



Dear Neighborhood Group participants and leaders,

We recognize the current political season that we are in as November approaches. We would like to remind you that Neighborhood Groups are a place where we focus on loving God and loving neighbors (inside the group and outside the group). Please love those inside of your group by keeping conversations revolving around politics outside of the group time. We ask that you please keep the focus of your group on the unity that Jesus brings rather than the division that politics can bring. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to Pastor Jeremy Einem at jeremy@calvarynexus.org.

NG Study Guide: Col. 1:12-14 “Jesus is Your Redeemer” [10.18.20]

Love God + know the Bible better:

1. Read the passage cited above, and try to answer the questions below before your group meets.
2. *Leader note: Please review the brief instructions for leaders at the bottom.*

The Study

Thesis: Your desire to live for Christ flows from an understanding and appreciation of what God has done for you through Christ. Let’s discover what Jesus has done for us; and respond with an attitude of gratitude and live for Christ.

Giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. ¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

In this section, Paul gives thanks to God the Father [12], and mentions three reasons for the attitude of gratitude:

1. Qualified by Christ for an inheritance [12]

Who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

God gives an inheritance to those who receive Christ. The term *qualified* is significant, because the Greek tense relates to a single act at a particular point in time; and thus a reference to the cross and salvation through faith, not a process based on our merit.

God has a special relationship with those who trust Jesus, “As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name” [Jn. 1:12]. “Since we are children of God, then we are heirs of God through Christ” [Gal. 4:7]. Not only are we children and heirs of God, but we are joint heirs with Christ [Rom. 8:17].

God has given us the Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our inheritance [Eph. 1:13-14]. Thus, the work of the Holy Spirit in your life drawing you into deeper relationship with God confirms your heavenly inheritance.

God gives every spiritual blessing in Christ [Eph. 1:3]. Israel’s blessings in the Old Testament focused on a physical place the Promised Land, but the blessings of the New Testament Church are primarily spiritual. The inheritance is presently partly available to Jesus’ followers to enjoy before heaven. For example, God’s forgiveness, love, life, leading, purpose, peace, protection, etc.

Years ago, I gathered our sons, and showed them my small collection of possessions that are particularly precious to me. There are a few things that belonged to my mom and dad, some fountain pens, a few vintage watches, and

some things that have some emotional value to me. I wanted our sons to be able to enjoy them now, and wanted to have the joy of seeing them enjoy them.

We need to learn to appreciate God's inheritance (blessings). Moses was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, and raised amidst all the material blessings of royalty in the height of the Egyptian empire, but he traded the material blessings for the spiritual blessings of God's people [Heb. 11:24-27]. Your appreciation of your inheritance is evidence of maturity. Just as children learn to appreciate the sacrifices their parent(s) made as they mature, God's children likewise reflect maturity as they appreciate their inheritance in Christ.

What spiritual blessings are you grateful for?

2. Delivered into Christ's kingdom [13]

He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.

Delivered from control by the power of darkness. You are no longer dominated by thinking and behavior that is contrary to God. *Darkness* is set in contrast to light. Light is a reference to God's ways [12], and *darkness* refers to rebellion against God. Darkness is reflected by the attitude that humanity, individually or collectively, knows better than God; and is thus a better judge of what is right or wrong. Ultimately, all darkness has its inception from Satan's rebellion against God, and man's response to the devil's temptation. The term *delivered* is the idea of being rescued by a sovereign.

Generally, someone in darkness is unaware of their condition. People tend to become accustomed to the darkness of the culture they inhabit (assimilation). I remember as a teen, prior to coming to faith in Christ, going to a Halloween costume party dressed as the devil, and not having any awareness of the darkness of Halloween, the devil, or what was going on at that party.

For example, in the time of Christ, the Jewish leaders denied their bondage [Jn. 8:32-34]. They not only were seemingly unaware that they were subject to Roman oppressors, but they were slaves to sin, because of their refusal to yield to Jesus. In our culture, many prevailing views regarding what may be framed as reproductive rights, a woman's choice, abortion or sanctity of life may be contrary to God's view. Similarly, issues regarding identity, gender, sexual behavior, and a host of other matters that may be affirmed by the culture may reflect darkness when exposed to the light of Christ. Jesus declared the reason for judgement is because light has come into the world (Christ's revelation), but people love darkness more than light because their deeds were evil [Jn. 3:19].

Transferred into Christ's kingdom. God *conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love.* The Greek term translated *conveyed* or transferred refers to displacement of a surrendered people to another land. For example, following the Assyrian and Babylonian conquests of the Jews, they were removed from the Promised Land and dispersed into their empires. As citizens of Christ's kingdom, we serve a new King. Thus, rather than living for self, and being conformed to the values of the world, we are to live for Christ and the values of His Kingdom. As citizens of Christ's Kingdom, we learn to appreciate the benefits of Christ's kingdom and this should produce gratitude. It is similar to the immigrant experience of moving from a place of hopelessness and despair, and being welcomed to a new country with a loving sovereign, peace, and hope. How grateful should you be, and how long does it take to assimilate? In the case of Christ's kingdom, the values, as revealed by Christ Himself, and the benefits of our new citizenship should motivate gratitude, and a desire to assimilate. Discover your true identity in Christ.

3. Redeemed by Jesus [14]

In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Through Jesus we have redemption. Redemption refers to delivering by payment of a ransom, often at great price. In the ancient world, the term was used in regard to servants or prisoners of war freed from bondage. The term was readily familiar to Paul's original audience, however it is likely helpful for us to consider why we need to be redeemed. If you don't yield to God, you are opposed to God, there is no neutral position [Matt. 12:30]. We all deserve God's judgment [Rom. 3:23, 6:23], whether we realize our condition or not. Our family adopted an Italian Greyhound from a rescue shelter. Presumably, had the dog not been adopted, it would have been "put to sleep." The dog had no awareness of the circumstances, but it did not change its condition.

How you are redeemed: *We have redemption through His blood.* Jesus death on the cross on your behalf paid the price. Jesus came to give His life a ransom for humanity [Mk. 10:45]. You are redeemed through faith in Christ, by

believing in His work and committing to follow Him. It is a gracious gift from God [Eph. 2:8-10]. Apart from Christ, we cannot earn, deserve, purchase, or obtain redemption.

The result of redemption: *the forgiveness of sins*. Our sin against an all holy and perfect God separates us from Him. When you receive Christ, the record of wrongs against God is completely wiped clean, God's righteousness is given to you, and you receive spiritual life through faith in Christ [Rom. 5:1].

How should you respond to what Jesus has done for you?

First, enjoy your inheritance currently, and look forward to fully enjoying it forever. Second, live and learn the values of Christ's Kingdom – discover your identity in Christ. Third, be ever-grateful for His redemption, and choose to live for Him.

Baptism is a public declaration of our identification with Christ in His death and resurrection, and our commitment to follow Him [Rom. 6, Matt. 28:18-20]. Baptism is a ceremony that all of Jesus' followers have been commanded to observe, however the primary reason to be baptized is not obedience as much as gratitude for what Jesus has done for you.

Study Guide Qs

Q1. What spiritual blessings are you grateful for?

Q2. How can Jesus' followers learn and live the values of Christ's kingdom?

Q3. How might the benefits of Christ's Kingdom produce gratitude?

Q4. What advice would you give to help cultivate an attitude of gratitude for what Christ has done.

"Digging Deeper" (optional or alternative study)

1. Here is an interesting article on our inheritance in Christ
<https://www.gotquestions.org/inheritance-in-Christ.html>.

2. What change(s) would you like to make in this season to demonstrate your gratitude to Christ?

Love your neighbor *outside* the group better:

1. Who would like to share how they sought to befriend or build relationship with their neighbors where they live, work, study, or play this past week?
2. Are there some needs that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor outside the group?
3. Here is a neighboring idea(s) for us to consider for the week(s) ahead:

Take a walk in your neighborhood park. Since most people at a local park are neighbors in the sense that they likely live in proximity to that park, try to engage neighbors there and befriend them.

Love your neighbor *inside* the group better:

1. Are there some needs in our group that can provide us an opportunity to love our neighbor within the group?
2. What might we do about that need to help?

Prayer [Loving God and Neighbors better]:

Close the NG meeting with a time of group prayer. Encourage each participant to pray, but don't force anyone to pray. Encourage the group to keep their prayers brief so that each person can pray.

Leader Notes:

- 1. Seek to involve as many group participants as possible.** A good group discussion time allows people to get to know the passage and one another better.
- 2. Feel free to pre-select the discussion questions that you want to focus on** in case there isn't enough time to answer them all.
- 3. The "Digging Deeper" section provides some optional or alternative study and discussion activities.** As a group leader, you can choose to focus on the "Digging Deeper" section, include part of that section in your group meeting, or not use it at all. Try to give the group sufficient notice so they can be prepared for the meeting.
- 4. Every time you meet consider asking:**
 - a. What about this passage is particularly exciting, challenging, or confusing?** If a leader is uncertain about a question of doctrine or theology don't hesitate to follow-up with your coach during the week. Then revisit the issue(s) when the group gathers next time.