



Group Leader Guide “Think Different” - Image of the Invisible January 17, 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

Real change doesn't start with behavior modification. In week 3 of “Image of the Invisible,” teaching pastor **Ben Foote** teaches about how in order to see real change in our lives, it starts with repentance, or, rethinking the way we think about everything. The power of Christ IN us helps us renew our minds and gain wisdom to address the challenges in our lives.

// Biblical Background

wisdom/logos/Jesus: In **Colossians 1:15-17**, Jesus is described in terms that Judaism reserved for God's Wisdom. Similar passages in **Proverbs** (e.g., **8:27-30**) and other Jewish writings personified Wisdom and placed it with God at the beginning. Some Greek philosophers claimed that the Logos, or Reason, is what held the world together. Certain Jewish philosophers combined these ideas, saying that God's Wisdom was His Logos. **John 1** claims that Jesus is God's Logos (or Word) and uses similar language to **Colossians 1** to describe how He was with God in the beginning. What Paul and John are doing, however, is something that was unthinkable at the time by both Greek and Jewish philosophers. They were saying that the Logos and God's Wisdom literally became a human, albeit a very unique one, named Jesus.

Colossians 2:22-23: Ben mentioned how Paul teaches that behavior modification doesn't usually work because it doesn't

address the root problem we have on the INSIDE. What Paul is specifically addressing in **Colossians 2:20-23** is the philosophy of asceticism. Asceticism is originally a Greek idea that teaches how depriving your body of indulgences or any type of



Diogenes, a famous Greek cynic and ascetic who lived in a clay wine jar

fleshly desire would improve your spiritual life. Some forms of asceticism even went to the extreme of inflicting bodily harm to yourself. The Christians in Colossae were predominantly converted Greeks, and the morality of Christian living, with its emphasis on avoiding things such as sexual immorality and drunkenness, among others, perhaps looked a lot like asceticism to them. There was probably even someone (or several people) within the church preaching these ideas. Paul points out the problem, however:



it is a backward way of thinking. Forcing your body to adhere to a certain morality is pointless. It doesn't help in curbing the desires of the flesh. Some translations even note that it actually does the opposite by *indulging* the flesh through pride and self-righteousness (see footnote on the verse in RSV). As Paul continues in the next verse, it takes addressing the inside first by "seek[ing] the things that are above, where Christ is" (**Colossians 3:1**, ESV). Then, your life will truly be changed, and your behavior will follow.

As Ben also pointed out, Jesus taught something very similar in **Matthew 23**. In calling out how the Pharisees did not clean the inside of their cups (their hearts), Jesus is referring to a specific debate within the Jewish religious community. The school of Shammai (the Pharisaic majority) believed that in ceremonially cleansing ritual vessels, such as cups and dishes, only the outside needed to be cleaned in order for them to be acceptable. The school of Hillel (the minority) taught that the inside *and* outside must be cleaned. While this debate was literally about cups, Jesus masterfully uses it as an analogy for the state of someone's heart.

Luke 13:1-3: Ben mentioned how at one point, people were asking Jesus if God kills people who are bad. The Bible says this question came up because some of the people with Jesus at that time had witnessed a great atrocity: Pilate (the same Pilate who would later sentence Jesus to death) had recently killed some people at the Temple. Luke 13:1 specifies them as Galileans. This is the only place in history that this is recorded. However, it may be connected to a recorded event where Pilate massacred many people in Jerusalem while they were protesting his use of Temple funds to build a new aqueduct. Whatever the case, whether it is connected to this or a separate event altogether, Pilate was a ruler known for his cruelty and lack of concern for the Jewish people and their customs.

// References

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The Holy Bible: English Standard Version: the ESV Study Bible. Crossway Bibles, 2008.

Keener, Craig S Ph.d. *IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*. InterVarsity Press, 2014.

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



Group Discussion Questions
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// Bible References

Colossians 1:15-17, 27; 2:2-3, 8, 22-23; 3:1-2; Proverbs 4:7; Matthew 4:17; 23:25-26; Luke 13:3; John 17:3; Romans 12:2; James 1:5

// Message Screenshots

- Think Different
- Repent: Rethink the way you think about everything.
- “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.”
- “The customer is always right.”
- “Slow and steady wins the race.”
- “You do you. Live your truth.”
- “He who shouts the loudest is heard.”
- If we want to BE different, we need to THINK different.

// Core Questions

1. Describe a time in your life when you tried to use sheer willpower to change an unhealthy behavior?
2. Were you successful in the long run? Why or why not?
3. Are you currently trying to make changes in your life by your own willpower? Explain.

4. What do you currently see in the “wisdom” of modern culture that is counter to the wisdom found in Christ and the Bible?
5. What is the worst advice you have ever received?
6. Did you know it was bad advice immediately, or did you find out later down the road?

7. What behavior or area in your life do you currently want to see a change but seem to be stuck?
8. Have you tried to change this area of your life before? If so, how did it go?
9. What are you telling yourself in your head that is driving this desire for change? Is it God’s wisdom or the world’s wisdom?
10. How might rethinking this area of your life in light of God’s wisdom help you have lasting change?