

CONNECT GROUP GUIDE

The Christ

SUPREME

of Colossians



Connect Groups at ACN...

The goals set out in **Vision 26** cast it like this ...

Living to love and proclaim Jesus we will...

- meet in Connect Groups to study the Bible together and equip one another to be faithful disciples
- pray together in our groups. We will make a space for those not used to praying in a group and provide opportunities for people to become more comfortable with group prayer
- have a missional focus, both local and global
- pastorally care for one another especially when people are facing difficult times in their lives
- invite new members to our groups. As groups grow we will encourage multiplication by identifying potential leaders who can be trained to lead new groups
- gather Connect Group leaders together regularly for prayer, training and encouragement

INTRODUCTION

This prison letter by Paul, probably written in Rome around AD60 is his response to very disturbing news brought to him by Epaphras.

False teaching had infiltrated this new church to cause serious damage. This is sometimes called the 'Colossian heresy', and though its exact nature remains unclear, we can assume its characteristics by what Paul says.

In response to this heresy, Paul writes magnificent theology about who Jesus is and what he has done for us.

He begins with thanks and prayer before launching into praise for the greatness of Christ.

He also shares his own struggles, and urges the Colossians to not be deceived. The heart of the letter attacks the false teaching and finally Paul goes to prayer.

June 19

Colossians 1:1-14

Introduction


What are the things that you are most thankful for?

Read Colossians 1:1-14

1. What is special about the way Paul introduces his letter? Note how different it is from the way we write a letter.

2. Paul talks about 'the true message of the gospel' v.5.
Looking at the surrounding verses ...
What is the heart of the message of the Gospel?

What is the outcome of the message in the Colossians' lives?



Your Notes

3. Paul asks God to fill the Colossians with the knowledge of his will. In vv. 9-12 how does Paul want God's will to be worked out in the people's lives? How is this the same or different to the way you think about God's will being worked out in someone's life?

4. In vv. 13 & 14 what do we learn about the redemption we have in Jesus Christ?

5. How do your prayers for others compare with the Apostle Paul's?

6. How does a true understanding of the gospel help us to pray in better ways for other people?

PRAYER

Pick a verse from this passage that you would like to pray for another member of the group.

Make sure every member of the group is prayed for after the pattern of the Apostle Paul.



Your Notes

June 26

Colossians 1:15-23

Introduction

Many non-Christian people have a sense of a superior being, a creator power, or 'god' that is 'out there', unknowable, unrevealed. Does it matter what this superior being is like? Why?

Read Colossians 1:15-20

Thomas Torrance was a chaplain in the British army during WWII. After a battle Torrance went in search of wounded soldiers. He wrote, "When daylight filtered through I came across a young soldier (private Phillips) scarcely twenty years old lying mortally wounded on the ground, who clearly had not long to live. As I knelt down and bent over him, he said, "Padre, is God really like Jesus?" I assured him that he was, the only God there is, the God who had come down to us in Jesus, shown his face to us, and poured out his love to us as our Saviour. As I prayed and commended him to the Lord Jesus he passed away."

1. What is the true God like? Focus on Jesus.
2. What does our passage tell us about Jesus' relationship to God the Father?
3. What is Jesus' relationship with creation?
4. What is Jesus' relationship to the church?
5. What practical effects should this revelation have on our Christian faith and life?



Your Notes

Read Colossians 1:21-23

6. From what condition, at what cost, and with what goal in view has Christ rescued us?

 7. What is required of those who desire fully to enjoy these benefits?

 8. How should we relate to Christ ...
 - as the ruler over all creation?

 - as the head of the church?

 - as the Saviour who rescued us from darkness and reconciled us to God the Father?

 9. How can you let Christ be Supreme in your life this week?
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PRAYER

Pray for increasing clarity of sight, that you may see Jesus as he truly is.

Pray for one another and the world to know reconciliation with God through Jesus' death.

Pray for specific friends and neighbours you would like to share the beauty, love and wonder of Jesus with.



Your Notes

July 3

Colossians 1:24 - 2:5

Introduction

What is your understanding of maturity?

How do you define it or describe it?

Compare it with immaturity.

Read Colossians 1:24-27

1. While Paul's situation is very different from our own, what can we learn from his suffering?
2. Think about Paul's suffering in v.24. What does he mean by 'I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions'?
(Paul is not saying his suffering is atoning for sin, but rather it is evidence of atonement.)
3. Christians are not free from suffering, but we are to face it differently. How can we encourage each other in endurance?
4. What do you think is the 'mystery of God'? (see 1:26 and 2:2)



Your Notes

Read Colossians 1:28 - 2:5

5. How are you going in 'proclaiming' Jesus? Discuss together how you are living out our Vision Statement - 'living to love and proclaim Jesus.

6. How are we made mature through that proclamation?

7. How fond are you of admonition?
Can you think of a time when you were rightly admonished?

8. How does 'Christ in us' make it possible to become mature? v.29

9. In 2:1 Paul contends for the Colossians and the Laodiceans to achieve a specific goal. What is that goal, and how can we contend for one another in the same way?

PRAYER

Pray for one another to be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that you may have the full riches of complete understanding, and be fully mature in Christ.



Your Notes

July 10

Colossians 2:6-15

Introduction

When you were young what did you think about being religious?

Read Colossians 2:6-15

1. Count the number of times the word Christ and the pronouns 'he/him' referring to Christ appear in this passage?
(It doesn't matter if people come to different answers, the point is that there are a lot.)

2. From that count, what does it tell you about Christ being supreme?

Each member of the group highlight one way in which the passage proclaims Christ as supreme. Share why this aspect of Christ is important to you.

[If you have a large group it is okay to repeat one of the qualities of Christ but try and make sure all in this passage are covered.]



Your Notes

3. Because Christ is supreme, what is the consequence for us who believe?
4. In what ways do we need to know Christ is supreme in our world today? Think about what it means for him to be Lord over the *'hollow and deceptive philosophy ... and the elemental principles of this world'* v.8, *'over every power and authority'* vv 10,15, *'over the charge of legal indebtedness'* v.14?
6. vv.11-13 What does it mean to be 'circumcised by Christ' v.11? How does baptism help us understand this phrase? Why is baptism important?
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PRAYER

Pray for different aspects of our world, international and Australia, where the Lordship of Christ is needed to disarm the powers and authorities and to bring the Kingdom of the Son.

Give thanks for your baptism into Christ.



Your Notes

July 17

Colossians 2:16-23

Introduction

Share some of the rules that you live by ...

What aphorisms, phrases or sayings did you inherit from your parents/grandparents/friends that lead you to certain values or practices? (Eg. 'God helps those who help themselves', 'don't judge a book by its cover', 'the early bird catches the worm', 'the second mouse gets the cheese', 'There is no "I" in team'.)

Read Colossians 2:16-19

1. Knowledge puffs up, love builds up (1 Corinthians 8:1). What helps you to remain humble and loving?
2. The body is a great image of the church with all members held together and growing under God's direction. In what way is God calling you to partner with him in growing his Church?
3. How can you help people to remain connected with the head of the body, Jesus?



Your Notes

Read Colossians 2:20-23

4. As a group define legalism, mysticism and asceticism.
5. The false teachers at Colossae seemed to emphasise these three things. How does Paul argue against them?
6. How do Christians relate to legalism, mysticism and asceticism today?
7. Why is legalism so popular amongst Christians?
8. In what sense have you died with Christ? (Compare with Galatians 2:19-21; 2 Corinthians 5:17).
9. What difference does this make to how you live?

Preparation for next week: Think of a psalm, hymn, song, or poem that helps the word of Christ to dwell in you/the Church richly.

PRAYER

Pray for a healthy relationship between law and grace.

Pray for our Church to grow ever more deeply connected to Jesus, our head.

Pray for one another to live Godly lives.



Your Notes

July 24

Colossians 3:1-17

Introduction

Share a way you've changed since you became a believer.

Read Colossians 3:1-4

1. How does a person's identity change when they become a believer?

Read Colossians 3:5-11

2. What are you to put to death or 'take off'? What do these things mean?



Your Notes

Read Colossians 3:12-14

3. What are you to put on or 'clothe yourselves in'?

4. What motivation do you have to forgive those who sin against you?

Read Colossians 3:15-17

5. Share with each other the psalms, hymns, spiritual songs or poems that help the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Talk together about the 'why', 'how' and 'what' these examples do for you.

PRAYER

Pray that you will each grow deeper into your true identity in Christ.

Pray for God's strength, wisdom and power to take off sinful practices and clothe yourselves in Christ.

Pray for our church to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly together.



Your Notes

July 31

Colossians 3:18 - 4:1

Introduction

*Who has been one of your best employers?
What did you appreciate about him or her?*

Read Colossians 3:18 - 4:1

1. Reading any of these verses on their own, the message seems very foreign in our culture.

What difference does it make ..

Reading the passage as a whole?

Reading only the section addressed to you in your situation?

Reading the passage in the context of the whole of chapter 3?

2. Thinking of your personal situation, what is something you could do to put this teaching into practice?



Your Notes

3. You may like to do some research on how the slavery in the Apostle Paul's time was different from what we know about slavery in America and the European colonies. Why not do some research on modern day slavery and see if there is an organisation working to end slavery today that you would like to support.

4. If in our context we interpret slaves and masters as employee and employer ...

What is the key principle for a Christian employee?

What is the key principle for a Christian employer?

5. Thinking about the overall teaching of the book of Colossians about the supremacy of Christ, how does this inform the various roles described here?

PRAYER

Colossians 3:1 '...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.'

Pray for God to give you the grace to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and please him in all your relationships.



Your Notes

August 7

Colossians 4:2-18

Introduction

How long has it been since you have written someone an encouraging letter?

How did you feel when you received one?

Read Colossians 4:2-6

1. How helpful are these verses for everyday life?
Which of these exhortations do you need to particularly take note of?

2. How much of your prayer life is taken up with the concerns Paul says are important?

3. Paul again mentions the 'mystery of Christ'. What is it, and how would you explain it to someone who is not yet a believer?



Your Notes

4. Are there any patterns of speech or behaviours you are prone to that don't fit with these verses?

Read Colossians 4:7-18

5. Who is somebody who has encouraged you in your Christian walk despite living far away? How did they do it?

6. As we read about these people, what do we learn about them from this letter?

7. How important is communication in Christian fellowship? How could we each improve in our communication with others?

PRAYER

Before you start to pray, go round the circle and thank people in your group for their gifts in Christ, sharing all that you appreciate about them.

As we conclude this series, try to gather all the encouragements you have learnt and pray them into each other's lives.



Your Notes



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