

Explore the Bible: The Gospel Lived

October 25, 2021

- *The Explore the Bible lesson for Nov. 14 focuses on Colossians 3:1-17.*

Based on my travels in the United States and other countries, I am shocked to discover how some Christians are living openly immoral, sinful lives. In one breath, they confess Christ and speak about the wonders of the cross. Then in another voice, conversations are packed with swearing and cursing. I have heard many testimonies about the goodness of God at conferences and retreats. However, when the preaching and teaching are finished for the day, the social gatherings of some of the Christians include sipping alcoholic drinks, eventually ending in a drunken state. Although this may seem to be the new norm and while drinking alcoholic beverages may not be an act of sin, I am not comfortable with the actions.

According to James 2:8, Christians have the responsibility to control their behavior in all areas of life. We also should be aware of any behavior that will affect other believers, because we do not want to become stumbling blocks. In this lesson, Paul warns the Colossians believers to set their minds on things above, not earthly things (vv. 1-2).

Becoming Renewed (Colossians 3:1-11)

At times, we have made some serious mistakes. Our prayers to God should be to give us the wisdom to make decisions according to our new life in Christ. All of us were created with a will to choose. “I have the right to do

anything,’ you say—but not everything is beneficial. ‘I have the right to do anything’—but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their own good, but the good of others” (1 Corinthians 10:23-24). While we have choices, our first thought is to first seek God for wisdom.

As Christians, our goal is to appear one day with him in glory, our final destiny (v. 4). Christians who are hidden in Christ will put off old habits and behaviors pertaining to the flesh and put on the new things in life. In Paul’s message to the church at Ephesus, he warns them to remember the way of life about Christ that was taught in truth, to put off the old self and acquire a new attitude in true righteousness and holiness (Ephesians 4:20-24).

Evidence of Renewal (Colossians 3: 12-17)

Jesus reminds us, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33). Jesus reminds believers that he will supply their basic needs of life. Material things—clothes, cars and houses—are the things we should trust him to supply as well as food, air and water.

Above all, God desires us to seek his compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience (v. 12). Each one of these virtues is essential to the daily lives of believers and an important discipline to practice. By recognizing the importance and practicing each one, our acceptance and understanding between ourselves, others and God will improve.

One requirement of all believers is to forgive one another just as the Lord has forgiven us (v. 13). Believers must take this matter seriously. Although it may be extremely difficult to forgive yourself or others, we are commanded to forgive: “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not

forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins” (Matthew 6: 14, 15).

Family relationships are broken because of unforgiveness. Wars are started because of unforgiveness. Prayers are unanswered because of unforgiveness. Churches are divided because of unforgiveness.

Where there is forgiveness, there is the perfect bond of unity—love. *Do you really have the power to love others?* If your answer is yes, then the Bible gives the reason why we love: “Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love” (1 John 4:7, 8).

God loved us so much that he sent his Son, Jesus, to die on a cross for the sins of all mankind. There is no greater love than this kind of love. Because of his love, we ought to share the same love to millions all over the world. As we learn to love like Christ, then his peace will rule in our hearts (v. 15).

As we learn to love like Christ, we will begin to worship him, “God is a spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). There are times when you may arrive at church with heaviness in your spirit, but as you begin to worship God, the heaviness disappears. The church and other Christian gatherings are places to allow Christ’s word, the center of it all, dwell richly through teachings, psalms, hymns, or spiritual songs (v. 16). Because we love him, we worship him and will do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to God our Father (v. 17). *Are you experiencing the kind of worship found in this passage?*

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