**AN ELEVATED MINDSET: REJECTING COUNTERFEIT CHRISTIANITY**

**Colossians 3:1-17**

*“So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.* (Colossians 3:1-4)

**TRUE CHRISTIANS FOCUS ON \_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ OVER THINGS OF THIS WORLD**

* *“So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”* (Colossians 3:1-4)
* **Escaping counterfeit Christianity requires a shift from our allegiance to the things of this world to Christ and His Kingdom alone.**
* Jesus - *“’My kingdom is not of this world,’ said Jesus. ‘If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, so that I wouldn’t be handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here.’”* (John 18:36)
* **If we are to be taken seriously as Christians we need to be known for commitment to Jesus’ teachings, rather than our commitment to worldly systems.**

**TRUE CHRISTIANS PURSUE A \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ LIFESTYLE**

* *“Therefore, put to death what belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, God’s wrath is coming upon the disobedient, 7 and you once walked in these things when you were living in them. 8 But now, put away all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self. You are being* ***renewed*** *in knowledge according to the image of your Creator.”* (Colossians 3:5-10)
* **Living a holy life is evidenced by being set apart and *different* from the way non-Christians live, act, speak, love, forgive, and sacrifice.**
* *“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires of your former ignorance. 15 But as the one who called you is holy, you also are to be holy in all your conduct; 16 for it is written, Be holy, because I am holy.”* (1 Peter 1:14-15)
* **Counterfeit Christians justify their sin and bad behavior while rejecting accountability, while true Christians embrace correction and confession that leads to repentance.**

**TRUE CHRISTIANS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ANY FORM OF RACISM, CLASSISM, AND SEXISM**

* *“In Christ there is not Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but Christ is all and in all.”* (Colossians 3:11)
* *“For those of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. 28 There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus.”* (Galatians 3:27-28)
* **Jesus broke every barrier that hindered us from loving one another the way He loves us, and we need to avoid building those barriers back up.**
* Read (Ephesians 2:13-22)
* **Counterfeit Christians will justify their sinful and separatist attitudes, while true Christians seek to build bridges rather than walls.**

**TRUE CHRISTIANS \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ AND \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ LIKE JESUS**

* ***“****12 Therefore, as God’s chosen ones, holy and dearly loved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a grievance against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you are also to forgive. 14 Above all, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. 15 And let the peace of Christ, to which you were also called in one body, rule your hearts. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”* (Colossians 3:1-17)
* **As Christians we experience daily the unending love and forgiveness of Jesus, and that should compel us to extend that love and forgiveness to everyone else.**
* Jesus - *“I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”* (John 13:34-35)
* **Counterfeit Christians are known for fueling division, slandering others, withholding forgiveness, being prideful, and worshiping the things of this world. Jesus said that true Christians are known for how they love others.**

**CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION**

**Icebreaker:**

* If you had unlimited resources, what would you do over the next 5 years?

**Start thinking:**

* In our Scripture for today the Apostle Paul speaks of shifting our minds from earthly things to the Lord’s Kingdom. What does that mean?
* Why do you think so many professing Christians spend so much time and energy living for this world, as opposed to living for eternity with the Lord?
* What does being holy mean for the Christian? Why is it so important?

**Start sharing. Discuss in depth to create openness***.*

* How can we shift our mindset from living for this world to living for eternity?
* How can you love and forgive people whom you disagree with, even if they mistreated you? Why is this so important to do?
* What can you do specifically to build bridges with non-Christians in hopes of them coming to know Jesus as their Savior?
* What steps do you need to take to correct any areas of your life that do not represent true Christianity properly?

**Start praying. Be bold, and pray specifically.**

* Heavenly Father, I am thankful that You listen to my prayers. I ask You to search me and show me any areas where I have displayed counterfeit Christianity. I ask You to forgive me in those areas and help me to walk holy in love and forgiveness as I seek to honor You with my life. - Amen

**Start digging. Read Scripture and Spend time reflecting.**

Colossians 3:12-17 John 13:34-35

Ephesians 2:13-22 1 Peter 1:14-15