

BGCC Community Group Guide



Character of The Church

July 26th, 2026

The Worshipping Church

Colossians 3

Main Idea: A worshipping church is made up of people whose entire lives are transformed by the finished work of Christ, producing grateful hearts, changed lives, genuine community, and minds fixed on Him.

Section 1 – Worship Begins with Remembering Christ's Finished Work

Colossians 3:1–4

"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above..."
(Colossians 3:1)

Summary

Paul begins this section with two important words: **"Since then."** Those words point believers backward before they point them forward. Every command that follows is rooted in something Christ has already accomplished. We pursue holiness because Jesus has already secured our salvation, not because we are trying to earn it.

Matthew emphasized that Christ is now seated at the Father's right hand because His saving work is complete. His death paid for sin, His resurrection defeated death, and His people now have new life hidden in Him. The Christian life begins by remembering what Christ has done before focusing on what we are called to do.

To illustrate this, Matthew described what psychologists sometimes call "transplant gratitude." People who receive life-saving organ transplants often experience a deep appreciation for every day because someone else's sacrifice gave them life. In an even greater way, believers have received new life through Christ's sacrifice. Our response should be overwhelming gratitude that shapes every part of how we live.

As Dallas Willard famously wrote, *"Grace is not opposed to effort; it is opposed to earning."* Christians do make every effort to obey Christ, but that effort flows from gratitude rather than from a desire to earn God's acceptance.

Group Question: Why is it so important to remember Christ's finished work before focusing on our own obedience?

Personal Relevance

It is easy to drift into thinking that God loves us more when we perform well or that we must constantly prove ourselves spiritually. **Or** that we are doing wonderfully well in life by obeying all His commands. Colossians reminds us that our identity begins with what Christ has already accomplished on our behalf.

When gratitude becomes the motivation for obedience instead of guilt or fear or pride, serving Christ becomes an act of worship rather than a burden.

Flow Question: What practical habits help you remember God's grace throughout your week?

Reflection Question: Are your efforts to follow Christ primarily motivated by gratitude or by trying to earn His approval?

Section 2 – Worship Requires Putting Off the Old and Putting On the New

Colossians 3:5–14

"Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience."
(Colossians 3:12)

Summary

Throughout this passage Paul repeatedly describes the Christian life as one of replacement. Believers are called to put sinful attitudes to death while intentionally putting on Christlike character. Worship is not merely avoiding sinful behavior—it is actively becoming more like Jesus.

Matthew pointed out that Paul's clothing imagery would have been especially meaningful in Colossae because the city was known for its textile industry. Just as no one would shower after a dirty day's work only to put filthy clothes back on, believers should have no desire to return to their old way of living after being made new in Christ.

This process requires intentional effort. We choose what we allow our minds to dwell upon, the attitudes we cultivate, and the habits we develop. Yet even this effort is grounded in God's grace rather than self-improvement. Because Christ has made us new, we now seek to live like the people He has already declared us to be.

Matthew encouraged us to find practical reminders throughout the day—whether through Scripture, prayer, or personal routines—that continually help "put on" gratitude and Christlike character.

Group Question: What old habits or attitudes are often hardest to put off, and what Christlike qualities should replace them?

Personal Relevance

Spiritual growth rarely happens accidentally. Just as we intentionally choose what clothes to wear each day, we must intentionally choose to clothe ourselves with compassion, humility, patience, forgiveness, and love.

Every decision becomes an opportunity either to return to old patterns or to reflect the character of Christ.

Flow Question: What daily reminder could help you focus your heart on Christ this week?

Reflection Question: Which quality listed in Colossians 3 do you most need to "put on" in your current circumstances?

Section 3 – Worship Is Personal but Never Private

Colossians 3:11–17

"Bear with each other and forgive one another..." (Colossians 3:13)

Summary

Although following Jesus is deeply personal, Paul never presents it as something believers do alone. Christ brings together people from every background into one new family. Differences of ethnicity, social status, and personal history no longer define believers because Christ is now their shared identity.

Matthew emphasized that worshiping with our lives includes living in genuine Christian community. Paul describes believers forgiving one another, bearing one another's burdens, teaching one another, singing together, and encouraging one another with wisdom. These are not isolated activities but the normal life of the church.

He illustrated this by sharing about a family member who struggled after returning from war and found it difficult to gather with other believers. While personal faith remained important, the tragedy was missing the comfort and encouragement that only the body of Christ could provide. God designed the church so His people would carry one another through seasons of suffering rather than face them alone.

As C. S. Lewis observed in *The Four Loves*, deep friendships often begin when two people discover they share something in common. The gospel creates the deepest possible community because every believer shares the same Savior, the same grace, and the same hope.

Group Question: Why do you think God designed spiritual growth to happen within Christian community instead of in isolation?

Personal Relevance

Many people are willing to attend church without becoming known. Yet Scripture consistently calls believers to something deeper—a community where burdens are shared, forgiveness is

practiced, and encouragement becomes a normal part of life. The job of accountability, counsel, and encouragement is not delegated to therapists or counselors but brothers and sisters.

Healthy churches are not filled with perfect people but with forgiven people learning to love one another well.

Flow Question: Who are the people you can honestly turn to when life becomes difficult?

Reflection Question: How could you become more intentional about helping carry someone else's burden this week?

Section 4 – Worship Flows from a Mind Fixed on Christ

Colossians 3:1–2, 15–17

"Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." (Colossians 3:2)

Summary

Paul repeatedly reminds believers that what occupies the mind eventually shapes the life. The things we meditate on become the things that influence our decisions, attitudes, and actions. Worship begins long before our actions; it begins with what captures our attention.

Matthew explained that if our minds constantly revolve around success, possessions, or approval, those pursuits will eventually control our behavior. On the other hand, when we continually remind ourselves that we are God's beloved children, our identity becomes anchored in Christ rather than in changing circumstances.

To illustrate this truth, Matthew concluded with David's kindness toward Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 9. Mephibosheth saw himself as worthless—a "dead dog"—yet David ignored his self-condemnation and welcomed him to the king's table as family. In the same way, Jesus invites sinners to His table not because they deserve it, but because of His grace. The Christian life is sustained by continually remembering that we have been welcomed, forgiven, and loved by Christ.

This identity produces lives marked by thanksgiving. Rather than trying to earn God's favor, believers worship because they already belong to Him.

Group Question: How does remembering your identity in Christ change the way you approach everyday life?

Personal Relevance

Every day our minds are shaped by something. The question is whether our thoughts are being formed primarily by the world around us or by the truth of the gospel.

When we continually remember Christ's grace, worship becomes more than singing on Sunday—it becomes the natural response of a grateful heart in every area of life.

Flow Question: What voices or influences most compete for your attention throughout the week?

Reflection Question: How would your daily life look different if you consistently viewed yourself as someone welcomed to the King's table?

Conclusion

Paul teaches that worship is far more than music. Worship is a life transformed by the finished work of Christ. Because Jesus has accomplished everything necessary for our salvation, believers respond with grateful obedience rather than striving to earn God's favor.

A worshiping church remembers the gospel, intentionally puts off the old life and puts on Christlike character, lives in an authentic Christian community, and continually fixes its mind on the truths of God's grace. Everything begins and ends with Christ.

Matthew closed by reminding the church of David's invitation to Mephibosheth. Though Mephibosheth believed he was worthless, David welcomed him to the king's table. Likewise, Jesus welcomes sinners through His grace, inviting them into His family and giving them a permanent place at His table.

As you leave today, consider these questions:

- Am I living out of gratitude for Christ's finished work, or am I trying to earn God's approval?
- What old attitudes or habits do I need to put off this week?
- Who is helping me grow in Christ, and whose burdens am I helping carry?
- What practical steps can I take to keep my mind fixed on Christ throughout the week?

A worshiping church is not simply a church that sings well. It is a church whose people remember the gospel, live transformed lives, love one another deeply, and glorify Christ in everything they do.