

Friday, Sept. 11: Read [*Philemon*](#)

Let's finish the week by reading a letter Paul wrote to a believer in Colosse. The letter was likely delivered to Philemon by Tychicus at the same time that he carried the letter of Colossians from Paul, while in prison at Rome ([*Colossians 4:7-9*](#)). Notice Onesimus is travelling with Tychicus back to Colosse, where he was previously a slave. Likely, Onesimus had robbed his master Philemon and fled to Rome where he became a Christian through Paul's ministry. And now Paul is sending him back to his master -- a changed man, a Christian and a fellow brother in the Lord.

The themes of redemption and reconciliation ring out loudly in this short but potent one chapter book of the Bible. Never underestimate how God can work through unforeseen means to bring people, both to Christ and, through forgiveness, back to others. Extra biblical tradition claims that Onesimus would not just be forgiven by Philemon, but set free and eventually rise to pastor one of the congregations of Laodicea ([*Romans 8:28-31*](#)).

Friday: Pray for Our Missionaries

Juan & Adriana Palacios (Angola, Africa), **David & Miriam Trott** (Cochabamba, Bolivia), **Mario Bloise** (Argentina), **Dan & DeAnn Gerard** (San Antonio, TX), **Craig & Shelly Shafer** (Sentani, Indonesia), **Sue Saunders** (Bosnia), **Matt and Becky Kooi** (Tijuana), **Daniel Jezowski** (Wycliffe), **Brad and Christa Babjack** (University of West Virginia), **Salomon and Megan Guzman** (Tijuana), **Alvaro and Rachel Garriga** (Central Asia), **William and Salma Garcia** (Tijuana church plant), **Brendan and Ashley Camp** (Columbia)

Week of
September 6
2020



Be the CHURCH is DISCIPLESHIP

Spiritual Disciplines Guide:

- *Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your reading each day.*
- *Read the chapters and underline any meaningful verses and take note of specific advice or wisdom gleaned from your reading.*
- *Note any unclear passages or teaching and seek insight, answers or help.*
- *Think about what you're reading. Ask:*
 1. *How does this apply to me?*
 2. *Are there any temptations to avoid, sins to confess, commands to obey or promises to claim?*
 3. *What insight do I gain on God, myself, others, or life?*
- *Ask God to show you any specific action you need to take as you read.*

We have come to the second part of our study of the book of Acts. Part I -- The Church Established, featuring the Apostle Peter. Part II -- The Church Extended, featuring the Apostle Paul. Luke, who wrote Acts, includes three different missionary journeys of Paul, covering a combined period of some 20 years. Each mission trip sets the stage for many of Paul's New Testament letters. This week, we will focus on Paul's third trip.

Monday, September 7: Read [*Colossians 1*](#)

On Paul's third missionary journey, he establishes the church at Ephesus and later writes the book of Ephesians. As a church, we studied the book of Ephesians last fall. Let's bypass it this week and look at two of Paul's letters written to a church somewhat near Ephesus, one that was started by an Ephesian convert of Paul, named Epaphras. The church is located in Colosse, east of Ephesus and was probably started during Paul's third missionary trip.

Paul writes this letter to combat a heresy known as Gnosticism. It is one that sought to diminish the deity of Christ and the uniqueness of God's revelation given in scripture. Note right off the bat, in verses 15-20, Paul expounds on the supremacy of Jesus Christ. List all the things Paul claims are true of him in this first chapter. Then go back and pray Paul's prayer for yourself in verses 9-12. Ask him to reveal his will for you this week, and be ready to follow him.

Monday: Pray for yourself:

My relationship with God

My life roles and responsibilities

My personal needs/weak areas

My goals and objectives for 2020

Tuesday, Sept. 8: Read [*Colossians 2*](#)

Pick up in chapter two with Paul's continued defense of the diety of Christ, along with warnings against "fine sounding arguments, deceptive philosophies and the basic principles of this world". In Christ (not mysticism, science or other religions) are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. The "fullness" we all desire and seek exists in Christ. Ultimate reality is found in him alone. And he is head over every power and authority. He is supreme! And he alone is Savior of humanity (Note [*v. 13-15, Philippians 2:5-11, Hebrews 1:1-4*](#)).

Tuesday: Pray for Family by Name.

Wednesday, Sept. 9: Read [*Colossians 3*](#)

In chapter three, Paul turns to the topic of practical Christian living, how to live out our faith. Notice the series of "do's and don't's". Verses 5-11 emphasize doing away with sinful attitudes and actions. Verses 12-17 emphasize new ways of thinking and acting. Verses 18-25 emphasize positive domestic relationships -- all done in a way that honors God. Go back and review the three sections of chapter 3. What might God be pinpointing for you personally in this section? Take to heart verses one and two. Since you are raised with Christ, live out your new identity as a Christian. Practice setting your mind on godly things, not on temporal, material, earthly things.

Wednesday: Pray for Bethel Gilead Community Church

1. Leadership: Pray for God's grace and guidance in Pastor Jim and Pastor David's ministries and families. Pray for Linda Penn in her work at BGCC. Pray for the church council and the various ministry team leaders. Ask the Lord of the harvest to raise up more workers for the harvest ([*Matthew 9:38*](#))
2. Worship: Ask God to strengthen our devotion to Him, in prayer, praise and thanksgiving. Pray for more musicians to help lead the church in worship, including a pianist. Pray for the development of a youth praise team.
3. Fellowship: Ask God to deepen our love and commitment to one another as a family of believers. Pray that we incorporate newcomers into our church fellowship. Pray through this past Sunday's congregational prayer requests.
4. Discipleship: Ask God to develop the faith, dedication, and leadership of our people. Pray for the children and youth ministries at BGCC. Ask God to bless our small group ministry, to raise up new groups, new teachers and more leaders.
5. Outreach: Pray that God will use Bethel Gilead to make a positive impact on our community so that many would come to Christ. Ask God to embolden our people to intentionally reach out to others.

6. Future Faith Goals: Ask God to give our congregation a united vision for the future. Pray for God's clear leading in our 2020 plan as we call our members to a greater love and commitment to the Lord and his service. Ask God to bless our finances so that we can better accomplish his purposes for our congregation.

Thursday, Sept. 10: Read [*Colossians 4*](#)

Colossians 4 consists mostly of final instructions and personal greetings. Verses 2-5 however contain two practical admonitions: 1. Devote yourself to prayer and 2. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders.

Prayer is your "oxygen line" to God. Communication oxygenates every relationship. Numerous things tend to crimp off our communications with God. For that reason, Paul says to dedicate yourself to praying. Part of this includes being watchful -- alert to needs and opportunities for which to pray. And, thankful -- quick to acknowledge what God has done. Prayer can also help us to be wise in how we relate to non-Christians. We are to be alert for opportunities to share our faith and "salty" in how we respond to others.

Thursday: Pray for "My World"

(Write down names as God brings people to mind.)

- Neighbors • People who live around me.
- People at Work • Others God brings into my life. Take note of specific needs around you and ask God what he wants you to do to help. Who can you invite to church?
- Community -- Ask God to bring revival and a spiritual awakening to Branch County, even through the Coronavirus crisis.
- Pray for the area churches and a greater spirit of unity and cooperation, especially as churches reunite after the quarantine.
- Pray for the community parachurch ministries serving our county, including Beginnings Care for Life Center, Branch County Right to Life, Celebrate Recovery, Coach Eby Youth and Family Center, Damascus Road Ministry, Family Promise, Forgotten Man Ministries, Foster Closet of Branch County, God's Choice Church, Jacob's Well Ministry, Presbyterian Free Health Clinic, Shelterhouse, Tommy's House, the Gideons and the Bronson Food Pantry.
- America: Continue to pray for the nation, our national leaders and a revival in America. Pray that God would use the Coronavirus outbreak to lead people to faith in Jesus Christ.