

GROWTH + GROUPS

NAVIGATE LIFE TOGETHER

Maranatha Chapel Sermon Based Study Guide

Bringing Heaven Down to Earth – Colossians 3:1-14 (SB 02.20.2022)

COLOSSIANS

Receiving the Message and Relating to the Study

What insights, principles, or observations stood out to you from this week's message? Discuss with your group.

In the second half of this letter to the Colossians, Paul gets really practical. This is a familiar pattern with the letters of Paul. The first half of his book tends to be theological, and the second half leans into the practical application of those truths. You could say that the first part of Paul's letter focuses on our "who" and the second half focuses on our "do." Many Christians complain that their lives are a struggle. The reason that these Christians are struggling instead of having a life that is full of joy is the fact that these Christians have never learned to live the way that Christ has made it possible for them to live. Since Christ has raised us to new life, we are to desire the things of Christ and not the things of this earth. At the moment that we placed our trust in Christ, He changed our lives and gave us new desires. These new desires can change and transform our lives as we learn to walk in the Spirit. We have died with Christ and have been given a new life by Christ. Our life is the life of Christ living in us. This new life can be a completely different life because we have been given a new nature and new desires. We are no longer controlled by our own sin nature. Let's get into our study...

1. What spoke to you from Pastor Daniel's sermon this week?
2. If you had to narrow it down to 3 things, what would you say are the keys to growing in Christ?
3. How do you wrestle with the fact that we've been made right before a holy God, but our lives don't always look holy?

Digging Deeper in God's Word: Life Lessons

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

1. What does it mean to seek what is above? How do we do that? How should our future hope change our day-to-day focus?

Paul's statement, "You have died" (v. 2) seems contrary to fact—we're still living and breathing. He was referring to believers' participation in the death and resurrection of Jesus (Col. 2:12-13; Rom. 6:1-11). In his letter to the Galatians, Paul explained, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:19-20). We have died to sins, so we might live for righteousness (1 Pet. 2:24).

2. What are the benefits of seeking what is above? What are the pitfalls of keeping our minds set on the things of the earth?
3. What worldly distractions can get in the way of believers keeping their focus on Christ? What are some practical ways to keep our thoughts focused on Christ as we fulfill our earthly obligations?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ COLOSSIANS 3:5-10

1. What do the sins listed in verse 5 have in common? What do they reveal about our hearts?
2. Why did Paul say greed was equivalent to idolatry? What do we worship when we are greedy?

BREAKTHROUGH! in 2022

We are to put to death what belongs to our worldly nature (v. 5). In Greek this command is literally to put to death “the earthly members.” We are to do away with the ungodly characteristics and affections that were formerly a significant part of who we are.

3. In verse 8, anger, malice and slander are the so called “respectable sins.” Why do you think they would be called respectable sins? Why would people think that they are not so bad?
4. What do the negative attributes in the second list (in verse 8) have in common? What do they reveal about our hearts?
5. How do these verses show the tension between the change in who we are (and whose we are) and the changes that still need to take place in our thoughts and actions?
6. What is the connection between renewing our minds and transforming our behaviors?

As we look to Christ, our minds are renewed in knowledge. This frees us to put off the old practices that were concerned with satisfying our worldly appetites and criticizing others for our own benefit. We are instead to become more and more like Christ.

1. What is our part in this transformation? Can we accomplish this by our own human effort alone? Explain.
2. From verse 10, what is God’s part in our renewal? What does this verse reveal about the goal of our renewal?
3. Which sins and attitudes of the old self do you think are most difficult to leave behind? What does it take to find the desire and discipline to put off the old ways?

We are dead to sin and alive to God in Christ, but we operate in two dimensions: in Christ (spiritually) and in the world (physically). Only when we get to heaven will we be free from the propensity toward sin that remains with us daily.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ COLOSSIANS 3:11-14

1. What barriers are represented in verse 11? How does our culture deal with them? As believers, how should we view them?
2. Why should there be no barriers of segregation or prejudice among God’s new people?
3. What virtues does Paul name in verses 12-14? How would it transform our church if we all worked to emphasize these qualities in our relationships with one another?

Applying God’s Word

What did you learn from this study and how does this personally speak to you? Discuss with your group.

In verses 12-14, Paul outlines the virtues and attributes that ought to adorn the believer. Paul tells us to ‘clothe’ ourselves in these things: compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Compassion is thinking of others and prioritizing their needs above your own. Kindness needs no explanation. In a world full of meanies, be kind. You’ll stand out, I promise. The pagan world of Paul’s day did not admire humility and meekness any more than ours does. But nothing makes you look more like Jesus than those two qualities. And then he tops off his list by saying, ‘and over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.’

1. Do your words build up or tear down others? What would make your words and thoughts more pleasing to the Lord?

BREAKTHROUGH! in 2022

2. Which attitudes and behaviors from verses 12-14 do you need to cultivate to more fully display Christ-like character?
3. How well do we make the story of Jesus Christ the center of our teaching and worship at our church? How can we make it more fully the topic of our conversation and our praise?

PRAYER – Thank God for promising to make you more and more like what He has already declared you to be—righteous in Christ. Pray that God would help your group to grow in being more transparent with one another so that we might encourage one another and point each other and those around us to Christ.

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.” (Col. 3:1-3)