

New Lifestyle

12 Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. 13 Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

16 Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. 17 And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

Colossians 3:12-17 (NLT)

Observation (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- When you were a child, what was one behavior your parents insisted on just because you were a member of the family?
- Think of a Christian you admire. What character qualities attract you about them?

O: What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

v.12 (&13) - Identity

O: What does Paul write about our identity as Christians/how does he describe our identity in Christ (v.12-13)?

Don't forget to view the broader book of Colossians as well (ex. 1:12-14 & 2:9-10).

I: Why do you think Paul begins by reminding us who we are in God's sight?

I: Being "tenderhearted" doesn't mean sentimental. Being "kind" doesn't mean being a soft touch. "Humility" isn't the same as low self-esteem. "Gentleness (or meekness)" is not weakness. How might you instead define or illuminate each character trait?

A: How does the description of our identity as Christians compare to your view of yourself?

v.13 – Allowance for Faults & Forgiveness

O: Expound upon v.13 (what strikes you about it?). What other scriptures does it bring to mind? What biblical stories illuminate it?

I: How radical do you think this mandate in v.13 is?

A: How could this radical allowance for faults & forgiveness change your home group? Your marriage? Your friendships? Your workplace? Take time to flesh out what this could mean in reality (it is imperative that verses like this leave theory and take root in reality).

v.14-15 – Love & Peace

O: What is the result when both love & peace are fully realized? What are the actions (symbolically) that allow love & peace to fully reign?

I: How could conflicts be better managed if peace ruled (literally, "functioning like an umpire") in our hearts?

A: How can we practically "clothe" ourselves with love? Allow peace to "rule" in our hearts?

(this is not just mushy gushy stuff...it is imperative that verses like this leave theory and take root in reality).

v.16-17 – Fully Functioning Church

O: What is the significance of thankfulness that Paul would command it three different ways (v.15-17)?

O: What about this view of a fully functioning church body strikes you?

I: How can we practically let the message of Christ "fill" our lives ("dwell in us richly" is how other versions translate it).

I: What does it mean to represent someone/something? Give modern-day examples outside of the one mentioned in the text.

A: How would doing everything "as a representative of the Lord Jesus" transform what you have to say & do this week (v.17)?

(it is imperative that verses like this leave theory and take root in reality).

A: How can our home group & our church create more/better opportunities for v.16-17 to take place?

How can you contribute to this vision?

A: Based on v.12-17, is/how is God asking you...to forgive someone as Christ forgave you? ...to ask for forgiveness from someone? ...to endure someone's idiosyncrasies? ...to be less irritating to someone? ...to show someone love? ...to accept the love of another? ...to make peace with someone? ...to teach or admonish someone? ...to receive the teaching or admonition of someone? ...to tell someone how thankful you are for them?

Recommended Follow-up:

- **Pray:** Spend time thanking God that you are his chosen, holy, loved, and forgiven people.

Pray boldly and specifically (based on this passage, potentially based on the last application question) for God to move in us individually and corporately (*this might be a good week to break up between men/women to discuss & then pray*).

- **Respond:** Memorize/Meditate 3:17. Reflect on the difference it makes to speak and act in the name of Jesus.

- **Read:** Next week's sermon (2/28/2010) will focus on Colossians 3:18-4:1. Take time prior to next Sunday to read & study the passage, pray through the passage, meditate on the passage, etc.

* As discussed in Riverside's HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid "go through this guide word-for-word." **There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time.** These guides rely heavily upon James Reapsome's &/or N.T. Wright's study guides on Colossians & Philemon (ISBN 9780830830145 & 9780830821921), as well as Ryan Roeder's 2005 discussion guides on Colossians & Philemon.