

## PAUL'S LABOR ON BEHALF OF THE CHURCH (1:24-29)

1. What are some of the ways we suffer in general as broken people in a broken world?
2. What are some of the ways we suffer simply because we identify with Christ and the gospel?
3. What are some of the ways you might legitimately compare Paul's suffering to Christ's suffering?
4. What are some of the ways you could never compare Paul's suffering?
5. What are some of the ways we share in Christ's suffering?
6. What are some of the ways Christ shares in our suffering?
7. How would you describe a person who is "fully mature in Christ?"
8. Based on Paul's description of his own ministry, what would you say are some of the essential ingredients for becoming "fully mature in Christ?"
9. Why is it important that we "strenuously contend with all of the energy Christ so powerfully works in [us]?"
  - a. What happens when we do not contend at all?
  - b. What happens when we contend in our own energy?
  - c. How do we strike a meaningful balance?

## PAUL'S LABOR ON BEHALF OF THE COLOSSIANS (2:1-5)

1. What is Paul's ultimate goal for the believers in Colossae and Laodicea?
2. Why do you think it is important to be "united in love" in order to fully comprehend and experience the "fullness of Christ?"
3. At Fellowship we define a disciple as someone who is being formed by the gospel in community for mission.
  - a. How do the gospel, community and mission each contribute to your overall maturity in Christ?
  - b. Which one of these areas needs the most attention in your life?

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## A LABOR OF LOVE | COLOSSIANS 1:24-2:5



While there are a few people who catch the public eye, there are many more who quietly labor behind the scenes. I always think of brilliant and highly capable young women who set aside glamorous careers in order to spend their days reading children's books, arranging play dates, changing diapers and picking Cheerios out of the carpet. Their workday has no beginning or end, no paid vacation, extended leave, or glamorous executive retreats. Everything they do is a labor of love. They are deeply vested in their children.

Long before there were celebrity pastors, lucrative book deals, high profile speaking engagements and the prospect of attracting thousands of followers on Twitter, the Apostle Paul labored in near obscurity, for the sake of the gospel. He was far more like a young mom picking Cheerios up off the floor than we might imagine. In fact in one passage he even describes himself as a nurturing mother.

He was willing to be misunderstood, suffer every inconvenience imaginable, forgo the simple luxuries of life, and labor through the night to pay his own way. His goal was never to make a name for himself, but to see his kids reach their full potential in Christ.

Colossians 1:24-2:5 gives us a window into the heart of a man who was willing to empty himself for the sake of the gospel.