



WEEK FOUR

GOAL

To see and experience the power of the Gospel in building racial reconciliation through community.

TIP

This week we will be looking at the subject of racial reconciliation. There have been so many factors in the past and in the present that have contributed to racial disunity in our country. As such, it is important that we let the scriptures lead us as we engage on this subject.

Voice note: [Click here](#) to listen to this week's voice note.

HEADLINES

Paul is writing to the church in Colossae, and he communicates the importance of community in the ongoing process of transformation in becoming more like Jesus. He drills deep into the foundations of the church community on the issue of how Christ followers should live together in peace and as one body. In Colossians chapter 3 we read that the church in Colossae were facing radical racial, ethnic, cultural and class challenges, similar to - if not more challenging than - the ones we face today. There is much we can learn and apply from these scriptures in our context in terms of racial reconciliation.

DISCUSSION

Read Col 3: 9-17...

Gospel Response: (Vs 9) Paul uses the analogy of the old self and the new self when we respond to the Gospel. It is the power of Christ working in us that changes our lives. This change can happen in a moment, but more often than not it is an ongoing process of transformation in becoming more like Jesus (vs10). The characteristics of the old self are anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk, and lying. The new self is characterized by compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, bearing with one another, forgiveness, love and is peacefulness.

1. Have you experienced the power of the Gospel in the ongoing process of transformation in your life?
2. Are there any characteristics in the old self that you are continually asking God to change in your life?
3. Which characteristic of the new self do you need God to develop in your life?

Gospel Reality: (Vs 15) Paul writes, "And let, the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body". Paul is highlighting the fact that when we enter into relationship with Jesus, we enter into relationship with other Christ followers. God doesn't do his transforming work in our lives by isolating us. Rather, he places us in community. In day 22 of the Colossians devotional book it speaks about loving people. Each church needs to be a sample of the new humanity that Jesus is bringing about; a picture illustrating how relationships should work.

The reality of Gospel-centered communities is expressed in verse 11: "Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all." This is picture of relationships in a Gospel-centered community. There is no status distinction. No one is treated with less dignity than anyone else. Christ is all and in all!

1. How has church community helped you in the ongoing process of transformation?

2. In what way do these verses speak into racial reconciliation in our church/small group?
3. How do these verses help us to pursue greater diversity in our church community?
4. How do these verses speak into your life in moving from the old self to the new self in the area of racial reconciliation?

Gospel Responsibility: When we respond to the Gospel and the reality of Christ takes shape in our lives there will always be the challenge to live it out. This is clear in verse 17: "And whatever you do, in word and deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." In exploring our Gospel responsibility as a group it will be helpful to use the Going Deeper document. It will help the group members to develop practical steps in moving towards racial reconciliation. However, it is important to say that the journey of racial reconciliation is made up of many steps. The key is to always be facing in the right direction, and to be taking one more step.

PRAYER

Get together in pairs and spend some time praying together. There are a couple of prayer points:

1. Pray for each other with regard to the ongoing process of transformation. Is there a specific area that needs prayer when it comes to moving from the old self to the new self?
2. Pray for the journey our church is on with regard to diversity and racial reconciliation.
3. Pray for our country.

GOING DEEPER

- 1) Colossians devotional:

<http://commonground.co.za/wpcontent/uploads/2017/03/Colossions-devotionweb.pdf>

2) Document on Racial Reconciliation

http://commonground.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Going-Deeper_Racial-Reconciliation_April2017.pdf