

Colossians 3: Participant Guide

SCRIPTURE READING QUESTIONS

Before diving into the group discussion, consider these four questions as you read the text:

- **What does this passage say about God, who He is, and what He does (Father, Son, and Spirit)?**
- **What does this passage teach me about me?**
- **What comfort/challenge can I take away from this passage?**
- **How will I respond or live differently because of what I've read?**

PART 1: THE FOUNDATION

Loving God's People (The Community Lens) In Colossians 3, our "One New Family" identity requires putting on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience—forgiving one another just as the Lord forgave us. Above all these, we put on love, which binds us together in perfect harmony, removing barriers between Jew and Gentile, slave and free.

- **Key Question:** "How are you pursuing authentic community with other believers right now?"
- **Key Question:** "What gets in the way of community with other believers?"

Looking to God's Word (The Truth Lens) This chapter grounds our "Wealth in Christ" in our transformed reality: "For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3, CSB). We are commanded to let the word of Christ dwell in us richly as we teach and admonish one another with all wisdom.

- **Key Question:** "How is God's Word challenging you?"
- **Key Question:** "What can you do to prioritize God's Word?"

PART 2: THE WALK

Listening to God's Voice (The Prayer Lens) Paul commands us to seek the things above, setting our minds on heavenly realities rather than earthly things. Walking in the Spirit involves letting the peace of Christ rule in our hearts and maintaining an attitude of continuous gratitude through prayer and praise.

- **Key Question:** "How is God directing you?"
- **Key Question:** "What do you need to quiet in your life to hear God better?"

Living Sent (The Mission Lens) Our "sending capacity over seating capacity" extends into every sphere of daily work and family life. Paul instructs: "Whatever you do, do it enthusiastically, as something done for the Lord and not for men" (Colossians 3:23, CSB). Living sent means reflecting Jesus in our everyday roles as employees, spouses, parents, and neighbors.

- **Key Question:** "What everyday opportunity have you used to point someone to Jesus?"
- **Key Question:** "What opportunities did you miss to tell someone about Jesus?"

GROUP PRAYER & SUMMARY

- **Closing Thought:** Colossians 3 shows us that because we have been raised with Christ, we must put off the old self with its sinful practices and put on the new self, doing everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.
- **Final Action:** Identify one specific "old self" garment (such as anger, malice, lying, or greed) to put to death this week, and consciously practice "putting on" its Christlike replacement.

PAGE 3: FACILITATOR CHEAT SHEET

The Structural Lens

Indicative vs. Imperative: The theological framework relies entirely on the **Indicative** that "you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God" (v. 3) and "you have put off the old self... and put on the new self" (v. 9–10). The **Imperatives** flow directly from this new status: "Therefore, put to death whatever in you is worldly" (v. 5) and "put on compassionate hearts" (v. 12). Remind the group that we don't change our wardrobe to become new creations; we put on new clothes because we already are new creations in Christ.

Facilitation Tips

- **Managing the "Household Code" Discussion:** When working through verses 18–25 (instructions for wives, husbands, children, parents, slaves/masters), the group may get stuck arguing about cultural applications. Redirect them to the overarching rule in verse 17 and verse 23: every relationship and duty is meant to be submitted to the lordship of Jesus as an act of worship.
- **Setting Minds "On Things Above":** Members might think "things above" means being so heavenly-minded that they are no earthly good. Clarify that setting our minds on things above provides the eternal perspective required to live rightly and redemptively right here on earth.

Leader Insights

- **Community:** Notice that "forgiving one another" is explicitly tied to how Christ forgave us (v. 13). The "One New Family" cannot survive without constant, active, grace-fueled forgiveness.
- **Truth:** Letting the word of Christ dwell in us *richly* (v. 16) goes beyond individual quiet times—it requires communal teaching, singing, and mutual encouragement.
- **Prayer:** Letting the "peace of Christ rule in your hearts" (v. 15) uses the Greek imagery of an umpire or arbitrator. In prayer, we allow God's peace to settle disputes and quiet internal anxiety.
- **Mission:** Verse 23 elevates mundane, daily work to high kingdom service. Our "sending capacity" turns ordinary jobs into missional platforms when performed for King Jesus.