

❖ Read aloud Colossians 3:1-17 (We'll focus our discussion next week on the remainder of chapter 3 and chapter 4 dealing with relationships.)

1) After hearing these first 17 verses of chapter 3, what title would you give to this section?

2) Look back at Colossians 1:21-23 & Colossians 2:9-15. How do Paul's words in chapter 3 connect to these verses in chapters 1 & 2?

3) Discuss these implications of our new identity in Christ as we "set our minds on things above" and know "your life is now hidden with Christ in God...you also will appear with Him in glory." Which is the most insightful, exciting, brings awe and wonder to you, or you want to think about more?

- Sees yourself and other believers through God's eyes as *beloved*
- Diminishes the importance or worldly labels and status
- Grounds your sense of worth & security in God's unconditional love
- Encourages you to treat others with compassion & forgiveness
- Leads you to greater humility & desire to share Christ with others
- Encourages you to persevere in your Christian walk, even through hardship
- Offers hope that your life in Christ will be fully revealed at His return

4) Focus on the 6 behaviors that are related to social relationships in verses 8 & 9.

How do these impact the church community? How do these look to unbelievers?

5) What noble virtues do you read in verses 12-15? How does actively focusing on Christian virtues differ from striving for perfection?

How do these verses turn us upward to Christ and outward to others in a way that transforms our hearts and minds?

**GO DEEPER:** Personal behaviors (verses 8 & 9) often distort our new identity in Christ. We can combat these tendencies through prayer, accountability within community, realigning our desires with God's Word, and having a time of self-examination. Look on the back for directions on self-examination to try this week.

## **EXAMEN - A SPIRITUAL EXERCISE**

**This spiritual exercise reflects on where I was most and least present to God's love in my day. It helps us recognize the things that bring us death and life.**

- ❖ **Read Colossians 1:9 & Philippians 1:9-10**
- ❖ **Ask these questions that open attention to how God is present in your life:**
  - **For what moment today (or this week) am I most grateful?**
  - **For what moment today (or this week) am I least grateful?**
  - **When did I give or receive the most love today (or this week)?**
  - **When did I give or receive the least love today (or this week)?**
  - **What was the most life-giving part of my day (or week)?**
  - **What was the most life-thwarting part of my day (or week)?**
  - **When did I have the deepest sense of connection with God, others, and myself?**
  - **When did I have the least sense of connection?**
  - **Where was I aware of living out of the fruit of the Spirit?**
  - **Where was there an absence of the fruit of the Spirit?**
- ❖ **Become still in the presence of Christ.**
- ❖ **Breathe in thanking God for His presence in your life.**
- ❖ **Breathe out thanking God for the way He continues to shape & mold you into His likeness.**
- ❖ **Continue this slow breathing in and out thanking God for His presence and life-giving change.**
- ❖ **Open your palms and ask that God make you ever aware of His presence in your life.**
- ❖ **Ask God to make you aware of God-given desires and direction in your life.**
- ❖ **Take a moment to journal your thoughts, write out the two verses above, and/or even draw a picture.**