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The Christian Life – Part 1

Colossians 3:1-11

I. Introduction: Live In Christ

1. If I were to write the cliff notes version of what we have been reading in chapter 2 and here in chapter 3, it would read like:
“First, believe on Christ as Messiah, then live what you believe.”
2. The simple truth Paul is conveying is the Gospel **IS** the very power of God to transform one from death to life **OR exchanging eternal separation from God to an eternal union with Him.**
 - A. In this, Paul is leading readers to understand (1) how to come into relationship with Him, (2) **how to live and mature in our relationship with Him, and** (3) the reality of eternal life with or without Him.
 - B. In this, Paul is leading readers to reject traditions, laws, mythical teachings, and man-knowledge **as, at best, being mere shadows of God distracting, distorting, and even denying the power of the resurrection.** Instead, the Christian is to come out of the shadows and live a life of victory in the person of Jesus Christ.
3. Despite our natural focus on the problematic things the saints in Colossae were doing, in a very real sense they were right. **Their lives in Christ did NOT stop at salvation AND** they saw their willingness to address their failures. **Yet, the flesh of mankind does NOT have the power to overcome the power of sin in mankind.** So, just as we are charged with, Paul guides them deeper into relationship with Jesus!
4. One of the most difficult question Christians face is “how?”. **How do I live a life of faith? How do I have victory over my flesh? How do I have my identity in Christ? Well, buckle up as Paul is getting ready to give us some very real guidance on answering “how”.**

II. Colossians 3:1-4: Eyes Up

1. If you have ever wondered “how” to overcome your sinful desires, “how” to draw closer to God, “how” to lead or follow at home, **OR** in any other way, “how” to be more like Him, Paul is giving you great counsel in these verses, so you might want to take some notes.

2. The very first thing to note is Paul’s gentle reminder of their salvation with his words of “if then you were raised with Christ” which he is presenting as AS FACT. This is a reminder that the resurrection of Jesus changed everything – specifically that God is real and His promises are trustworthy. It’s a reminder that with the resurrection, they (and we like them) received the promise and the power of God in us that we may be made complete in Christ. That is, we need not look for the things of the flesh and the world to do what only Jesus can.
3. A little later in that verse Paul points us again to the power of the resurrection in noting ALSO AS FACT that Christ is sitting at the right hand of the Father. Maybe you have heard this enough times that the freshness and hope that comes with these words has lost its luster. Folks, this is the Gospel of Jesus Christ...that He is seated at the right hand of the Father means that His death was an acceptable sacrifice for our sins AND that He lives. So, when He offers us new life in Him, it’s not some mythic story, but the real deal. The Colossians, you & I, all destined for death are, instead, offered a new eternal life...a life starting with being born-again.
4. So, “if you were raised with Christ” or born-again, “how” can you live this new life...especially in light of the heart of the old you is still hanging about, which along with the enemy and his world system, are constantly tempting and trying to derail you. The answer as to “how” is the third thing to note in this opening verse. Specifically, Paul says to “seek those things above”, the things from where God is.

5. As the Colossians considered these words, they were confronted with an implied statement of “stop looking down and around you in trusting the promises, knowledge, doctrines, and rituals of man” – they are instead to “**seek**” or have “**eyes up**” on Jesus. The implications of this are clear and profound...Paul is telling them the only place they should be having their identity is in the person of Jesus with their lives lived according to His design.

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6. In Matthew 6:21, Jesus says “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”. Put differently, what the Colossians valued (just like you and I) is where they placed the treasure of their time and resources. What they valued is where their obedience could be found. What they valued captured their hearts and minds. What they valued spoke of just what their identity was – a child of God or of the father of lies.
7. The idea of “seeking”, part of having “eyes up”, is to know and obey God. I love that Paul does not stop here with the imperative of “eyes up”, but goes on to tell them (and us) “how”. Specifically, at the beginning of verse 2, he tells them that having “eyes up” also means to continuously **set their minds on the things above**.
8. Now a full exposition of these “things” takes a lifetime and even then they/we will NOT be done. For God’s ways are not our ways and His thoughts are not our thoughts, yet He tells us to be holy as He is holy...this requires we be transformed from the inside out in reflecting His Character, will, actions, and teachings. This, in turn, brings Him glory in our loving obedience, testifies of Him to a world desperate to receive Him, and has us walking in the victory of the abundant life only He can provide – a victory marked by adventure, freedom, peace, rest, forgiveness,
9. So, Paul has masterfully woven his letter that they may know Jesus is their victory **AND** how they may live victory out in their lives. Specifically, “eyes up” that they may (a) know Him in their mind AND (b) experientially know Him in the egg-and-flow of their daily living. Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 2:12-16. I want you to

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see that what Paul has in mind is actually the supernatural presence and power of God Himself.

¹² Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. ¹³ These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. ¹⁴ But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned. ¹⁵ But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is *rightly* judged by no one. ¹⁶ For "*who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?*" **But we have the mind of Christ.** - 1 Co 2:12-16

10. Before we look at the "how" of setting our mind on the things above we read in v2, I want to offer a great warning. *While some may be tempted to create a list to be accomplished from Paul's words and other Biblical truths, this is not what Paul has in mind. Relationships do not "arrive", they are. Yes, the Bible is replete with things we can do to strengthen our relationship with God and others – BUT we must be cautious to not let these "things" become shadows of the actual relationship OR worse yet, idols to do or use, causing us to lose track of the relationship itself.*
11. So, with that said, Scripture offers us volumes of how to know God in our minds and experientially. *Some of the more prevalent ways are what we refer to as the "spiritual disciplines" such as being in His word (study, devo, memorization, etc), prayer, service, worship, generosity, meditation, fasting, quietness with the Lord in His creation and otherwise, and fellowship. These and other disciplines bring the child of God to fear, know, and have their identity in Jesus.*
12. Verses 3-4 build on this last point by setting out two additional transformative facts.
 - A. First, the believer dies in Christ, but obtains a new life hidden with Jesus in God. *That is, the believer lives in the freedom of the victory Christ secured as we are overcomers of life's trial,*

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travails, and the enemies efforts to kill, steal, and destroy. 2 Peter 1:3-4 says it this way:

³ as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue,
⁴ by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust. - 2 Peter 1:3–4

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B. Second, in what is hard to fully grasp, Paul says that when Christ is revealed, His children will too be revealed in His glory. The Apostle John also speaks of this great promise in 1 John 3:2:

² Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. - 1 John 3:2

Believer, this will be a day for the ages. A future day when the Colossians and Aikenites will be with and like Christ in the fulness of God's promises...Amen? Amen!

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III. Colossians 3:5-11: Putting Off the "Old Me"

1. "Therefore", IF you have "eyes up" victory in Christ, there are a few things needing to be tended to as part of transforming a person's mind (Ro 12:1-2) and giving them a new heart as a born-again child of God (Jer 24:7; Jn 3:3; Ezek 11:19; Ja 4:8). This is also part of the "how" we live out the victory of the resurrection received in our lives.
2. You see, the "old sin-laden me" is still here in my flesh. What's more, it will continue to war against the spiritual victory of Christ by drawing one's mind back to the earthly things. Paul warned the church in Ephesus of this in Ephesians 5:5 with these words:

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For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. - Ephesians 5:5

And to the church in Philippi, in Philippines 3:19-21 Paul wrote:

¹⁹ whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is* *their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame—who set their mind on earthly things. ²⁰ For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, ²¹ who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself. - Philippines 3:19–21

3. So here, with the Colossians, Paul takes a “no-prisoner” approach in that he does not suggest trying to clean up, hide, nor tinker with the messiness of our flesh (meaning sin). *Instead, as we read in v5, one’s flesh must be crucified.* While God offers the way to new life, we **MUST** receive it **AND** live it out.
4. Yet, He gave us free will and apart from Christ at work in us, all will open the doors of their hearts to the evil of fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness (which is idolatry). For you see, these are NOT simply things we do, but things we live in...things that are the essence of our identity outside of Jesus Christ. If our hearts are knit to these, they cannot be knit to the Godly things from above.
5. Verse 6 makes the consequences of one’s choice to not obey Jesus clear – God will pour out His wrath in judgment of those who disobey. Turn with me to Romans 1:18 for a fuller discourse of what Paul has in mind...

¹⁸ For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, ¹⁹ because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown *it* to them. ~~²⁰ For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead,~~ so that they are without excuse, ²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools, ²³ and changed the glory of the

incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

²⁴ Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, ²⁵ who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

~~²⁶ For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. ²⁷ Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.~~

²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting; ²⁹ being filled with all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, evil-mindedness; *they are* whisperers, ³⁰ backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, ³¹ undiscerning, untrustworthy, unloving, unforgiving, unmerciful; ³² who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who practice such things are deserving of death, not only do the same but also approve of those who practice them.

- Romans 1:18–32

6. In **Galatians 6:7**, Paul tells the reader to NOT be deceived as God will NOT be mocked. So, “eyes up”, don’t look down or back as did Lot’s wife when she turned to salt in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in **Genesis 19**. In v7, he reminds them that they know what disobedience looks like and they are to, instead, are to live in Christ as they look ahead to the fulness of their eternal hope in Him.
7. In v8-9, Paul offers a second list. This one reflects some of the more common behaviors and habits (our deeds if you will) one must often wrestle with as we journey through God’s sanctifying process with us. We are to take the ungodly behaviors off – that is, they are filthy rags that must be cast away as they rob us and others of our testimony of Jesus.

What's more, just as with the first list, the only way for them to be put off is in the power of God the Spirit in us that we may seek and set our minds on the things above. **For if one desires eternal life, there is no room for these deeds in the life of a child of God** for they testify of a depraved heart rather than the new heart Christ gives His children.

A. What's more, this list speaks of a heart whose primary concern is itself. **A heart that does not love, nor forgive, nor offer grace or mercy, nor give compassion, but a heart that does make excuses for itself.** Rather than purposing to edify others through living in Godly peace with reverence, respect, and kindness, the deeds on this list seek to tear down, defile, defraud, and hurt others.

8. As we close up with v10-11, Paul is not only saying we shouldn't live this way, but that we don't have to! **The things of man, whether rituals and regulations OR man-knowledge cannot save nor sanctify, but Jesus has made the way.** "Eyes up" – seek those things which are above and as God reveals them and brings them into your life, set your mind on them.

A. Whatever your background, position, status, wealth, nationality, race...**we are all created in Jesus image and we are all offered the opportunity to place our trust in Jesus and find our identity in Him...**for knowing and following Christ is our sure victory.

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B. In His resurrection power, Jesus offers to unshackle us from the senseless death and destruction of our flesh and the enemy evil intentions. **He offers us to be heirs of His promise of eternal life if we will surrender our lives to Him.** He offers to make us like Him if we will live surrendered lives to Him.

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[Prayer for those to come to faith]

[Prayer for those to live in faith with "Eyes Up"]

Colossians 3:1-11

The Christian Life – Part 1

I. Introduction: Live in Christ

- Cliff Notes: First, believe on Christ as Messiah, then live what you believe.”

I. Colossians 3:1-4: Eyes Up

- How one can live their belief in Christ.
- Seek & set your minds on the things above. This is NOT done in your power and wisdom, but in the Lords.

Additional Scripture References: Mt 6:21; 1 Co 2:12-16; 2 Pet 1:3-4; 1 Jn 3:2

II. Colossians 3:5-11: Putting Off the “Old Me”

- Even as we seek & set our minds on the things above, we are to purpose to discard the dirty old rags of our sin-destroyed hearts.
- Knowing and following Christ is our sure victory.
- Consequence of God’s wrath in dealing with one’s sin are very real.

Additional Scripture References: Ro 12:1-2; Jer 24:7; Jn 3:3; Ezek 11:19; Ja 4:8; Eph 5:5; Phil 3:19-21; Romans 1:18-32; Gal 6:7; Gen 19

5-Day Devotional

Colossians 3:1-11

The Christian Life – Part 1

Day 1: The Foundation of Victory

Reading: Co 3:1-4; 2 Pe 1:3-4

Devotional: The Christian life begins with a transformative truth: you have been raised with Christ. This is not wishful thinking but established fact. Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father, proving His sacrifice was accepted and His promises are trustworthy. Your old life ended at the cross, and a new life began in the empty tomb. This resurrection power now dwells within you, offering everything needed for life and godliness.

Today, you don't need to search for victory in worldly wisdom, religious rituals, or self-help strategies. Your victory is a Person—Jesus Christ. When you grasp this truth, the question shifts from "Can I overcome?" to "How do I live in the victory already won?" The answer begins with looking up.

Day 2: Setting Your Mind on Things Above

**Reading: Co 3:2; Mt 6:19-21;
Ro 12:1-2**

Devotional: Where your treasure is, your heart follows. Paul's command to set your mind on things above is not about escaping earthly responsibilities but about establishing proper priorities. This "setting" is continuous action—a daily, moment-by-moment choice to align your thoughts with God's truth rather than the world's lies. How do you practically do this? Through spiritual disciplines that deepen relationship: reading Scripture, prayer, worship, meditation, fellowship, and service. These are not mere religious activities to check off but pathways into knowing God intimately. When your mind is saturated with His character, promises, and purposes, earthly temptations lose their grip. Transformation happens from the inside out as you behold Him and become like Him.

Day 3: Putting Off the Old Self

Reading: Co 3:5-7; Ro 1:18-25; Gal 6:7-8

Devotional: Paul takes no prisoners in addressing sin. The old nature must be crucified, not managed or redecorated. Sexual immorality, impurity, evil desires, and greed are not merely bad behaviors but expressions of hearts turned from God toward idols. These sins carry eternal consequences—God's wrath against all unrighteousness. Yet here's the hope: you once walked in these things, but you no longer have to. The same resurrection power that raised Jesus from death can break sin's dominion over your life. God will not be mocked; whatever you sow, you will reap. But when you sow to the Spirit through obedience, you reap eternal life. Don't look back longingly at Egypt. The promised land lies ahead.

Day 4: Removing the Filthy Rags**Reading: Co 3:8-9; Eph 4:22-32; Ja 4:7-10**

Devotional: After addressing heart issues, Paul confronts behavioral patterns: anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language, and lying. These are "filthy rags" that must be cast away. Why? Because they testify against Christ in you and harm those around you. These behaviors flow from hearts focused on self rather than surrender. They tear down rather than build up. They curse rather than bless. But you cannot remove these in your own strength. Victory comes through the Holy Spirit working in surrendered hearts. Draw near to God, and He draws near to you. Purify your hearts. Humble yourself before the Lord. As you seek things above with genuine repentance, God provides the power to put off what dishonors Him and damages others.

Day 5: The New Self in Christ**Reading: Co 3:10-11; 1 Jn 3:1-3; 2 Co 5:17**

Devotional: You are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your Creator. In Christ, human distinctions that divide fall away—race, nationality, social status, religious background—all become secondary to your primary identity as God's beloved child. This is the glorious reality: you are being transformed into Christ's likeness. One day, when He appears, you will be revealed with Him in glory, fully like Him. Until then, the renewal continues daily. Old things have passed away; all things have become new. You don't have to remain trapped in past failures or present struggles. The same God who began this good work will complete it. Keep your eyes up, believer. Your victory is secure in Christ alone.

Small Group Study Guide

Colossians 3:1-11

The Christian Life – Part 1

Opening Prayer: Lord, help us to hear your will clearly and to be faithful to keep our eyes and heart upon you.

Opening Question: Share one area of your life where you've struggled with the question "How do I live this out as a Christian?"

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

1. **The Gospel transforms us from death to life** – Salvation is not just a one-time event but the beginning of a lifelong relationship with Christ.
2. **"Eyes Up" on Jesus** – Victory in the Christian life comes from seeking and setting our minds on things above, not on earthly solutions.
3. **Spiritual disciplines strengthen our relationship with God** – These are not a checklist but pathways to knowing God more deeply.
4. **Put off the "old self"** – We must actively crucify sinful patterns and behaviors through the power of the Holy Spirit.
5. **Our identity is in Christ alone** – Not in our background, status, nationality, or accomplishments.

Discussion Questions: Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

I. Section 1: Understanding "Eyes Up" (Colossians 3:1-4)

1. What does it mean practically to "seek those things which are above" in your daily life? How does this differ from merely trying harder to be good?
2. Read Matthew 6:21. Where do you currently invest most of your time, energy, and resources? What does this reveal about what you truly treasure?
3. The sermon mentioned that our lives are "hidden with Christ in God." How does this truth provide security and freedom when facing trials or temptations?

4. What are some "shadows" (traditions, man-made rules, self-help philosophies) that Christians today might be tempted to trust instead of Christ?

II. Section 2: Setting Our Minds on Things Above (Colossians 3:2)

1. The pastor listed several spiritual disciplines: Bible study, prayer, service, worship, generosity, meditation, fasting, quietness, and fellowship. Which of these do you practice regularly? Which one might God be calling you to develop?
2. How can we practice spiritual disciplines without turning them into a legalistic checklist? What's the difference between relationship and religion in this context?
3. Share a time when engaging in a spiritual discipline helped you experience God in a fresh way. What made that experience meaningful?

III. Section 3: Putting Off the Old Self (Colossians 3:5-11)

1. Paul uses strong language: we must "put to death" or "crucify" sinful patterns (v. 5). Why is such radical language necessary? What happens when we try to merely manage or hide our sin instead?
2. Look at the two lists Paul provides (v. 5 and v. 8-9). Why do you think Paul distinguishes between these two categories? How are they different?
3. The sermon emphasized that these sins reflect "a heart whose primary concern is itself." How does self-centeredness fuel the behaviors Paul lists?
4. Read Romans 1:18-32 (referenced in the sermon). What does this passage teach us about the progression of sin and God's response to persistent disobedience?

IV. Section 4: Our New Identity in Christ (Colossians 3:10-11)

1. Paul says we are being "renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created" us (v. 10). How does knowing we're created in Christ's image change how we view ourselves and others?
2. In verse 11, Paul lists various distinctions that no longer matter in Christ. What modern-day divisions or labels do Christians sometimes wrongly allow to define them instead of their identity in Christ?

3. The sermon ended with this statement: "Whatever your background... we are all offered the opportunity to place our trust in Jesus and find our identity in Him." How should this truth shape how we treat others, especially those different from us?

Personal Reflection Questions: Take 3-5 minutes of silence for individual reflection on each of the following.

1. Is there an area of sin that I've been trying to manage or hide rather than crucify?**
2. Where am I looking "down and around" for solutions instead of keeping my "eyes up" on Jesus?**
3. What is one practical step I can take this week to set my mind more fully on things above?**

Practical Applications: Choose one or more this week's challenges.

1. Daily "Eyes Up" Practice: Set 2-3 alarms on your phone each day. When they go off, pause and redirect your thoughts to Christ—thank Him, pray briefly, or recall a Scripture.
2. Identify One Thing to "Put Off": Choose one behavior, habit, or thought pattern from Paul's lists that you struggle with. Confess it to a trusted friend or accountability partner and ask them to pray with you about it weekly.
3. Deepen One Spiritual Discipline: Pick one spiritual discipline you'd like to grow in. Make a specific plan (e.g., "I will read one Psalm each morning" or "I will serve at the food bank this Saturday").
4. Identity Audit: Write down all the ways you typically identify yourself (job, role, accomplishments, struggles, etc.). Then write "Child of God" at the top and pray through how this primary identity should reshape the others.
5. Memorize Colossians 3:1-2: Write it on a card and review it daily. Let these verses become your "eyes up" reminder throughout the week.

Closing Prayer Focus Points

1. Thanksgiving: For the resurrection power that gives us new life in Christ
2. Confession: Areas where we've been looking to earthly things for victory instead of Christ

3. Petition: For God's Spirit to empower us to put off the old self and live with "eyes up"
4. Intercession: For group members' specific struggles and growth areas shared tonight

Discussion Questions

Colossians 3:1-11

The Christian Life – Part 1

1. Paul emphasizes that believers must 'seek those things above' rather than earthly solutions. What specific areas of your life are you currently seeking answers from worldly wisdom instead of from Christ?
2. The sermon states that spiritual disciplines should strengthen our relationship with God, not become shadows or idols themselves. How can we discern when our spiritual practices have become mere religious routines rather than genuine encounters with Jesus?
3. Paul warns that the 'old sin-laden me' continues to war against our spiritual victory in Christ. What does it practically look like in your daily life to crucify the flesh rather than simply manage or hide your sin?
4. The passage describes believers as having their lives 'hidden with Christ in God.' What does this mysterious phrase mean for your identity, security, and purpose in everyday circumstances?
5. According to Romans 1:18-32, God's wrath is revealed against those who suppress the truth. How does our culture today exchange the truth of God for lies, and how can believers stand firm without becoming self-righteous?
6. Paul provides two lists of sins that must be put off, describing them as reflections of our identity rather than just actions. Why is it significant that these are identity issues and not merely behavioral problems to correct?
7. The sermon asks 'how do I live a life of faith?' repeatedly. Based on this passage, what is the relationship between believing right doctrine about Christ and experiencing transformation in daily living?
8. Colossians 3:4 promises that when Christ is revealed, believers will be revealed with Him in glory. How should this future hope shape the way you handle present suffering, temptation, or disappointment?
9. Paul reminds the Colossians that Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father proves His sacrifice was acceptable and that He lives. Why is the resurrection essential not just for salvation but for ongoing victory over sin?
10. The passage warns against seeking victory through traditions, laws, and human knowledge, calling them shadows that distract from Christ. What modern equivalents might Christians be tempted to trust instead of the sufficiency of Jesus?

Dinner Conversation Starters
Colossians 3:1-11
The Christian Life – Part 1

1. Transformative Power of Faith

"In the sermon, it was mentioned that the Gospel has the power to transform our lives. What is one area in your life where you've seen faith make a significant change?"

2. Living in Victory

"Paul encourages us to have 'eyes up' and seek things above. What are some practical ways we can keep our focus on spiritual goals during our daily activities?"

3. Struggling with the 'Old Me'

"The sermon discussed the conflict between our new life in Christ and our old, sinful nature. Can you share a personal challenge where you've struggled to move past an old habit or mindset?"

4. Identity in Christ

"The message talked about finding our identity in Jesus rather than in worldly things. How do you think focusing on our identity in Christ can positively impact our relationships with others?"

5. Spiritual Disciplines

"We heard about various spiritual disciplines that can deepen our relationship with God. Which spiritual discipline do you find most rewarding, and how does it help you connect with Jesus?"

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

Colossians 3:1-11

The Christian Life – Part 1

AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

I. Understanding Right Choices

Scenario: Your child faces situations where they need to make a choice, such as sharing toys or being kind to friends.

Discussion Question: "When you have a choice to either share your toys or not, how can you make a choice that shows kindness like Jesus?"

II. Learning to Pray

Scenario: Teaching simple prayers to help them feel connected to God when they feel scared or anxious.

Discussion Question: "When you're scared, what words can you say to God to ask for help?"

III. Identifying as a Child of God

Scenario: Explaining that being God's child means showing love and kindness.

Discussion Question: "How can we show others that we are part of God's family by the way we act at school?"

AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

I. Handling Peer Pressure

Scenario: Your child is facing peer pressure to gossip or exclude someone in their friend group.

Discussion Question: "When your friends want to say mean things about someone, what can you do to be kind and follow what Jesus teaches?"

II. Digital Discernment

Scenario: Discuss appropriate behavior and choices online, such as the content they share or view.

Discussion Question: "If you see something online that makes you feel uncomfortable, what can you do to make sure you're making choices that honor God?"

III. Developing a Routine of Spiritual Disciplines

Scenario: Encouraging daily time for prayer or reading a Bible story.

Discussion Question: "What is one way you can make time each day to hear from God, like reading a Bible story or praying before school?"

AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

I. Establishing Identity in Christ

Scenario: Facing identity challenges in social settings where appearance or achievements may pressure them into conformity.

Discussion Question: "In a world where people often value looks and popularity, how can remembering your identity in Christ help you make wise choices?"

II. Maintaining Integrity in Digital Spaces

Scenario: Wrestles with honesty and integrity when using social media or peer interactions online.

Discussion Question: "How can you ensure that your online actions and the way you communicate reflect the character of Jesus?"

III. Navigating Relationships Through a Christian Lens

Scenario: Handling conflicts with friends or handling rumors.

Discussion Question: "When your friends are in a disagreement or spreading rumors, how can you promote peace and uphold your Christian values?"

Tips for Parents

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it's okay to ask questions, even if things don't make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z

Colossians 3:1-11

The Christian Life – Part 1

I. Staying True to Your Identity in Christ

1. Application Point: Courage to Stand Alone

Biblical Basis: Daniel 3 (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego standing firm in faith)

Scenario: You're in a group where others are engaging in activities that compromise your values.

Application: Remember how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego stood firm and trusted God. Similarly, you can choose to uphold your Christian values even if it means standing alone.

Discussion Question: "How can you find strength in your faith when others are pressuring you to choose differently?"

II. Practicing Love and Forgiveness

1. Application Point: Forgiving Others

Biblical Basis: Ephesians 4:32 ("Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.")

Scenario: Dealing with friendship drama or betrayal.

Application: Choose to forgive and show kindness. This doesn't mean ignoring hurtful behavior but choosing not to hold onto grudges while setting healthy boundaries.

Discussion Question: "What steps can you take to forgive someone who has wronged you, and how can this reflect Christ's love?"

III. Navigating with Integrity

1. Application Point: Reflecting Christ Online

Biblical Basis: Colossians 3:17 ("And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus...")

Scenario: You're tempted to post or share something that could harm your testimony.

Application: Think before you post: Is what you're sharing aligned with Christian values and does it uplift others?

Discussion Question: "How can you use your online presence to positively reflect your faith in Christ?"

IV. Positive Influence Among Peers

1. Application Point: Being a Salt and Light

Biblical Basis: Matthew 5:13-16 (Being the salt of the earth and the light of the world)

Scenario: You're part of a group project or team where negative attitudes prevail.

Application: Strive to bring Biblical hope and encouragement, embodying Christ's love.

Discussion Question: "What specific actions can you take to be a positive influence in a group setting?"

V. Discernment and Content Consumption

1. Application Point: Guarding Your Heart and Mind

Biblical Basis: Philippians 4:8 ("Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right... think about such things.")

Scenario: Consuming media that doesn't align with Christian principles.

Application: Choose media that is uplifting and aligns with biblical values, and be mindful of how it affects your thoughts and behavior.

Discussion Question: "How do you determine what content is beneficial for your spiritual growth?"

These points aim to empower Gen Z to live out their faith genuinely and courageously in various aspects of their daily lives, reflecting Biblical integrity, compassion, and steadfastness.