

Spring four: Way

Main point: As Christians, we are invited to orient ourselves around living a particular kind of way: the way of Jesus.

Memory verse: *Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Colossians 3:12-14*

Getting started:

Review *last* week's Memory verse (Colossians 2:13-14), giving group members the opportunity to share these words from memory. Next, read *this* week's Main Point and Memory verse (above). Pray together, asking God for the "perfect unity" that comes through experiencing - and sharing - His perfect love.

Get into a discussion group (3- 5 people) and share:

1. Are you the type to stop and ask for directions? Why or why not? What's the most 'lost' you've ever been? How did you get un-lost?
2. Reflect on the following conversation from Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland:

'Cheshire Puss,' [Alice] began, rather timidly... 'Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?'

'That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,' said the Cat.

'I don't much care where--' said Alice.

'Then it doesn't matter which way you go,' said the Cat.

'--so long as I get SOMEWHERE,' Alice added as an explanation.

'Oh, you're sure to do that,' said the Cat, 'if you only walk long enough.'

- In what way do you think the Cheshire Cat is correct? How have you seen this play out in your own life, or in the lives of people around you?
 - Proverbs 14:12 warns us, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." In light of this passage - and the conversation between Alice and the Cat - why is having a destination in mind so important?
3. This week we consider that there is a "Way" that Jesus invites us to join Him in. Yet before we get into the specifics of the route itself, we must be clear on our destination. Look up Colossians 3:1-4. What does a Follower of Jesus need to keep in mind, before setting out on the path of following Jesus? What additional insight do you gain from John 14:5-6?

4. In opening pages of the book of Acts, the early Christian movement was simply called, "The Way" (look up Acts 9:1-2 and 11:26). The "Way" of Jesus continues to draw people of all ages and nationalities, even two thousand years later. As a modern follower of Jesus, Rob Bell observes:

As a Christian, I am simply trying to orient myself around living a particular kind of way, the kind of way that Jesus taught is possible. And I think that the way of Jesus is the best possible way to live. This isn't irrational or primitive or blind faith. It is merely being honest that we all are living a "way."

I'm convinced being generous is a better way to live.

I'm convinced forgiving people and not carrying around bitterness is a better way to live.

I'm convinced having compassion is a better way to live.

I'm convinced pursuing peace in every situation is a better way to live.

I'm convinced listening to the wisdom of others is a better way to live.

I'm convinced being honest with people is a better way to live.

This way of thinking isn't weird or strange. It is simply acknowledging that everybody follows somebody, and I'm trying to follow Jesus.

- Rob Bell, Velvet Elvis

- Let's say you had never heard of Jesus, but you came across a follower of Jesus who is truly walking in this "Way"? What would be attractive or compelling to you about the way they live?

Read aloud Colossians 3:5-14

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Discuss:

5. Read again verses 5-7. You are reminded, without apology, that there is "a way that you used to walk in", that there is an old life that "you once lived." Do you like being reminded of your past, or of your failure? Why is it so important to remember where you've come from? (Hint: look up Ephesians 2:8-9).
6. Notice the strong language of "putting to death" (verse 5), and "ridding yourself" (verse 8) of your old self. Why is making a clear break with your past patterns so important? Do you find

that the decision to leave the past behind happens once-and-for-all... or is it a decision that happens continually, on a daily basis?

7. Notice also that there is not only a "putting off", but also a "putting on" a new set of clothes (verses 10, 12). What do the new set of clothes look like compared to the old ones? What is your favorite piece of "new clothing" taken from the list in verses 12-14?
8. How does knowing WHO you are (verses 1, 3, 11) affect HOW you live?

Dig deeper (optional):

(Excerpted from "The Serendipity New Testament for Groups")

1. What does all this "putting off" and "putting on" actually involve: A quick-change act? A disguise? A burial service? A shopping spree?
2. In shopping or swapping a new "spiritual wardrobe," look again at verses 10-11, 15-17, noting the verbs, their subjects and objects. Who is doing what to whom to ensure that "Christ is all"? How does Christ tailor-fit his clothes for you?

Jump into action:

1. Read Colossians 3:15-17. What will occupy your mind over the next week, and what good will you do, as a result of this study?
2. What good might you do together as a small group? Is there a project/ need/ opportunity that God is presenting to you?
2. Read aloud the memory verse for the coming week (Colossians 3:12-14) one more time. Close in prayer, especially taking note of the command to "be thankful" (3:15, 17).
3. Plan to participate in the coming weekend's Worship Gathering, where you will explore the final Spring of this Jump! series: "Amen."