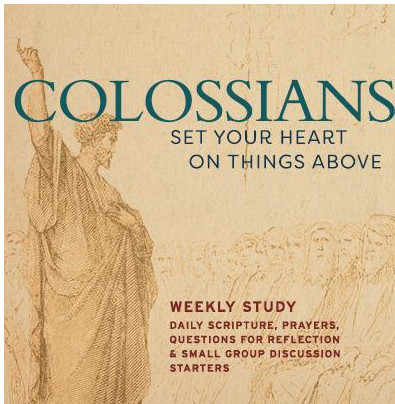




WEEKLY STUDY

Colossians - Week 8

If you've been with us throughout this Colossians series, you might recognize the language that Paul gave us, the language of "Once, but now..." Once I was _____ (lost), but now I am _____ (found). Paul continues in this line of teaching to say to us "And now (now that you have begun to see the change that receiving Christ can bring) you must grow. It's what we're all doing as we continue to follow Jesus. We don't stay the same—we are changed! May you spend time reflecting on how you have been changed and how God is continuing to call you to grow.

Please note our prayer focus for the week in the box below. Join us in seeing what God will do as we unite in prayer.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for someone (could be you!) that feels stuck in their growth as a disciple. Pray that they would receive fresh vision and conviction to press forward in faith.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: COLOSSIANS 3.5-6(NIV)

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.

- Paul is calling for a solid decision to be made. “Be decisive”, he is saying. “Choose and commit to be dead to sin and (coming soon) alive to Christ.” There is an earthly nature that we carry around that tracks back to the Fall in Genesis 3. The earthly nature is contrasted to the things above mentioned earlier in the letter. The list of identifiers of the earthly nature is not meant to be exhaustive but includes, *sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry*. When we are completely honest, we can see that these are present in the world around us...and in us, before we put them to death. In other words, our lives as followers of Jesus ought not to reflect the earthly nature. Where and when do you see the earthly nature creeping up in your life, heart and mind?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned– (Romans 5.12)**
- *God, I want to put away what seem like natural tendencies in this world. I know that you require justice and the result of sin is death...except that you sent your Son to die on a cross and to be raised to life for me. Let the nature of Christ be my new nature! Amen.*

TUESDAY: COLOSSIANS 3.7-10(NIV)

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. 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.

- Paul was teaching the Colossians (who used to walk in the ways of the world) to rid themselves of such things. This was like an invitation to take off the old clothes so they could put on a new garment. He wasn't telling them that they would be made perfect in one day, rather they were being renewed in the knowledge in the image of God! What have you recently “taken off” or “rid yourself” of that was keeping you from becoming more like Jesus? Are there signs that you have put on the new self that Paul writes about?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! (2 Corinthians 5.17)**
 - *Lord God, I long to live in Christ. May the old me be a distant memory and the new me be seen. The new creation can come even through me! Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: COLOSSIANS 3.11 (NIV)

Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

- This one line is among the most groundbreaking in all of Scripture. Paul is declaring the removal of national, religious, cultural, economic, and social distinctions! Those distinctions were (and often are) the way identities are formed. How will we know who we are if not by our national citizenship or economic and social status? In Christ, all are made one. He is all, and is in all! Think about the distinctions that define you in this life. List some of them below. What would it look like to write “Jesus Christ” over all of them? Are you willing to let the original distinctions go?
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- **Prayer Prompt: But if anyone obeys his word, love for God is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: ⁶Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did. (1 John 2.5-6)**
- *God, I let go of any status that is not of you. And to the extent that I will naturally bear them in this world, allow me to live only as Jesus did. Amen.*

THURSDAY: COLOSSIANS 3.12-14 (NIV)

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

- *Just like believers in Colossae were to decisively take off the earthly nature, they are now called to decisively put on the virtues of Christ. There were six vices in vs 5-6, and now there are 6 virtues (including love which covers them all) to put on in their place. Spend time today walking through each of these virtues, Compassion, Kindness, Humility, Gentleness, Patience, Love. How is God inviting you to grow in each of these areas?*
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- **Prayer Prompt: May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. (1 Thessalonians 3.12)**
 - *God, I want the fruit of the virtues of Christ to be evident in my life. May they grow in me as I share your love with others. Amen.*

FRIDAY: ROMANS 6.5-6 (NIV)

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his.⁶ For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—⁷ because anyone who has died has been set free from sin.

- These verses begin with “For if” but it could also be translated as “Since”. The latter is closer to the original meaning as the next phrase is one of certainty. Since we have been united with Jesus in a death and resurrection like his...we know that our old self was crucified with him. In this very certain reality, we have freedom from sin! Are you ever hesitant to claim freedom from sin? Why or why not?
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- **Prayer Prompt: For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace. (Romans 6.14)**
- Jesus, thank you for joining my life to yours. Help me to surrender to the freedom from sin that you have given to me. I am no longer a slave to sin! Amen.

SATURDAY: 2 CORINTHIANS 4.16-18 (NIV)

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.¹⁷ For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.¹⁸ So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

- It is easy to see growth in a healthy child. From one day to the next we see growth in stature and in ability. Some of us, as adults, begin to notice that we are changing outwardly as well. Many times this feels like we are wasting away. But the promise of the Christian life is that we are being renewed inwardly day by day. Sometimes that inward renewal is just as evident as an outward one. Regardless of your age, In what ways is Christ renewing you inwardly?
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- **Prayer Prompt: “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”(John 3.3)**
 - *God, I do not want to live just for the outward life. My physical looks and strength are gifts you give me, but they are not the only growth that matters. What truly changes me and changes the world around me is the renewal you are working in me. Come and do a work of renewal in me today. Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

Use the questions below to guide your conversation.

1. Paul says, “You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived” (Colossians 3.7). Where have you seen Christ change the way you respond, think, or live?
2. Some old practices can feel ingrained because we have repeated them for years. What old habits or patterns can be difficult to leave behind as we grow in Christ? What helps us recognize when something in our lives needs to change?
3. Read Colossians 3.12-14. Which of the qualities Paul tells us to “put on” comes most naturally to you? Which is hardest, especially in difficult relationships?
4. Paul admits in Romans 7 that he cannot change himself, then points to Jesus as the one who delivers him. Where do you want to trust Jesus to keep changing you? What encouragement does that give you when change feels slow? How can we pray for you?