

INTRODUCTION: *One2One Real Women*

Real Women is a fourteen-session Bible-study guide to be used by an older woman and a teenage girl (or two teenage girls). The odd-numbered sessions (1, 3, 5 and so on) are to be done jointly, as a one-to-one (or a one-to-two, if you're doing *Real Women* with two teenage girls). The even-numbered sessions (2, 4, 6 etc) are to do on your own, in between meeting up. It's great if you can meet weekly, but fortnightly is fine too.

Each joint session should last between 30 and 45 minutes. But it works best as part of a time together that lasts between 60 and 75 minutes, and includes doing something together before you dig into the Bible. What you do depends on who you're working through *Real Women* with. You might meet up in a coffee shop and go for cake; you might go for a walk, do some craft, play a game together, or do something sporty; you might just have some time to chat. But time together is important as it helps build a real trusting friendship between you.

As you get towards the end of *Real Women*, it would be great to organise something to do together as friends. It might be going out for ice-cream, playing sport, or something else—something that you can enjoy together.

Of course, both with meeting up, and with a “social”, make sure that both the teenager's parent/guardian and your church leader know what you are doing. If possible, meet up at the teenager's house—and, wherever you do meet, always make sure that there is someone else around and you are never in a room with the door shut. Equally, try to do the sessions somewhere where you won't be overheard, where you can both feel relaxed, and not get distracted or constantly interrupted.

The aim of this leader's guide is simply to give you confidence that you're on the right track! You might want to use it to help you prepare sessions beforehand, or to check things afterwards—or you may find you don't need it at all!

It's wise not to encourage the teenager to use these notes for her “solo” sessions, because the temptation to cheat and not bother to look at the Bible to find the answers might be overwhelming. The reason there are notes for the solo (even-numbered) sessions is so that you can help her with anything she found confusing when you next meet up.

These notes are not exhaustive. If you want to look into Colossians in more depth, two useful books are the *The Message of Colossians and Philemon* by Dick Lucas, (you can grab a copy here (<http://www.thegoodbook.co.uk/bible/bible-study/all-bible-commentaries/the-message-of-colossians-and-philemon>)), or *Colossians and Philemon* by John Woodhouse from the *Focus on the Bible* series.

We hope that *Real Women* helps both you, and the teenage girl you're reading it with, to be thrilled by what God has done for you through the Lord Jesus; to be equipped and challenged to live for Him every day; and to build a real, lifelong friendship, where you can encourage each other to keep following Christ until you reach your glorious, eternal inheritance.

It would be great to read the whole letter in your first meeting together so that you've read it as a whole, as it was meant to be read.

Session 1: JOINT

Colossians 1 v 1-8 —What we believe

Big idea:

Faith in Jesus, love for other Christians and the hope of heaven—this is the gospel that is bearing fruit. We must hold on to the truth.

Guidance for questions:

1. This is supposed to be a light introduction. So “thank you” could have been as they got off the bus, or as you gave them a drink!

They may not have said thank you to God—this doesn’t need to be pushed.

It’s good if you’re willing to share at this point too.

As we read the first part of Colossians, we’ll see how many things Paul is grateful for.

2. An apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God (the jargon buster tells you what an apostle is). Paul has a special responsibility from God.

3. It tells us who he is, and tells us he’s here in this place writing because God sent him—not on his own accord. This letter isn’t Paul’s made-up thoughts.

4. He describes them as holy people, the faithful brothers and sisters. They are family to him, and they are Christians—he calls them holy people. As Paul writes, he writes to them as Christians,

5. Thanking God for the Colossian Christians. He is always praying for them.

6.

a) Because of their faith in Jesus

b) Because of their love for all God’s people

These Christians have faith in Jesus, and this shows in the way that they love other people.

7. Faith and love spring from hope stored up in heaven.

These Christians know where they belong. They know they’ll be with Jesus one day—and that affects how they live and love. They know this because they have been taught the truth of the gospel. They know who Jesus is, why he came and what it means to love and follow him—now and forever.

8.

a) All over the world

b) Among the Colossians

9. People becoming Christians

10. Since the day they heard it and understood God's grace.

As soon as they understood who Jesus was and what he'd done for them, they began living it out and sharing it with others, who also became Christians.

11. It is bearing fruit and growing around the world. People are hearing it, believing it, living it and continuing to share it.

12. God's grace. They hadn't earned God's love—Jesus' death means they are forgiven.

13. The faith and love of the Colossians, the hope of heaven, the gospel bearing fruit, God's grace. Paul gives thanks that the men and women in Colossae really know and love Jesus. He can see that because they love and trust God and love and serve each other. They know that they are heaven bound, and other people see this in them as they share it with others and more people come to know and love Jesus too. They don't deserve it, they've done nothing—it's all because of Jesus!

14. Epaphras. We read about him in Colossians 1 v 7-8, Colossians 4 v 12 and Philemon 1 v 23 (a letter that was also written when Paul was in prison and Epaphras was with him). Colossians 4 v 12 tells us that although Epaphras is not with the Colossians at this time, like Paul, he is still praying for them always and is concerned for their growth as Christians.

15. Paul is an apostle of Christ, Epaphras is a faithful minister of Christ—fellow servant. They are both followers of Jesus who pass on the good news.

16. They're encouraged by them, and thankful to God for them.

Epaphras has been passing on info to Paul.

Session 2: SOLO

Colossians 1 v 9-14—How we grow

Big idea:

Christians are rescued sinners promised an amazing inheritance. Knowing God, and knowing his will, helps us to live in a way that pleases him and keeps us growing.

Guidance for questions:

1. This might be a good question to follow up when you meet up next time.

2. Since the day we heard we have not stopped praying! v9

We continually ask God... v9

Paul says he never stops... so it must be pretty important to him!

3. That they would be filled with the knowledge of God's will.

That they would know how to live the way that God says is best!

4.

- Live a life worthy of God
- Please him in every way
- Bear fruit in every good work
- Grow in in the knowledge of God

You won't stay the same as your knowledge of God's will increases—you'll become more like him, in all you do.

5. It's transforms the way we live, and helps us to live the way that God planned and intended.

6.

Living a life worthy of the Lord and pleasing him means:
v10b (this means the middle of the verse) bearing fruit in every good work
v10c (this means at the end of the verse) growing in the knowledge of God
v11 being strengthened in all power according to his glorious might, having endurance and patience
v12 giving thanks to the Father

7. As I live a life that pleases God, I'll show it by the things I do. I will bear fruit. As an apple tree produces apples for people to see, my Christian life will produce things that show I'm a Christian—my words, actions, care of others, work, sharing of my faith.

As I do these things they will help me get to know God better. God will strengthen me to keep going and that will make me thankful! Because it's all about Jesus.

8. Qualified them (and us) for an amazing inheritance in the kingdom of light. All Christians are promised the inheritance of heaven. We will be with God for all eternity.

9. Rescued us from the dominion of darkness, brought us into the Kingdom of Jesus.

God has dealt with sin and death—they're not going to stop us being with Jesus forever.

10. Redemption and forgiveness of sins. Our sin is forgiven, God has bought us back (see jargon buster)—we can know God as he intended. Paul really emphasises this point! He tells us what we're promised, what we've been rescued from and assures Christians that they are forgiven—Praise God!

QUESTIONS: to ask as you meet to do Session 3 to help check their understanding of Session 2

1. What is Paul always doing for the Colossian Christians? (Praying)

2. What does he want them to have knowledge of? Why? (God's will... as it will help them live the way God says is best.)

3. What does he want to assure them of? (Where they belong as Christians.)

Session 3: JOINT

Colossians 1 v 15-23—It's all about Jesus

Big idea:

Everything is all about Jesus—everything is by him, through him, and for him. Once we were separated from God because of sin, but because of Jesus we are united with him—so stand firm.

Guidance for questions:

Answers to the table: JESUS

1. No right or wrong answers at this stage, just what you'd honestly answer.
2. Jesus, God's Son. He shows us an image of God. We can't see God, but when we see Jesus we know what God is like.
3. "in him", "all things"
4. All things were created in him, visible and invisible, thrones, powers, authorities.
All things were created through him and for him! Jesus was there at creation.
5. For him.
6. In him all things hold together—he is crucial in the world now! He didn't just make it and then disappear off somewhere—he's involved every day in the world he created.
7. The church
8. Honesty is the key here. It could be a useful chat about how they see church and why!
9. He is the first one to be raised from the dead. He is the one with authority over death. He is the only one to have beaten the power of death.
10. He has proved his power over everything, even death. He's in all, over all, and everything is for him. He's done what no else could do—showing his amazing power.
11. God was pleased to have his fullness dwell in him. Jesus was fully God on earth. The things that he did, the things he had power over, all show us what God the Father is like. So when we look at Jesus, we see the invisible God.

12. To reconcile (bring together) all things, through Jesus' death, making peace. Jesus' work on earth meant that God and people could be reconciled, reunited—peace was made possible—because of who Jesus is. God was pleased (v19) to be reconciled with people he had made, through Jesus.

13. Alienated from God, and enemies in our mind, because of our evil behaviour. This is strong language:

- Alienated—completely cut off from our perfect heavenly Father. Separated from him and all his goodness
- Enemies—is a strong description. It's not just a a minor break down, but on opposite sides.
- Evil behaviour—totally the opposite to how we're called to live by our loving and perfect Father.

14. Reconciled us, so that we are presented holy in his sight, and without blemish, free from accusation. We are reunited with God our creator, our sin and wrongdoing (our blemishes) are dealt with and we stand before Jesus as perfect, holy people!

15. Nothing! It's all done by Jesus—we just accept it!

Continue in our faith, established and firm (sure that Jesus has done this).

Not moving from the hope held out in the gospel.

We keep clinging onto the fact that Jesus has rescued us—it's all his work. There's nothing else we do!

Session 4: SOLO

Colossians 1 v 24-29 —Mystery made clear

Big idea:

God has revealed himself, through Christ, so that people may know him. This message must be proclaimed so that more people will know him.

Guidance on questions:

2. Paul rejoices in his suffering.

3. He rejoices because it isn't just pointless suffering. It is for God and for Paul's fellow Christians.

4. He must present the whole word of God to people—his job is to share the good news of Jesus.

5. Every part of it—Old Testament, New Testament, hard bits, easy bits.

Note: This means we must make sure that we're at a church where they teach all of the Bible—not just the nice or easy bits.

6. Christ in you, the hope of glory. They can know Jesus and the exciting promise of heaven!

7. The Lord's people and the Gentiles.

8. Gentiles have always been on the edge, outside of God's chosen people. But now Paul is saying that the mystery of Jesus' work on the cross, the fact that his death on the cross saved people, has been made known to them as well as to the Jews, God's special chosen people.

9. No... he has to make it known.

10. Instead of being enemies of God, we are reconciled, and presented holy in his sight, without blemish. We were in a totally hopeless place, and God did EVERYTHING that was needed for us to know him again. It's glorious riches because we get to know God now and forever—with nothing in the way!

11. Paul talks about Jesus so that they can know him. This teaching is to ensure that people are wisely taught and warned/corrected where necessary, so that they are presented perfect before God—so they will experience his glorious riches.

12. Living a life that is pleasing to God—knowing that we have been reconciled, and continuing in our faith, growing more like Jesus day by day.

13. No, it can't—it has to change! Our thinking, speaking, acting will all change as we become more like Jesus, who was perfect in every way.

14. He strenuously contends with all the energy / he struggles with all his energy as Christ works in him. He has to work really hard, and Christ works in him.

STOP AND THINK

These would be good questions to follow up:

Are they regularly hearing the word of God proclaimed? Do they need challenging to be at church/ youth group more often?

QUESTIONS: to ask as you meet to do Session 5 to help check understanding of Session 4

1. What is the mystery that God has made known? (Christ in you, the hope of glory. They can know Jesus and the exciting promise of heaven!)
2. How important is the word of God? (Crucial. We need to make sure we read it in all its fullness.)
3. What does it mean to be presented fully mature in Christ? (Knowing him, loving him, knowing how to live for him, loving to live for him and serve him in all we do.)

Session 5: JOINT

Colossians 2 v 1-7 —Stick with Jesus

Big idea:

The gospel does not change—stay rooted in the truth of Jesus and continue to grow and be built up in him.

Guidance on questions:

1. Maybe things such as:
 - reading your Bible, praying regularly, going to church, sharing faith, being different at school/college, not doing certain things that you know aren't how God calls us to live , eg: gossip, swearing, unkind words, sexual immorality.
2. He's contending/struggling for the Christians he knows and for those he's never met! It's not easy... but his struggles aren't for himself or his own comfort. He's struggling on behalf of other people. He's so committed to God's people, even those he hasn't met—he's contending for them, he wants them to keep going as Christians.
3.
 - a) 1 v 9: Praying continually
 - b) 1 v 28: Proclaiming Jesus
4. He wants them to be:
 - a) encouraged in heart
 - b) united in love
5. Because in Jesus Paul has all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. It's worth it, because the most important thing is to know Jesus. So even when it's tough, he still knows the mystery of God, Christ.
6. The warning is about people who may try and deceive them by fine-sounding arguments.
7. Some "fine-sounding arguments" might be:
 - The Bible is important—but it's a bit outdated these days, so you don't have to listen to all of it. Some bits were only relevant in the old days.
 - It's ok to sin, because God will forgive you no matter what you do.
 - Church is ok, if you enjoy it—but it won't matter if you don't go very often.
 - God wants you to be happy, so if sleeping with your boyfriend makes you happy, God will think it's a good idea.

8. Paul delights to see how disciplined they are, how firm their faith in Christ is. He's encouraged by the way they're living and relying on Jesus for all they need. Their faith in Jesus is firm, and they're living for him, even though Paul isn't there.

9. In spirit.

He knows them, and knows what they're going through. Because of what they share as Christians they're united, and it's God's Holy Spirit that ultimately unites us. We're all part of God's family.

10. It might be worth having some info before the session to help with this.

11. Verse 6 starts with "Therefore" or "So then".

When we see a "therefore" we need to ask what it's there for. So we need to look back because these verses are connected to the verses that have come before.

So then, because of all that Paul *has already told us...* we need to put verses 6 and 7 into practice.

12. They received Christ Jesus as Lord. That is all—they didn't *do* things!

13. Jesus was the one the people had been waiting for. He is God's chosen one, who'd been promised since the beginning. He is the one sent to deal with the problem of sin—so accepting Jesus as Christ means accepting him as the one who came to save us, since we can't save ourselves.

14. Jesus is not just our rescuer, he's Lord. When we accept his rescue, we also need to accept his rule. We need to be ready to say that he knows best, and we want to live the way that he says is best.

15.

What are they do?	What does this mean? How can you do it?
Live in him (some versions say "walk in him") (v 6)	Whatever you do, whatever you say, whatever you think, wherever you go—walking with Jesus. Trying to do what he would do, live how he would have you live. Think about your life, how can you make sure you're walking with Jesus. Start your day listening to his word—and put it into practice.
Rooted in him (v 7)	Staying with Jesus, not moving from the truth that you believed when you first became a Christian. It's all about Jesus. Stand firm in Jesus. Keep reminding yourself of the gospel.

What are they to do?	What does this mean? How can you do it?
Built up in him (v 7)	Learning more and more about Jesus from his word. Learning from both the Old and New Testaments and seeing how God is at work in the world. Listening to what God has to say about the way you live your life.
Strengthened in the faith as you were taught (v 7)	Keep learning, keep being reminded of the truth about Jesus. Trusting God through difficult times. Meet with other Christians to help encourage you in this. Pray regularly.
Overflowing with thankfulness (v 7)	Never lose the wonder of how amazing God is. Never stop being thankful for Jesus, and the fact that his death has reconciled you with God, creator and sustainer of the universe. Listen to praise songs. Sing praise to God in church/youth group.

Session 6: SOLO

Colossians 2 v 8-15—See what God has done

Big idea:

We were dead and God has made us alive. God has triumphed over all sin and death. We have been forgiven, he has done all that was needed—so believe in Christ.

1. Again no right or wrong answers, but it's good to try and be honest—to try and get to the heart of it.

2. Don't be caught/taken in by people who try and teach you a different message than the truth of the gospel of Jesus. Some people may try and deceive us by trying to teaching new ideas—don't believe them!

3. It wouldn't be good. It's usually being held against your will. Restricted and forced to do something you don't want to do. Don't have freedom, might be in trouble or in pain.

4.

a) The fullness of the deity lives in Jesus in bodily form. (Jesus was God on earth)

b) We have been given fullness in Christ. (We have all we need to know God)

c) Christ is the head over all powers and authorities. (Nothing to compares to Jesus)

6. We don't experience a physical cutting. But instead our self ruled by the flesh (our sinful nature) (v 11) is cut off. The things that we do that get in the way of our relationship with God, the things that are not in line with the way that he, as creator of the world, says is the best way to live—are cut off.

7. By Christ. Sin has been cut off—no longer with them. Jesus' death and resurrection mean that our sinful nature has been cut off and we're raised with him, to live for him.

8. Having been *buried* with him...

you were also *raised* with him (v 12).

When you were *dead* in you sins....

God made you *alive* with Christ (v 13).

9. "The written code with its regulations" or "the charge of our legal indebtedness".

This is quite a mouthful (see explanation on page 36). Our list of sins stopped us knowing God, but he has dealt with it.

10. Cancelled our debt, taken away our sin, and nailed it to the cross, so it is dealt with once and for all. And he has shown all powers and authorities that he is the ultimate power. He can beat death and sin. He has made a “public spectacle of them”—he has shown they have no power compared to him!

QUESTIONS: you could ask as you meet to do Session 7 to check understanding of Session 6

1. What is so brilliant about Jesus? (He was fully God, living on earth and is head of everything.)
2. What has Jesus achieved for us? (Our sinful nature, the record of our sin, is cut off, the debt is paid—he has shown that he has beaten all powers and authorities.)
3. When we're tempted to believe that there's something better than Jesus, what should we remember? (He is all powerful, he has triumphed over all powers and authorities, he has paid our debts.)

Session 7: JOINT

Colossians 2 v 16-23—You have Jesus

Big idea:

Do not be taken in by the lies the world tells about having to *do* things to please God. Stay connected to Christ, the head—in him we will grow.

Guidance on questions:

1. Paul reminds them that Jesus is fully God.

He also reminds them that they had been dead in their sins, and had now been raised with Christ. And that their sin had been fully forgiven by Jesus. Jesus has triumphed over all powers and authorities.

2. Don't let anyone judge you, by what you eat or drink or how you celebrate festivals or Sabbaths.

3. As a shadow of the things to come. The reality is found in Jesus.

4. Now Jesus had come, he was the reality, so they no longer needed to look back to the past. They could see everything through Jesus, who had saved them and forgiven them.

5.

- *People who may try to disqualify them for the prize* by making the Colossians feel like failures.
- *People who delight in false humility*—this is sometimes translated as asceticism (abstaining from worldly pleasures with aim of leading a more godly lifestyle). So maybe people don't indulge in things of enjoyment, of luxury or rest, as they think it makes them more holy (they've lost sight of Jesus).
- *People who worship angels*—this is a tricky one to explain; there are different ideas. It could be describing the way that people were worshipping. People who thought they were joining with the angels, and worshipping in a very spiritual and uplifting way, and therefore making other people whose worship was more simple (trusting in Jesus, loving him and looking forward to heaven) seem lame in comparison.
- *People who describe in great detail what they see*—this is also tricky to understand. Paul is probably talking about people who have had “visionary experiences” that make them intimidating to others. This isn't to say that these can't/don't happen. But that if you're a Christian who hasn't/doesn't, you mustn't let these people intimidate you and feel like you don't qualify for the prize.
- *People who are puffed up with idle notions* by their unspiritual minds. (The ESV reads: “puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind”). Another way to describe these people is arrogant—they appear humble, but it's false humility.

None of the the things they're doing or experiencing give them any reason to be puffed up—it's an idle notion. The Christian life is all about Jesus. But for this person, who seems so super holy—his behaviour comes from his sensuous mind/unspiritual mind—it's all from the flesh. It's worldly and not godly at all.

Beware of those who look super-holy/spiritual however they express it—unless it's rooted in Jesus, it's not good, even dangerous.

6. He's worried that they might be disqualified for the prize (see Jargon buster).

7. They might disqualify them by making them feel that they're not good enough, not spiritual enough, not holy enough as Christians—so that they give up.

8. He's puffed up, thinks he's more important than he is, but most importantly, he's lost connection with the Head—with Christ. So it's become all about that person, rather than all about Jesus. Colossians 1 v 18 showed us that Christ is the head of the body.

9. We're part of the body, that is supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, growing as God causes it to grow. *God* makes us grow—not other people.

10. Because it's all about Jesus, not other humans. We shouldn't compare ourselves to other people, to other Christians—but look to Christ. If we look to Christ, and keep trusting him, we will never be disqualified from the prize.

11. The Colossians died with Christ.

12. If you died with Christ, and are free to live for him, why do you keep trying to live by rules?

13. These rules are related to earthly things that won't last. They're based on human commands and teaching. They appear wise, but they can't restrain sensual indulgence. Rules might change behaviour for a time, but they don't change our heart attitude.

14. You might think your language is better, that you're more regularly at church, you know that you read your Bible more, or read other Christian books. You don't watch certificate18 films, mostly listen to Christian music—and this makes you Ok.

or

You might worry that other people live a better life than you, find it easier to live as the Bible says, seem better at sharing faith etc... so you feel like a lesser Christian.

Session 8: SOLO

Colossians 3 v 1-4 —Look up!

Big idea:

Set your heart and mind on living for Jesus, not for earthly things

Guidance on questions:

2.

- You have been raised with Christ (v 1)
- You died (v 3)
- Your life is hidden with Christ in God (v 3)

3. Ask if they wrote down a question about something they're not sure they understand.

4. Set your hearts on things above. Set your minds above, not on earthly things.

5. Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, so that we're committed to living the way he says is the best in the world that he has made. We should live as the forgiven, new people that we are—not carrying on as if Jesus had never lived, died and been raised.

6. We set our minds on things above because that's where Christ is seated, at the right hand of God. That's where we're going one day—to be with Jesus forever.

7. The priest (Jesus) sat down when he had offered his sacrifice “for all time”—when he had completed his work.

8. Jesus is sat down. We can be sure that he has offered his sacrifice for sins—he has finished. His death and resurrection mean that our sin can be forgiven, we can live the life we were created to live and be with him one day in glory.

10. We died, and our life is “hidden with Christ in God”.

11.

- Read and study God's word, the Bible
- Pray to him
- Meet with other Christians
- Go to church and youth group
- Do a one-2-one
- Be wise about what you watch and listen to

12. Christ will appear, and we will appear with him glory. We will be with him for all eternity.

13. One day we will be the people that God has made us, and we will be with him, forever. So, whatever happens in this life, whether it's easy or hard, whether we make good or bad decisions, we can be confident that if we set our hearts on things above, that one day we will be with God forever. So we should live for that day.

QUESTIONS: you could ask as you meet to do Session 9 to check understanding of Session 8

1. What does Paul say we should set our hearts on? (Things above... where Jesus is.)
2. What does it mean to set our hearts on things above? How can we do that every day? (Keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, so that we're committed to living the way he says is the best in the world that he has made. We should live as the forgiven, new people that we are—not carrying on as if Jesus had never lived, died and been raised.

Make sure we read his word regularly, pray to him, meet with other Christians, go to church and youth group, do a one-2-one, be wise about what we watch and listen to.)

3. Talk about the prayer of response they wrote for question 3 and/or any questions they had.

Session 9: JOINT

Colossians 3 v 5-11—Live the life

Big idea:

Because of Christ and what he has done, we should get rid of all the things that no longer fit with the new life he has given us. We have a new self—live the life.

Guidance on questions:

1. Dedicated, focused, regular training, eating the right diet...
2. Rehearsing, lessons, listening to music...
3. Put to death the things to do with our earthly nature:
 - Because they don't belong to our new life.
 - God hates them; they bring about God's wrath.
 - They damage us, our relationship with God, and our relationships with each other.
4. Sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed.
5. God created sex. God saw all that he had made and it was very good.
6. Your old way of life was lived for yourself, but now you have died with Christ and been raised with Christ. You used to live the way verse 5 says, but now you are new person—live like it.
7. Yes, he says: "You used to walk in this way"—that's the old way of life. They are living a new life.
8. Anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language.
9.
 - Anger/Rage: Losing our temper—being out of control. It might be shouting at a friend or parent when things haven't gone the way we want.
 - Malice: Nasty, unkind, words—meant to hurt others.
 - Slander: Words that damage people and reputations.
 - Filthy language: Horrible language used in all the above.
10. How we speak/communicate with one another.
11. All these things damage relationships with each other and with God. Mark 7 v 20-23 says it is out of a person's heart that the mouth speaks. These actions, these words show what our heart is like.

12. Verse 9 says: “Do not lie to each other”. So how we speak to other people, how we treat others matters.

Verse 11 reminds us that Christians come from all different nations. We’re united together.

13. We have a new self that is “*being* renewed”; not has “*been* renewed”. We are a work in progress, being renewed in knowledge in the image of our Creator.

14. They are all in Christ:—so these differences no longer matter. The people listed are:

- Greek—the learned Gentile
- Jews—God’s chosen people
- Circumcised—the Jews
- Uncircumcised—the Gentile
- Barbarian—Gentiles
- Scythian—Gentiles
- Slave/free

These things are irrelevant. If we’re Christians, we are all in Christ. The past doesn’t matter, nationality doesn’t matter—what matters is that we are a forgiven people, with a new self, growing to be more like Jesus.

Session 10: SOLO

Colossians 3 v 12-17—New Clothes

Big idea:

Because of Christ and what he has done, we should clothe ourselves with things that fit the new life he has given us. Let his word teach and challenge us.

Guidance on questions:

4. Put them on! You don't just sit and look at them. You actually have to do something!
5. God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved. (See jargon buster.)
7. With compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.
Bear with one another, forgive one another.
8. Complete opposite. These things are all about being like God. These are all things that mean that we're caring for others. These are how God's chosen people are to live.
9. Love, which binds them altogether.
10. Members of one body.
11. Peace.
12. As we're clothed as God's chosen people, we're all part of one body. Jesus brings peace between us and other people, and between us and God.

All Christians are united in Christ. He can bring peace between different people, and make us one body. Although different, as we meet together we can be at peace. Remember that we were once enemies of Christ, but now we're members of one body. Wherever we come from, whatever our background... Jesus unites us together.

13. Study the Bible, Sing songs, encourage one another, share peace and unity together.

Colossians 3 v 16	What does verse 16 say Christians will do when they're together?	How will this help us to wear our new clothes?
<p>Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom...</p> <p>through, psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.</p>	1. Listening to teaching	<p>All reminds us of God's truth, and what he's done for us.</p> <p>Helps us to make sure we're focusing on Jesus, and helps us to encourage one another.</p>
	2. Speaking God's word to each other	
	3. Encouraging one another with songs	
	4. Giving thanks to God as we sing	

14. Every part of our life is affected as we come to know Jesus. It's inward and outward. It affects what we do, and what we say. Instead of living for ourselves, our old way of life, we're doing everything in the name of Jesus, and thanking God for how amazing he is.

QUESTIONS: you could ask as you meet to do Session 11 to check understanding of Session 10

1. Ask what their reaction was to the description of Christians in Colossians 3 v 12.
2. Talk about the new clothes Christians are given in 3 v 12-14 (look at page 78—and see the comparisons). If they're a Christian, can they see the way that God is dressing them in their new clothes? If they're not, what is their reaction to the two different sets of clothes?
3. You could chat through the prayer time questions (page 57), and challenge each other.

Session 11: JOINT

Colossians 3 v 18-21—Living for God

Big idea:

Because of Christ and what he has done, our relationships matter; wives and husbands, parents and children—living to please the Lord.

Guidance on questions:

2.

Wives	Husbands
submit to your husbands	love your wives

3. To follow the godly lead of another.

5. As Christ loved the church and gave himself up (was willing to die) for her.

EXTRA QUESTION YOU COULD ASK:

Which is easier, to love or to submit—given the description here of what it means for a man to love his wife?

6. By dying on a cross in our place, and reconciling us to God.

He loved us enough to die for us, so we could know God. There is no love greater than this.

7. One that loves her as Christ loved the church. One who wants her to grow in godliness and holiness.

8. One that loves her as Christ loved the church. One who wants her to grow in godliness and holiness.

9. Yes, because he will want what's best for her. He'll want her to become more like Jesus and want her to love Jesus more, so he'll make decisions that make that possible.

10. Yes, because she will be saying that she wants to be more like Jesus, and wants to love him more. So when her husband leads her, guides her, helps her, supports her and isn't harsh with her—he'll see her growing to be more like Jesus.

SCENARIOS:

- A boy who's not a Christian asks you out. How do these verses help you answer?

If you want to marry a Christian, so you can submit to him as is "fitting in the Lord" as God says is right—you need to date a Christian.

- A boy who says he's a Christian asks you out. He doesn't come to church all that often and says reading the Bible isn't that important. How do these verses help you answer?

If you want to marry a Christian who will help you love Jesus more, you need a boyfriend who wants that too. If he isn't bothered about growing more like Jesus—he won't be bothered about help you love Jesus more either.

11.

Children	Fathers
Obey your parents in everything	do not embitter your children

13. It pleases the Lord. It's how God has created us to live. God loves his children to obey their parents. We are his children, and are to obey him too.

SCENARIOS:

- You're ready to go out, but when you come downstairs, your parents look at what you're wearing and send you to change before you go out. How do you react?

Not losing your temper. Talking to them, discussing it rationally. Listening to why they are asking you to change. Trusting that they want what's best for you.

- Your parents, who aren't Christians, say you can't go to church because they want you to spend time with them on a Sunday. What should you do?

Don't lose your temper, don't disobey them. Talk to them. Show them by the way you live that you love Jesus. Talk to them about why it's important to you. Is there a way you can come to a compromise? Are there other Christian groups you can attend? Could you go a service at time, which also meant you could spend time with them? Let them see how loving Jesus has changed the way you live and speak.

15. Do not embitter their children or discourage them.

16. Of course.

Session 12: SOLO

Colossians 3 v 22 – 4 v 1—Living for God

Big idea:

Because of Christ and what he has done, our relationships matter: how we work, and how we respect authority, how we live on earth, matters. We are living for the Lord and not for men.

Guidance on questions:

3.

Slaves	Masters
obey your earthly masters	provide your slaves with what is right and fair

4. Earthly masters.

They may be slaves on earth now, and have to obey their masters, but these masters are just masters on earth, they are not the ultimate Lord and ruler of their lives.

5. They might be tempted to only work when their boss is watching them, so that they'll be impressed and reward them.

6. Paul says to work hard even when no one is looking at you because you love and live for Jesus.

7. As we work, we should remember that ultimately Jesus is our Lord, and so we work hard, and do our best because it's him we're serving (see Colossians 3 v 17).

8.

- At school? Carrying on working even when the teacher leaves the room or when you have a supply teacher.
- In a job? Putting as much effort in when your boss is there as when they're not; being committed to doing your best.
- At home? Not always waiting to be asked or being nagged to do a task at home, but getting on with it because you know it helps and serves your family, and therefore God.

9. We have an inheritance to come, an amazing reward. And no matter what we're doing, whether in church or out, on our own or with others, at work, at school, at home... we are serving Christ. One day we'll have the privilege of serving him forever. Let's start now!

10. Eternity with Jesus in heaven! Rewards in heaven, even if things on earth have been hard, as they might have been for the slaves.

1 v 12—Sharing in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light—being with Jesus in heaven forever.

3 v 4—Appearing with Jesus in Glory—being with him in heaven!

11. Some versions start verse 25 with the word “for”, suggesting it links to the verse before it.

There will be consequences for wrongdoing—God is just and fair in the way that he treats us. There is no favouritism. Slave or master—you will answer to God for your wrongdoing. Both should remember that it is the Lord they are serving,

12. Provide your slaves with what is right and fair.

13. Treat their slaves badly, underpay them, expect too much of them...

14. They may be masters here on earth, and have responsibility and power, but ultimately they have a Master in heaven. They are not the biggest or the best or the most powerful—God is.

15.

- Chapter 3 v 18b: It is fitting in the Lord
- Chapter 3 v 20b: This pleases the Lord
- Chapter 3 v 23: Work for the Lord
- Chapter 4 v 1b: You have a master in heaven

Q: What is the big thing that everyone one of them needs to remember?

Jesus is Lord, he is the ultimate master. We are living to please him in everything that we do. How we treat others, how we live, act and speak, should reflect the fact that we are living for God not man.

QUESTIONS: you could ask as you meet to do Session 13 to check understanding of Session 12

1. What’s the warning in these verses about how we view those in authority, how we live with “earthly masters”? (We are called to obey them. Submitting to their authority is important—as we work for our earthly masters we are working for the Lord.)
2. How can we put 3 v 23 into practice? (Consider God more than what our friends, family etc. think of us—always wanting to do things the best we can.)
3. Why should we? (As we serve people on earth, we’re serving God—and living for him. That’s great now, and we have an amazing reward to look forward to.)

Session 13: JOINT

Colossians 4 v 2-6 —Get Talking

Big idea:

To encourage us to be devoted to prayer, for ourselves and for others, and to be committed to reaching others with the good news of Jesus Christ.

Guidance on questions:

2. Devote yourselves to prayer being watchful and thankful.
3. Being committed, loyal—being wholehearted about it.
4. Being alert to the things that might tempt them away from Jesus. Watching out for false teachers, those who might distract them. Need to always be on the look out.
5. Because of who Jesus is and what he's done for them. They have been forgiven, reconciled, and they will be with Christ in glory.
6. That God may open a door for the message, for which he is in chains. Paul prays that he may proclaim the mystery of Christ.
7. In chains... in prison.
8. He doesn't pray for release, or for comfort, but that he would be able to keep teaching about Jesus!
9. Very very important. He tells the Colossians to be devoted to it, and not just pray for themselves but for others. They are to pray that doors would be opened and that Paul would proclaim the mystery of Christ.
10. Proclaiming clearly as he should! He knows the truth; he knows how awesome Jesus is—so he wants to make that plainly known!
11.
 - What makes it hard? When their friends are against it, have a different religion, when they're going through a tough time, when they think it's a waste of time.
 - What makes it easier? When they ask questions, when something happens which means they mention Jesus first, when you have a chance to show the difference Jesus makes to your life.
12. NO

13.

- Verse 5a: Be wise in the way you act towards outsiders

You have been raised with Christ, you have put on a new self. So how you live should be different. People should be able to see from the things you do and say that you are living for Jesus and not for yourself. Being wise means living out your Christian life and showing that you are different from the world around you—making wise decisions about every aspect of your life. Let people see that being a Christian changes you!

- Verse 5b: Make the most of every opportunity

For example when

- Someone asks you what you did at the weekend
- Someone asks you if you go to any clubs
- Someone asks you what book you're reading at the moment
- Someone asks you what music you like listening to
- Someone says "I don't think there's a God—there's too much rubbish in the world".
- Someone asks why you don't swear all the time
- Someone asks why you don't sleep with your boyfriend.

- Verse 6: Let your conversation be full of grace, seasoned with salt—so you can answer everyone. Full of grace—Gentle and loving in all I say. Being kind and wise, as I talk about Jesus. Not just launching in with: "If you're not a Christian, you're going to hell"! But wanting to tell them how great it is to know Jesus.

Seasoned with salt—We mustn't shy away from the hard truths of the Bible. The Bible is serious about sin, and we need to be too. We shouldn't just tell people what they want to hear. So if they ask: Does God hate sin? Is Jesus the only way to God? —we need to tell them what the Bible says.

14. Pray

15. No

16.

- Talk to God about people—pray for people.
- Talk to people about God—make the most of every opportunity.

Session 14: SOLO

Colossians 4 v 7-18—In this together

Big idea:

To remind us of the joy of Christian friendship and the importance of encouragement

Guidance on questions:

2. Eleven

3. Tychicus and Onesimus

4.

v7—fellow servant

v9 —dear brother

5.

v7—he calls Tychicus “fellow servant”

v9 —Onesimus—“dear brother”

v10—Aristarchus—“fellow prisoner”

v11—“fellow-workers”

6. Paul talks about people as equals—united in their love and service of Jesus. He loves them, cares for them and needs them for his ministry.

Being locked up in a prison would be pretty miserable without any companionship or knowledge that people were with you, thinking of you and praying for you.

7. Six—they were committed to the Colossians too. It wasn't a case of “out of sight, out of mind”. The Christian brothers loved and cared for each other, wherever they were.

8. A mixture, some of Jews but mostly Gentiles—all united.

It shows it doesn't matter whether they're Jews or Gentiles —they're united in Jesus.

9. Epaphras was the one who had started the church in Colossae.

He was wrestling in prayer that they would stand firm—that they would be mature and fully assured of who they are in Christ.

He's working hard for the Colossians, and those in Laodicea and Hierapolis.

10. Brothers at Laodicea, Nympha and the church, and that Archippus would keep going.

11. They're united. They're in different places—some in prison, some close, some far away. Some are travelling to Colossae, some are still far away, but what unites them is the gospel. Their love for Jesus (2 v 2-3).

Paul loves people, and he truly loves and is connected to God's people. He's not a one-man band, doing his own ministry.

He doesn't think it's all about him. He loves, he cares, he encourages, he builds up, he supports, and he sends people.

QUESTIONS: you could ask to check understanding of Session 14

1. Did Paul think he could be a Christian on his own? (No, he was involved with many people who helped and encourage him, and who he helped and encouraged.)
2. What was Paul really concerned about? (People becoming Christians and continuing to live as Christians.)
3. It would be great to talk through the "D: THE END" section on page 76 together.