

Small Group Guide: The Supreme Life

Based on Colossians 1:15-20

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: Have you ever experienced a situation with "too many cooks in the kitchen"? What happened, and how was it resolved?

Key Sermon Takeaways (5 minutes)

Review these main points before discussion:

1. **A supreme life can only be lived under the supreme authority of Jesus**
2. **Jesus is the image of the invisible God** - fully divine, not created
3. **Jesus is "firstborn over all creation"** - a title of rank and authority, not birth order
4. **Jesus is Creator of all things** - the unmoved mover, the uncaused cause
5. **Jesus holds all authority** - over spiritual and earthly powers
6. **Jesus is head of the church** - the firstborn from the dead, leader of the new humanity

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Context (15 minutes)

1. **First Century Fears:** The sermon described how people in Colossae lived in fear of gods, governments, natural disasters, and spiritual powers. What are the modern equivalents of these fears today? What "powers" do people try to appease in our culture?
2. **Too Many Masters:** Paul reminded the Colossians that they were trying to please too many authorities. In what ways do we experience this same struggle today? What are the different "masters" competing for our allegiance?
3. **The Gospel Message:** How does understanding the first-century context help you better appreciate Paul's message that "Jesus is enough"?

Diving Deeper into Scripture (20 minutes)

4. **Image of God (v. 15):** What does it mean that Jesus is "the image of the invisible God"? How does this differ from simply being a physical representation?
5. **Firstborn Over All Creation (v. 15):** Why is it important to understand "firstborn" as a title of rank rather than a description of being created? How does this impact our understanding of who Jesus is?
6. **Creator and Sustainer (v. 16-17):** Read the passage again. What does it mean that Jesus not only created all things but also holds all things together? How does this affect your daily life?

7. **Authority Over Powers (v. 16):** The hymn mentions "thrones, powers, rulers, and authorities." What does it mean that all authority is "borrowed authority" from Jesus?

Personal Application (20 minutes)

8. **Single Focus:** Jesus taught that "no one can serve two masters." What areas of your life are you trying to serve multiple masters? What would it look like to have Jesus as your sole "head chef"?
9. **Freedom from Fear:** The Colossians felt like "pawns in a greater game of chess." In what ways do you sometimes feel powerless or controlled by circumstances, people, or systems? How does Jesus' supremacy speak to those fears?
10. **Practical Surrender:** What specific "cook" needs to get out of your kitchen? What authority, influence, or power do you need to stop trying to please so you can focus solely on Jesus?
11. **The Church as Body:** How does understanding the church as the "body of Christ" with Jesus as the head change how you view your role in the church community?

Going Deeper (15 minutes)

12. **Comparison to Philippians 2:** The sermon referenced the Philippian hymn (Philippians 2:5-11). Read both hymns side by side. What similar themes do you notice? How do they complement each other?
13. **Jesus' Eternality:** Discuss the concept of Jesus as the "unmoved mover" and "uncaused cause." How does understanding Jesus' pre-existence and eternity impact your relationship with Him?
14. **Reconciliation Preview:** The sermon briefly mentioned the next section about reconciliation (v. 19-23). What questions or thoughts does this raise for you as we prepare for the coming weeks?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Identify Your "Cooks"

- Make a list of all the authorities, influences, and powers competing for your allegiance
- Pray through the list, surrendering each one to Jesus' supreme authority
- Share your experience with the group next week

Option 2: Meditate on Jesus' Supremacy

- Each day, read Colossians 1:15-20 slowly
- Focus on one phrase each day
- Journal how that particular aspect of Jesus' supremacy impacts your daily decisions

Option 3: Practice "Seeking First"

- Based on Matthew 6:33 ("seek first his kingdom"), begin each day by consciously putting Jesus first
- Before checking your phone, making your to-do list, or starting work, spend time acknowledging Jesus as your supreme authority
- Notice how this changes your perspective throughout the day

Prayer Time (10 minutes)

Group Prayer Focus:

1. **Praise:** Thank God for Jesus' supremacy over all things
2. **Confession:** Confess areas where you've been trying to serve multiple masters
3. **Petition:** Ask God to help you live under Jesus' supreme authority alone
4. **Intercession:** Pray for those who feel weighed down by trying to please everyone

Closing Prayer: *"Father God, thank You for revealing who Your Son is. Help us to leave here today with a renewed focus on Jesus as our supreme authority. Remove the weight of trying to please everyone and everything, and help us to be pleasers of You alone. Give us the courage to die to our old way of thinking and to live fully for Jesus Christ. In His name, Amen."*

For Next Week

- Read Colossians Chapters 2-3 and look for ways to live in light of Jesus authority.
- Continue practicing your chosen weekly challenge
- Be prepared to share one insight from your personal study

Leader Notes

- Be sensitive to group members who may be struggling with fear or feeling overwhelmed by life's demands
- Encourage vulnerability in sharing areas where they're trying to serve multiple masters
- Emphasize the grace and freedom found in Jesus' supremacy, not condemnation
- If time allows, consider playing a worship song focused on Jesus' lordship to close your time together