



Small Group Discussion Guide For the week of January 21 - 27, 2024

Main Thought and Scriptures:

Being set apart *for* God begins when we receive Jesus as Lord. We are *justified* and made righteous through His sinless life and sacrifice on the cross. Justification is not a work we do but is done *for* us by Christ, which we freely receive. This is just the beginning. Scripture also instructs us to be *sanctified* and set apart *for* God in this life. This means we must partner with the Holy Spirit in His work of transforming us to become more like Christ in how we think, act, and relate to others. This is the only way to bring God's goodness and blessing to the earth through our lives.

"Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.²² But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation—²³if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant."
(Colossians 1:21–23 NIV)

- Christ made a way for us to be *justified* or reconciled to God. This is purely a work of His grace that we receive.
- The only right response to this grace is to live a life of worship.

"Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling,¹³ for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.¹⁴ Do everything without grumbling or arguing,¹⁵ so that you may become blameless and pure, 'children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.' Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky¹⁶ as you hold firmly to the word of life..." (Philippians 2:12–16 NIV)

- Sanctification is the process of "working out our salvation" or working salvation into every area of our lives.
- This is essential for us to rightly represent Jesus in this life.
- This means that we need to grow in our faith intentionally through spiritual practices and the right relationships to work salvation into the areas where sin persists (our relationships, thoughts, behaviors, etc.).

**Discussion Questions:**

(Break into groups of 3-4 to discuss)

- As you reflect on the main thoughts, scriptures, and the weekend sermon, what is the Lord highlighting to you and why?
- Since coming to faith in Christ, how have you seen God transform you to be more like Jesus? It's essential to take time to reflect and celebrate your progress. In what ways have you changed so far? Explain.
- What area of your life is God challenging you to continue to “work out your salvation” in? Explain. What practical steps can you take to partner with God in your continued transformation?

Prayer:

(Break into pairs to pray)

- Pray for one specific area where we need the Spirit to work in our lives to make us more like Jesus.
- Pray for one unreached friend or family member to encounter the love of Christ through us this week.