

Colossians: It's All About Jesus!

Lesson 6

Jesus Transforms Our Relationships! Colossians 3:12–16

In our last lesson, we ended with verse 11 which reads, “In Christ, there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.” This serves as a transition into the next section as Paul unpacks what this begins to look like practically in our relationships. Jesus transforms us and as a result, He transforms how we interact with others. The Christian life is one that thrives in community. And though relationships are hard work, God’s transforming work in our hearts is on full display as we honor Him in our interactions and relationships with others.

We Are Called to LOVE ONE ANOTHER Like Jesus LOVED US!

Colossians 3:12–13, Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Jesus is our standard for relationships. In the same way Jesus has given you grace, forgiveness, patience, and care so we are to mimic in how we interact with others. When Jesus saved us, He chose us and set us apart from the rest of the world. Our world and our flesh look at relationships from a self-centered perspective, which is the exact opposite of our call as followers of Jesus. How then should we interact with others?

- **With COMPASSION and KINDNESS**

Compassion is a gracious sensitivity toward others that manifests in genuine care for them. It’s being aware of the needs of those around you to be able to respond with love. Paul says elsewhere that “Love is patient, love is kind” (1 Corinthians 13:4). He also says, “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you” (Ephesians 4:32). Grace, kindness, and compassion are all tied together because of Jesus’ work in salvation.

Honestly, to love compassionately apart from God doesn’t make sense. Why should we give someone love they don’t deserve? And for the unbeliever, it’s this line of thinking that can lead to walking away from a marriage, or justify treating people you like differently than people who have wronged you, or

offer conditional love to others. But when our standard for love changes, our practice of love changes. God must be our standard of compassion and kindness toward others.

- **With HUMILITY and GENTLENESS**

To be compassionate, we must be humble. We must stop thinking about ourselves and our perspective and attempt to seek understanding with self-control. Just like the previous point, Paul says elsewhere, “[Love] does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud” (1 Corinthians 13:4b). Additionally he adds, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:3–5).

We love to think the best of ourselves. In doing so, we become experts at defending and justifying our actions while giving ourselves an incredible amount of grace. But then we can look at someone else and only see their worst. Without Jesus’ transforming work in our lives, we will remain prideful in our view of others.

But we are called instead to have the same mind as Jesus in our relationships with others. If Jesus, the Creator of the cosmos, Name above all names, King of kings, and Lord of lords humbled himself, who are we to walk in arrogance? Loving others with humility forces a perspective change: What’s it like to live in their shoes? And when we combine that with gentleness and meekness, we become self-controlled and selfless, ready to help in every situation.

- **With PATIENCE and FORGIVENESS**

The climax of loving others like Jesus is ultimately in how we model his patience and forgiveness. We are called to forgive as the Lord forgave us. When faced with bitterness and unforgiveness, the question we must ask is: How has Jesus forgiven me? Apart from understanding the debt we’ve been forgiven, forgiveness can be impossible. But as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:7, “[Love] always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”

Loving others like Jesus is a call to active, lifelong patience. It’s a call to bear one another’s burdens, put up with annoyances, and continue to love always. In our sinfulness, we desire to love in ways that are convenient, pleasant, enjoyable, and personally beneficial, and when one of those is not present, we’re done. But God calls every believer to love patiently when it’s hard,

frustrating, discouraging, tiresome, and burdensome. Why? Because the goal of loving others is not for our happiness but for our sanctification. In the end, Jesus wants us to look more like him in how we love others. Paul ends this thought with:

Colossians 3:14, And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Discussion Questions:

- How can our life group love each other like Jesus has loved us?
- What are some of the differences between how Jesus defines love and our culture defines love?
- How should we approach difficult relationships?

To Love One Another Like This:

- **Jesus Must RULE OUR HEARTS**

Colossians 3:15, Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

For Jesus to rule our hearts we must be overwhelmed by Him to such a degree that He takes over our heart and establishes His reign in our lives. In many ways this is like a kingdom take-over: from self-rule to Jesus-rule. When this takes place, you begin to live as a citizen of the Kingdom of God, a kingdom marked by peace, unity, and thanksgiving.

Our world is chaotic, hate-filled, and selfish which is why there is no peace. Christ has given us peace with Him, so when He rules our hearts, we display His peace to others. This is why we are called to be peacemakers. If we rule our own lives, then peace is only pursued if it is beneficial to us. But if Jesus rules our lives, peace is always pursued. How can Jesus rule in my heart?

- **Jesus Must SATURATE OUR WORSHIP**

Colossians 3:16, Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

The message of Christ is the Word of Christ, and the peace of Christ is given to those who dwell continually in His Word. If we want Jesus to rule in our hearts, then the Word of God must take top priority in our lives so that we have no other response except worship. We often think of “worship” in terms

of singing, but worship is a lifestyle pursuit of Jesus and what better way to know Him and love Him and follow Him than to get in His Word.

Biblical illiteracy runs rampant in our churches which is why godly love for one another is often absent. But notice, the encouragement to get in the Word is not just an individual pursuit but one that should be done in community. The commands are to teach, admonish, sing psalms, hymns, and songs with gratitude together. In other words, if we want the peace of Christ to rule in our lives so Jesus can take over how we operate in our relationships, then we must be saturated with the worship of Christ through the Word of Christ together.

If we think of church time/group time as obligations that help save us or make us super saints, then we've missed the point. Each gathering is an opportunity to worship the risen Jesus together through the proclamation of His Word. And regularly doing so transforms our love for God and our love for others.

Discussion Questions:

- What does it mean that we are called to be “peacemakers?”
- What is corporate worship and how important is it in the life of a believer?
- What are some ways we can worship together?