



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS Colossians 3:1-11

Read Colossians 3:1-11 (and pray)

1. Spend a few moments taking in the staggering truth of verse 1. ***Where are you right now according to verse 1? What implications does this have for your relationship with God?***
2. There used to be an old saying that said “She is too heavenly minded to be of any earthly good.” In verse 1-4 Paul seems to be saying that we are not nearly heavenly minded enough. ***Looking over the passage as a whole, what two major areas of our lives are most affected by being heavenly minded?***

The Jesus besotted heart

3. ***Look at verse 5-6. What would you say to someone who says, “If I am deeply attracted to something there is nothing I can do about it. How can I change my deepest desires?” How does the whole passage help us answer this?***
4. ***Practically, share some strategies that help you supplant evil desires. In other words, what do you actually do to grow in your love of Jesus so that you won’t love other things?***

The Jesus besotted tongue

5. What is true for the heart is true for the tongue also. ***Look at verse 8-10. How does Jesus’ words “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks”, help us understand how to cultivate a loving tongue?***
6. ***Share some practical ways of taming the tongue based on the fact that we have a brand new identity at work, at home, at church.***
7. ***Looking closely at verse 11, what is the Christian answer to racism? How does our constant thinking of heaven and our new identity help us with judgemental thoughts about people of other races? How does 2 Corinthians 5:16-17 summarise the Christian attitude to other people? Therefore, what should the Christian attitude be to refugees coming in to Australia?***

## Leaders Notes

1. (This study presumes that folk have heard the sermon on this passage and follows on from last week's study in 1-4). In Christ we are seated right next to God. The implications of this are vast. Here are some of them: Access. We 'have God's ear' so to speak. We know He hears us because we are right next to Him. Acceptance. God has *already* accepted us because there we are: right next to Him. Safety. Who can approach God's throne and remove us from there? Joy. Its hard to fully grasp just what joy Jesus must enjoy sitting next to the Father. We are there too. Security. We don't have to be afraid that we haven't performed enough to please God – we're already there. And so much more...
2. Our loves and our language. Basically, because we have died with Christ and have been raised to where He is, we only love Him. Everything else pales into insignificance compared to loving Him. And our language is also radically affected. We don't use our tongues in conflict with others. Because our hearts have been changed, our tongues only speak what builds up because "out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks."
3. This is the heart of personal transformation. Religion and moralism tries to change outward behaviour. But only love can change the heart. Christianity is about a Holy Spirit induced love for Jesus that expels all other loves. Here's the puritan Thomas Chalmers with the ultimate fridge magnet quote: "There is not one personal transformation in which the heart is left without an object of ultimate beauty and joy. The heart's desire for one particular object can be conquered but it's desire to have some object is unconquerable. The only way to dispossess the heart of an old affection is by the expulsive power of a new one."
4. The point here is to gaze and gaze on Jesus. The more we see of Him and the more heavenly minded we are, the less appealing the things of the world will become. So, if you're a guy and going to the beach. Read and memorise a little passage about Jesus. And then, don't forget it, keep going over it. So that when you get to the beach, you'll still see beauty, but you won't over desire it because you've already seen beauty in Jesus before you got there. Or, before you look at your neighbours house and sigh because your husband is a dud and can't fix anything, spend time thinking about John 14:1-2 etc.
5. Some people are just good at biting their tongue. This is not Christianity. True Christianity is when our hearts are so filled with love for Jesus, what gushes out of us is language that builds others up and doesn't tear them down. What's in the heart will find a way of oozing out of the mouth – as gross as that sounds.
6. For example, at the office there is 'that' one person who just constantly winds you up. What about going in to work with a verse in mind or in your pocket and when you see them, you make sure you go over that verse. Or, as regards the children: Spend time in the morning thinking about your status as a child of God before you speak to your children. How does your heavenly Father deal with you? Or, at church: Think how Christ is in every single Christian and He is not finished changing people and working in them, so there is no need for you to be harsh in your words or bitter and angry against your brothers and sisters.
7. The only antidote to racism is to divide the world into those who are Christian and those who are not yet Christian. Nothing else matters and no racial divisions matter at all. All that matters is a new creation in Christ. For Christians, as verse 11 tells us, we have far, far more in common than our earthly races may make us different. Those differences mean nothing to Jesus. When it comes to not-yet Christians we view them as Jesus does: with compassion and care. We have only one desire for not-yet Christians, whatever their race may be: that they be saved. Earthly races mean nothing to Christians because we are citizens of heaven, not earth. We don't mind if the government lets more refugees in to Australia. Australia is not our primary concern nor are we fighting to make Australia heaven. We want more refugees to come to Australia so that they

can get a chance to hear about the only country that matters: heaven. The fear of some that our standard of living will go down if refugees flood the country is not the concern of Christians. Our standard of living is measured by us being seated with Jesus next to God. When He appears we will appear with Him in glory. This is our overwhelming concern. Not this short temporary life.