

# AN INVITATION TO A JOURNEY



## SMALL GROUP GUIDE



### HOW DID IT GO?

#### Reaching Upward: Growing in Your Relationship with God

- Did you pray at least 5 times this week asking God how you can be more like Jesus, and then listening for God's guidance? What did you hear?
- Did you read descriptions of Jesus' actions toward suffering people in the Bible? What did you learn?
- With a trusted friend, did you discuss how you can be more like Jesus"?

#### Reaching Outward: Investing in Your Neighbors

- Were you intentionally gentle (kind) and lowly in heart (humble) in dealing with
  - » a friend who is suffering,
  - » a neighbor who is seeking God, or
  - » one of Houston's recent immigrants?
- As an agent of God's healing and liberating grace, did you share your "abundant life" with someone this week?

#### Reaching Beyond

Any other way God stirred you to put this passage into practice?

### SEPTEMBER 19

#### SERMON TITLE:

How We Change

#### SCRIPTURE:

Colossians 3:1-2 & 5-8  
Matthew 16:24-27

### Scripture Passages

**Colossians 3:1-2 & 5-8 (NIV)** Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things....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.

**Colossians 3:1-2 & 5-8 (MSG)** 1-2 So if you're serious about living this new resurrection life with Christ, act like it. Pursue the things over which Christ presides. Don't shuffle along, eyes to the ground, absorbed with the things right in front of you. Look up, and be alert to what is going on around Christ—that's where the action is. See things from his perspective....5-8 And that means killing off everything connected with that way of death: sexual promiscuity, impurity, lust, doing whatever you feel like whenever you feel like it, and grabbing whatever attracts your fancy. That's a life shaped by things and feelings instead of by God. It's because of this kind of thing that God is about to explode in anger. It wasn't long ago that you were doing all that stuff and not knowing any better. But you know better now, so make sure it's all gone for good: bad temper, irritability, meanness, profanity, dirty talk.

## Scripture Passages

**Matthew 16:24-27 (NIV)** Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

**Matthew 16:24-28 (MSG)** 24-26 Then Jesus went to work on his disciples. “Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You’re not in the driver’s seat; I am. Don’t run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I’ll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for? 27-28 “Don’t be in such a hurry to go into business for yourself. Before you know it the Son of Man will arrive with all the splendor of his Father, accompanied by an army of angels. You’ll get everything you have coming to you, a personal gift. This isn’t pie in the sky by and by. Some of you standing here are going to see it take place, see the Son of Man in kingdom glory.”

### HEAD [15-20 MINUTES]

Read aloud the passages for this week.

1. What two realms does the Apostle Paul compare in Colossians 3:1-2?
2. Colossians 3:5-8 gives some clear instructions on how to refocus on Christ. What does Paul command?
3. Does the Matthew passage further that thinking? Explain.

### HEART [15-20 MINUTES]

1. How can we “set our hearts on things above”?
2. List examples in our culture that impede “setting our hearts and minds on things above.”
3. If you feel comfortable, share a difficulty you have experienced in your journey of doing this?

### HANDS [10 MINUTES]

**Reaching Upward: Growing in Your Relationship with God**

- Being a believer requires that we submit to Christ’s will in every aspect of our lives. Ask God to show you where you need to grow.
- Create a chart of your personal desires. Separate those that make you more like Christ and those that do not.
- Meditate on The Message version of Matthew 16:24-28 (MSG) from the Scripture passages above.

**Reaching Outward: Investing in Your Neighbors**

- In your conversations with friends and neighbors, learn what tends to weigh them down. Find ways to support and encourage them.
- Is there something in your life you need to crucify? Something you need to deny because it is not of God? Bring this to the Lord. Then consider confessing this to a friend and asking them to pray for you as you seek to “let Jesus lead.”

➤ **Head**  
Observe the text and the author’s main points.

➤ **Heart**  
Envision how the text—when applied—might transform your inner life in terms of your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors.

➤ **Hands**  
Apply the text by moving from inward reflection to outward action looking for practical ways to live the text out in our lives to serve others.

➤ **Neighbor**  
Anyone in your life—whether a friend, colleague, family member, classmate, or literal neighbor—to whom you can show God’s love.

## Reaching Beyond

Is there any other way God is stirring you to put this passage into practice?

### **FPC ALPHA UPDATE: WE NEED YOUR HELP PRAYING AND INVITING PEOPLE**

FPC's Alpha starts September 28th at the Weekly YMCA. Is there a friend who God has put on your heart to invite to Alpha? If you want to invite them, follow this 3-step process.

**STEP 1:** Pray for this friend.

**STEP 2:** Ask the friend something like, "Do you think you would like to join a group of people for dinner and conversations to explore faith and spirituality?"

**STEP 3:** Invite them to Alpha saying something like, "At the Weekly YMCA, my friends and I are having a discussion over dinner. I think your voice and opinions will be much valued in the group. Would love to have you there."

If you have more questions on how to invite a friend or have any other questions, please feel free to contact Pastor Emmanuel at [epaulpeter@fpchouston.org](mailto:epaulpeter@fpchouston.org). To register visit [fpchouston.org/alpha](http://fpchouston.org/alpha).

*\*Alpha is a listening community where non-Christian or Christians with questions can explore their questions about faith. We will have a meal together, watch a video about the Gospel and discuss the video in a safe non-judgmental environment welcoming all questions and doubts.*

