

Group discussion *Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for “the big question.”*

Read Colossians 1:15-23 aloud.

1. What is said about Jesus in verses 15-17? What does each phrase say about him?

Discuss the significance of each phrase – image of invisible God, creator, all created for him, before all things, all hold together in him.

What is surprising in this description?

In what ways does this passage ascribe a greater role for Jesus than we might typically have in mind?

Most of the time we think how Jesus interacted with people - as teacher, healer, and savior. “Cosmic lord who holds the universe together” is a significant expansion of our concept.

How does this text expand our understanding of God?

How does it feel when you consider that our beloved friend Jesus is creator and master of the universe?

2. What is said about Jesus in verses 18-20? What does each phrase say about him?

How does the phrase “firstborn from among the dead” give us hope?

What does the word “reconcile” mean?

What does it mean to reconcile a bank statement? What does it mean when family members are reconciled? Deals with re-uniting two parties.

What was reconciled through Jesus? How does this fit with 15-17?
All creation being reconciled with God.

How is this a richer description of Jesus’ work than “he died for me”?
While it’s true that Jesus died for each of us, this passage shows that his work is much bigger than the ways it helped me personally.

What pleased God in verse 19? What might be pleasing to God today?

3. Let’s talk about us. What is said about us in 21-23?

We were alienated... enemies... because of our evil choices.

We have been reconciled... made holy, without blemish.

We are called to stand firm in the faith... committed to the gospel.

How would you describe our role in the reconciliation verse 22 mentions? What did we do?

Verse 13 gives additional insights to the reconciliation God gave us. How is our deliverance like the Israelites leaving Egypt?

4. Wilson’s sermon theme was unity. What are some things that are united in this passage?

15-17 – All creation united under one creator/ruler – Jesus.

18-20 – Church and all things reconciled through Jesus’ blood.

21-23 – Each of us re-united with God through Christ.

Wilson implied that “Christ set in motion something that the church continues.” How do you respond to that statement? How are we continuing the reconciling work of Jesus?

Why is Christian unity difficult?

† **The million-dollar question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It’s okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

Which of your relationships could use Jesus’ peace-making touch? Where do you need to work on reconciliation with someone? Who would you like to feel closer to?

What can you do to promote peace in this particular relationship?

Resources

Bible notes

Colossians 1 brings to mind II Corinthians 5:11-21, especially 18-21 because the word “reconcile” appears five times in four verses. Read and meditate on this passage as part of your preparation for this discussion.

Colossians is difficult reading – lots of rich phrases packed into small spaces. Don’t panic. Break it down phrase by phrase, and you’ll get it. It also helps to read from multiple translations. The Message often gives interesting insights.

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

Bring glue, scissors, old magazines, crayons & blank paper.

Ask group members to cut out photos or draw things that tell us how your week went. Share the collages with one another and tell why you chose those items.

Read II Corinthians 5:17-20 aloud.

What does it mean to be reconciled?

It’s when people were fighting and then they make peace.

How do your parents help you and your siblings to reconcile after an argument?

Do they make you hug or kiss your sister after an argument?

How did Jesus reconcile us to God? How did he change that relationship?

How did Jesus reconcile us to one another? How are our relationships changed because of what Jesus did?

When you made your collage, how was that like what Jesus did? How were you bringing all sorts of different things together into a single picture?



November 21, 2010

LIFE Group Guide

Colossians 1 – Unity in Christ

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme: **The unity brought about by the work of Christ sets the stage and provides a model for the work of the church today.**

Kevin & Wilson are engaged in a sermon series called iBelieve, looking at Christ’s call to worship, to love one another, to evangelize, and to grow in faith. This week’s sermon involves Wilson looking Colossians 1 and how Jesus holds the universe (and us) together. It helps me envision Jesus standing in the middle of the universe pulling things together.

The body (that’s us!) follows the head, so Christians ought to be unifiers and peace-makers, just like Jesus was.

Leadership tip: Your group is a great opportunity to bring people together (like Christ did). Talk about who would benefit by being invited to your group.

Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone’s spiritual pulse, and “break the ice.” No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ What is the title you use most often to refer to Jesus?
- ❖ How did your parents reconcile differences between you and your siblings? What was the worst thing they made you do? *Did they make you hug or kiss your sister after an argument? It took years of counseling for me to get over that one!*
- ❖ When have you been part of a dispute between Christians? Looking back, what do you wish had been different? What would have made the conflict less disruptive?