

# Doing What God Wants You to Do



## SABBATH—MARCH 21

**READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON:** Colossians 4:7–15; Ephesians 6:21; 2 Peter 3:10–14; Isaiah 60:1–3.

**MEMORY VERSE:** “Whatever may happen to you, continue to thank God. God wants you to do that, because you belong to Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:18, EASY).



**Anywhere Paul traveled, he always connected people with churches.**

**THIS WEEK, WE STUDY THE FINAL PART** of Paul's letter to the Colossian church. We will learn more about Paul's work partners. The book of Acts shows Paul working first with Barnabas, then with Silas. Then Acts gives us an outline of Paul's three trips to share the Good News about Jesus.

This week, we will look at Paul's plan to preach the Good News. Paul's plan was to share the Good News about Jesus in the most important cities in the Kingdom of Rome. Paul also wanted to train people to be Bible workers. Paul sent these workers to the cities and towns he didn't visit. Some of those places included Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis.

Anywhere Paul traveled, he always connected people with churches. Paul understood that the people must work together: Jews and non-Jews, men and women, and church members with Bible workers. These workers included Tychicus, Aristarchus, Justus, Epaphras, Luke, and Nympha. In the final part of Paul's letter to the Colossians, we learn about a letter he wrote to Laodicea. This letter was lost. Paul puts a lot of information into his final verses. He also includes some advice to a man named Archippus. Paul did everything he could to make the churches strong.

**LESSONS ON SHARING THE GOOD NEWS  
(Colossians 4:7–9)**

We learn much from Paul about sharing the Good News about Jesus. Paul traveled about 13,400 miles. This information is amazing because Paul made most of this journey on foot! Some of the time Paul also was in jail.

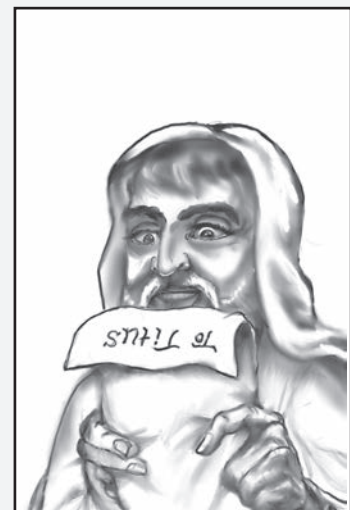
Paul spent a lot of time in cities, including Corinth and Ephesus. These cities were business centers. Paul sent Bible workers from these centers out to small towns. These workers shared the Good News about Jesus with the people in these small towns. Paul also visited the churches he started. Paul wanted to help the faith of the new Christians in these churches. When Paul couldn't visit the churches himself, he sent letters. This way, church members knew that he remembered and cared about them.

**Read Colossians 4:7–9. Compare with Ephesians 6:21. What does Paul say in these verses about Tychicus? What reasons does Paul give for sending Tychicus and Onesimus to Colossae?**

We don't know what news Tychicus and Onesimus shared with the Colossians. From Paul's words, we can tell that the news was meant to give them hope (Colossians 4:7–9). Tychicus and Onesimus may have shared news about Paul's time in jail. This communication between Paul and the churches was important. Paul's letters helped to connect church members together.

Tychicus's name means "a lucky chance." Paul trusted Tychicus. Paul says that Tychicus was a loyal preacher and worker. Paul chose him and one other person from Asia (Acts 20:4) to go with him on his journey to Jerusalem. Paul and these two men brought an offering with them for poor Christians in the city. Tychicus also was with Paul during his second time in jail in Rome. Then Paul sent Tychicus to Ephesus to help the church there (2 Timothy 4:12). Paul also thought about sending Tychicus to Titus, in Crete (Titus 3:12). Onesimus also traveled with Tychicus. Onesimus became a Christian in Rome after he met Paul (read Lesson 1). Paul also says Onesimus was a loyal Christian.

Paul also wanted to know about the lives of Christians in Colossae. The church could easily send someone back to Paul with a message. In this way, Paul shared his love for Christians and helped their faith to grow strong in Jesus.



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**STAYING CONNECTED (Colossians 4:10, 11)**

Today, we have the internet, phones, and computers to help us stay connected. So, we may have a hard time trying to imagine in our minds how Paul helped church members feel that they were part of something bigger than their local churches.

**Paul sent Bible workers to the churches. The Bible workers carried news from Paul. Then they brought news back to Paul from the churches (Colossians 4:7–9). What other ways did Paul encourage church members to connect with each other? What greetings did Paul send? What message did those greetings also contain? Read Colossians 4:10, 11 for the answers.**

With these greetings, Paul helps church members connect and stay connected with each other. Paul shares news about his fellow workers. We learn from these verses that Mark was Barnabas's cousin. Mark may have gone to Colossae. Paul makes Mark's trip possible. Aristarchus was in jail with Paul. They were both soldiers for Jesus. They put on God's battle suit, the same as clothes (Ephesians 6:10, 11). Together, Paul and Aristarchus worked to help people escape from Satan's power. Then they taught these people to serve the Kingdom of God (read 2 Timothy 2:1–4). Paul also praises Justus. Justus is someone that people can trust to work for God. They can trust Justus to share with them the Good News about Jesus.

Paul also says that Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus are Jewish Christians. Then Paul talks about three non-Jewish Christians: Epaphras, Luke, and Demas (Colossians 4:12–14). Yes, there were some problems in the church between Jewish Christians and non-Jewish Christians. But Paul shows us that these Jewish and non-Jewish men worked together in peace and love. Paul also is sad that more Jewish Christians haven't joined him in his work. At that time, John Mark was with Paul. Some years ago, John Mark left Paul and Barnabas on their first trip to share the Good News (Acts 13:13). But now Paul trusts John Mark very much. John Mark gives Paul hope (Acts 15:36–40).

Satan works to destroy peace in God's church. As our church grows worldwide, it often changes in many ways. During these changes, Satan attacks the church. Satan tries to destroy our work for peace in ways that hurt us all.



**Paul shows us that these Jewish and non-Jewish men worked together in peace and love.**

## STAND PERFECT AND COMPLETE IN JESUS (Colossians 4:12, 13)

Paul's life and work for God showed that he had a plan (read Philippians 3:13, 14). Paul's fellow workers and Jesus' followers had this plan, too. They planned to share the Good News about Jesus everywhere in the Kingdom of Rome and elsewhere and to do this work fast (Colossians 1:23). We need to work with the same energy and strength today.

**Read Colossians 4:12, 13. What plan do we read about in these verses? How does Paul get this plan done?**

As we saw in an earlier lesson, Epaphras may have gone to Colossae to share the Good News. He also may have traveled to the nearby cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis (read Lesson 1). For sure, Epaphras's greetings and prayers for the churches in these cities filled them with hope. Paul tells the churches that Epaphras "prays that you will continue to grow as believers [Christians]" (Colossians 4:12, EASY). Epaphras also "asks God to help you to be strong and to make you perfect" (Colossians 4:12, NLV). "He prays that you will completely understand everything that God wants you to do" (Colossians 4:12, EASY). Let's look more carefully at the different parts of this prayer.

**"To be strong."** The word means to stand firm and not be moved in our faith. We can do that only if we know Bible truth and trust the Good News about Jesus (Colossians 1:23). Paul uses the word "stand" many times to talk about the fight against Satan and his tricks (Ephesians 6:11). We must put on God's battle suit, the same as clothes. Then we can stand strong against the devil and his army of evil angels (Ephesians 6:10–18; compare 2 Timothy 2:19).

**"To make you perfect."** The word "perfect" means showing God's holy love. This same love sent Jesus to the cross to save us (Matthew 5:44, 48).

**"Completely understand."** The word "completely" or "complete" shows us that God wants us to know something fully. Abraham was fully convinced that God would keep His promises (Romans 4:21). The Lord made Paul strong so that Paul could fully preach the Good News (2 Timothy 4:17).

**"Everything that God wants you to do."** The word "everything" shows us that Paul and Epaphras wanted the Colossians to know all about God's plan for their lives. Then they would honor God and please Him in every way (Colossians 1:9, 10).



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## LIVING FOR GOD (Colossians 4:14, 15)

**Read Colossians 4:14, 15 and 2 Timothy 4:10, 11. How is Luke different from Demas, and why is he different?**

John tells us, “Do not live like [the same as] people who do not know God. Do not love the wrong things that belong to this world [life]. If anyone loves those things, it [their love for those things] shows that they do not love God, their Father” (1 John 2:15, EASY). Luke’s love for Jesus caused him to be loyal to Paul to the end of Paul’s life. But not Demas. Demas loved the things of this life more than he loved heaven.

**Read the following verses. What advice do these verses give us as we wait for Jesus to come back?**

**1. Mark 13:32–37** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Titus 2:11–14** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. 2 Peter 3:10–14** \_\_\_\_\_



**This faith and love is the same as gold that was heated in fire.**

Jesus and His followers often warn us to watch and to be careful. We must be ready at all times for Jesus to come back. Then we won’t be surprised. Sad to say, many people will be the same as Jesus’ followers. Jesus told them to watch and pray (Mark 14:38). But many people won’t do what God asks them to do to get ready. Who or what has your heart? The answer to this question tells us if we will be ready or not for the Second Coming. We can’t serve two masters. We must choose: Jesus or Satan.

In Jesus’ message to the Laodicean church, He tells us what to do to be ready (Revelation 3:14–22). First, we must confess our sins. Second, we must open our hearts to Jesus. We must give Jesus full control of our lives. Third, we must ask Jesus for faith and love. This faith and love is the same as gold that was heated in fire. When you heat gold at a high temperature, all the dirt is removed. Then the gold is perfect. The fire is a symbol for all the suffering and tests in our lives. These tests help us to win the fight against sin and remove it from our hearts.



**A MESSAGE FOR LAODICEA (Colossians 4:16–18)**

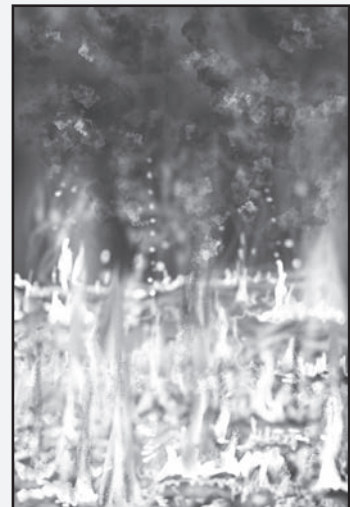
Read Colossians 4:16–18; compare Colossians 2:1–3. Think some more about Jesus' message to Laodicea in Revelation 3:14–22. (Read yesterday's study.) Paul asked that his letter to the Colossian church also be read to the Laodiceans. Why was Paul's advice important to both churches?

In the history of God's people, the same problems happen again and again. The prophets warned Israel not to worship false gods. The prophets were God's special messengers. The prophets told Israel to confess their sins and to give up their false gods before it was too late. Isaiah told the people to ask God for forgiveness (Isaiah 1:21; Isaiah 1:16–20). Both John the Baptist (Matthew 3:2, 8–10) and Jesus (Matthew 4:17; Matthew 12:33–37) asked the Israelites to stop sinning and serve God. Jesus' followers also preached the same message (Acts 2:38; Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30; 2 Corinthians 7:9, 10).

**Compare the following verses: Isaiah 60:1–3 with Revelation 18:1–4; and Isaiah 62:1–5 with Revelation 19:7, 8. What things are the same between the messages in the two books?**

God will join heaven and earth. But because of the world-wide war between good and evil, God must do this work in separate parts:

1. **The Cross.** At Calvary, Satan lost any love that the holy angels felt for him (John 12:31).
2. **Jesus' work for us in heaven.** Jesus works as our High Priest or top religious leader in heaven. Jesus goes to God for us to get help. Because of Jesus, "God will give you every good thing that you need to serve him" (Hebrews 13:21, EASY).
3. **1,000 years in heaven.** After the Second Coming, we will spend 1,000 years in heaven. During that time, Jesus will answer all our questions about God's work as Judge. Then sin and all sinners will be destroyed in the lake of everlasting fire. This fire will make the whole earth clean (Revelation 21:8).
4. **End of sin.** When sin is destroyed, then God can finally join heaven and earth together.



Sin and all sinners will be destroyed in the lake of everlasting fire.



**“When we give our lives to Jesus, He makes us the same as a strong castle on this earth. This castle is under His control and no one else’s.”**

**ADDITIONAL THOUGHT:** “When we give our lives to Jesus, He makes us the same as a strong castle on this earth. This castle is under His control and no one else’s. The people on this earth are at war with God. When we give our lives fully to Jesus, Satan cannot destroy us. So, we must allow Jesus to fully control us. Two powers control this earth. We must choose to serve one or the other. We may not choose to serve Satan. But we can come under his control anyway. That will happen if we don’t choose to serve Jesus. If we don’t work with God and His angels, Satan will take control of our hearts. Then Satan will make our hearts his home. Jesus must live in our hearts. His life in our hearts is the only safety we have against evil. Jesus lives in our hearts when we have faith in His holy and obedient life. So, we must become connected with God. This living connection is the only hope we have to fight against self and sin. We may give up many bad habits for a time. We may leave Satan for a little while. But without a living connection to God, Satan shall take control of us. We connect with God when we give our hearts fully to Him each moment. So, we must have a personal relationship with Jesus. We must continue to communicate with Him all the time. If we don’t, then Satan will take control of our lives. Then we will do what Satan wants in the end.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 324, adapted.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Read again the Ellen G. White quote above. There are only two sides in the worldwide war between good and evil. If we don’t choose Jesus, we are on Satan’s side (Luke 11:23). We may not like this idea. But God doesn’t need to make His truths popular so that we will like and accept them. What does this Bible truth tell you about why you must give Jesus your heart and free will? Why is doing that so important?
- ② Read Revelation 14:14–16. God poured His Holy Spirit on the church after Jesus went back to heaven. The Holy Spirit helped the church to grow. This time was named the early rain. In the end-times, God will pour His Spirit (named the late rain) on the church again. The Holy Spirit will help the church finish God’s work on earth. How does Revelation 14:12 show us this Bible truth?

## STOLEN BIBLE STARTS A CHURCH

In 2021, in Papua New Guinea, people from five villages started to fight each other. Many houses were burned. In one village, named Kemefa, the fighters stole many things. At least 16 people were killed.

During this time, a fighter entered the Kemefa Seventh-day Adventist Church and stole a Bible. The fighter, Abuni Ane, took the book to his home village, Orege.

After the fights ended, Abuni started to read the stolen Bible. As he read, his heart was touched.

Many months passed. A Seventh-day Adventist pastor named Dicks Neheza visited Abuni's village. Abuni brought the stolen Bible to the pastor and explained what happened. Abuni was sorry for stealing the Bible. He wanted to give his life to God.

The pastor and Abuni started a house church in Orege. Before long, Abuni decided to get baptized.

At the baptism, Abuni shared his story with the people who came from the Kemefa church. Abuni asked for their forgiveness and gave the Bible to the church's leader.

The church leader forgave Abuni and asked him to keep the Bible. Then the leader gave Abuni a church songbook as a gift. The leader encourage Abuni to keep reading the Bible, to sing hymns to God, and to start a church in Orege.

Abuni went right to work. The next day, he and two friends went into the jungle to collect wood to build a church. Pastor Neheza bought tools to build the church. The church opened that same day in Orege with three members.

Since then, the church now has 18 members. Eight people were baptized during a Bible meeting in 2024.

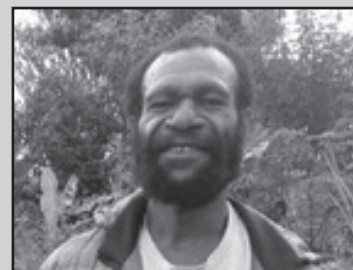
Pastor Neheza is amazed that fighting between people in different villages and a stolen Bible started a new church! The pastor said that their church is now too small. Church members now plan to build a bigger church.

Each week, your special offerings help us build new churches in Papua New Guinea and in other places worldwide. This quarter's 13th Sabbath Offering will help support the work of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Papua New Guinea. Thank you for your offering this Sabbath.

INSIDE  
*Story*  
by DAVID FLETCHER



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