Leader's Guide

Session 7: Colossians 3:18–4:1	
SESSION GOALS	
Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.	
Main Idea: Just as Jesus enables us to be reconciled to the Father, He also empowers us to have Godhonoring relationships with those closest to us.	
Head Change: To know that the supremacy of Christ not only changes us on the inside, but it also impacts the way we treat the people in our lives.	
Heart Change: To feel increased affection toward other believers through the power of the Spirit.	
Life Change: To act out the love of Christ in all our relationships so that Jesus is glorified in us and through us.	
OPEN	
What's been the most influential relationship in your life? What's unique about that relationship? How has that person impacted you?	
We started talking in the last session about how Jesus changes our relationships with others. In this session, we're going to look at three specific examples of how that plays out in our lives: marriage, parenting, and work. Even if you're not married, don't have kids, or don't have a boss, there are timeless principles we can apply to our lives today in the relationships that matter most to us.	
READ	
Read Colossians 3:18–4:1. ghtnow MEDIA	

WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Louie's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how Louie answers the following questions. What was the cultural context of the Colossian church? Is God more interested in changing us or our circumstances? Why? How can we specifically honor God in our marriages, families, and workplace? Show Session 7: Colossians 3:18–4:1 (15 minutes)

DISCUSS

Before we dive into this session, let's review the cultural context of the Colossian church. **How did Louie describe** the situation in Colossae, specifically about women and slaves?

Women had significantly fewer rights than today and slaves were part of the norm in the Roman Empire. Louie talked about how the Bible isn't condoning these practices. Instead, it's speaking into the cultural moment to teach how to apply biblical principles in everyday life. Do Louie's points impact the way you view the passage we're looking at today? If so, how? What biblical principles, specifically from the previous session, could relate to this session? (The last session talked about putting on the new self. This passage shows how putting on the new self and all that comes with it—love, peace, unity, worship, and gratitude—works itself out in specific relationships.)

Louie said God wants to speak into our situations to cause internal transformation. He said, "it doesn't necessarily require the circumstances changing for God to revolutionize you right in the middle of the circumstances." Do you expect God to change your circumstances? How do you typically respond when He doesn't?

How have you experienced God changing you internally through a difficult situation?

It's true that God doesn't always change our external circumstances. This passage might be especially difficult for us to swallow because of a broken marriage, a prodigal child, or a cruel boss. Or maybe the sting comes from not being in that particular season of life—being single, childless, or jobless. But we can take hope in the fact that God is working in us to make us into the image of Jesus. There's something in this passage for everyone. With all that in mind, let's dive into the text.

Read verse 17.

What does this verse say about how we should act? Should our circumstances change the fact that we do everything for Jesus? Why or why not?

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Why do you think it's so	difficult to	shift from	self-focus
to gazing on Christ?			

Paul wants the Colossians to embrace Jesus and His people through selfless love. He continues this idea— that we should serve Jesus and His people—by giving three specific examples of how Christians can apply this principles to their lives: marriage, family, and slaves and masters.

Read verses 18-19.

PEEK AT THE GREEK

The word Paul uses that's translated "submit" is the Greek word *hupotasso*, which means to willingly subject or subordinate. It's not referring to the authority, power, or worth of a person. This word is used in Luke 2:51 to describe Jesus's attitude toward Mary and Joseph—He willingly submitted to them. To submit isn't to subjugate yourself to abuse or cruelty or even to obey necessarily. Rather, to submit is to willingly put another person's interests above your own. Paul's appeal to wives isn't about hierarchy, but about living out the principle stated in verse 17 to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, which includes serving and loving their husbands.



For those who are married, what's difficult about putting your spouse's interests above your own? What does it look like when it's done well? How do you feel when your spouse loves and serves you well? Regardless of your marital status, what are some examples of marriages you're familiar with that personify the selfless service Paul talks about in this passage? Paul shifts to the second example: parents and children. Read verses 20-21. What was it like to obey your parents as a kid? What does that look like to honor them today? For those who are parents, how do you feel when your children obey you? What about when they don't? What do you think it means to not embitter or provoke your children? What are some ways you can encourage them? Even if you don't have kids, what are some ways you can model the selfless love of Jesus to those who are younger than you? Paul concludes his argument by talking to slaves and masters. Slavery in those days wasn't based on race. Rather, people could sell themselves into slavery to pay off debt. They were seen both as people and as property. They could work for and earn their freedom in some cases. Paul doesn't urge slaves to leave their masters, instead he tells them to honor Christ in the midst of their situation. Read Colossians 3:22-4:1. What do you think would be difficult about these instructions for slaves? What about for masters? How does Paul encourage the slaves to act? How do you think having a holy mindset would change the way they worked? rightnow MEDIA

GO DEEPER

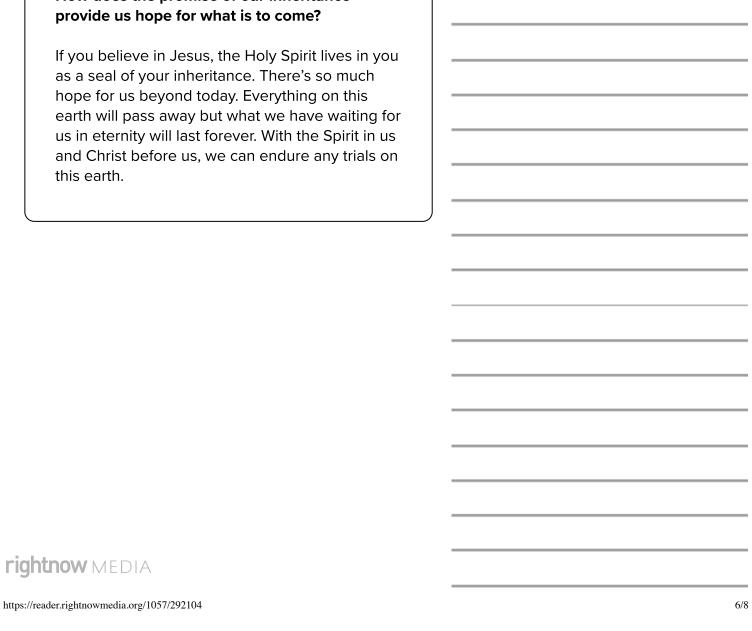
Learn more about the inheritance of the people of God in these verses: Eph. 1:11–14; Heb. 9:13–15; 1 Pet. 1:3-5

Who is the guarantee of our inheritance? (The **Holy Spirit)**

Is this inheritance something we've obtained for ourselves? Who obtained it for us and how did He do it?

How do you think this promise of an inheritance would have resonated with slaves who had no earthly inheritance?

How does the promise of our inheritance



We aren't in the same situation as these slaves and masters. But all of us know what it feels like to be in a situation that's less than ideal. We've all been in chaotic circumstances, difficult relationships, or tough jobs. Verse 23 takes us back to verse 17—in all things, no matter the situation, we work for God and His glory. What specific life situations do you find yourself in today? (Some examples include: singleness, marriage, divorce, job, unemployed, family turmoil, prodigal child, loss of a family member, etc.) Are they similar or different from what Paul describes in these verses? How so? What's difficult about the life circumstances you're in? What are some of the blessings to this time of life? Would you say it's easier to focus on yourself in these situations, or on others and Christ? Why do you say that? What would it look like to focus on working for Jesus in all areas of your life? What could you do this week to honor God in your relationships and circumstances? **LAST WORD** We all know that following Jesus doesn't guarantee us an easy life. Jesus promises the opposite in John 16:33—in this world, we will endure hardship. But we can put our hope in Jesus, who overcame the world through His death and resurrection. In all that we do and in every relationship we can look to Jesus and rely on the strength of the Holy Spirit. Louie encouraged us to find purpose in our work, in our families, and in the mundane moments of life through Jesus. We work for Him—for His glory, honor, and fame. All that we do can exalt Him. This week, let's live with this truth at the forefront of our minds.

LIVE IT OUT

Pray: Pray about your specific situation in life this week—
your relationships, job, school, neighborhood, family. Ask
God to teach you how to honor Him in all that you do.

Serve: Pick one person to serve this week. Choose two to
three intentional actions you could do to lovingly put that
person above yourself.

Work: Whether you're employed or not, take a moment at
the beginning of each day to remind yourself that you're
working for God. Come up with a way to creatively remind
yourself of that truth throughout the day—phone
reminders, a sticky note, or a verse as your computer
wallpaper.

Thank: Thank your parents, or semeone who has acted.

Thank: Thank your parents, or someone who has acted like a parent to you, this week.

Memorize: Memorize Colossians 3:23–24 this week. Use it to remind yourself that you work for the Lord throughout the day.