

Small Group Guide

Based on Colossians 4 | Calvary Chapel Heartland

Overview

This week's message from Colossians 4 covered how believers are called to pray fervently, walk wisely among those who do not yet know Christ, share the gospel with grace and discernment, and encourage one another in ministry. The passage also highlights the importance of unity within the body of Christ and the transforming power of God in the lives of ordinary, imperfect people.

Key Takeaways

- Prayer is to be earnest, persistent, emotional, humble, and filled with thanksgiving – not merely a list of requests brought before God.
- Our walk, meaning the way we actually live, must come before our words when it comes to sharing the gospel. A life that does not reflect Christ will undermine the message we are trying to share.
- The gospel message never changes, but the way we introduce it and deliver it should be shaped by genuine care and understanding of the person in front of us.
- We are witnesses, not deal closers. The work of saving a soul belongs to God. We plant and water; He produces the growth.
- No failure is too great for God to restore. The story of John Mark and Paul illustrates that forgiveness and reconciliation are possible even after serious conflict and disappointment.
- Every believer has been given a ministry. We are all called to take that responsibility seriously and to encourage others to fulfill theirs.
- Unity within the body of Christ is not accidental. It requires humility, forgiveness, mutual encouragement, and a shared commitment to the same direction and doctrine.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question

1. Think of someone in your life who influenced you toward faith, not necessarily through a formal gospel presentation, but simply through the way they lived. What was it about them that made an impression on you?

On Prayer (Colossians 4:2-4)

2. Pastor Jerry described earnest prayer as persistent, emotional, humble, burdened, thankful, and rooted in trust. Which of those qualities comes most naturally to you in prayer, and which is the most difficult? Why?
3. Pastor Jerry mentioned that God wants to commune and fellowship with us, not just receive our list of requests. What would it look like practically for your prayer life to shift in that direction?
4. Paul asked the Colossian church to pray that God would open a door for the gospel – not that Paul would force one open himself. What does that posture tell us about how we should approach opportunities to share our faith?

On Sharing the Gospel (Colossians 4:5-6)

5. Pastor Jerry said, "Our walk must come before our words." Have you ever seen this play out in real life, either positively or negatively? What happened?
6. He also described the danger of being a "gospel sledgehammer" – dropping truth on someone and walking away. What does it look like to share the gospel with both truth and genuine care for the other person?
7. Pastor Jerry pointed out that we live in a cultural moment where many people do not believe in absolute truth. How does that reality change the way you might begin a conversation about faith with someone who holds that view?
8. He said, "You and I are not the deal closers." How does that truth take pressure off of you when it comes to sharing your faith? Does it also carry a caution? What might that be?

On Restoration and Forgiveness (Colossians 4:10)

9. John Mark had a significant public failure and was the subject of a sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas. Yet later, Paul called him useful for ministry. Is there someone in your life you have been defining by a past failure

rather than by who they are in Christ? What would it take to change that?

10. Pastor Jerry noted that even two godly, humble people can have intense disagreements without sin being involved, and that God can still heal and restore those relationships. Have you experienced that kind of restoration? What did it require?

On Ministry and Encouragement (Colossians 4:17)

11. Paul told the entire church to encourage Archippus to fulfill the ministry he had received. Who in your life is serving God in a way that is difficult or discouraging? How could you come alongside that person this week?
12. Pastor Jerry said every person in the room has a ministry. Do you have a clear sense of what yours is? If not, what might be getting in the way of that clarity?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice before your group meets again.

Pray Differently This Week Set aside a specific block of time for prayer that is longer than your usual routine. Begin not with requests but with praise and thanksgiving. End with a deliberate surrender – "Nevertheless, your will be done." Notice how that changes the tone of your time with God.

Identify One Open Door Think of one person in your life who does not yet know Christ. Commit to praying for them daily this week. Ask God to open a door for a genuine conversation, and ask Him to show you how to listen well before you speak.

Examine Your Walk Before thinking about what you might say to someone about the gospel, honestly assess how you have been living in front of them. Is there anything in your lifestyle or attitude that might be undermining your witness? Bring that to God in prayer.

Extend Forgiveness Is there someone you have held at a distance because of a past failure or conflict? Take one concrete step this week toward restoration, whether that is a phone call, a note, or simply praying for them by name.

Encourage Someone in Ministry Identify one person who is serving in the church or sharing their faith in their community. Reach out this week to specifically tell them what you appreciate about their faithfulness and encourage them to keep going.

Closing Reflection

Pastor Jerry closed with a summary of the entire letter of Colossians: walk in Christ, rooted and built up, abounding with thanksgiving, seeking the things above, and letting the word of Christ dwell richly in you. As a group, take a moment to reflect quietly on this question before closing in prayer:

In which of these areas is God most clearly calling you to grow right now?

Closing Prayer

Close your time together by praying for one another's specific needs and ministry opportunities. Ask God to unify your group around love for Christ and love for the people around you who do not yet know Him. Pray that your walk would speak before your words do, and that God would open doors you could never open on your own.