

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Week 3: Jesus Is Enough to Unite Us

Main Idea: Because Jesus is enough to unite us, we live as one new people rather than retreating into old divisions.

Colossians 1:21-2:5; 4:7-18

“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him.” (Colossians 2:6).

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

Gather in groups of three to five people and discuss the Observation and Interpretation sections.

Observation Exercise 1: From alienation to maturity

Read Colossians 1:21-29. How did Paul describe the believers' past condition, their present standing in Christ, and the goal of his ministry among them?

Suggested Response: Paul said they were once alienated from God and hostile in mind. Now they have been reconciled through Christ's death to be presented holy and without accusation. He said the mystery revealed is Christ in you, the hope of glory. His ministry was to proclaim Christ, teaching and warning everyone so that everyone may be presented mature in Christ. He labored for this with Christ's energy working in him.

Observation Exercise 2: Unity and stability

Read Colossians 2:1-5. What did Paul say he wanted for the believers, and what concerns did he mention?

Suggested Response: Paul said he wanted their hearts strengthened and united in love. He wanted them to have full understanding and knowledge of Christ. He said he did not want them deceived by persuasive arguments. He rejoiced to see their order and the firmness of their faith.

Observation Exercise 3: The network of believers

Read Colossians 4:7-18. Who did Paul mention by name, and what kinds of roles or actions are described?

Suggested Response: Paul mentioned Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Justus, Epaphras, Luke, Demas, Nympha, and Archippus. He described them as fellow workers, fellow prisoners, servants, and brothers. Some were sent to encourage, some labored in prayer, and some hosted churches in their homes.

INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Interpretation Exercise 1: Reconciliation and a new people

Based on Colossians 1:21-29, what does reconciliation through Christ accomplish beyond individual forgiveness? Why did Paul connect reconciliation with maturity in Christ?

Suggested Response: Reconciliation restores believers to a right relationship with God and forms them into a new community with a shared identity. Paul did not describe isolated salvation but a people being presented mature together. Proclaiming Christ is the means by which this new people would grow. Reconciliation was the foundation, and shared maturity in Christ was the goal.

Interpretation Exercise 2: Unity as protection

In Colossians 2:1-5, why did Paul connect being united in love with having full understanding in Christ? How does unity protect against deception?

Suggested Response: Paul linked unity and clarity because a divided community is more vulnerable to persuasive arguments. When believers are strengthened and knit together in love, they are less likely to drift toward rival teachings. Christ contains the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, so looking elsewhere undermines both confidence and cohesion.

Interpretation Exercise 3: Visible unity

In Colossians 4:7-18, what do the names and relationships reveal about how the gospel shapes community?

Suggested Response: The repeated language of brother, fellow worker, and servant shows that identity in Christ reshapes relationships. People of different

backgrounds and roles are connected through shared mission and shared allegiance to the Lord. The gospel does not produce independent individuals but a network of interdependent believers.

APPLICATION: HOW DO I RESPOND?

Question 1: In Colossians 1:21-29, what phrase or description— such as alienated, reconciled, Christ in you, or mature in Christ—stands out to you most? Why does that phrase feel weighty or personal right now?

Suggested Response: Some may be struck by “alienated,” especially if they recognize lingering distance from God. Others may resonate with “Christ in you” if they need assurance of presence. Some may focus on “mature in Christ” if growth feels slow or uneven. Encourage participants to reflect on why that particular phrase feels grounding or challenging.

Question 2: Paul said believers are to be united in love and firm in Christ so they are not deceived. Where do you see the temptation to organize your life around something other than Christ?

Suggested Response: Participants may recognize their identity being rooted in work, parenting, politics, achievement, reputation, or even spiritual discipline. The issue is not that these are wrong but whether they function as the center rather than Christ.

Question 3: Paul said his goal was to present everyone mature in Christ. What would it look like for you to pursue maturity, not just privately but as part of a people growing together?

Suggested Response: This may involve inviting accountability, praying for others consistently, encouraging perseverance, or refusing to measure growth by comparison. Maturity is not individual advancement but shared formation in Christ.

Question 4: Paul called the church to remain established and firm in the hope of the gospel. When pressure or persuasive voices arise, how can you stay anchored in Christ rather than drift toward fear or division?

Suggested Response: Some may need to guard what influences they absorb. Others may need to lean more intentionally into community rather than isolating. Remaining firm is not stubbornness but, rather, steady confidence in what Christ has already accomplished.

Question 5: Looking at the network of believers in chapter 4, what practical steps can we take as a group to live as one people rather than retreating into old divisions?

Suggested Response: This may include praying for one another by name, sharing responsibility, addressing conflict early, celebrating faithfulness over preference, and refusing to let secondary issues define belonging. Unity grows when Christ remains the shared center.