spend some time repenting of these areas and asking God to continue to conform you to the image and likeness of Christ in these areas.

(d) *Family:* Tell your family that you will spend a few minutes today reviewing Colossians. Using the topics & doctrines in Day 5 (b), ask what your family learned in each of these areas. Be prepared to give summaries in each of these areas in case the crickets start chirping (i.e. silence)! Then ask what each member thought was the most interesting section of the letter, the most challenging section of the letter, and the most difficult section of the letter and discuss why.

DATE: December 26, 2010

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Final Greetings & Instructions