



Group Leader Guide “All” - Image of the Invisible January 10, 2020

Group Creed

We come together as a Group with the goal of Spiritual Formation; encouraging one another to become the same kind of person that Jesus is, so that we can live out every part of our lives inside of His Kingdom.

// Message Summary

Giving glory to Jesus in the midst of our lives’ good and bad circumstances isn’t always easy. However, as Lead Pastor **Jim Burgen** teaches us this week, all things come from Jesus, and He uses all things to reveal His glory, love, and character. Our response should be to give Him glory for all that He has done and continues to do in our lives.

// Biblical Background

Colossae: The book of Colossians was written by the apostle Paul to the church in a town called Colossae around 60-61 AD. Paul wrote it while on house arrest in Rome awaiting trial. Colossae is located in an area of modern-day Turkey that was known as

Phrygia. This predominately rural area was the least Hellenized (Greek-influenced) area in the region. As such, there were many different religions represented there.

Epaphrus: Jim mentioned last week and this week that the church of Colossae had been started by a man named Epaphrus (**Colossians 1:7**). He also noted that Epaphrus may have been involved in a sex cult prior to converting to Christianity. This is because his name is an abbreviated version of the name Epaphroditos (there are other people named Epaphroditos in the New Testament, though it is unknown if they all refer to the same



Colossae in Southwest Turkey



A Temple of Aphrodite in Turkey

person). Epaphroditos means “one devoted to Aphrodite,” who was the Greek goddess of love, beauty, and sex. Temples of Aphrodite were famous for their numerous slave



prostitutes who served as the priests and priestesses (the temple in the Greek city of Corinth alone “employed” 1,000), and having sex with these prostitutes was the most popular way of worshiping the goddess. The name of the festival that was celebrated yearly across all of Greece in Aphrodite’s honor was called “Aphrodisia.” Make of that what you will.

Saints: Throughout Paul’s writings in the New Testament, he consistently refers to Christians as “saints” (for example, **Colossians 1:26**). In Catholic tradition, the term “saint” is usually reserved for someone who has been officially recognized (or “canonized”) by the Catholic Church as being a saint after their death. Certain requirements must be met for someone to be canonized as a saint, such as martyrdom and/or the performing of documented miracles. Among other things, a “feast day” is established in their name, as well as the ability for others to start churches in their name and pray directly to them.

This is NOT what Paul or the Bible, in general, is referring to when they use the word “saint.” The word “saint” in the Bible simply refers to someone who is separated as holy by God, i.e., a Christian or someone who is a part of the body of Christ.

Firstborn: In **Colossians 1:15**, Paul calls Jesus the “firstborn of every creature.” He then goes on to say that Christ is the source of creation in the next verse. The term “firstborn” might seem to us to designate that He is the first created being, so it seems strange that He would be both Creator and created. However, the term “firstborn” would bring up other connotations to the original Colossian readers. “Firstborn” designated someone as an heir to an estate and gives them preeminence over, or sets them above, everything and everyone that follows. Therefore, this verse is stating that Christ has supreme authority over everything. Verse 16 tells us why: “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.”

// References

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Lucas, R. C. (2000). *The message of Colossians and Philemon: fullness and freedom*. Inter-Varsity Press.

Prior, D. (1993). *The message of 1 Corinthians: life in the local church*. Inter-Varsity Press.



Group Discussion Questions “All” - Image of the Invisible January 10, 2020

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// Bible References

Colossians 1:15-16, 24-29; Philippians 4:13; 1 Peter 1:20-21; John 1:1; Romans 5:6-8; John 3:16; Revelation 4:11

// Message Screenshots

- When we give glory to God, we are announcing how much we believe He is worth.
- Our “hope of glory”: you and I living the ideal life in intimate relationship to God that we were created to live.
- We have this HOPE that we can get it back.
- Jesus putting on flesh and living with us and then dying for us and rising from the dead was always God’s plan A.
- “All things.” What about the hard things, the painful things, the sinful things that have happened to me and to the world?
- Jesus IN us gets the glory when He walks WITH us through the valley of the shadow of death.
- How do/should we respond to a Jesus like this?
 - We give glory to Jesus.
 - We worship Him by first choosing to bow before him.
 - We worship Him by how we live our lives.
- The bread represents His body that was broken and nailed to a cross.
- The juice represents His blood which represents the wage paid for sin.

// Core Questions

1. What are some of your favorite Bible verses (the verses that really connect with you and relate to a very personal part of your life)?
2. How do these verses help you to glorify Christ in your life?
3. Who do you usually give the credit and glory when something good happens in your life or when you come through a difficult time in your life? Yourself or Christ?
4. When was a time in your life where it was easy to give Jesus the glory on the front end (e.g., when things were going good, when you gave your life to Christ, when you felt blessed, etc.)?
5. When was a time in your life where it was hard to give Jesus glory in the midst of suffering or pain?
6. Has there ever been a difficult time in your life that, on the back end, you could see how



Jesus used it to reveal His glory, love, and character to you and/or others? Explain.

7. How does it make you feel knowing that since Christ is over all things, He is able to use our suffering to reveal His glory, love, and character?
8. What is a way you can give glory to Christ this week in the midst of your current circumstances?
9. How can this group support you?