



The Good & Beautiful God Week #7: God Transforms
Colossians 1:11-23
February 28, 2010

CONNECTION.....30 Minutes

1. Take a few minutes for introductions and give people a chance to catch up and connect with one another.

2. **Review the Assigned Soul Training Exercises From Last Week:**

Were you able to spend 5 minutes every day or most days in silence?

What did you notice that you had not noticed in your previous readings of the Gospel of John? How would you describe the effect this week's reading had on you?

How about self-sacrificing love? What opportunities did you have for that this week that you were able to give yourself to?

Reflect on the soul-shaping exercises you continue to practice. Exercises done so far include: silence, awareness of creation, counting your blessings, praying the 23rd Psalm, keeping margin in your life, and *lectio divina*.

What are the gradual effects they are having on you, your narratives, and your life? What practices have you not done since the week they were introduced? Why?

3. Invite the Spirit of God to join and lead your group.

EXPLORATION.....30 Minutes

Read through Colossians 1:11b-23 and then discuss the questions listed below and/or create some of your own.

Colossians 1:11b-23 (NLT)

May you be filled with joy,¹² always thanking the Father. He has enabled you to share in the inheritance that belongs to his people, who live in the light.¹³ For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son,¹⁴ who purchased our freedom and forgave our sins.¹⁵ Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,¹⁶ for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can't see—such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.¹⁷ He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.¹⁸ Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything.¹⁹ For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ,²⁰ and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ's blood on the cross.²¹ This includes you who were once far away from God. You were his enemies, separated from him by your evil thoughts and actions.²² Yet now he has reconciled you to himself through the death of Christ in his physical body. As a result, he has brought you into his own presence, and you are holy and blameless as you stand before him without a single fault.²³ But you must continue to believe this truth and stand firmly in it. Don't drift away from the assurance you received when you heard the Good News.

1. What in particular stands out to you from this text? Explain.
2. Do you identify more closely with the term sinner or saint when thinking about who you are? Explain why.
3. The whole of the NT approaches the Christian life by telling us who we are and whose we are, and then it continually encourages us to live in a manner worthy of that identity. What are some ways that we can live consistently in touch with the truth of our identity in Christ? What are some ways that you have found to be personally helpful?

ACTION.....30 Minutes

1. Again, find 5 minutes each day to sit in silence. During this time, your thoughts may run rampant. If so, you can do the following 2 things to help still your mind:

Have a notepad nearby to jot down things that may come to your mind. This will help to quiet your mind. or ease into the time by reading the bible for a minute or two.

2. Solitude is intentionally spending time apart from other people for the purpose of being with God. When we go into solitude and silence, we stop making demands on God. It is enough that God is God and we are his. We learn that we have a soul, that God is here with us, and that our soul needs his direct care..

When we step away from people for a period of time, there is no one to impress, no one's opinions of us, no image to live up to or down to...only us and only God. And it is here that we are free to have our identity shaped by God into the image and likeness of His son. So, this week, try to withdraw from people each day for 10-15 minutes. Take a seat and relax, go on a walk, whatever allows you the chance to get away. You do not need total silence, but you do not want to have excessive noise around you to the point where you are unable to relax and be present to God and able to listen to your life.

If you would like to focus your thoughts during this time, and deepen the truths about your identity found in the scriptures, you can look at and reflect on the following verses:

John 1:12 - I am God's child

Romans 8:1- I am free from condemnation

Romans 8:31-39 - I cannot be separated from God's love

II Corinthians 3:18 - I am being transformed into the image of Christ

3. Share any items of Community News

*The content of this Study Guide is taken from **The Good & Beautiful God** – James Bryan Smith