

LESSON THREE

COLOSSIANS: MORE THAN ENOUGH

“JESUS IS ENOUGH TO UNITE US”

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

MEMORY VERSE

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

MAIN IDEA OF THE TEXT

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

GROUP TIME

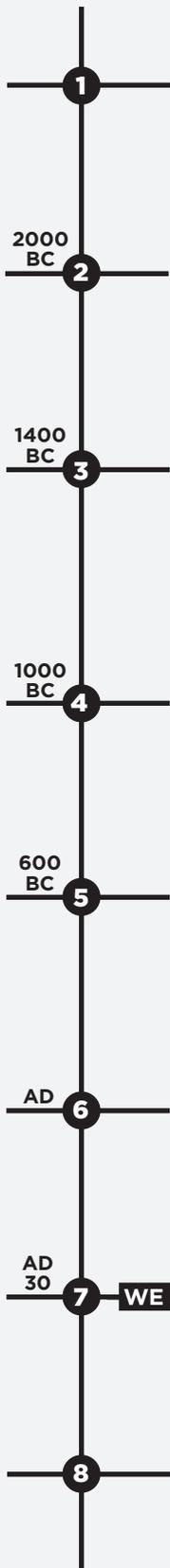
5 minutes	Welcome
5-10 minutes	Attention Grabber
10 minutes	Story / Context
25 minutes	Discussion
5-10 minutes	Closing & Prayer

PRAYER FOCUS

- **Baptism Weekend** - Pray for people to take this step of obedience. Is there anyone in your group that has not been baptized? (May 2/3)
- **Rooted** - Pray for people to remain committed to the Rooted session and return for week 2. This week, they are exploring “Who is God?”, a foundational conversation.

BEGIN this time in prayer, confessing any sins you know of, thanking the Lord for the gift of his Word, and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your study.

GOD'S STORY TIMELINE



1. God Creates the World and Promises a Rescuer (*Genesis 1-11*)

God created everything good and placed humans in a garden to live in close relationship with Him. But Adam and Eve chose to trust themselves instead of God, and sin entered the world. Relationships, creation, even our connection to God was broken. Yet even in judgment, God promised that one day, a descendant of Eve would crush the serpent and bring healing.

+This points to Jesus as the promised Rescuer who defeats sin, Satan, and death.

2. God Calls a Family and Makes a Promise (*Genesis 12-50*)

God chose a man named Abram (later Abraham) and gave a covenant to him: that he would have a large family, receive a land, and be a blessing to all nations. Though Abraham and his descendants were deeply flawed, God continued His promise through Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

+This points to Jesus as the true offspring of Abraham, through whom all nations are fully blessed.

3. God Rescues His People and Forms a Redeemed Nation (*Exodus-Deuteronomy*)

Generations later, Abraham's descendants were enslaved in Egypt. God raised up Moses to rescue them from oppression and slavery. God called His people into a relationship with Himself. He made a covenant with them, gave them the law, and instructed them in worship. He was forming a people who would live differently and show the world what it looked like to belong to Him.

+This points to Jesus as the greater Moses, who rescues us from slavery to sin and writes God's law on our hearts.

4. God Gives a Home and Promises a King (*Joshua-2 Chronicles*)

God brought His people into the promised land under Joshua's leadership. Over time, they asked for a king like the other nations. It was a disaster. But God graciously gave them David, with whom he made another covenant: one of David's descendants would rule forever. Solomon built the temple, but after his death, the kingdom split into two and began spiraling into idolatry and injustice again.

+This points to Jesus as the forever King from David's line, who reigns with justice and peace.

5. God Removes His People and Reminds Them of His Promise (*Ezra-Nehemiah*)

Because of their rebellion, God allowed His people to be conquered and taken into exile. First, it was the Northern Kingdom, Israel (to Assyria), then the Southern Kingdom, Judah (to Babylon). The temple was destroyed, and the glory of the kingdom faded. Yet God continued to speak through the prophets, reminding the people of His promise to restore them, give them new hearts, and send a Rescuer.

+This points to Jesus as the one who brings the new covenant, restores hearts, and fulfills every prophecy.

6. God Sends His Son and Fulfills His Promise (*Matthew-John*)

At just the right time, God sent Jesus into the world—born of a virgin, fully God and fully man. He perfectly obeyed the law, pointed us to the Father, and laid down His life as a sacrifice for our sins. On the third day, He rose again, proving that He is the Savior, the King, and the fulfillment of every covenant promise God has ever made.

+Jesus is the center of the story—all of Scripture leads to Him.

7. God Sends His Spirit and Builds His Church (*Acts-Jude*)

After rising from the dead, Jesus ascended into heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to empower His followers. The early Church spread the good news of Jesus across the Roman world—planting churches, welcoming both Jews and Gentiles, and learning to live as God's new covenant people. Though imperfect, the Church carries Jesus' mission forward today.

+This points to Jesus as the risen King who gives the Spirit to dwell in us and send us on mission.

8. God Restores All Things and Dwells with His People (*Revelation*)

The story isn't over. One day Jesus will return to judge evil and make all things new. There will be a new heaven and new earth, where God's people from every tribe and nation will live with Him forever. There will be no more pain, no more death, and no more sin—just joy, justice, and unbroken peace.

+This points to Jesus as the one who brings the story to its perfect and eternal culmination.

1 GRAB THEIR ATTENTION

LEADER TIP

To grab your participants' attention, start your lesson by telling a story related to the lesson's main idea. We have provided you with three options in this section, but feel free to develop your own.

OPTION 1: THE ROMAN EMPIRE

For centuries the Roman Empire presented itself as the great unifier of the known world. From Britain to North Africa, from Spain to the edges of Asia, Rome gathered diverse languages, customs, and religions under a single political order. Roads connected distant provinces. Laws standardized justice. Armies enforced stability. The empire even named its achievement: *Pax Romana*—the peace of Rome. Unity was maintained through strength, structure, and allegiance to Caesar.

For a time it appeared to work. As long as tribute was paid and loyalty was affirmed, Rome tolerated diversity within its borders. But what held the empire together was not strong enough to sustain it. Peace enforced by military power required constant pressure. Loyalty grounded in fear could not produce shared devotion. When economic strain increased and leadership faltered, fractures spread. Civil wars erupted. Provinces broke away. The empire that claimed to hold the world together eventually split and slowly unraveled. Rome could organize nations, but it could not reconcile hearts.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *Why did the Roman Empire appear so strong and unified for so long? What ultimately made that unity fragile?*
- *What do we tend to rely on (power, shared interests, politics, personality, success, etc.) to hold our lives or communities together? How do those centers eventually show their limits?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:

Colossians was written inside that empire, and it makes a claim far more sweeping than Rome ever dared. It does not locate unity in political power or enforced allegiance. It locates unity in a person. Christ is “before all things,” and “in him all things hold together.” If something less than Christ becomes the center, it will eventually fracture under the weight. But if Christ truly is enough, then He is strong enough to unite those who were once alienated into one new people.

OPTION 2 : THE TOWER OF BABEL

In Genesis 11, humanity achieved something remarkable. The people shared one language. They settled together on the plains of Shinar. They organized their labor, developed new building techniques, and committed themselves to a common project. “Let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves.” It was a moment of visible unity. No tribal warfare. No scattering. One people, one purpose, one voice.

Yet the center of that unity was not strong enough to sustain it. The project was driven by self-exaltation and fear of dispersion. The people sought security and significance on their own terms. Their togetherness was impressive, but it was anchored in pride. The unity was horizontal, not vertical. When God intervened, language fractured and the people scattered. What appeared stable dissolved. A unity built on human ambition cannot hold.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *What made the people at Babel appear unified? What ultimately revealed that their unity was fragile?*
- *Where are we tempted to build our identity around making a name for ourselves? How does that shape the way we relate to others?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:

Colossians describes a different kind of center. “Once you were alienated,” Paul wrote, “hostile in mind.” Fragmentation is our natural condition. But reconciliation with God produces reconciliation with one another. Christ does not gather people around a tower built to make a name for themselves. He gathers them around Himself. If something less than Christ becomes the center, division will eventually follow. But if Christ truly is enough, then He is strong enough to unite what pride once scattered.

OPTION 3 : 2004 OLYMPIC TEAM

In 2004 the United States sent a men's basketball team filled with elite talent to the Athens Olympics. NBA All-Stars. Franchise players. Athletes who were used to carrying teams on their own. On paper, the roster looked unstoppable. Individual skill had defined American dominance in international basketball for years. The assumption was simple. Put the best players on the floor and the rest will take care of itself.

But the tournament exposed something deeper. Talent alone could not create unity. The team had limited time together, possessed little shared system, and held competing instincts shaped by individual stardom. Other nations fielded teams with fewer headline names but greater cohesion, discipline, and a shared identity. The United States did not win gold. The assumption that individual greatness would naturally produce collective success proved false. What looked overwhelming in pieces could not hold together as a whole.

POTENTIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- *Why did so much individual talent fail to produce a unified and dominant team in 2004?*
- *Where do we assume strong personalities, gifted leaders, or shared success will naturally create unity? What changes if Christ, rather than individual strength, is truly the center?*

Transition Statement from Attention Grabber to Text:

Colossians confronts a similar temptation in the church. Talent, experience, and passion do not automatically create unity. A community can be full of strong individuals and still lack cohesion. Paul insisted that Christ is the head. If unity rests on personality or strength, it will fracture. If it rests on Christ, it will hold.

2 SET THE STAGE

LEADER TIP

This section provides the historical, cultural, and literary context needed to properly interpret and apply the text.

OUTLINE

- I. Opening Greetings (1:1-2)
- II. Continuous Work of the Father (1:3-14)
 - A. Thanksgiving (1:3-8)
 - B. Intercession for the Colossians (1:9-14)
- III. Climactic Work of the Son (1:15-23)
 - A. Supremacy of Christ (1:15-20)
 - B. Response to the Work of Christ (1:21-23)**
- IV. Apostolic Mission of Paul (1:24-2:5)**
 - A. Paul's Suffering in the Plan of God (1:24-29)**
 - B. Paul's Toil for the Local Churches (2:1-5)**
- V. Faithfulness of the Believers (2:6-4:1)
 - A. Call to Faithfulness (2:6-7)
 - B. Sufficiency in Christ (2:8-23)
 1. Against Deceptive Philosophy (2:8-15)
 2. Against Human Rituals and Regulations (2:16-23)
 - C. Reorientation of Christian Living (3:1-4:1)
 1. Focus on the Risen Christ (3:1-4)
 2. Take off the Old Humanity (3:5-11)
 3. Put on the New Humanity (3:12-17)
 4. Lord of the Household (3:18-4:1)
- VI. Eschatological Mission to the World (4:2-6)
 - A. Prayer in Eschatological Alertness (4:2)
 - B. Prayer for Paul and His Mission (4:3-4)
 - C. Witness to Outsiders (4:5-6)
- VII. Final Greetings (4:7-18)**
 - A. Messengers of the Letters (4:7-9)**
 - B. Greetings from Paul's Coworkers (4:10-14)**
 - C. Greetings to and Instructions for Others (4:15-17)**
 - D. Paul's Signature (4:18)¹**

CONTEXT

By the time we reach Colossians 1:21-2:5, Paul has already made sweeping claims about Jesus. Christ is the image of the invisible God, the one through whom and for whom all things were created, the one in whom all things hold together. He is not a regional deity or a helpful spiritual guide. He is the center of reality and the head of the church. In a world filled with talk of spiritual powers and unseen authorities, Paul made clear who rules over them all.

The believers in Colossae came from different backgrounds. Some were shaped by Jewish law and synagogue life, others by pagan practices and local folk spirituality. Some were drawn toward philosophical wisdom, others toward strict discipline and spiritual experience. The pressures they faced did not require rejecting Christ. They encouraged organizing around something more than Christ. Once that happened, old instincts returned. People clustered around practices. They measured maturity differently. Spiritual hierarchy formed. The community that began with shared reconciliation began to sort itself again.

¹David W. Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament: (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), 34.

So Paul brought them back to what they shared. “Once you were alienated from God.” All of you. “But now he has reconciled you.” All of you. Their common identity was not ethnicity, experience, discipline, or knowledge. It was rescue. If Christ truly holds all things together, then He was enough to hold them together. To move beyond Him was not progress. It was a return to fragmentation.

FALLEN CONDITION FOCUS

Separated from God, we do not live from a shared center. Alienated from Him and hostile in mind, we organize our lives around rival sources of security and significance. We build identity on tribe, status, knowledge, performance, politics, culture, or spiritual achievement. Those centers promise stability, but they cannot reconcile us. Pride and fear drive us to protect what defines us, and self-preservation turns differences into division.

GOSPEL RESPONSE

Through His death, Christ did not merely improve our condition. He reconciled us to God. The hostility that defined us is addressed at its root. In Him, the rival centers that once governed our identity lose their authority. He becomes the shared ground on which we stand, the head who holds the body together. Reconciliation with God creates a new people. What pride divided, Christ unites. What alienation fractured, Christ restores.

LEADER TIP

In this section, you will find exercises you can use to lead your group through Observation, Interpretation, and Application. As the leader, work through all the exercises below to ensure you understand the text well.

In 1:21–23, Paul shifted from describing who Christ is to describing what Christ has done. “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.” That was their shared past. Alienated is relational language. It describes distance, estrangement, and separation. “Hostile in mind” adds depth. The problem was not merely external behavior but internal posture. Their thinking, loyalties, and desires were set against God. This was not a description of a few extreme individuals. It is the condition of humanity apart from Christ.

“But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death” (v. 22). The language turns from hostility to peace. Reconciliation assumes real rupture. It also assumes initiative. God is the one who acts. Through the death of Christ, the barrier is addressed. The goal of that reconciliation is not simply forgiveness in isolation but also in presentation. Paul said Christ reconciles in order “to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation” (v. 22). The movement is from estrangement to belonging, from hostility to acceptance, from guilt to vindication.

Verse 23 adds the call to continue. “... if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel.” The reconciliation accomplished by Christ produces a persevering people. Stability matters because pressures exist. Hope must be held. This is not individualistic language. The “you” is plural. The community that once shared alienation now shared reconciliation, and their shared perseverance in the gospel guarded them from drifting back into fragmentation.

In verse 24 Paul made a statement that can sound surprising. “Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you.” His imprisonment is not framed as an interruption but as participation. When he said he was filling up what was lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, he was not suggesting Christ’s atoning work was incomplete. The reconciliation described in verses 21–23 stands finished. What continued was the suffering that attends the spread of that message. Paul’s hardship served “the body, which is the church.” His life was given for the strengthening of a people.

In verses 25–27 Paul explained his role in that work. He became a servant of the church by God’s commission to present the word of God in its fullness. That fullness is described as a mystery once hidden but now revealed. The mystery is not secret access for a spiritual elite. It is this: “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” And the “you” includes Gentiles. Those who once stood outside the covenant promises now share the same indwelling Christ and the same future hope. The dividing line between insider and outsider is replaced with a shared identity.

Paul described the content and scope of his ministry. “He is the one we proclaim.” (v. 28) The focus is singular. The reach is comprehensive. He repeated “everyone” three times. Everyone was warned. Everyone was taught. Everyone was presented mature in Christ. There are no tiers of believers, no secondary paths to fullness. Maturity is not found in supplementing Christ but in growing up into Him.

In verse 29 Paul spoke of the effort involved: he struggled and he labored. But the energy at work was Christ's, not his own. The same Christ proclaimed is the Christ empowering the proclamation. This section shows how unity is formed and preserved. A reconciled people are shaped by a shared message, a shared hope, and a shared pursuit of maturity in Christ. The church does not organize itself around competing centers. It grows together around one proclaimed Lord.

In chapter 2, verses 1-2 Paul opened his heart and let them see the weight he carried. He said he was contending for them, for the believers in Laodicea, and for others who had not met him face to face. The language is athletic and intense. This was not mild concern. He struggled so their hearts might be strengthened and they might be united in love. Strength and unity are connected. A church that is knit together in love is not easily unsettled. Paul wanted them to experience "the full riches of complete understanding," not a partial grasp of Christ but settled confidence in who He is.

At **verse 3**, Paul named the center again. Christ is the one "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." That statement spoke directly to their situation. If Christ contains the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, then no competing philosophy, discipline, or spiritual experience can offer something essential that He lacks. The issue was not intellectual curiosity. It was sufficiency. Either Christ is the storehouse of what is needed, or believers will continue searching elsewhere.

Verses 4-5 are Paul's explanation for why he wrote as he did. It was because he didn't want them deceived by persuasive arguments. The danger is not always open denial but reasoning that sounds refined and compelling. He rejoiced to see their order and the firmness of their faith in Christ. That firmness carries the idea of stability in formation, like a structure set in place. Unity, clarity, and stability rise or fall together. When Christ remains the shared center, the church stands steady. When other claims compete for that place, confidence and cohesion begin to erode.

Colossians 4:7-9 is Paul's final greetings to the church. He began with Tychicus and Onesimus. Tychicus is described as a dear brother, a faithful minister, and a fellow servant in the Lord. He was being sent to inform the Colossians about Paul's situation and to encourage their hearts. Onesimus traveled with him and is identified as a faithful and dear brother, "one of you." That phrase signals belonging. Onesimus was no longer defined by his past status but by his place within the body. Paul's language emphasizes shared identity in the Lord rather than social rank or background.

In verses 10-12 Paul named additional coworkers. Aristarchus was a fellow prisoner. Mark, once a point of division in Acts, was now commended and to be welcomed. Justus was counted among those working for the kingdom of God. Epaphras is described as always wrestling in prayer for them, longing for their maturity and firmness in the will of God. These were not isolated workers. They were part of a network bound by a shared mission. Their unity was expressed through service, prayer, and endurance.

Finally in **verses 13-14** Paul mentioned Epaphras's deep concern for believers in Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis, and he included

Luke and Demas in his greetings. The circle widened beyond one congregation. What emerges is a picture of interconnected churches and shared labor across regions. The unity Paul defended in earlier chapters is visible here in lived relationships. Different personalities, different histories, different locations, yet one Lord and one gospel binding them together. Christ does not form detached individuals. He forms a people who belong to one another.

In verse 15 Paul turned from traveling co-laborers to local gatherings. He sent greetings to the brothers and sisters in Laodicea and to Nympha and the church in her house. The church is not an abstract idea. It meets in homes. It gathers in ordinary spaces. Unity is embodied in specific people in specific places. These believers were not isolated congregations but part of a connected fellowship across cities.

Verses 16-17 was Paul instructing that this letter be read in Laodicea and that the Colossians read the letter coming from there. The Word circulated. Teaching was shared. No congregation was self-contained. Then he spoke directly to Archippus, urging him to complete the ministry he had received in the Lord. Responsibility is personal, but it serves the whole. The health of the body depends on each member carrying out what has been entrusted to them.

In verse 18 Paul closed with his own greeting in his own hand and a reminder of his chains. Even his imprisonment became part of the shared story. “Remember my chains.” The final word is “Grace be with you.” The letter that began with reconciliation and firmness ends with relational connection and shared perseverance. Unity in Christ is not theoretical. It is lived out in gathered churches, shared teaching, mutual accountability, and costly faithfulness.

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

21 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, and do not move 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.

24 Now I rejoice in what I am suffering 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 Lord’s people. 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 He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. 29 To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

2 I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. **2** My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, **3** in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. **4** I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. **5** For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

4:7 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant a in the Lord. **8** I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. **9** He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

10 My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) **11** Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my co-workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. **12** Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. **13** I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. **14** Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. **15** Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

16 After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.

17 Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord."

18 I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES IT SAY?

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

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.

LEADER TIP

In this section, you will find questions to choose from that will help your group consider how God calls them to respond to the text. Help your group set measurable action steps.

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.

4

CHALLENGE

LEADER TIP

End your study time with one final challenge and prayer. Your final challenge should pull together everything you covered in this lesson and call your participants to action.

This week will offer plenty of chances to retreat. When conversations get tense, you will feel the pull to defend your ground. When expectations are unmet, you will be tempted to withdraw. When opinions clash, old loyalties and familiar categories will beckon. We do not drift toward unity. We drift toward self-protection.

Colossians reminds us that we were once alienated and hostile in mind. That is our default setting. But now we have been reconciled through Christ's death. The same Christ who reconciled us is the one in whom all things hold together. Unity is not maintained by managing personalities or minimizing differences. It is sustained by remaining rooted in Him.

- Where this week am I most likely to protect my pride rather than pursue unity?
- What difference in this group or in my home most easily unsettles me?
- How would my response change if I believed Christ is sufficient to hold us together?

Left to ourselves, we divide. In Christ, we remain.

Let's pray.