



Approaching God

Read Deuteronomy 7:7 and begin with an opening prayer - (Remember God's Love)

The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the Lord loves you. (Deut 7:7)

Countdown To Acts

Passage Introduction:

One of the most beautiful outcomes of the spread of the gospel is how the redeeming work of Jesus Christ unifies people across lines of ethnicity, gender, and class. How do you see the power for that happening in Colossians 3? What enables people to relate in unity?

Bible Reading, Study & Meditation

Start with Engaging the Text: Take a few minutes to highlight, circle, or underline key words. Use the margins to take notes. What stands out to you about how the gospel renews relationships?

What enables people to relate with unity?
What has to change in our minds and hearts? What has to change in our behavior?
Write down some ideas here.

Colossians 3:1-17 - **1** Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. **3** For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. **6** Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. **7** You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. **8** But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. **9** Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices **10** and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. **11** Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

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. **18** thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. **19** By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return."

Close in Prayer:

Tim Keller says *"the gospel changes everything."* It brings down racial barriers by melting away racial pride OR inferiority. It brings down psychological problems by melting away self-inflation OR self-hatred. It brings down personal facades, for we are free to admit who we are. As you read today's passages, what were 1 or 2 main takeaways? Where does the gospel most need to work in your life right now?

Resources for Further Study

Introduction to the Book of Acts

People Groups

Acts was written during a time when people were more divided than perhaps any other era in history. But the gospel of Jesus Christ unified those who were separated by culture, race, and social standing. For those living in first century Rome, this unity was not only beautiful, it was astonishing. Acts repeatedly calls this to our attention by identifying people not just by name, but by their people group, to show us how the gospel unifies them. Here is a brief overview of the key people groups named in Acts:

Jews/Hebrews/Israelites

Descendants of Abraham, and inheritors of God's covenant. Devoted to the Law given to Moses at Mount Sinai (Genesis 17).

Gentiles

Literally, "the nations," or everyone who was not Jewish. Romans, Greeks, and "barbarians" were regarded by most Israelites as "unclean" (Acts 10:45, 13:48, 14:4-7).

Romans

Roman citizens protected by Roman law; had legal rights in the Roman Empire. Citizenship could be obtained by birth, and a ruling of law (Acts 22:25-29).

Greeks

Roman citizens protected by Roman law; had legal rights in the Roman Empire. Citizenship could be obtained by birth, and a ruling of law (Acts 22:25-29).