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**WHAT
MAKES
YOU FEEL
WELCOME
IN A
NEW PLACE?**

THE POINT >

**OUR LIVES SHOULD SERVE TO
WELCOME OTHERS INTO THE CHURCH.**

► TITUS 3:3-11

³For we too were once foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved by various passions and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, detesting one another.

⁴But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared,

⁵he saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy—through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

⁶He poured out his Spirit on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior

⁷so that, having been justified by his grace, we may become heirs with the hope of eternal life.

⁸This saying is trustworthy. I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed God might be careful to devote themselves to good works. These are good and profitable for everyone.

⁹But avoid foolish debates, genealogies, quarrels, and disputes about the law, because they are unprofitable and worthless.

¹⁰Reject a divisive person after a first and second warning.

¹¹For you know that such a person has gone astray and is sinning; he is self-condemned.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

RESEARCH SHOWS THAT ONE OF THE BEST WAYS TO MAKE PEOPLE FEEL WELCOME IN A NEW SITUATION, WHETHER THEY'RE WALKING INTO A RESTAURANT, STORE, NEW SCHOOL, OR VISITING YOUR CHURCH, IS SIMPLY TO SMILE.¹

The summer before seventh grade, I was a nervous mess. I was entering junior high, and I'd heard from my older friends how difficult things would be. The subjects were a lot tougher, the teachers a lot meaner, and I'd be changing classes every period for the first time. There wasn't enough time to make it from class to class, and as tardies accumulated, there were some pretty harsh consequences. Or so they said. However, it only took about two days to figure out that things weren't nearly as bad as my friends had said.

Many people who aren't a part of the church have preconceived notions about what the church is. Some think we're stuffy and legalistic, but many have heard that Jesus is a friend to sinners, that God loves the world, and that the people in church are kind and generous. Scripture calls God's people to reflect Him, and we should therefore be the most loving people on the planet. However, when people enter our churches, what they find is often inconsistent with what God has called His people to be.

We might think we are welcoming, yet the reality can be entirely different. To ensure we are a welcoming church, let's go back to the beginning. We welcome others because of the gospel.

TITUS 3:3-7

- 1** How have you personally experienced the kindness of God?
- 2** What elements of the gospel are present in these verses?





TITUS 3:8

3 What are some examples of good works you've seen or experienced?

4 How have you seen good works really make a difference?

5 What's the difference in being saved by good works and devoting ourselves to good works?

TITUS 3:9-11

6 How might divisive people effect a church's efforts?

7 What are some ideas you're tempted to debate or argue about?

8 What steps can we take to redirect debates toward kingdom-focused conversations?

When we don't feel like giving up our comforts to reach out to others, remember that Jesus left heaven to reach out to us. #BSFLWelcomeHome





LIVE IT OUT

► CHRIST

Living in light of the gospel means:

- Loving Jesus more and more each day
- Living in a way that reflects Jesus' character

9 Briefly note a few ways you've experienced Jesus this week that have caused you to grow in loving Him.

EXPERIENCE #1

EXPERIENCE #2

EXPERIENCE #3

10 How will you use these experiences to better reflect Jesus this week?

► COMMUNITY

The church is a community of believers united for the sake of demonstrating God's goodness on earth.

11 What room for improvement do you see in your life or in your church to help make this a reality? (Make sure not to complain; talk with your leader about more serious issues.)



12 What steps will you take to grow where you see weaknesses?

► CULTURE

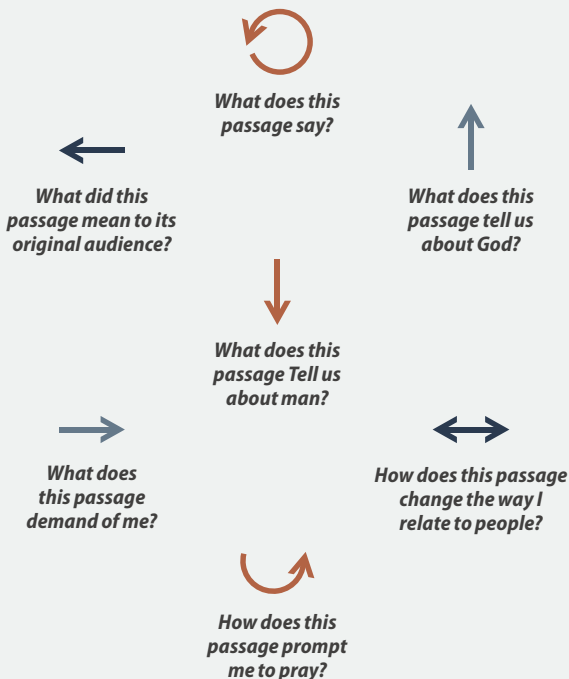
13 How do you think it impacts your unbelieving friends when they hear of arguing in the church?

14 How will you pursue unity with your church family for the sake of impacting your friends who aren't involved in church?

DAILY DEVOTIONS



THE 7 ARROWS OF BIBLE READING



DAY ONE COLOSSIANS 3:12

God has chosen us to be His children. Wow, what a privilege! It's important for us to understand that with great privilege comes great responsibility. This means that God blesses us, so that we can be a blessing to others. In light of the great kindness God has shown us, we are called to be kind to others. We are to be:

- **Compassionate:** Sharing with others in their suffering, being moved to the point of taking action to minister to those who suffer.
- **Kind:** Desiring good things for others and living like it.
- **Humble:** Lowering ourselves in order to serve others.
- **Gentle:** Willing to yield, living under control—the opposite of harsh and wild.
- **Patient:** Willing to wait, even endure difficulties, in order to receive what we value.

God has demonstrated all these qualities toward us, and we're called to reflect them in order to glorify Him and love others well.

- **Of these qualities, which ones do you do well? Which ones do you struggle with?**
- **What will you do to grow in your areas of weakness?**

DAY TWO

COLOSSIANS 3:13



We live in a culture in which people are pretty easily bent out of shape. However, followers of Jesus are called to something different. After all, Jesus readily and willingly forgave us of the worst sorts of offenses. We're to live this out in two specific ways:

- **Forbearance:** No one is perfect, and we're going to do things that offend each other. Forbearance means we don't get upset with every little thing, but instead overlook minor offenses for the sake of love and unity.
- **Forgiveness:** At other times, people will offend us in ways we can't overlook. When this happens, we should communicate kindly and clearly about the offense, ready to forgive and seeking reconciliation.
- **In what ways have you been easily offended?**
- **What is God calling you to do to reflect the forgiveness of Jesus in your life?**

DAY THREE

COLOSSIANS 3:14

Because God loves us, He sent Jesus as the perfect sacrifice for our sin. Because Jesus loves us, He lowered Himself and became a servant. God is love (1 John 4:8), and everything He does flows out of this very nature. God reveals Himself through Scripture, and everything written in the Bible is for the purpose of teaching us to love well (Gal. 5:14). This stands in stark contrast against the values of the world, which teach us to look out for ourselves, even at the expense of others. This type of self-centeredness divides. But a love-driven others-focus bonds people together in unity, and this is to be, "above all," the clearest mark of the church.

As people, we're wired to be connected with others. We do this through common interests, such as music, athletics, technology, and more. The glue that holds the church together, and which binds us to Jesus, is love.

- **What "glue" binds you to those you're closest with?**
- **What do you think Paul meant by "put on" love?**

DAY FOUR

COLOSSIANS 3:15

God originally intended that people would live in a close relationship with Him. However, we sinned, and instead of enjoying intimacy, we experienced separation from Him. This isn't simply that we were no longer close—this separation means we set ourselves against God as His enemies (Jas. 4:4). This is a spiritual reality; however, it is also reflected in real-world ways. All around us, people experience conflict—with others, within themselves, and with God.

When we trust in Jesus, we are no longer enemies, but friends. Where there was once hostility and conflict, now there is peace. The peace that makes us one with Christ makes us one with others in the church. As we live this out, it stands against the selfishness and arguing that so often characterizes our culture. As we follow Jesus, we are to let His peace reign in us. This means the peace we experience with Him is to exert influence and control in every area of our lives.

- **In what ways do you experience conflict? How are these a result of your own selfishness?**
- **How would your life change if peace were really ruling?**

DAY FIVE

COLOSSIANS 3:16-17



Christian worship is to be vertical in nature—offered up to God. Notice, however, that we're also called to sing songs to one another. Corporate singing is unique in that God's people are united in a way like no other. Think about it. We sing the same melody and rhythms, reflect on the same scriptural ideas, and are moved to experience common sentiments. God has called us to worship with all we are, both as a lifestyle and within the corporate gathering, because as we pursue this kind of togetherness in worship, we grow in unity. Corporate singing is a small picture of the ways we're to live our lives—unified with other believers in pursuit of God's glory.

- **Describe a time corporate worship has been especially meaningful to you.**
- **How has someone else's worship served to encourage you to pursue God? How can you encourage others through your worship?**