

# GOD'S PEOPLE ARE THE CHURCH

YEAR: UNITE / FOCUS: LIVING IN COMMUNITY  
SERIES: GOD'S PEOPLE ARE THE CHURCH

## BIG TRUTH: GOD'S PEOPLE ARE THE CHURCH

Ezekiel 36:28; Jeremiah 31:33; 2 Corinthians 3:5-6; 5:17; 1 Peter 2:9-10; Exodus 19:5-6; Matthew 16:18

## BIBLE VERSE: COLOSSIANS 1:18

*"And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent."*

## BIG IDEAS

- God's people are devoted to Him above all else.
- God's people are made new.
- God's people are set apart and sent with the gospel.
- God's people live by faith and run with endurance.

## BIBLE PASSAGE: COLOSSIANS 1:13-20

## UNITE: LIVING IN COMMUNITY

The Unite year is an exploration of what it means to be united in Christ as the family of God (Romans 12:5). When we are saved, we are brought into the family of God- seen throughout the Old Testament as "God's People" and in the New Testament and today as the church (Exodus 6:7; Colossians 1:18). We are set free from our sin to walk in freedom in Christ (Galatians 5:1) and use our influence to call others to do the same.

## SERIES AIMS



### Every student should know...

- God has always been making and keeping a people for Himself
- In this age, the church is God's people
- Being a part of God's people should inform every aspect of our lives



### Every student should strive to...

- Study the connections between God's people in the Old Testament
- and the church in the New Testament
- Memorize the Bible verse each week
- Invite others into God's people, the church



### Every student should feel...

- Love for God and the people of God
- Accountable to God and to the church to pursue holiness
- Responsible to use their influence to make much of God alone



### Every student should want...

- Be marked by their faith
- Talk about God every day, in every setting and circle of influence
- Live as a faithful member of their local church

## GUIDES AND WORKOUTS

The Guide provides a commentary page on each week's Bible verse and on each Big Idea that unpacks the Big Truth. Each week also includes a Student Workout as a resource to help the student pursue spiritual disciplines on their own. Additionally, each week has a Family Workout that helps equip parents and guardians to have spiritual conversations with their student.



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**BIBLE VERSE: COLOSSIANS 1:18**

*"And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent."*

**Christ is the head of the church.**

*"And he is the head of the body, the church."*

- Christ is the preeminent being. This means that He is above all other beings and of most importance. He above all others is worthy of all praise and worship. He is the head of the church, or the body of God's people. He is the leader of the church and the one established as the head of the church.
- Christ is the rightful head of the church because He is the beginning of all things and has gone before every person, living the perfect life of obedience to God the Father. It is God the Father's authority that is given to Christ the Son as the leader of the entire body of Christ here on earth. Christ is the rightful leader because He is perfect and holy unlike any other person.

**Christ is above all things.**

*"He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent."*

- To be preeminent is to be above all others. It is to be first and set apart and above all others. Christ is set above all others because He is the firstborn Son of God and has lived in perfect obedience to God the Father. Christ gave His life for the world and is worthy to be exalted on high.
- Christ is above any earthly leader because there is no person who has done what Christ has done, nor is there a person who can do what Christ has done. Only Jesus can save from sins because God the Father has ordained that it is through His Son that people are saved.

**God's people are His church.**

*"And he is the head of the body, the church."*

- Every person who is reconciled to God through the Son is transferred from the kingdom of earth to the kingdom of heaven. Becoming a part of the Kingdom of Heaven means that he or she is part of God's church. All people who believe in Jesus are connected by the Holy Spirit to joins God's people to Him and to one another.
- The church is God's people and Christ is set as the head of His church. The church all over the world is made up of the people of God. The local church in each community is made up of the people of God. When we speak of the church, we are speaking of God's people. Jesus is the leader of God's people.

**BIG IDEA #1: GOD'S PEOPLE ARE DEVOTED TO HIM ABOVE ALL ELSE.<sup>1</sup>****[ THIS ]**

Colossians 1:13-20 teaches us of the holiness and preeminence of Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of the world. Jesus is God in the flesh and the fullness of God dwells in Him. He took on flesh and lived as a human being that He might live the perfect life that no person can live. His death on the cross paid the price for our sin debt and enabled every person who believes in Him to be forgiven for their sins. Deuteronomy 6:4-6 and Matthew 22:34-40 teach us that God's people love Him above all others. The church is God's people, and they love God more than they love any other thing or person, including themselves. This type of love means being devoted to Him and making Him the center of our lives. We can make Him the center of our lives by loving Him above all other things. We do this because He is worthy of our complete devotion.

**[ THEREFORE ]**

**Read Deuteronomy 6:4-6. How does the truth that there is only one God lead His people to be devoted to Him above all else?**

In Deuteronomy 6:4-6, God's people, the Israelites are being prepared to enter the Promised Land. God prepares them by teaching them that He alone is their God, and they should love Him above all others. This truth produces a devotion to God from His people. Because He is the only God, His people are devoted to Him.

**[ THIS ]**

Mankind's heart is prone to wander away from God and to love other things more than Him. Human beings are naturally inclined to run away from God and to love the things of the world more than we love God. When we become a child of God, we are no longer devoted to the things of the world, such as seeking worldly success, the passions of our flesh, or being known. Instead, we are devoted to God, and we love Him above all else. We desire to make Him known more than anything else and we desire to obey Him. His commands are not burdensome to us. Instead, we delight in doing what He asks.

**[ THEREFORE ]**

**To be devoted to God, we must set aside the other things that we love above Him. What are some things you struggle with loving more than God?**

We often struggle against our flesh natures. We love the things the world has to offer more than we love God. 1 John 2:16, James 4:4, and Romans 12:2 warn us to not love the world or the things of the world. Instead, we are to love God above all.

**What about God compels you to be devoted to Him above anything else in your life?**

God is the one true God and worthy of our praise and worship. He alone is worthy of our devotion. Psalm 145:3 and Zephaniah 3:17 show us that God is greatly to be praised because He is above all others in His character, worth, and holiness. He is the only God and that alone makes Him worthy of our devotion to Him.

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1. Matthew 22:34-40: The people of God love Him above all other things.

**BIG IDEA #2: GOD'S PEOPLE ARE MADE NEW.<sup>2</sup>****[ THIS ]**

When a person has saving faith, he or she is forgiven of their sins. God remembers their sin no more and reconciles them to Himself. He creates in them a new heart that can live for Him, obeying His commands and growing in knowledge of Him. Prior to this saving faith, people do not know God and cannot live for Him. God gives His people the Holy Spirit to sanctify them, or make them holy. It is in making them like Christ that people become new. God's people no longer live lives that are set on the things of the world. Instead, they are set free from the captivity of their sin to live for Him by obeying His Word. They can grow in their understanding of who He is and then obey Him by obeying His commandments. God's people are awakened to the things of God and are able to follow Him as His chosen people.

**[ THEREFORE ]**

**How has your life changed since coming to know Jesus through saving faith?**

In Colossians 1:13-20, Paul writes of the transferal of people from the domain of darkness to the light through Christ. Prior to knowing Christ through saving faith, we live for ourselves, giving in to our selfishness and sinful desires. After we come to know Christ, we put on the fruit of the Spirit and seek to live for Him.

**[ THIS ]**

In our sin, we desire the things of the flesh and the world. We covet what others have. We are jealous and we desire to please ourselves. People who do not know God do not seek to glorify Him with their lives. Instead, they seek to bring glory to themselves. Prior to knowing God, we are enslaved to our sin and are unaware of the things of God. We do not know how to please Him because we are not awakened to Him or His commands. After we have saving faith, God puts a new heart in us, and we have His Spirit to guide us. We are made new in the power of the Holy Spirit, and it is in this power that we can become like Christ. We are no longer enslaved to our sin natures. Instead, we are free to live for Christ and to obey God's commands.

**[ THEREFORE ]**

**What commands are still challenging for you to obey since coming to know Christ?**

Ephesians 2:2 reminds us that we all once walked in the darkness but now are in the light. We still fight against our flesh natures, though, and are tempted to sin. Luke 6:46 reminds us that it is easy to say Jesus is Lord, yet not obey Him. We all have to identify the commands that we struggle to obey, yet we must identify them and repent of our disobedience.

**What awe does it bring to your life to know that God makes you new in Him?**

Delighting in the Lord helps us worship Him and devote our lives to Him. He is worthy of our devotion. Psalm 33:8 and Revelation 4:11 help us understand how to delight in God and praise Him for who He is. As we remember that God makes us new through Christ and the work of His Spirit, our hearts should be in awe that He does this work in us when we are not worthy of it.

2. Jeremiah 31:31-34: God's people are made new in Him. He sets them apart for His glory. He cleanses them of their sin.

**BIG IDEA #3: GOD'S PEOPLE ARE SET APART AND SENT WITH THE GOSPEL.<sup>3</sup>****[ THIS ]**

In 1 Peter 2:9-10, Peter writes of the role and position of God's people. God's people are set apart for His glory. They are a chosen race and a royal priesthood. God assigns them this role and position for His glory and to fulfill His purposes. God's people are reconciled to Him to know Him and live in relationship with Him. They are called to be holy as He is holy. He redeems them to be like Jesus, the firstborn Son. This means that God redeems His people that they may be made righteous as Jesus is righteous. He chooses to make them His special people and sets them apart from the world for His purposes. They His people and His sons and daughters and they are set apart to be on mission for Him.

**[ THEREFORE ]**

**What is challenging about being separate from the world as one of God's chosen people?**

1 Peter 1:16 and Galatians 2:10 tell us that we are to be holy and set apart for the Lord because the Lord is holy and set apart. It is challenging because we still live in the world. The world is enticing and draws us to its pleasures. Our flesh nature desires what feels normal and natural to us, but we must resist and follow Jesus.

**[ THIS ]**

God redeems His people for His purposes as seen in Colossians 1:13-20. He transfers them from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of His beloved Son. He does this for His glory and to make His name known in all the world. He has given the ministry of reconciliation to His people and uses them to bring people who are far from Him to Himself as they proclaim His excellent glory to others. Our redemption is not just for our sakes, but for God's purposes. We bring Him glory by living on mission for Him. When we are sent with the gospel, or good news, we are fulfilling His redemption plan. This plan involves redeeming His people to tell others the good news of the gospel.

**[ THEREFORE ]**

**How does knowing God's people are redeemed for His purposes change how you view your daily life?**

Read 1 Peter 2:9-10. God's people are a royal priesthood, which means they are set apart for His works. His works are to declare His excellencies as Peter writes. This means that our daily lives should declare the goodness and excellence of God. Our lives should be lived to bring God glory, and this will show others the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Why is it important and necessary for God's people to live as people who are sent with the gospel?**

In Exodus 19:4-6, we see God's Word given to His people and His promise that if they obey Him, they will be His chosen people. For believers today, God has chosen them to be His people and it is necessary that they live as His people. They will live set apart because He has chosen them and given them His Spirit to guide them. They will tell others of the goodness of God because they have experienced it themselves.

3. 1 Peter 2:9-10: God's people are a chosen race and a royal priesthood. They are given the truth of Christ to share with others.

**BIG IDEA #4: GOD'S PEOPLE LIVE BY FAITH AND RUN WITH ENDURANCE.<sup>4</sup>****[ THIS ]**

Because God's people have faith, first in Jesus as their Savior and second in God's promise of eternal life, they live their lives for Him. Salvation is more than being forgiven for our sin debt. Though it is a freedom from the sin that enslaves us, it is also a renewal and redemption from our flesh that holds us captive. This redemption allows us to live for God and we do this by obeying His commands. His commands are not hard for us because we love Him. Our lives are lived by faith because we trust in what God's Word says. We have not seen God, but we believe in Him. We live by faith that our sin is forgiven, and we faithfully obey God's commands in this life and trust in the eternal life that is to come. We serve Him and build into the life that is to come. God's people hold fast to His promises and the work He has done and is doing through His people and through them.

**[ THEREFORE ]**

**How does our faith depend much more on the work of God than our works?**

Ephesians 2:8-9 tells us that we are saved by grace through faith and that this is not a work that we do, but it is something that God does. Faith is given to us through the Holy Spirit. Our faith rests much more on God's work and His character than it does on anything we could do or have done.

**[ THIS ]**

The faith of believers enables them to live their Christian life with endurance. Endurance is required because life on this earth is full of troubles and trials. We live in a fallen and broken world and the world hates Jesus. Those who follow Jesus and become like Him will be hated by the world, too. Believers can run their race with endurance because of the faith that they have and through the power of the Holy Spirit inside of them. Endurance is possible because the Holy Spirit sustains them and encourages them to continue in their journey to obey God and become like Christ.

**[ THEREFORE ]**

**What are some challenges that you face in running your Christian race with endurance?**

John 16:33 reminds us that believers will face tribulation and opposition in this world. The world hated Jesus during his earthly ministry, and it will hate His followers. Some of the challenges we will face are ridicule, loss of relationships, and even persecution. Believers have faith in Jesus and will continue with endurance.

**What helps you continue to follow Jesus with endurance in the face of troubles?**

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 teaches us that when we run this race together, we can help one another. We can face troubles when we face them with other believers. Facing troubles and the trials that come with being a follower of Christ in this world is easier when we do it in community with other believers.

4. Hebrews 12:1-3: God's chosen people live by the faith He gives, and they live this life with endurance because of His Spirit who enables them.