

small group **discussion**

For the sermon on March 9-10, 2013
"The Challenge of Change"

lean in

In a minute or less, tell your spiritual story. Yes, in less than a minute! How did you first come to know and experience God's forgiveness? Did you come from a religious/church background or from a secular/non-religious past?

look down

Jeff Manion begins a sermon series, *The New You*, anchored in Colossians 3. When individuals in the first century turned to Christ (from a Gentile background) they basically had to relearn how to live. None of these people were "raised in church." They had new hearts but old habits. The old habits were anchored in the prevailing Greek/Roman system of life. These habits were not eradicated from their lives even as they recognized their need for Jesus, baptism, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and involvement in a church community. The New Life had to be learned.

In this week's sermon, Jeff talks about the cultural context in which the church of Colossae was placed. What sort of cultural conflicts would a new believer in Colossae face as he/she would attempt to follow Jesus for the first time?

Read Colossians 3.1-4 together. Based just on these verses, how would you describe the new life that Paul talks about? There is a past, present, and future theme in these verses. What's happened to their past? What's their life like in the present? What should they expect in the future?

What directions does Paul give in these verses? What are the people to do because of their new life in Christ?

Read Romans 6.1-14 together. What similarities do you see in this passage (written to the church in Rome) with what he wrote in Colossians 3? What new or additional truths do you see in this passage?

look in

Both of these passages highlight a spiritual truth—when Christ died, we died with him. He also said that when Jesus was raised from the dead, we were raised into a new life. Obviously, we didn't physically die. So what did Paul mean when he said we died and we have been raised?

Paul said, "Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it?" (Romans 6.2 NLT) Answer Paul's question. Why do we still struggle with sinful patterns even after Christ has completed his work to pay the penalty of sin? Why are sinful habits still part of our new life in Christ?

Over the next weeks, we'll be looking at some cultural footholds that many followers of Jesus have a hard time breaking away from: sexual immorality and ungodly ways of relating to others. Why do these two "biggies" in our culture tend to trip us up?

Read Colossians 3.12-17 together (this is where we'll land on Easter). Paul uses the imagery of clothing to illustrate our responsibility in this matter of living the new life. What should be "put on"? What then will be shed or taken off?

Spend some time in prayer asking God to show you, over the next few weeks, areas that need work in your life. Commit to him that you'll have a receptive heart to follow in obedience as he prompts you.



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