



Sermon Study - Conversation Guide

May 5, 2024

“Make a Decision”

Colossians 3:1-11

This guide is a discipleship tool for personal reflection, family conversations, for home groups, and for Table Talk on Sundays @10:40 am and 12:15 pm on the Lowell Patio

Coastal Community Church
mycoastal.org

Imagine one day you get a letter from a lawyer saying you've received an inheritance for hundreds of millions. But the inheritance is unique because the family member is still alive. You say, "Why did you give me this money?" And your relative says, "Because I love you. That's it." I might worry that my relative could ask for the money back when I mess up. I'd want to prove that I'm somehow worthy of the gift freely given.

This is what we do with the love of Jesus, with His forgiveness, and His generous, undeserved gifts. We take them and turn them into burdens we must earn. That's called religiosity and it's the devil's design. Paul teaches us how to practically live out the good news of God's unconditional love with Jesus in our everyday lives, avoiding that trap.

3:1 *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.*

Our heart is the place where our emotions and our loves reside. When we invite Jesus into our hearts, He becomes our first love. The loves we pursued first to satisfy our souls now have been displaced by Jesus. He also helps us sort our emotions. But Paul knows that life happens, and when stress, trauma, or threats come, we can go back to our old loves.

We eat our feelings. We numb. We go back to anger, power, or isolation. Setting our hearts on Jesus means coming back to Him as our first love by praying, worshipping, and telling Him everything that's happening.

"Jesus, I give you my anger, sadness, hurt, and fear. I don't know how to handle these emotions well. I don't understand what's happening in my own heart. But You have me and You have all of what's in front of me in Your capable hands. So, I'd really love something good from you right now, whatever You want for me, so I can take the next step with You. Bless and seal these good things in me so I don't lose them. Thank You."

3:2 *Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*

Walking with Jesus is paying attention to what's happening in your mind. Just because a thought flits into it doesn't mean you have to let it live there. You're not your thoughts. You can look at each and either accept or chuck them. Setting our minds on Jesus means taking all our crazy thoughts to Him, asking Him to help us sort out if they need to stay or go.

3 *For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

We died when we rebelled and went it alone. There Jesus took our death and killed it on the cross, breathing His life into us. Our life is hidden with Jesus because He is with us, living in our hearts and minds. God doesn't see you as a sinner anymore. You're His beloved child, and He wants to draw you close to Him so you can have great influence in this world.

Glory is the weight of God's presence. When you show up to serve someone in need with your heart and mind set on God, you'll listen to them, love them, and serve them, and they will experience the weight of God's presence. It will be like Jesus is there, helping through you. This is the purpose of our church. No matter how broken you were in years past, God wants to use you to change lives, because you are His beloved.

3:5 *Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.*

Idolatry is asking a thing or a person to do God's job. We die when we try to do God's job for Him. So, God's wrath is when He gives us the death we're insisting on chasing. When all our idolatrous desires destroy our dreams and bring us harm, God is with us in His kind love, not anger.

3:7 *You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.*

Each of these costs others and benefits us when we use them. That's the definition of hate. But love costs you and benefits them. We used to walk in these hateful ways. So, when we stumble like we did in the past, we must get back up and walk with Jesus again. Faith isn't perfection. It's getting back up and trusting God once more. So don't give up!

3:9 *Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.*

Paul came to a point in his life when he realized he was hurting Jesus when he persecuted the church. This is why we love and forgive those who have hurt us. One day when they come to their senses and turn to Jesus, they need to know they are still loved and forgiven when they fail, just as we are. So, continually make the decision to set your hearts and minds on Jesus, receiving everything you need from Him. Then give it away to everyone, no matter what they do. That's what love looks like.

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDELINES: Tips for great conversation

- We aren't here to teach/fix each other, but to share our experiences.
- Show respect by listening to one another, asking clarifying questions.
- If you're quick to share, allow space and time for others to speak up.
- If you're slow to speak, your experience is valuable so please share.

INTRO

Invite everyone to introduce themselves and then read the Bible verses.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What part of the message and Scripture was most encouraging, and which part is most challenging?
2. What did You notice about God, and what did you notice about yourself as well as other people?

GOSPEL EXCHANGE (REDEMPTIVE WORK)

Jesus asks us to give Him our burdens (Matthew 11:28-29), whatever they may be (a lie we have believed about God or ourselves, our hurt or negative emotions, or even our concerns for loved ones), so He can carry them for us, giving us His peace (His completeness) in exchange.

What do you want to exchange with Jesus today?

What is the burden? "Lord Jesus, I give you my..."

What's His gift? "Lord Jesus, I receive your..."

ACTION QUESTIONS

1. What is one step of obedience you can take this week, based on what you've discovered today? (*NOTE – Consider prayerfully asking God to answer this question for you, taking 30-45 seconds to listen in silence, writing what you heard. If nothing comes clear, keep praying this week.*)
2. During the coming week, who can you share what you learned today? (*NOTE – Consider repeating the same step with this question as the previous question.*)