

Life Group Questions

Better Together: We Are Not a Crowd; We Are Family

Better Together Isn't Always Easy / Willy Reimer/ Colossians 3:12-17 / Feb. 12/13, 2022

To the Life Group leader: thank you for your ministry leading this Life Group. **Take time to review the questions selecting those that you believe will be most helpful for your group study.** You will not have time to use all the questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you lead, as you select questions, and as you guide the discussion. As a team, we're praying for the Holy Spirit to guide you, lead you and speak through you.

Amidst a cultural context of identity confusion and frustration, God has given us an identity in Christ as children of God. How does that identity change how we relate to our world and one another in the church? This week, pastor Willy answers that question by taking us to Colossians 3:12-17.

Reconnect

Come together with these preliminary questions:

- Did you have the opportunity this past week to make someone feel welcome? Either in your home, workplace, or church?
- How would rate your depth of relationships this past year on a scale of 1-10? Why?
- How immersed have you been this past week in wisdom and the word of Christ? Be honest. We all fail, and we're here to grow together!

Open in Prayer

Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you through the text, the questions, and each other.

Message Recap

Review the message using these questions

1. What stood out to you most in this week's message?
2. What was the most meaningful thing you heard in the message? Why?
3. What questions are still lingering?

Choose discussion and application questions

1) We're better together because we know who we are

- a) When we talk about someone's "identity," what are we talking about? How is a person identified?
 - (1) It's been said many times that people today are struggling to find their identity. How are they defining "identity," and how do they think they'll obtain an identity?
 - (2) Have you or someone you know found it hard to find a place to "fit" in the world? Why?
 - (3) Read Colossians 3:10-11 and John 1:12. What do these verses say about identity?
 - (4) Is "identity" meaning something different in these verses than what most people think identity means? Why?

- (5) Is “identity” in these verses talking about identity-based on belief, belonging, outward appearance, career, humanity, race, or something different? Does our understanding of identity bear on how we see Christians or everyone?
- (6) How might these verses give hope to people struggling to find their identity?
- (7) Read these verses again. If this is your identity, how does your identity in Christ change how you act (and think)?
- b) Continue reading Colossians 3:12-14. Stop on each characteristic and answer the following two questions:
 - (1) How does this characteristic relate to “the new nature,” “becoming like our Creator,” and being a child of God?
 - (2) How can this characteristic be lived out in our world and church today? Give specific examples.
- c) Pastor Willy made the point that “we’re better together because we know who we are.” List ways in which knowing our Christian identity changes how we interact with other Christians for the better.
- d) What is the benefit of focusing on virtuous characteristics and working towards them rather than only focusing on the bad characteristics to remove them?
- e) What does it mean to actually forgive?
- f) What does it mean for love to “bind everything together”?

2) We’re better together when we let Jesus rule our hearts

- a) Read Colossians 3:15. Reflecting on the word “let,” think of ways in which we might be blocking the peace of Christ from ruling in our hearts.
 - (1) If we let the peace of Christ rule our hearts, how will that affect the way we engage with each other and our world? Think of things that cause conflict in the world and the church, and answer the question: what does letting the peace of Christ rule look like?
 - (2) Reflect on this quote by Lesslie Newbigin, “The church is to be a sign, instrument, and foretaste of the kingdom of God.” Share what thoughts come to mind and what it might look like for you, your life group, and church to be a sign, instrument, and foretaste of the kingdom of God.
- b) Notice the constant repetition of the command to be thankful (Colossians 3:12-17). Besides creating a positive attitude, what good does being thankful do?

3) We’re better together when Jesus’ teaching rules our attitudes and behaviour

- a) Read Colossians 3:16-17. What is the “word of Christ”?
 - (1) Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17. What do both of these passages say about the word of Christ/God informing our community?
 - (2) Does the Bible give us everything we need for Christian community? Why or why not?
 - (3) Are there any issues that the church has run into that the Bible hasn’t directly addressed?
 - (a) How might we still “let the word of Christ dwell in [us] richly” and address those issues?
- b) What is wisdom?
 - (1) How do we get wisdom?
 - (2) How can you change the way you think to increasingly reflect the mind of Christ through the things you do or think about each day?
- c) Verse 17 teaches that in everything we do: 1) we must do it in the name of Jesus, and 2) be thankful. Go over some moments of your day and think about what it would look like for you to do it in the name of Jesus and be thankful as you do it.
 - (1) How would practicing living in “the name of Jesus” and being thankful every day change the way you think and act?
 - (2) If the whole church community did the above, what significant changes could you expect to see?

Reflection Questions

- Is there anyone you need to forgive?

- Is there anyone you need to ask forgiveness from?
- If no one comes to mind, ask God to show anyone who you need to forgive. Ask Him to bring their names to mind. Write them down. Pray and ask God what your next steps should be. Then go do them.

Group Action

This sermon series is about spiritual family. What steps will you take to deepen the family connection?

The Life Group questions for January 8th and 9th included a call to action in your Life Group to deepen fellowship. If you haven't gone over that with your group, we ask you to do that this week. If you did, perhaps take some time to remind the group of the action steps you committed to. Here are the group action questions from last week:

- (1) Do you feel a need for a spiritual family?
- (2) Has this need ever been fulfilled? Share times when you felt fulfilled in fellowship with other Christians.
- (3) Is that need regularly fulfilled in your church or life group? Don't be afraid to say no, but try to explain or share what barriers stand in the way.
- (4) Do you want to experience deeper fellowship with your church and life group? What steps could you take?

If your group would like to, list ways your group could deepen fellowship with one another and/or the larger church. Choose one or two to start with, and then pledge to put that into action. In the following weeks, remember to remind each other of the change you wanted to see in moving deeper in fellowship.

Here are some examples of things you could do: 1) Have one person share their testimony at each group meeting. Give everyone an opportunity to ask questions and pray for that person. 2) Eat together. 3) Go out and do something fun together (hiking, walking, laser tag, visiting a museum, etc.) 4) Serve together. 5) Help each other with any projects they have. 6) Set up a regular prayer meeting. 7) Put into practice a regular spiritual discipline together and hold one another accountable. 8) Have a split group time, split between men and women, and have room for conversation. 9) Talk to someone (pastor, elder, another group leader) about other ways you could deepen your group's fellowship and sense of family.

Choose Your Next Step

What next step will you commit to for the upcoming week (and beyond)?

☐ Individual

- Do you have behaviors or attitudes that are stopping you from following Jesus into "danger?" If yes, confess those to God.
- If you are unsure if you have any areas of your life that are not submitted to Jesus, ask the Holy Spirit to show them to you.
- Ask Jesus to forgive you for not trusting him in the "danger."
- Commit each area of your life that you have held back from Jesus to him. Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit to walk in trust of Jesus' rule every day.

☐ Christian Community

- Tell a trusted friend where you sense God calling you to step into "danger" and ask them to pray for you as you seek to trust and follow God in these areas.

- Reach out to your Christian community to talk through the things that pull you away from God and his ways. Ask the group to pray for you and tell them how they can support you in your walk with Jesus.

□ **The world**

- Ask God to guide you as you bring his kingdom through your longings and love wherever you go.
- Ask God for discernment to see where this earthly kingdom is in conflict with God's kingdom and how you can live out God's priorities in your world.

Closing Prayer

A closing prayer is an effective way to point people back to our Loving Father as they seek to apply their new learnings throughout the week. If we remain connected to the power of the Holy Spirit, He will remind us of His call for us and give us the strength to follow through. Ask group members to share what they sense God calling them to. Pray for each other and commit to continue to do so during the week as people step out in obedience to God's leading.