

## Small Group Discussion Guide

### COLOSSIANS – Part 8 – Advancing the Gospel

Northern Hills Community Church

November 6, 2011

Colossians 4:2-18

This guide is to help facilitate discussion with our Small Group. Use it as a resource in discovering and owning the truths of God's Word. There may be questions you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions in some and cause people to dwell on their relationship with God. The purpose of this guide and this experience is not to complete every question. Use this as a flexible learning tool not a rigid task list.

#### Connect . . .

Discuss some of the following questions:

- Spend some time recapping our series in Colossians. What do we know about the Christians in Colossae? What were they facing? What have Paul's main points been so far?
- What have you learned about the identity of Christ? His work? His church?
- How have the truths in Colossians been relevant to your life today? Share how you've been applying these truths in your life?
- Based on last week (Building a Household in the Lord) has God shown you any changes that may need to be made in your family? In your attitude toward you spouse or children? In your attitude towards your workplace?  
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- When you hear the word "mission" what is the first thing you think of?
- How would you sum up the Biblical mission of the church in one sentence?
- How well do you think you're doing personally when it comes to advancing the Gospel?

#### Review the Message . . .

##### 1. PRAY EARNESTLY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE GOSPEL

*<sup>2</sup> Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. <sup>3</sup>At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— <sup>4</sup>that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. (vv. 2-4)*

- Pray for opportunities
- Pray for clarity

#### Discussion/Application Questions

- Why do you think prayer is often taken so lightly in the church today?
- This passage urges us to "continue steadfastly" (devoted, actively engaged, persistent) in prayer. What kind of commitment does this kind of prayer require? What are the effects of this kind of prayer?
- Read Luke 11:5-10. What does the parable told by Jesus teach us about this kind of prayer?
- Being watchful in prayer implies being alert spiritually, it also involves watching and knowing specifically what to pray for. Paul mentions two specific areas: opportunities ("open door for the word") and clarity. Look up (ahead of time or with the group) specific prayer requests that relate to advancing the gospel:
  - North American Mission Board ([www.namb.net/prayer](http://www.namb.net/prayer))
  - International Mission Board ([www.imb.org/pray](http://www.imb.org/pray))
    - Take time together as a group to pray for these needs that relate to advancing the gospel.
    - Now, pray for each other that God would give opportunities and clarity in our everyday work and relationships
    - Finally, pray that God would be leading us as a church in how we can be engaged in mission work here and abroad.

## 2. SEIZE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE THE GOSPEL

*<sup>5</sup> Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. <sup>6</sup>Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. (vv. 5-6)*

- Be gracious
- Be engaging
- Be ready

### Discussion/Application Questions

- Why is our “walk” or our behavior so important when it comes to our relationship with those outside of the faith?
- Why is wisdom such a necessary part in our witness to those who don’t know Christ? What are some difficulties that we face as we strive to walk in purity, careful to represent Christ well, and yet be bold witnesses for Christ as we stand on the truth?
- Discuss these scriptural sources of wisdom: Proverbs 9:10, James 1:5, Colossians 3:16, Colossians 1:28.
- “Making the best use of the time” is a very important phrase in this passage. No one knows how many days they are granted to live this life. What are some things we can do to keep our mission of advancing the Gospel in focus as we live our daily lives?
- What recent opportunities have you seized to share Christ? What opportunities have you let pass?
- Our conversations with those who don’t know Christ need to be full of grace and seasoned with salt (interesting, witty, humorous, charming, etc.) What effect does harsh or unwholesome talk have on our witness for Christ? (Read Ephesians 4:29). What effect does dull and boring speech have on our witness for Christ?
- We’re called to be ready to respond and answer questions about our faith and the way we live. What does this require on our part?
- How is your life different from those around you who don’t know Christ? Has it resulted in them asking questions about your faith?
- Beyond knowing how to explain our faith, this verse also speaks of having specific answers to specific individuals. What is the importance of personal relationships with non-Christians in our witness for Christ?

## 3. ADVANCE THE GOSPEL TOGETHER! (vv. 7-18)

### Discussion/Application Questions

- Advancing the Gospel truly is a team effort. Paul exemplified this. What is required of us as a church in order to forge ahead and be engaged in advancing the Gospel? (*unity, love, prayer for each other, cooperation, etc...*)
- What are some pitfalls that can keep us from corporately being on mission as a church?

*I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. (v. 18)*

### Wrap Up:

- Paul was glad to suffer for Christ (Colossians 1:24). How are his words here (“Remember my chains”) meant to be an encouragement?
- What kind of commitment is required of us to follow Paul’s example and serve Christ in this way?
- Remember, it is only by God’s grace that we stand firm in His Truth, live out our new life in Christ, and persevere in His mission for us in this world.