

Colossians

Group Study



Week 1: Stuck or Fluid

WHAT YOU VALUE MATTERS

A value is simply an attitude, a belief or a philosophy that you find to be meaningful and important, which provides direction to your everyday living. What you value shapes and motivates you regardless of your awareness of it.

Do you know what you value the most? Are you aware of what shapes and motivates your life? Is it material wealth, successful career, social media, people's opinions, human philosophies, famous celebrities, exciting entertainments, competitive sports, healthy lifestyle, justice issues, higher education, caring community and/or a loving family?

Name what you think are the top three values in your life and share it with the person next to you.

What you value shapes and motivates you

VALUING WHAT IS RIGHT

It is good to have values. But, are you valuing the right things and for the right reasons? Your values determine if your life is pointless or purposeful. It exposes your life and shows if it is stuck (self centered) or fluid (GOD centered). The letter to the Colossians was written to expose the reality of what was being valued and to show about the necessity of valuing the right things, specifically the right person, Jesus. Knowing and valuing Jesus helps us to move from a self centered stagnant life to a fluid life that is purposeful and passionate.

The writer of this letter is the apostle Paul. After he became aware of the reality of Jesus he traveled from place to place talking about Jesus and pleading with people to respond to Jesus appropriately. Jesus encountered Paul and had exposed his wrong values and had set him free from bondage to sin. In response to Jesus' truth and grace Paul was determined that others also should know the reality of Jesus that would not only give them freedom from sin, but also give them a passion and a purpose for life.

NAMING YOUR VALUES

Today, our culture places their value on things that are centered on self. Some values like wealth, power, fame and sex have become the things that shape and motivate people. The gospel of Jesus reinterprets what we value and exposes how we have made them into gods that control our lives. We trust in these gods for security and get stuck ending up with a purposeless self-centered life. The message of Colossians is that only Jesus can give us the true security and purpose we need in life.

If only Jesus can give us true security and purpose for life, then do you value Him? Or, do you value someone or something else? Naming the reality of what you value is not an easy thing to do. If you are not careful you will fall into the temptation of naming what you would like to value, rather than naming what you actually value.

How does one name what is actually valued in an authentic way without empty words, false pretenses and white lies?

HOW TO NAME WHAT YOU VALUE

Next to GOD, only you know your life and what you value the best. However, identifying and admitting your values requires intentional reflective work. We believe the following exercise will help you name your reality in an authentic way. In a sheet of paper draw four columns and name them as shown.

NOT VALUED	LEAST VALUED	SOMETIMES VALUED	ALWAYS VALUED

From the following list of words determine which column each word would fit best under. As you read each word, ask yourself, "As an individual how much do I value this?" Write down the word under the appropriate heading.

Remember, a value is determined by what you do not just what you think. So, for example, if you value "hockey" but seldom find time to actively engage in hockey, whether it is watching it, playing it or buying things related to it, then it could not go under the "Always Valued" column. It would need to be placed somewhere else. The key is to keep it real!

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|-------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|
| Recognition | Tradition | Advancement | Competence |
| Power | Forgiveness | Environment | Achievement |
| Authority | Recognition | Friends | Peace |
| Honesty | Integrity | Equality | Prayer |
| Church | Missions | Fame | Love |
| Teamwork | Serving | Helping | Belonging |
| Poor | Sports | Pleasure | Intimacy |
| Family | Social Justice | Prosperity | Community |
| Creativity | Health | Appearance | Scripture |
| Vacation | Traveling | House | Clothing |
| Shopping | Giving | Caring | Children |
| Orphans | Unity | Diversity | Cultures |
| Ethnicities | Cars | Money | Celebrities |

And, the final word is 'Jesus.'

When you have finished placing all the words in the columns, read each column individually. Is there a theme to what you value the most? Are common characteristics under a column? Are there any surprises? Are there any affirmations?

The purpose of this exercise is not to make you feel shame or guilt, but to name your reality for what it actually is. Share your findings with your group and pray for each other.

BEFORE THE NEXT SESSION

Before you move to the next session please read through the entire letter to the Colossians in the New Testament at least once. It takes only about 20 -25 minutes to read the whole letter.