

Life Group Leader Guide

Experiencing Christ – Week #7

(Suggested Format and Discussion Questions)

Fellowship and Food (15 minutes)

Welcome (10 minutes)

- Share about the upcoming Winter Season study of Courageous Faith in Joshua. Pass out the attachment on the Winter Season and discuss.
- Cover any group business:

Bible Study (45 minutes)

1. **(Marriage – fitting in the Lord)** Read Col. 3:18-19. Wives, Christian marriages should never be about power! In the sermon we find, "Submission in no way implies that one party is lesser than the other." Instead, the sermon advocates a wife voluntarily and appropriately deferring to her husband. How would a Christian wife go about that? What difficulties might one have to overcome?

LEADER NOTES: The primary point of the first two questions is to get people thinking about how they have bought in to a power-model of marriage rather than a biblical model. Wives voluntarily give up the typical power struggle through appropriately deferring to their husbands.

2. **(Marriage – fitting in the Lord)** Read Col. 3:18-19. Husbands, Christian marriages should never be about control! The sermon has the following statements: "Christlike love is a high calling to devoted and sacrificial care for your wife's entire well-being....To love sacrificially is to give up your rights to what you want to do for her sake." How would a Christian husband go about that? What difficulties might one have to overcome?

LEADER NOTES: Husbands give up the typical power struggle in TWO ways. This question addresses the first, which is to love their wives just as Christ loved the church, with self-sacrificing love. Try to focus on how this is different.

3. **(Marriage – fitting in the Lord)** Read Col. 3:19b. The verb translated as "do not be harsh" toward one's wife also means not to be strict, severe, hostile or cruel. So, loving one's wife is the positive challenge, and Col. 3:19b expresses what is prohibited. What are some examples of how this prohibited behavior might manifest itself? What would be alternative approaches that would keep God's commands?

LEADER NOTES: Again, try to focus on how this is different from the power-struggle model of marriage so typical in our culture.

4. **(Family – pleasing the Lord)** Read Col. 3:21. Suppose a father challenges his son to do his best. So far, so good. But suppose further that the son is already doing his best. This sets up conditions where the son cannot succeed in gaining his father's approval. If that cycle goes on for long the son will get frustrated and give up. If the cycle still continues, the son will become resentful and bitter. How can Christian fathers avoid this scenario and any others that lead to exasperation for a child? How can Christian mothers help? How do step-parent relations complicate the picture?

5. **(Workplace – serving the Lord)** Read Col. 3:22-24. While slavery has had its day, work is still the order of the day for most of us, either at home or at the workplace. No matter what is going

on at work, how can we begin to see it as working for the Lord and not for men? What would make that hard to do, and how can we overcome the obstacle?

6. **(Workplace – just and fair)** Read Col. 3:25-4:1. Perhaps one thing we need to have straight in our minds is that earthly distinctions in rank mean nothing to God when it comes to evaluating our stewardship. He shows no favoritism to the high or the low. But biblical revelation shows that the high seem to have a harder time accepting this fact. What measures can we reasonably take to ensure that we are treating those below us (e.g. children, employees, those paid to provide a service) fairly and justly?

LEADER NOTES: This question attempts to get power-holders to consider how the biblical commands are counter-cultural in relation to American standards.

7. **(Family – pleasing the Lord)** Read Col. 3:20. The NET Bible translates this verse as, "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing in the Lord." That last phrase makes it clear that parenting is ultimately for God, not for the satisfaction of parents. How should this truth impact parenting? In fact, being a Christian husband, wife child, worker or supervisor are all to be done for the Lord Jesus Christ! How might we make changes to make that so?

Share and Prayer (30 minutes)

Ask for prayer requests and spend time praying for each other.