

“Neither Jew nor Gentile.....”

Bible Passages

Colossians 3:5-11

Read

Our identity as Christians is that we are “*in Christ*”. We are all accepted and valued equally by Him. Churches should operate on those principles too, but it is too easy to let the world’s ways of grouping and separating people creep into our culture. Unless we are intentional about creating an accepting culture, we will end up making people feel like outsiders who are not welcome. Paul addressed the same issue in Colossae.

Study

1. Read Colossians 3:5-11, focussing particularly on v 5a & 11.

[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 also 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 Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.** (NIV 2011)

Verse 11 is saying that putting to death our earthly nature means not engaging in the type of divisions that the world makes. If Paul were writing verse 11 to us, what might he say? What barriers do we put between people that stop our friendships and fellowship being based on our identity in Christ alone? (eg. class, race, education etc.) How could your group be an “antidote” to those kinds of divisions in the wider church?

2. One study showed that ‘middle class’ churches often value **achievement** over **acceptance**. In what ways is that an affront to the gospel? How might such an attitude manifest itself in this church?
3. We will shortly be opening up coffee after church services again. Write a ‘job description’ for a normal member of this church, outlining their priorities when attending that coffee time.
4. If you can view YouTube video clips, watch “Twenty tips to keep your church safe from visitors” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFcmwSFPZ3I&t=26s>. Discuss anything that strikes you.

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