



SERMON STUDY GUIDE
"Experiencing Grace"
For the sermon preached on 9/23:

From the text:
Colossians 3:12-17

How to use the Groups Study Guide

Hello Leaders! Thank you for your ongoing commitment to pursue Christian community and the study of Scripture—study that leads to life transformation in Christ and strives to serve "the other."

These studies have been designed with the following aspects in mind:

1. To facilitate a discussion on the passage of Scripture that was preached that particular Sunday using the Inductive Bible Study Method. In summary, this method stresses "**Observation**" (what the reader can see from the text), "**Interpretation**" (what we can learn when we study the text with various tools, commentaries, and resources), and "**Application**" (how we can apply the Scripture to our lives).
2. Groups using this study range from the new leader to the highly experienced. Groups themselves have their own context. This study attempts to hit the middle. The stronger studies require about an hour of leader preparation to contextualize this resource to the needs and personalities of your group. It's recommended that you rephrase the questions to match your voice and have an understanding of the interpretive questions as you prepare to lead and facilitate.
3. In addition to prep time, please spend time in prayer during preparation and before and after the study. It's the power of the Holy Spirit that illuminates the Word of Scripture and we are humbled that He uses our combined efforts as part of this work. (For more tips on using this study, please see the endnotes.)

As always, we are so grateful for you, your gifting, your servant leadership, and all that you do for the cause of Christ. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Tim, on behalf of the Group Life Team

We are in week 3 of the sermon series called "Experiencing Grace." This week's message focused on Connecting in a Group. So first, give each other a high-five because you are living out the message already and are here in a group!

As an opener, think back to some of your more memorable and special moments being part of a small group. Maybe it wasn't even the one you are currently in. What have been your highlights of small group life?

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:12-17

O – Let's take a few moments and personally re-read this beautiful passage in a quiet moment together. Share words and concepts resonate with your heart and why do you think your heart is drawn to them?

O – What virtues does Paul tell us to "clothe ourselves" with? And what words, memories, and feelings come to mind when you hear these five words - compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience?

I – Simpler question: Why do you think Paul instructs his readers to clothe themselves with these virtues as a natural outworking to this supernatural gift of being "God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved?"

(The logic is that if are loved like this by God, then in Christ-like response, we will clothe ourselves with the virtues of love.)

I – Harder question: Paul states that love is above all of them as it binds one another in perfect unity. The following verse calls us to bear with each other and to forgive one another. Recall a time where you either extended the grace of Jesus to another by forgiving them, or received this grace by being forgiven. What did you learn from that experience and what can you pass on?

I/A – If someone else has chosen not to forgive you, or if you have chosen not to forgive another, it suggests that we might have a higher standard of forgiveness than God. This is the difference between forgiveness and condemnation. Recall our Biblical text and

consider how we can avoid begin people of condemnation and how can we grow as people who imitate Christ's forgiveness?

(Leaders, it may be a good idea to acknowledge that in certain cases, namely abusive situations, that though forgiveness may be experienced, the relationship may not be safely restored. And even still, the grace of God can meet us in this moment.

The objective of these questions is to figure out ways to apply what Paul is writing – how to extend grace and love in community).

A – Sometimes it feels like we have lost our ability to “bear with one another” and have allowed grievances to go unresolved. Why do you think this is and more importantly, what can we do as Christ-followers to live out Paul's words of forgiving and extending love and grace in community?

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- a. Please note that not all these questions might be able to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your group the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your group.
 - b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?).
 - c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don't rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
 - d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
 - e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching” rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.