



# Centennial Bible Study: Inspiring Service Session 1

## Do Everything in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ Colossians 2 and 3

### Gathering

The theme for this Bible study is “inspiring service.” Invite each participant to reflect on one of the following:

- Tell about a time when you felt inspired to do something.
- Share a story about the worst service you ever received in a store or restaurant.
- What is the scariest thing you’ve ever had to do for someone else?

### Encounter the Word

Paul is concerned in this letter about religious syncretism and philosophical speculations taking the place of simple faith and trust in the gospel of Jesus Christ. He emphasizes that Christ has reconciled us to God so that we are free to love and serve others, rather than worrying about how to placate or appease the spiritual forces that were assumed to be at work in the ancient world. A brief summary of the context, organization, and major themes of Colossians can be found in the introduction to the book in *The New Oxford Annotated Bible*, “The Letter of Paul to the Colossians.” You can also find information about the historical background of Colossians in *The Interpreter’s Bible* or other commentaries.

### Engage and Reflect on the Word

Have volunteers read the following verses, while others follow along. Verses below are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

#### Colossians 2:6-15

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fullness in

him, who is the head of every ruler and authority. In him also you were circumcised with a spiritual circumcision, by putting off the body of the flesh in the circumcision of Christ; when you were buried with him in baptism, you were also raised with him through faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead. And when you were dead in trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive together with him, when he forgave us all our trespasses, erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it...

- Imagine you are trapped in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. There is chaos and confusion all around. All civil authority has been abolished. How would you behave? What defines who you are in these circumstances? Where do you look for moral guidance?
- What are “the elemental spirits of the universe” that rule and govern the world in which we live today? If Christ has “disarmed the rulers and authorities” of this age, then how should we behave?
- What do you think it means to be “rooted and built up in [Christ] and established in the faith”?

### **Colossians 3:1-17**

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry). On account of these the wrath of God is coming on those who are disobedient. These are the ways you also once followed, when you were living that life. But now you must get rid of all such things--anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator. In that renewal there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all!

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

- Reflect for a moment on the “old self” and the “new self.” What is one old habit you

would like to strip away, and one new habit you would like to put on?

- Consider the daily context in which you live. What might it mean for you to “do everything (in word and deed) in the name of the Lord Jesus”? Given the cultural context in which we live, do you think this is a realistic expectation for Christians? Why, or why not?
- If, as Paul says, “there is no longer Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all,” then what barriers, borders, or boundaries is God calling you to cross? What walls still need to be broken down in your city, country, or community of faith?

## **Closing**

Invite willing participants to name one thing they would like to do in Jesus’ name. After everyone has had a chance to share something, conclude with the following:

Lord Jesus, we thank you for giving us new life and for this time together. Inspire us in service and teach us to do everything in your name. Amen.

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