

## Further Bible Study Questions

- A) The letter to the church in Colossae, which is the book of Colossians in the Bible, is meant to beg the question, “Is Christ truly all you need? Is Christ sufficient for you and your life?” On a scale of 1-10, if you were to take a fearless evaluation of your own life, do you believe that Jesus Christ is completely sufficient? On the same scale, are your behaviors and practices consistent with a life of a person who is depending on the sufficiency of Christ for their whole life?
- B) What would it require for you to take whatever your next step is in your relationship with Jesus Christ? How can Christ become more sufficient for you? If not an area of sin or weakness, what about an area of life in which you do not engage God authentically (prayer, evangelism, etc.)? Is God sufficient to reach the world (your neighbor or someone in a far away country) with the Great News of Jesus Christ? Does this “actively, alertly, and thankfully” engage your prayer life in Jesus Christ? Is God calling you to a deeper dependence on His sufficiency for some area of your life?
- C) Our church has several “missionary partners” who are spread around the world. You can pick-up information on any of our missionaries at our information table, or connect with our missionary profiles through our website. But more than that, these missionaries who are on the “front lines” of the worldwide Gospel effort of Jesus Christ need our earnest and authentic prayers. Can you “adopt” one of our missionary partners and spend regular time (like a car which is ready to run at all times, “be devoted,” Colossians 4:2), praying for that missionary partner? Will you pray for God to provide open doors for the Gospel? Will you consider how you can support both the mission and the missionary through prayer and support? Letters? Gifts? Engagement? God has chosen YOU to say YES to what He is already doing!

# Open Doors

Long Beach Alliance Church • November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2007 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**DEVOTE YOURSELVES TO PRAYER,  
KEEPING ALERT IN IT WITH AN  
ATTITUDE OF THANKSGIVING; PRAYING  
AT THE SAME TIME FOR US AS WELL,  
THAT GOD WILL OPEN UP TO US A  
DOOR FOR THE WORD, SO THAT WE  
MAY SPEAK FORTH THE MYSTERY OF  
CHRIST, FOR WHICH I HAVE ALSO BEEN  
IMPRISONED; THAT I MAY MAKE IT  
CLEAR IN THE WAY I OUGHT TO SPEAK.  
~COLOSSIANS 4:2-4 (NASB)**

## **1) Is Jesus Christ Truly Sufficient?**

- A) The Apostle Paul wrote the short letter to the Colossian church begging the question of whether Jesus would be completely sufficient for all the needs of a Christian.
- B) Colossians is set against this question of Christ’s sufficiency through each key teaching passage. The book can be summarized as:
- i) Remember, Christ **was** sufficient for your initial salvation (Colossians 1:1-12).
  - ii) Christ’s sufficiency exists because **He is God**, the head of His church, of which we are all a part (1:13-29).

iii) Since Jesus is sufficient, **why are you unfaithful?** Why have you added false teaching and practices to the complete sufficiency of Christ (2:1-8)?

iv) **Do not return to rules and laws** which cannot provide life! Christ crucified the Law, it is only good for pointing out sin, and is not for righteous living (2:9-23).

v) Rather, **put on the new self** (new identity) which is part of being a follower of Jesus Christ! This is a life which never asks "how far away from God can I get and still get into Heaven." This is a new life which asks, "**how close can I draw to God**, how deeply can I embody Jesus in my life, how can I respond to my relationship with God in thankfulness and deeper devotion" (3:1-17)?

vi) The new self is most important in our family & personal relationships! **This is where authenticity is refined to its deepest levels** (3:18-4:1).

C) The whole letter to the Colossians is set against the question, "**Is Christ sufficient to do these things?**" From its foundation to its completion, this question is both asked and then answered with a resounding "**YES!**"

## 2) Engaging The Mission In Prayer

A) As Paul often does in his letters (Romans 12:12, Philippians 4:6, Ephesians 6:18), he calls on the Colossians to a "constant" lifestyle of prayer (Colossians 4:2).

B) The prayer life of the follower of Christ is like a car which is left running, always ready for immediate use. Prayer should never be "shut down" in our lives, but always "at the ready."

C) Paul further instructs to "keep alert," not falling into mundane or boring prayer, but remaining fully engaged.

D) This call to "keep alert" is a call to stay awake in the midst of a world which lulls the Christian to sleep. Our mind's are to be alertly focused on following Jesus Christ (4:2)!

E) The call to "thanksgiving" is interesting simply because it repeated so often in Colossians (cf., 1:3, 12, 3:15-17, 4:2). The reminder to "be thankful" is more concentrated in Colossians than any other book in the Bible (even the Psalms)! There seems to be a relationship between embracing Christ's sufficiency and being thankful.

## 3) Engaging The Worldwide Mission Of The Gospel

A) Paul asks the Colossians to pray for him also, in the midst of their "constant" prayers (4:3). This was not a gratuitous request, but was an earnest request to engage the worldwide ministry of the Gospel in a distinctively spiritual manner.

B) The motivation for prayers were three-fold (4:2-3):

i) **The spread of the Gospel** through "open doors" which only God could provide.

ii) **The spread of the Gospel**, despite obstacles, like Paul's imprisonment (cf. 4:18).

iii) **The spread of the Gospel**, clearly presented.

C) When we think of how we are supporting the church, both locally and around the world, what comes to mind? How do you respond to Christ's sufficiency within His church?

D) Without "active, alert and thankful" prayer, Christ's sufficiency for His church is blunted. Can the Gospel reach the world? **YES!** Most effectively through the prayers of His people!