

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

LIVE IT UP!
Colossians 3: 1-17

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:

Find a picture of a heart {either a real human heart or the symbol for heart (a Valentine heart)}. Find a picture of the human brain. Display these as the interest center to begin the time together.

Bible Study Leader:

Make slips of paper which include the evils depicted in Colossians 3: 5-9 and the virtues described in 3: 12-17. You can make copies of those lists for each participant from the ones printed on the final page (p.20) of this session.

Worship Time Leader:

Use the posters that the youth have made with the theme Live It Up!

Music Sources:

Jesus is Lord of All, *The Worship Hymnal* # 294; CCLI # 26478

I Bow Down, CCLI # 2892359

Make Me a Blessing, *The Worship Hymnal* #380; CCLI # 311603

1

Copy this section for the Gathering Time leader.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)

LIVE IT UP!

Focal Text

Colossians 3:1-17

Background

Colossians 3:1-4:6

Main Idea

Christians are to live lives that reflect that Christ himself is their life.

Question to Explore

How should our faith affect our lives?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to summarize Paul's teachings about Christian living and identify at least one way they will apply these teachings.

Gathering together:

For an interest center, display a picture or drawing of a large heart {this can either be a picture of an actual heart or the very common symbol for a heart (a valentine heart)}. Have a picture of the human brain as well to symbolize what we think of when we use the word "mind".

The session title, "Live It Up!" is taken from the concepts given in Colossians 3:1-2.

"Since then, you have been raised with Christ, set your heart on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."

Live it up may refer to our being raised to walk in newness life in the baptism which symbolizes our commitment to Christ. It may refer to the higher level of living which is mandated in the words, "Set your heart on things above". It may refer to the life we live which is so different because it is lived with Christ, who is seated at the right hand of God – a high and holy life where our very being is centered on heavenly things rather on earthly things. The title "Live it up!" calls us to a level of life far above any earthly goodness we might hope to achieve.

The Scripture refers to both heart and mind. We are to set our heart on things above and to set our minds on things above. This double emphasis means that our total self is to be set on heavenly things. Our emotional self may be symbolized by heart and our intellectual self may be symbolized by mind. At any rate, it is a total centering of our being on heavenly things.

As we study and worship today, may we be challenged anew to set our hearts and minds on the high and holy things of God.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Sing **Jesus is Lord of All**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 294; CCLI # 26478

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

LIVE IT UP!

Focal Text

Colossians 3:1-17

Background

Colossians 3:1-4:6

Main Idea

Christians are to live lives that reflect that Christ himself is their life.

Question to Explore

How should our faith affect our lives?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to summarize Paul’s teachings about Christian living and identify at least one way they will apply these teachings.

Introduction to your personal study:

Before Paul begins the descriptive list of things we are not to do and the things we are to do, he reminds us in verses 3-5 of why we are to live such changed lives. We have **died** and our lives are hidden with Christ. All of the old self – its desires, ambitions, abilities, and hopes have died and can only be seen now as a transformed self where Christ appears and we appear with him in glory. This is heady stuff and as you prepare to lead the Bible study this week, focus on your own salvation experience and the death to self that you have experienced and will continue to experience as long as you live.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the **“Introduction”** article found at the beginning of this series of Bible Study and Worship sessions (Bible Teaching #.....). The person who downloaded this session should have that material for you, as well.

The book of Colossians is addressed to the church in Colossae. Paul had never been to this church, but he is deeply concerned for it. The Christians there were being influenced by people who believed Christ to be important, but not central, in the believers' lives. Jesus may have been prestigious, but not pre-eminent. Cosmic forces of one sort or another were getting equal billing with Jesus. Paul writes to them in an attempt to restore Jesus, the Messiah, to the center of their lives. (For further background, read the background material for the first two sessions in this series on Colossians—and the **“Introduction”** to the series). These two earlier sessions focused on the centrality of God and the fact that Christians are not bound by a set of rules. Our salvation does not come through keeping a set of rules.

The Colossian heresy was a strange doctrine, half Jewish asceticism and half Oriental speculation. We examined it in previous sessions. In today's session there is an emphasis on simple ethical goodness inspired by complete reconciliation to God through Christ.

Focusing on the Meaning:

The study today lists things that must be avoided and things that we must strive to make a part of our very character. Christians may be seen as focusing on the list of do not's rather than on the acquisition of the beautiful characteristics listed in Colossians 3. We want to give attention to both lists, but our focus will be on setting our hearts on things above.

The two lists of vices (vss. 5 and 8) include both the sins of the flesh and the sins of the spirit, though not exclusively. Evil desire and covetousness spring from the spirit.

“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”

These strong words include “Put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature.” The writer of Colossians emphasizes the final nature of the change from the former life to the life in Christ. The actions and the desires are to be put to death. We would be

overwhelmed with this command if we had not already read that the new life is “hid with Christ in God”. The word “hid” implies that the new life is a mystery. We cannot explain how Christ indwells us and changes us from worldly creatures to creatures filled with God’s power. We can experience the indwelling and transformative power of that indwelling. We are not responsible for making the change; we cannot not do it by our own strength and will. Nonetheless we must will to do it – **“put to death therefore...”**

Sexual immorality, impurity, and lust are not issues which just plagued the Colossians, but have somehow through the ages been extinguished. These realities are as present today as they were in Paul’s day. On the other hand, it is well for us to remember as we express concern over the current state of morality that these sins have existed since the beginning.

Also, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry, existed in the Colossians’ world and continue to exist in our world. These sins are not peculiar to any race or culture. They are the sins of unregenerate human nature everywhere throughout the ages. What is tragic is that we see them in our own lives and in the lives of other believers. In fact, we are beginning to understand that our desire for more and more creature comforts is putting our entire planet at risk. These sins must be transformed by Christ in us just as much as the sins of sexual immorality. A person worships what he/she loves and our love for material belongings has become worship.

Paul then lists a group of sins of the spirit that plague believers as well. These are anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language. In 1985 when missionary James Philpot was killed in Mexico City in an incident of road rage, his friends were astonished that someone could become so angry because of a traffic incident that he would shoot an innocent, unknown person. Today we accept road rage as one of the hazards of living and driving in busy cities.

Only recently this writer was merging into traffic when a car whipped around her, honked, and sped by. There arose a desire to “get back” at that driver; to shout at him, to let him know that his action was inappropriate and unnecessary. I was surprised at the intensity of my reaction and had to ask the Lord to calm my spirit and allow me to lift the driver up in prayer.

Anger simmers in many believers’ hearts and minds. There is anger at those whose moral standards are radically different than ours. There is intense anger at those who would change laws and ways of being that have existed in “our” country for many years.

Nor is the Christian free from malice. Denominational differences and differences within denominations have made unity within the Christian church a more distant hope than it was even a few years ago.

Modern technology has given new ways of communication and therefore there are new ways of slandering other people. Intimate details of the lives of public figures are available for mass observation. An innuendo which in the past might have been limited

to only a few people is now spread quickly around the world. Christians are not as careful as we should be to stop an e-mail sent to us which may contain erroneous information. We must think carefully before forwarding e-mails to others. Most informative (actually, sensational?) e-mails claim sources of authority. Many hold no such authority.

Filthy language is the common language of the day. Children hear their parents and other adults use words which demean the spirit and make ugly all of human conversation. They often have never been told that such language is inappropriate.

We are further told not to lie to one another. Basic to the integrity of any marriage is a relationship based on truth, not lies. Buying an object and not telling your spouse is lying. Spending time with a person of the opposite sex and not wanting to tell your spouse is lying.

We are amazed with public figures who lie. We read newspapers and hear news reports where the unspoken admonition is to “believe only a portion of what you read and hear”.

Children hear their parents lying to others. They may call the school to say the child is ill when in reality the family is going on an outing. They may call their employer to take a sick day when they are not sick.

“Because of these the wrath of God is coming.” Paul is using this phrase not of an emotion in God, but concretely of the Day of Judgment (Romans 1:18). It is not wise to make declarations of how and when human tragedy is related to God’s wrath. These declarations all too often come from our own anger and prejudice. There are consequences for sin and many unhappy people have discovered those consequences. However, innocent people may suffer the consequences of another’s person’s sin as well.

The writer of Colossians tells us that the increasing degradation that flows from participation in these sins will result in our paying the full price for every moral detour we take.

Paul then shifts to a description of attributes which we should desire. **“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which bind them all together in perfect unity.**

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever

you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him” (vs. 12-17).

We are reminded that we are God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved. We realize that we are only holy because we are chosen and because Christ has worked his miracle of redemption in our life.

There is the sense, however, in all of these writings of the Christian’s obligation as well. We are to deliberately set our hearts on things above; we are to set our minds on things above. We are to clothe ourselves with virtues of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. We are to forgive and to love. We are to be thankful.

Compassion involves action. It is the caring response to a need seen and felt. It may call us to prayer for a dying friend, to housecleaning for a stressed mother, or to the bringing of food to a needy family.

Out of our compassion we are called to kindness.

Humility is hard for most Christians. It is so easy to be judgmental of others and to imagine that our superior moral life is something of our own accomplishment. But no, humility is the daily dying to one’s own self and abilities and dependence on God’s working in our lives.

Gentleness and patience may go hand in hand. The gentle person does not demand of others what they cannot give. The patient person waits for God to speak to the heart of the unloving neighbour, the rebellious child, the person of a different religion or culture.

Love seems to encompass all of these virtues for certainly any of them expressed without love would change their very character. We are reminded of 1 Corinthians 13:13, ***“But now these three remain: faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.”***

Once again, we are reminded to be thankful.

The writer ends chapter three with rules for Christian households. It is well to remember that these rules follow the admonition to clothe ourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience. We are to be forgiving and peaceable and we are to be thankful. Further we are to dwell in the word of God and to encourage one another with happy songs of praise to God.

With this understanding, we read the rules for living together in harmony with different eyes. The submission of the wife is not to a dominant, controlling husband, but to one whose actions are motivated by Godly attributes. The husband’s attitude toward the wife is based on great love. Fathers are to discipline children in such a gentle and patient way that children can understand and accept the teaching of the parents. Slaves are to serve their masters well and owners are to recognize the human worth of

a slave. Paul speaks advice for the time and culture in which he lived. Slaves and wives were property; Paul's advice is to treasure wives and to value slaves.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

These lists of attitudes and actions to avoid and those to live by hold the key to the Christian living up to Christ's expectations. Your task as the teacher will be to help each person understand these things. As well, you will want to help them think of ways to memorize the lists and make these things basic to their lives.

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)

LIVE IT UP!

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.

Focal Text

Colossians 3:1- 4:1

Background

Colossians 3:1-4:6

Main Idea

Christians are to live lives that reflect that Christ himself is their life.

Question to Explore

How should our faith affect our lives?

Teaching Aim

To lead the church to summarize Paul's teachings about Christian living and identify at least one way they will apply these teachings.

Connect with Life:

Have someone read Colossians 3: 1-4.

If the Gathering Time leader has brought a picture of a heart and a brain, use those to emphasize the important of our total being to be involved in the process of focusing on God. All of our emotions and all of our thoughts are to be hidden with Christ in God.

Guide the Study:

Consider what it would mean to have your heart and mind set on things above, not on earthly things.

Ask: What promise is contained the verse 4?

Discuss what it means to have a life hidden with Christ in God.

Encourage a brief discussion of these two questions: Does “put to death” involve the human will? How do we understand our part in this process and God’s part in the process? (Use verse 10 in your discussion).

Have pieces of paper with the sins listed in verses 5-9 printed on them. (A list is given at the end of the Worship Time). Hand them out at the beginning of the session and ask people to comment on the sin listed on the slip of paper given to them.

Urge a discussion: Are these sins which were present only in Paul’s day or are they sins present today among our people and ourselves?

Have someone read verses 12-17.

Again, look for opinions: What does it mean to be God’s chosen people? (Avoid lengthy discussions about predestination. The focus of these verses in on believers who came to Christ from a variety of backgrounds.)

Have another set of pieces of paper with the attributes listed in verses 12-17 printed on it. Give those to class members and ask for descriptions of the virtues. (A list is given at the end of the Worship Time).

Add to the discussion as appropriate from the **Teacher Preparation** materials and your own understanding.

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.  
~~~~~

Conclude with this activity: It is always refreshing to study the characteristics or virtues which appear in Colossians 3: 12-17. On the back of the slip of paper which each of you should already have, please select a virtue which you need to more actively seek. Write it down so you will not forget to pray for God’s help in making that virtue more active in your life.

Pray together that you may set your hearts and minds on achieving this virtue in everyday life. Ask God for His power to transform whatever attitude is keeping you from experiencing victory in this arena.

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 session to your own needs.

LIVE IT UP! **Colossians 3: 1-17**

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.

Losing the Bad and Living the Good!

“Lose the Rules!” and “Live It Up!” are both sessions in Colossians which might seem to be of special interest to you as young people. They are, in fact, both of extreme importance for youth. It is essential that you understand that the rules you live by are rules you have internalized from the moral teachings of family, society and, most importantly, the Bible. Even Biblical truths which are external to self will not keep us from making wrong decisions and acting on those decisions. Only when Biblical teachings are made a part of our very character by the transforming grace of Christ can we consistently make the best choices.

Freed from the constraints of an external set of rules, we are free to set our hearts and minds on the things above. We can really Live It Up!

Provide poster board or large sheets of paper (this could be newsprint) and markers to draw a poster using as the theme Live It Up! Decorate with pictures describing the virtues listed in Colossians 3:12-17.

Display the posters for the home church to see during the Worship Time.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)**The Rest of the Story**
Colossians 4: 2-6**Beginning the service:**

Sing **Jesus is Lord of All**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 294; CCLI # 26478

Remind the group that this has been the theme of three sessions on the book of Colossians. Jesus is Lord of All. He is all I need.

Sing **I Bow Down**, CCLI # 2892359

Offering:**Praying for the World:**

The chronological Bible storying group in village B is composed of a faithful group of 15 older women. They have heard many difficult teachings about who Jesus is and the claims He made, and they continue to ask for more. One woman remembering the parable of the sower and the seeds said that she wants to be like the seed that was sown on the good soil. She wants the message of Jesus to take root in her heart and flourish. Another woman asked how her heart can be cleansed so that the Holy Spirit can dwell there. Pray for these women as they begin to hear the gospel message. Ask the Lord to sow these seeds deep in their hearts, so that lives are changed as they find true peace, hope, and joy through the Saviour.

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.

Introduction:

Paul Harvey was a well-known news broadcaster in the United States. He was known for his long career and for his human interest stories which featured people who lived out lives of dignity and courage. He was a Christian and that fact was no secret to his listeners. One of his long-lasting techniques of gaining interest was to tell a story and then later in the broadcast return to that story with what he called “The Rest of the Story”. Many times he would focus on something newsworthy which had happened in the past and was well-known. He would then bring the story up to date with “The Rest of the Story.”

Our Bible study today focused on Colossians 3:1-17. However, the background material included chapter 4:2-6. We might call those verses our “Rest of the Story” as we focus on them for our worship experience.

The verses read ***“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.” Colossians 4: 2-7.***

1. Devote yourselves to prayer.

Paul has encouraged the believers in Colossae to set their hearts and minds on the things above – on heavenly values and pursuits. He speaks of the transforming power of being “hid with Christ” yet he indicates that we must deliberately seek heavenly things. There is no way to accomplish that but through prayer. Prayer for self is not a selfish thing if we are asking to desire the things of the Lord. When we ask the Lord to make us more compassionate, more filled with kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, we honour the Lord and release his power in our lives. Even as we read the words of Colossians 3:12 we are strengthened to desire those attributes in our lives.

Paul also asked that we pray for him. Paul, the great master of words, asks that he may proclaim the mystery of Christ clearly. Paul is in chains – in prison in Rome and he might well have asked for prayer that he would be freed. He asks, instead, that he may clearly proclaim the mystery of Christ. May we like Paul ask the Lord to enable us and those in our sphere of influence to be clearly proclaiming the mystery of Christ.

2. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.

Paul reminds us that we can easily become comfortable with those most like us. We enjoy fellowship with believers who think like we do. It is more uncomfortable to be with those whose values are different. In an increasingly multicultural world, we are challenged to appreciate and value customs very different from our own. We must be wise in the way we act toward outsiders. We cannot close the door to an opportunity for witness by a carelessly expressed opinion. We must spend time and effort in relationships with those who are different from us. We must make the most of every opportunity. Christ taught us to be “salt and light” in the world. We would rather withdraw from the world. Instead we must make the most of every opportunity.

3. Let your conversation be always full of grace; seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

We have been blessed by those people whose conversation is always full of grace. Their views always make us see things a little differently – a little clearer. Their words are seasoned with salt. They give not merely platitudes or expected responses. Their words seem to be God’s words to us through a person. The writer of Colossians desires that each one of us be that person for another person. That other person may be someone younger for whom we are a mentor. It may be our dearest friend. It may be our spouse or our children or grandchildren. This conversation is as far on the other end of the continuum from the filthy language of verse 8 as can be imagined. Our conversation brings beauty and blessing.

Call to Commitment:

So we may say that these admonitions are “the rest of the story” for the Colossian church and for us. We are to put away evil in many forms. Some of those evils have never been a part of our lives; other forms of evil are a constant challenge to dismiss. We are to clothe ourselves with some beautiful attributes – compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. We are to undergird this with love and we are to be a thankful people.

But we must also pray—for ourselves and for others. We must be wise as we interact with outsiders—those different from us. And we must be very, very careful to use wise and uplifting words.

May it be so, Lord Jesus.

Concluding the Service:

Close by singing **Make Me a Blessing**, *The Worship Hymnal* #380; CCLI # 311603

Make copies for participants as needed:

Sins listed in Colossians 3: 5-9

Sexual immorality

Impurity

Lust

Evil desires

Greed

Idolatry

Anger

Rage

Malice

Slander

Filthy language

Lying

Attributes listed in Colossians 3: 12

Compassion

Kindness

Humility

Gentleness

Patience

Forgiveness

Love

Peace ruling in hearts

Thankfulness

Faithfulness to Christ's teachings

Wisdom