



# weekend

## resource guide

for the week of 26 May

Poverty and affluence alike test the soul— albeit from opposite ends of the spectrum. We may cry out amidst poverty, “My God why have you forgotten me?” But God may cry out to us amidst our affluence, “My child, why have you forgotten me?” Both sift the soul looking for responsive obedience, sincere gratitude, and a confident trust in the promises of God...

It came about when the sons of Israel became strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but they did not drive them out completely... So Joshua said to the sons of Israel, “How long will you put off entering to take possession of the land which the Lord, the God of your father has given you? (Joshua 17.13; 18.3)

Aphorisms abound. “Don’t grow weary in well-doing...” “Good things come to those who wait...” In Joshua’s case it had taken 45 years to fulfill God’s promise that the family of Israel would possess the land God had sworn to Moses. At the seasoned age of 85, Joshua begins to divide up the Promised Land among the 12 tribes so they might possess their possession. He recognizes that there are still hostile tribal remnants that need to be defeated. However, he also understands that they pose no strategic threat to the distribution of the land according to God’s promise to His people.

Yet among the tedious real-estate records describing the divisions of land (Joshua 13.1-22.9) Joshua issues a prophetic challenge to the nation: “How long will you fail to take possession of your possession?” They had failed to take complete hold of the land that God had given them although their land stretched out before them.

Had God lost His power?  
Had God reneged on His promises in any way?  
Was He unwilling to keep His Word?  
Had He laid aside His commands issued for their safety, security, and success?  
Had He excused Himself from the scene?  
Why, then, did they not confidently move forward?

The bottom line answer is that they grew complacent. “Enough already... we’ve won... we’re here... we’re strong... let’s be practical...” And so they, who had been slaves, enslaved a people because they wanted peace and prosperity. For the sake of ease and money they deliberately chose not to “possess their tomorrows” and instead enslaved themselves and others in the sinful patterns of their “yesterdays” (slavery in Egypt).

Dear ones, there is a challenging Kingdom warning here for God’s beloved. It is possible for us to enter our possession without possessing it for our own because we choose to stray from the lifeline of God’s promises. At issue is not the security of our salvation in Christ but the actualization of the powerful promises of God, within the life and community of a believer. These promises can shape our destiny if we will surrender ourselves to them and live consistently by them.

In Christ we have been promised more than land— we have been promised a Kingdom. Yet, like our ancestors, we make our peace with what is unclean in our land because we desire peace, ease, comfort, and greater wealth. Jesus cautioned that some of God’s beloved would bring “no fruit to maturity” because they are choked with worries, riches, and the pleasures of this life (Luke 8.14).

Israel’s failure to temporarily eschew peace and prosperity in order to hold fast to God’s promises sowed the seeds for future compromise, heartache, loss, grief, and division. Their families for generations to come lived under God’s love amidst the conflicting circumstances that their forebears created for them.

Be strong and courageous— do not fear! Cleanse your land of “Canaanites” and do not make peace with sin in your borders. Then you will enter and possess the Kingdom God has bequeathed to you.

Enjoy your LifeGroup!

## Getting to know one another...

What was the first toy you set your heart on? How did that affect your thoughts, behavior, choices, and/or relationships?

## Reading Scripture together...

### Colossians 3.1-17

*1 Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.*

*5 Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. 6 For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, 7 and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, 10 and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him — 11 a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.*

*12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14 Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.*

## What? (does the Bible say?)

What do you think Paul means by “things above” and “things on earth”?

What makes “greed” synonymous with “idolatry”?

What is the great transformation which Paul gives as the reason for our changed behavior?

In verses 12-14, Paul uses the analogy of putting on new clothes. What are the new clothes for followers of Jesus?

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What does it mean to “do all in the name of the Lord Jesus”?

Reread 3.1-17. What is the foundation for a genuine Christian ethic?

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### So what? (how will I think?)

Read v 8. Which of these do you find most difficult to put behind you? Why?

In v 11, Paul lists the distressing divisions between people in the Colossian culture. Denominations, political views, ethnic identity, gender, nationality, etc. divide us today. How might becoming aware of Christ in other Christians help us to eliminate our cultural divisions?

How might you “let the word of Christ richly dwell within you”? (v 16)

Read v 17. This verse is easy to understand but difficult to apply! How might this verse influence your understanding and shape your decisions?

Is v 17 practical and doable? Why or why not?

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### Now what? (what difference does it make?)

Verses 12-17 are a design for a remarkable LifeGroup. How might these benefit your LifeGroup?

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How might your LifeGroup grow in her understanding and application of verses 12-17? How can you help?

Which behaviors listed in verse 12-17 do you find most difficult to embrace? Why?

Which of Paul's goals for holy living listed in these verses do you need help in and accountability for?

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## Prayer requests...

(write in advance what you want your group to pray for...)

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## Praying for my group...