

Growth Group Reflection Questions—June 27-July 3

1. How do you like to celebrate the 4th of July?

Spiritual warm-up: Read Colossians 1:21-23, a passage with some good news and some bad news. Then you'll be ready to learn and be encouraged as a growth group.

2. In Col. 1:21, the Apostle Paul describes what the Colossian believers were like in their pre-Christian condition. First, what super strong language does he use to describe pre-Christians?

Follow up: How does this "in-your-face" assessment go against modern "I'm-Okay-You're-Okay" kind of thinking?

3. What does Psalm 51:5 say about our status before God at birth?

4. It's time now for some really, really good news to brighten our moods! Read Col. 1:22 in your growth group and crack a big smile.

5. We learned that one vicious lie that we sometimes find ourselves believing is that we've blown it too badly ever to be brought back into God's full favor and blessing. You don't have to share details, but have you ever struggled to accept God's complete forgiveness in your own life? How can you overcome this lie with the truth?

6. What's the amazing, unqualified, crystal-clear promise that Romans 8:1 makes? Then discuss to whom this awesome promises applies, because it's not for everyone.

Talk to God now, thanking Him, and pouring out your needs and cares.

e Believe d Could Never Forgive Me

I. The Bad News

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

Colossians 1:21

Alienated = estranged, to be cut off, separated, shut out, locked out, outcasts

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed . . . but now you must rid yourself of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander and filthy language from your lips.

Colossians 3:5 & 8

But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.

Isaiah 59:2

A. The Bad News Involves My Affections

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Deuteronomy 6:5

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I

am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing.

1 Corinthians 13:1 – 3

B. The Bad News Involves My Attitudes_____.

All of us also lives among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts.

Ephesians 2:3

C. The Bad News Involves My Actions_____.

(We) have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. (We) are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. (We) are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; (we) invent ways of doing evil; (we) disobey our parents; (we) are senseless, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Although (we) know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, (we) not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

Romans 1:29 - 32

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.

Colossians 1:21

Listen to some really bad news verses:

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:6

... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ...

Romans 3:23

What shall we conclude then? Are we any better? Not at all! We have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under sin. As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one ..."

Romans 3:9 – 10

II. The Good News

Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. 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 . . .

Colossians 1:21 - 22

Reconciled = a restoration of a relationship from war to peace_____

Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

John 15:13

"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."

Isaiah 1:18

... for the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down.

Revelation 12:10

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus . . .

Romans 8:1