

Faith Bible Study Guide
For the Week of November 12, 2023
Imagine the Possibilities Series : LOVE IN ACTION



Be still [2 Minutes] As you hear these Centering Words, let us greet each other, greet the Holy Spirit, and begin with 1 minute of silence, breathing in the breath of God and allow the group to open themselves to the Holy Spirit today:

CENTERING WORDS: We believe love in action can change the world. A sisterhood and brotherhood acting in faith to tackle the hard work of the world without hesitation. Driven by God’s love and united, we work to improve the lives of women, children and youth. Every day, we show up. We take action. We get it done. We lift up United Women in Faith.

Open in Prayer:

Sometimes, O God, we forget people, or we toss them aside – the difficult ones, the needy ones, the ones that are hard to spend time with, the ones who confront us. And sometimes when we do things like that, it’s not really about the other people, but about us. We are uncomfortable, or we feel guilty, or we follow brighter, shinier people, or we worry about what will make us look good. We are in such desperate need of your forgiveness. We need to be forgiven for our sin, for our mistakes, for mistaking what the world values with what you value. Help us to be better and to see more clearly, and to care more thoroughly. In Christ we pray. Amen.

Be the Word: Scripture: Colossians 3: 23-24

²³ *Whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not for your masters,* ²⁴ *since you know that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you serve the Lord Christ.*

L: The Word of God for all people

P: Thanks be to God

Be present: [Being mindful of others and sharing time]

1. Take a deep breath. How is it with your soul?
2. Are you ready for Thanksgiving? What are your plans?
3. Have you ever done a task where you put your full self and heart into it? Why? How did you feel after the task ended? (What were your emotions? Did those feelings last/linger?)

Be rooted: [Bible Study]

1. Read Colossians 3:23-24 again for a second time. How do you understand this text? What words stand out to you?
 - a. How do you feel about the master and serving language?
 - b. How does this text call us to “Love in Action” as Sara Munshin, President of the West

District United Women in Faith called us to task?

2. Now read Colossians 3:18-25 for context:

Instructions for Christian Households

18 Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

21 Fathers, [c] do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. **23** Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, **24** since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. **25** Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism.

The text immediately before Colossians 3:1-17 is in a titled section (varying titles): “Living as Those Made Alive in Christ,” (or also “The New Life in Christ,” or “Christ IS The Message”); Colossians 3:18-25 is titled “Instructions/Rules for Christian Households.”

- a. Does reading the text in context change how you understood the text when you only read verses 23-24?
- b. Since we’re talking about context, let’s start with verses 18-19. They are often not used in the way if the text just stopped at verse 18. Why do we understand verse 18 with 19 following it up? How about when the text adds family members to it? (Verse 20: children; Verse 21: how to treat your children).
- c. Reading into slaves and masters trope, we now see that verse 22 is directly connected to verses 23-24 (which we read on Sunday). How does reading verse 23-24 feel to you when realizing that this section was addressing slaves and masters and how they are to both FEEL about their job and HOW they are to do their tasks?
- d. In verses 18-25, what roles do you identify in having to follow in your households? (Currently or in your growing up) Are you the wife? The husband? Were you the child? The parent? The servant? The master? The reward reaper? The wrongdoer?

Be transformed: [Call to action]

1. Imagining the Possibilities. In this season of Stewardship and Gratitude, we are reminded that in addition to our financial gift giving, we are called to be Love in Action and Faith in Action. We need you to help us imagine the possibilities of how we can be the Church of God for yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Help us by sharing your thoughts and vision by participating in our Possibilities Visioning Survey. Dream big. Cast your vision wide.



And don't forget that we are Consecrating and praying over our 2024 pledges THIS Sunday, November 19, 2023. Online pledge card:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdZL2vP-Pzq75sCeJyVKig2_9EiljCsoifRIH1bw8SOFo3VQw/viewform

2. Invite others to take this survey. Be a part of the vision. Think specifically about how YOUR gifts play into building the Kin-dom of God, whether it is in volunteering, serving, praying, creating, making, be present... the list to build the Kin-dom is infinite!
3. Make this your alternate Lord's Prayer this week:

Prayers of the Cosmos: The Lord's Prayer

(inspired by Matthew 6: 9-13, Luke 11: 2-4)

O Birther! Father-Mother of the Cosmos
Focus your light within us—make it useful.
Create your reign of unity now—
through our fiery hearts and willing hands.
Help us love beyond our ideals
and sprout acts of compassion for all creatures.
Animate the earth within us:
we then feel the Wisdom underneath supporting all.
Untangle the knots within
so that we can mend our hearts' simple ties to each other.
Don't let surface things delude us,

but free us from what holds us back from our true purpose.

Out of you, the astonishing fire,
returning light and sound to the cosmos.

Amen.

~ written by Neil Douglas-Klotz, in *Prayers of the Cosmos*.

<http://www.amazon.com/Prayers-Cosmos-Meditations-Aramaic-Words/dp/0060619953> Posted on
The Nazarene Way of Essenic Studies website. http://www.thenazareneway.com/lords_prayer.htm

Prayers & Concerns (we will pray together)

Claretta Foster

Jack Hamada

The Sasaki Family; Jordan Sasaki, Sally, Ken, and Jason

Dave Cook

Jerry Osaka

Kirk Sinn

Victoria DelaTorre

The Bone Family; Pam Fink, Scarlett

For our hurting world

And Know that He is God:

Lord of us all, through the blessings we receiving and in the serving we are called to do for others, we become partners with you in your cause. We join you in our concern for all people, and name them as our own brothers and sisters. May we find ways to return these gifts of our material resources and our time, our presence, witness, and prayers to extend your redeeming will into this moment in history and into your world. We are filled with gratitude for the ability to understand this privilege. Amen