

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Lose the Rules
Colossians 2:6-23

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.
2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)
3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Gather newspaper articles which feature an incident of a law broken and the consequence for the person.

Bible Study Leader:

One of the youth will need a dictionary available.

Also, see the definitions of the word “anarchy” at the end of this session. Ensure that both you and your youth group have a copy of that page of definitions.

Have a white board or large piece of paper available. Also note that the quotes to be used with the group are printed in a large font on pages printed at the end of this session.

Worship Time Leader:

Enlist someone to read the closing verses from Psalms 96.

Music Sources:

How Great is our God, *The Worship Hymnal* # 5; CCLI # 4348399

Your Grace Still Amazes Me, CCLI#4578547

Amazing Grace, *The Worship Hymnal* # 104; CCLI # 22025 Public Domain

Grace Alone, *The Worship Hymnal* #112; CCLI # 2335524

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

Lose the Rules

Focal Text

Colossians 2:6-23

Background

Colossians 1:24-2:23

Main Idea

Life in Christ does not come from dependence on rituals and rule keeping, but from Christ himself who is more than sufficient for our needs.

Question to Explore

What place do rituals and rules have in the Christian life?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to evaluate the place rituals and rules have in their lives and decide to rely fully on Christ.

Gathering together:

Sing **How Great is our God**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 5; CCLI # 4348399

First thoughts:

Gather newspapers which feature stories of law-breakers. Have each person find one story and identify what law was broken and what was the consequence for the offender. How important are rules and laws to the orderly conduct of any community. Why would our session today be entitled "Lose the Rules".

We will focus today on the place of rules and rituals in the Christian life and why the writer of Colossians would warn believers against being caught up in the keeping of rules and rituals.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Lose the Rules

Focal Text

Colossians 2:6-23

Background

Colossians 1:24-2:23

Main Idea

Life in Christ does not come from dependence on rituals and rule keeping, but from Christ himself who is more than sufficient for our needs.

Question to Explore

What place do rituals and rules have in the Christian life?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to evaluate the place rituals and rules have in their lives and decide to rely fully on Christ.

Introduction to your personal study:

Please note that, during your actual teaching time of the group – you will be asked to refer more than once to these preparation materials. Please read them over more than once and also take them with you when you go to guide the church in this study. Then, after reading over the “Bible Study Plan” (your teaching guide), highlight the places here in the preparation that you think you will use during the class time.

An old hymn written by Phillip Bliss called **Once for All** expresses the main idea of our session today.

Free from the law, O happy condition,
Jesus hath bled, and there is remission;

Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.

Now we are free-there's no condemnation,
Jesus provides a perfect salvation;
"Come unto Me," O hear His sweet call,
Blessed salvation once for all.

"Children of God," O glorious calling,
Surely His grace will keep us from falling;
Passing from death to life at His call,
Blessed salvation once for all.

Chorus:

Once for all, O sinner, receive it;
Once for all, O brother, believe it;
Cling to the cross, the burden will fall,
Christ hath redeemed us once for all.

Public Domain

Background:

Paul continues to both encourage and admonish the Christians at Colossae. The background material for the session entitled "Who is Most Important" helped to understand the relationship Paul had to the Christians at Colossae. Paul had probably not been to Colossae himself. Nor is there a hint that he expects to visit Colossae. Nonetheless, he expresses a deep interest in the church "I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally" (2:1). The church which he founded at Ephesus was probably responsible for carrying the message to Colossae and Paul is deeply concerned that this church is firmly grounded.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Even in Paul's day, this city had lost its influence as a major city. Located in modern western Turkey, the city had at times suffered greatly from earthquakes.

Some scholars question Paul's authorship feeling that it might have been written by Timothy with Paul's approval or even written by someone of the "Pauline School" at a later time. The first verse does say, "**Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother**" so we may assume some joint authorship at the very least. It may be best to simply assume that verse one speaks literally of the authorship by Paul with some type of help by Timothy.

Two sources of influence may have been present in creating an atmosphere of “rule keeping” which was affecting the spiritual lives of the believers and the health of the church.

Various philosophical beliefs may have blended together. Former Jews may have stressed the obedience to Old Testament regulations. There may have been an emphasis on the Jewish “festivals, new moons, or Sabbaths” (2:16). These may represent various holy days of the Jewish calendar – annual, monthly, and weekly. Wherever the source of the emphasis it resulted in a giving of attention to rituals and rule keeping which demonstrated a lack of trust in what Christ has done.

A further “error” may have occurred through the influence of those who had a wrong conception of matter as evil. They, thus, either had difficulty with the concept of God as human or included Christ as only one emanation or expression of God.

A further aspect of this philosophical approach threatened to substitute a pseudo knowledge – a secret understanding – for the riches of the treasures of wisdom found in Christ.

The rule-keeping aspect may have stressed spiritual perfection more than forgiveness of sins as the way salvation was gained.

Paul’s aim is to help believers experience the fullest, deepest, and most watchful holiness. He is concerned with the broader themes of authentic Christian existence.

We may be aware throughout the book of positive teaching followed by negative warnings followed by expanded positive teaching which is followed by expanded negative warning.

The driving force comes from direct imperatives:

Continue to live in him (v. 6)

Be rooted and built up and overflowing with thanksgiving (v. 7)

See to it that no one takes you captive to false teachings (v. 8)

Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink or what religious celebration you observe (v. 16)

Do not let anyone disqualify you (v. 18).

We are to remain faithful to Christ throughout our whole life. Some start the Christian life with great enthusiasm, but their interest wanes as other commitments take the place of the initial commitment to Christ.

Being thankful is a key element in living a joyous life. There will always be things we could long to have or do, but if we learn to be thankful for those things we already have and can do, we will always have peace and contentment. A thankful heart is a good gift to give your children.

Every day a new book or idea is available to us. With a great deal of information available on the internet, it is easy to turn aside from the basic teachings of the Bible. Christians must learn to be good consumers of Christian literature. Not everything is Biblical or edifying just because it has a Christian title.

Don't let outward observances determine your spiritual condition. Be careful that your actions do not lead others astray.

Don't let others determine or influence or negate your relationship to Christ. "Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God" 1 John 5:5.

Another powerful teaching technique used is the rhetorical question "Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belong to it, do you submit to its rules? (v. 20).

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

The very old problem of adding to or taking away from the basic message of salvation through faith in Christ exists today. Some religious groups claim further revelation; others deny the divinity of Christ; others simply live as if a certain set of expectations for a worthy life will gain one salvation. This study in Colossians helps us focus on Christ's power, place in history, and his saving grace.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this session bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Remember to bring the “Teacher Preparation” notes with you this week. As you lead the study you will be quoting from them frequently.

Lose the Rules

Focal Text

Colossians 2:6-23

Background

Colossians 1:24-2:23

Main Idea

Life in Christ does not come from dependence on rituals and rule keeping, but from Christ himself who is more than sufficient for our needs.

Question to Explore

What place do rituals and rules have in the Christian life?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to evaluate the place rituals and rules have in their lives and decide to rely fully on Christ.

Connect with Life:

Open with this discourse: God gives children wonderful imaginations and, in good and healthy circumstances, the ability to act out things that they make up. Most children enjoy games where they make up the rules. This gives them a sense of accomplishment, of control over the situation, and, in their minds, freedom to do and to be whatever brings joy for the moment.

Other children who wish to play in the game may want to change the rules that one child has made. Adults may not see the logic or fairness of the rules and may insist on the “real” or the written rules, much to the distress of the child. Rules for both children and adults may bring into life many things such as contentment, safety, confusion, distress, prosperity, health, and other things, both good and bad. At times, every person becomes frustrated with rules and limited by them.

Add: In our study today, the apostle Paul talks about rules, human traditions, Christ’s authority, regulations, God’s principles and human principles, and other such things. From this passage, we will try to discover how to respond to rules and how to discern the ones to obey and the ones to avoid.

Guide the Study:

Discuss information from the background study which is applicable for your group.

Help the group to recall the descriptive words used in the previous study in Colossians 1: 1-23. He is:

- The image of the invisible God,
- The firstborn over all creation
- By him all things were created
- He is before all things and in him all things hold together
- He is the head of the church
- He is the beginning and the first-born from the dead
- All fullness dwells in him.

Ask someone: Describe how those descriptive words makes you feel.

Search an answer from the group:

What was Paul’s attitude toward this church (2:1)?

Why did he feel so strongly?

Have someone read chapter 2, verse 8, and tell how that would be descriptive of modern day society.

From the background material discuss what seemed to be the issues Paul was addressing here (an influence from the Gnostics – a group who felt the material world to be evil and who considered Christ only one expression of God and an overemphasis from believers with a Jewish background on keeping Jewish traditions).

Have someone read 2:9-15 as a summary of the faith experience which Paul was calling them to remember.

©2001-2009, Eternal Interactive, LLC, All Rights Reserved. www.homechurchonline.com

Request the group to each look in their Bibles at verses 13 and 14.

Then ask the group to respond to this question: “What does Paul say has happened to the ‘written code’?”

Review the direct imperatives of this chapter. You may want to write these on a white board or copy each imperative on separate sheets of paper. (They are printed for copying in large type on the final five pages of this session.)

Continue to live in him (v. 6)

Be rooted and built up and overflowing with thanksgiving (v. 7)

See to it that no one takes you captive to false teachings (v. 8)

Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink or what religious celebration you observe (v. 16)

Do not let anyone disqualify you (v. 18).

After having the group review verses 20-23, ask the class to comment on this question: “How was that “written code” being lived out?”

Explain that a rhetorical question is one which contains the answer within the question. It is asked not for information but for effect. What is the effect of Paul’s rhetorical question: “Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belong to it, do you submit to its rules?” (v. 20).

Finally, ask the group to decide (and share with each other) exactly what Paul expected them to be doing about his concerns.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the session by and for themselves.

Challenge the group to a brief discussion: Let’s take a few minutes to discuss the tension we live with as Christians in wanting to live in an orderly, law-abiding society—and our understanding that our life in Christ leads us to have an internalized moral code beyond the written rules of our government.

If the group does not understand the above, try this: In other words, As Christians, do we need to live by different moral and ethical standards than our government allows? If so, how do we do that?

Close by having someone lead the group in a prayer, asking God to give each one wisdom in understanding the rules of God and man and how to respond to those rules.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

YOUTH!!! TAKE TEN

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Lose the Rules

Colossians 2:6-23

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

NOW THIS IS A TOPIC YOUTH CAN LIVE WITH - LOSE THE RULES!!

Rules, however, are a necessary thing if a culture or civilization is to survive. Use a dictionary to define the word "**anarchy**". (Definitions are listed on a page near the end of this session.)

On a whiteboard to large piece of paper, make a list of rules in your home, community or school that you are GLAD exist.

Why on earth would Paul be teaching that the Christians at Colossae not be bound by rules? Is that a good thing for us today?

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Lose the Rules***
Colossians 2:6-23**Beginning the Service:**

Sing **Your Grace Still Amazes Me**, CCLI#4578547
Amazing Grace, *The Worship Hymnal* # 104; CCLI # 22025 Public Domain
Grace Alone, *The Worship Hymnal* #112; CCLI # 2335524

Offering:**Praying for the World:**

One missions sending agency recently reported 600,000 baptisms for the last calendar year. Some said “if you put 600,000 baptisms in the context of our daily lives, that means more than 1,640 people are being baptized each day – 68 every hour, more than one baptism every minute of every day, every day of the year.” That is exciting news.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God’s call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Colossians 2:6-7

Introduction:

The Scripture reference from Colossians 2: 6-7 reads ***“So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.”***

Our study today has examined freedom from human regulations through life in Christ.

It is our life in Christ which frees us to live lives of integrity which are not dependent on external rules and authorities to make us behave.

Our scripture exhorts us with the words, “So then”. We might interpret this as “therefore” or “because of this reality”. The words “So then” have a strong sense of the imperative.

If the truth of Christ abides in us the natural reaction to that truth is a life of freedom. However, it is important to stress that the first step is to receive Christ.

Jan Karon’s wonderful book **“At Home in Mitford”** tells the story of a jewel thief who hid in the attic of the church of which Father Tim is the Episcopalian priest. The thief was a man of great intelligence who had seen his father and uncle live a life of theft and deceit.

Although at times he had determined to change his own life for the better, temptation was ever present and in this incident, he had stolen jewels from another thief who had smuggled them illegally into the country. The church attic was meant to be a temporary hiding place, but he seemed compelled to stay. He hid during the day and roamed the church at night, eating left over sandwiches and snacks or, on one occasion, a three-layer marmalade cake designated for a special event!

During his stay in the attic, he was exposed to the life of the church – to its worship and prayer and preaching. He wanted to leave but seemed unable to do so.

On one occasion Father Tim counselled another man who had come to the church in despair shouting at God, “Are you up there?” Father Tim suggested that a better question was “Are you down here?” As Father Tim explained to this man the simple confession of repentance and faith that could be prayed in order to receive salvation, the man in the attic prayed the prayer of salvation. He later told Father Tim it was a “real two for one deal”.

The man in the attic took Father Tim’s Bible from the pulpit and began to study. He prayed and listened to the worship of the church until on one dramatic day during the

worship service, he lowered the stairway from the attic and emerged by the pulpit to tell an astonished congregation his story of sin and faith.

Though he was soon off to jail for his theft, he nonetheless said he was living a life of freedom. And it was all because he accepted Christ as Saviour.

Our study today has taught that we are not free because we obey a set of rules or regulations and we are not bound because we have failed to do so. We are free because we have placed our faith in Christ.

Because we have placed our faith in Christ, we want to live for him. The man in the attic confessed his theft to the congregation and ultimately to the authorities not because he had been found out. He confessed because the work of Christ in his heart led him to want to make things right.

Freedom in Christ enables us to live a victorious life. Pain will come, disappointments may abound, death will bring us grief, but life in Christ enables us to see the hope of eternal life and the joy of life on this earth. We are rooted and grounded in Christ; we are strengthened in him.

Thus, receiving Christ and living for him brings us to thanksgiving. We are to be overflowing with thankfulness. The old hymn, **Count your many blessings, name them one by one** is still a good reminder for us each day. Most of us have such a long list that it literally takes all day long just to say, "Thank you, Lord".

Call to Commitment:

Receive Christ and live for him with a thankful heart. It is not a difficult concept, but a deeply important one. As we live our lives today may we overflow with thanksgiving.

Concluding the Service:

Close the worship time by having someone read from Psalm 96:11-13 and Psalms 34: 1,3.

***Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
Let the sea resound, and all that is in it;***

***Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them.
Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy;***

***They will sing before the Lord; for he comes,
He comes to judge the earth.***

***He will judge the world in righteousness
And the peoples in his truth.***

***I will extol the Lord at all times;
His praise will always be on my lips.***

***Glorify the Lord with me;
Let us exalt his name together.***

Copy this page as a benediction to be read at the end of the service by one of the participants.

Psalm 96:11-13; Psalms 34:1,3.

***Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
Let the sea resound, and all that is in it;***

***Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them.
Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy;***

***They will sing before the Lord; for he comes,
He comes to judge the earth.***

***He will judge the world in righteousness
And the peoples in his truth.***

***I will extol the Lord at all times;
His praise will always be on my lips.***

***Glorify the Lord with me;
Let us exalt his name together.***

Selected definitions of the word “anarchy”

A state of lawlessness or disorder due to the absence or denial of an established authority.

www.efpinternational.org/elearning/mod/glossary/view.php

Political and social disorder resulting from a lack or absence of governmental authority.

www.teach-nology.com/worksheets/soc_studies/rome/vocab/

Chaos, lack of government, without law or guidance, lack of rules

www.marshfield.k12.wi.us/socsci/apushhomepage/vocab/vocabulary_chapters_9-12.htm

Copy these final five pages for the leader of the leader of the **Bible Study Time** to use during the teaching of the Bible study.

Continue to live in him. (v. 6)

**Be rooted and built
up and overflowing
with thanksgiving.
(v. 7)**

**See to it that no
one takes you
captive to false
teachings. (v. 8)**

**Do not let anyone judge
you by what you eat or
drink or what religious
celebration you
observe. (v. 16)**

**Do not let anyone
disqualify you. (v. 18)**