

Lesson 13

Colossians 3:12-15

Day 1

KEEP IT IN PERSPECTIVE

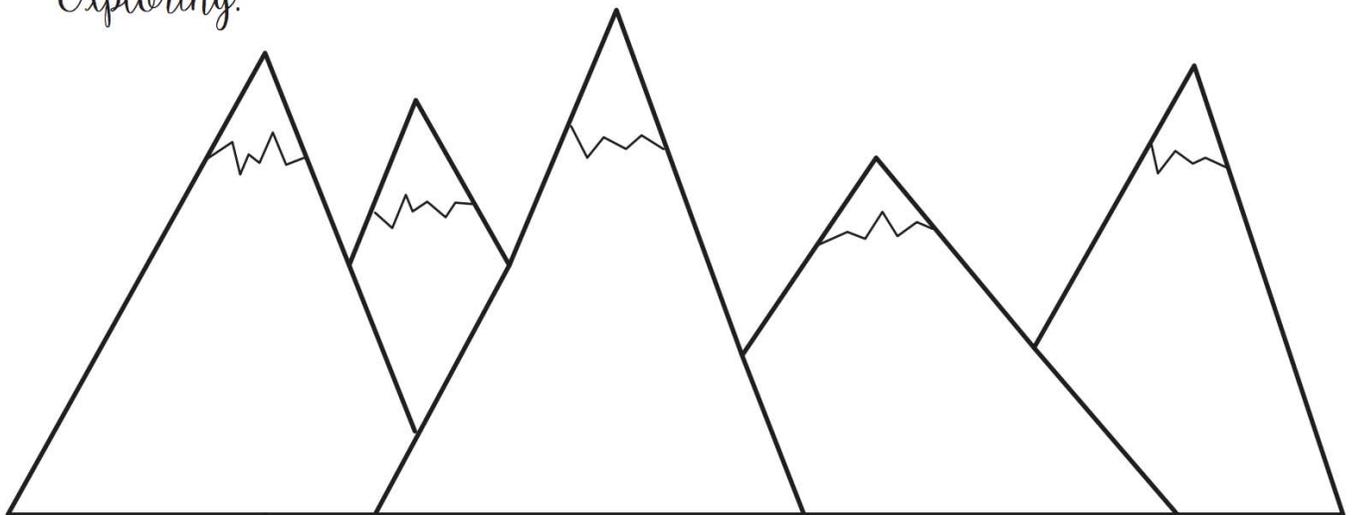
- In the box below, explain verses 5-11 in only one or two sentences. Think about how you would explain it to a 10 year old child. I usually ask myself, “Who is doing what, and why is he doing it?” This is usually enough to get the main point of the thought into one or two sentences.

Verses 1-4	Verses 5-11	Verses 12-17	Verses 18-25
Paul is concerned that they may be deluded from the wealth that comes from true knowledge in Christ and instructs them to walk in Him as they were originally instructed	Their position in Christ: being dead to sin and alive in Christ makes it possible for them to not be taken captive to worldly philosophies and empty deception		

EXPLORING THE THEME

- In all of Colossians, look for the word: THANKS (any form). Write down the verses where you find this word and what you learn about it.

Exploring:



Day 2

3. Paul continues his instruction for the person who is alive to God through Jesus Christ. This person has been born again and renewed in his/her mind and life. The old self is gone and the new self is being “filled” with the knowledge of His will which leads to life-changing attitudes and activities! It’s like you have been given a new wardrobe of clothing that you are to PUT ON. What does this new heart wardrobe include according to Colossians 3:12?



1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____

4. Look up the first word on the list, “oiktirmos” (G3628), and define it. Then write down how Jesus was an example of this quality from Matthew 9:36 and Mark 6:35-38? (<http://biblehub.com/greek/3628.htm>)
5. Look up the second word on the list, “xrēstótēs” (G5544), and define it. Write down how Jesus was an example of this in Luke 8:26-56. (<http://biblehub.com/greek/5544.htm>)
6. Look up the third word on the list, “tapeinophrosýnē” (G5012), and define it. Write down at least three situations when Jesus displayed this quality. Be sure to include verse references. (<http://biblehub.com/greek/5012.htm>)



GROWING IN RESPECT TO SALVATION

7. Because Jesus displayed all these qualities perfectly, you are able to also! However, you must rely on Him in difficult situations and with difficult people in order to live out these qualities. Think of a situation or a person with which you are struggling to display compassion, kindness, or humility, and describe how you will apply Christ’s example as you “put on” these qualities.

Day 4 and 5

15. Sometimes forbearing with the sin of others over a period of time can tempt us to bitterness if the motivation isn't a proper one. People often continue to sin against us over and over again, especially people who live with you! That's why the command to forgive is given in Colossians 3:13 and in so many other places in the New Testament. Meditate on the definition of "forgiving each other" (charizomai G5483) which literally means, "Freely extending unmerited favor to each other." Read Colossians 3:13 in this way, "Whoever has a complaint against anyone, just as the Lord freely extended unmerited favor to you, so also should you freely extend unmerited favor to others." I have heard it said that this phrase should read, "...gracing each other as grace has been given to you." Why do you think it is so difficult to extend unmerited favor toward someone else?

16. In what manner are we to forgive according to Colossians 3:13?

17. Truly, God is our example in freely extending unmerited favor to others. Read the following parable from Matthew 20:1-16 and answer the questions that follow.

(Jesus speaking) "For the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. **2** After agreeing with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. **3** And going out about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the marketplace, **4** and to them he said, 'You go into the vineyard too, and whatever is right I will give you.' **5** So they went. Going out again about the sixth hour and the ninth hour, he did the same. **6** And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing. And he said to them, 'Why do you stand here idle all day?' **7** They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You go into the vineyard too.' **8** And when evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last, up to the first.' **9** And when those hired about the eleventh hour came, each of them received a denarius. **10** Now when those hired first came, they thought they would receive more, but each of them also received a denarius. **11** And on receiving it they grumbled at the master of the house, **12** saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' **13** But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius?' **14** Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. **15** Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or do you begrudge my generosity?' **16** So the last will be first, and the first last."

- a. To what is the kingdom of heaven compared in Matthew 20:1?
- b. Think about the focus of this parable. Who is the parable about, and what character quality does he portray?
- c. How many times did the master go out into the marketplace to pick up day laborers according to this parable? (I always have a picture of men standing at Home Depot.) What time of the day was each visit to the marketplace? Does this reveal anything about the character of the master?
- d. What question did the master ask of the eleventh-hour worker in Matthew 20:6? What does this reveal about the master's character and workers' situations?
- e. How did the master show great generosity in this parable?
- f. How do the other workers respond?
- g. Do you ever feel the same way as the first hour workers? Why is that?
- h. What is the punchline of the parable? How does this get to the heart of the matter?

18. Jerry Bridges, in his book, *Transforming Grace* (pp. 54-55, 77), has some incredible insights into this parable. Read the excerpts below:

The landowner of Jesus' parable, who obviously represents God, was a very gracious and generous man. From the very beginning he was as concerned for the welfare of the workers as he was for his vineyard. He readily agreed to pay the first workers a day's wages, a fair amount. In the labor culture of that day, the workers needed the money to buy food for their families. They lived a day-to-day existence. That is why landowners were instructed to pay a hired man "his wages each day before sunset, because he is poor and is counting on it" (Deuteronomy 24:15).

The landowner was not only fair with his workers; he was progressively more generous with each group of workers he hired throughout the day. Each worker, regardless of how long he had worked, received a day's wages. He received, not what he had earned on an hourly basis, but what he needed to sustain his family for a day. The landowner could have paid them only what they had earned, but he chose to pay them according to their need, not according to their work. He paid grace, not debt.

The parable focuses particularly on those workers who were hired at the eleventh hour. They were treated extremely generously, each one receiving twelve times what he had earned on a strictly hourly basis. Why did the landowner hire these workers at the eleventh hour? Perhaps it was because an extra push was needed to complete the work by the end of the day. More likely, since Jesus was not teaching about Jewish agriculture but about the kingdom of heaven, those eleventh-hour workers were hired because they needed to receive a day's wages. They had been standing all day waiting for someone to hire them so they could support their families. They needed to work more than the landowner needed their work. He hired them, not because of his need, but because of their need. He represents God in His gracious awareness of our needs and His continuous work to meet them. God calls us to serve Him, not because He needs us, but because we need Him. Then His reward for our service is always out of proportion to our efforts--as Jesus said to Peter, "a hundred times as much" (Matthew 19:29).

Why do so many people stumble over this parable and consider the landowner to be unfair? I believe it is because we Christians instinctively identify with the workers who had worked all day. We place ourselves in their shoes instead of in the shoes of those who worked only one hour. We look at society around us, instead of at Jesus Christ, and we begin to feel pretty good about ourselves. We consider ourselves to be twelve-hour-workers, and we expect to be rewarded accordingly.



GROWING IN RESPECT TO SALVATION

19. What truths can remind you to forgive/show grace to someone this week?

20. Moms: How can you explain God's unmerited favor to your child as the motivation to give grace to your child's sibling and/or friend? This will be helpful when your children are complaining about each other and/or friends. Are there any word pictures/illustrations that come to your mind to explain this concept?

21. Colossians 3:15 says that the peace of God should rule in our hearts. With whom were you called to display this quality according to v.15?

22. The idea of "rule" is interesting here. Read the following excerpt from Douglas Moo's commentary on Colossians. Then write down a situation where you need to let peace be the arbiter in a situation with a believer. Pray that God will do this work in your heart.

"Paul's concern for unity of the body becomes explicit in this verse. It begins with a *kai* 'and' which suggest that this next command continues the theme that Paul has been developing since verse 12... Moreover the transition from love to peace is a natural one, as the parallel text suggests in Ephesians 4:2-3... 'Rule' translates a Greek verb that refers to the activity of the 'umpire,' who renders verdicts in contested situations. The verb naturally takes on the connotation of control; the standard Greek lexicon paraphrases, 'let the peace of Christ be the decisive factor.' Paul wants the Colossians to make 'peace' the arbiter, the factor that should be given preference over competing concerns and interests" (pp.282-283).