

High School Sunday School Lesson

Freedom and Responsibility

Colossians 3:1-17

First Baptist Church Stanleyville

Lesson Objective

Students will discover that following Jesus is about more than being saved—it means living differently every day. Because Christ has given us freedom from sin, we now have the responsibility to reflect Him in our attitudes, choices, relationships, and worship.

Lesson Length: 35–45 Minutes

Main Idea

Freedom in Christ isn't permission to do whatever we want—it is the power to become who God created us to be.

Opening Activity (5 Minutes)

"Who Are You?"

Ask students:

"If someone who didn't know you had to describe you using only three words, what would they say?"

Allow students to answer.

Then ask:

- Would they describe what you do?
- What you're good at?
- What you look like?
- Or who you really are?

Transition:

Many people build their identity around sports, grades, popularity, relationships, social media, or hobbies. Paul reminds us that our greatest identity is found in Jesus Christ.

Scripture Focus (2 Minutes)

Read **Colossians 3:1-17** together.

Encourage different students to read sections aloud.

Teaching & Discussion

Part 1 – Your Identity (8 Minutes)

Read Colossians 3:1-4

Paul says believers should "set your minds on things above."

Teaching

Our culture tells us:

- Your followers define you.
- Your grades define you.
- Your athletic ability defines you.
- Your appearance defines you.
- Your relationships define you.

But God says:

Jesus defines you.

If your identity is built on temporary things, it will constantly change.

If it's built on Christ, it never changes.

Discussion Questions

- What do teenagers most often find their identity in?
- Why is it so easy to compare ourselves to others?

- How does knowing your identity is in Christ change the way you handle failure?
 - What does "setting your mind on things above" actually look like during a normal school week?
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Part 2 – Living Differently (10 Minutes)

Read Colossians 3:5-10

Paul says to "put to death" sinful habits.

Teaching

Following Jesus doesn't mean we'll never struggle.

It means we're no longer controlled by sin.

Think of changing clothes.

When you become a Christian:

Take off:

- lying
- gossip
- anger
- jealousy
- impurity

Put on:

- honesty
- kindness
- patience
- humility
- love

Jesus changes us from the inside out.

Discussion Questions

- Which sins in this passage seem most common among teenagers today?
 - Why do people often excuse sins like gossip or lying?
 - Why is it hard to let go of old habits?
 - How can Christian friends help us become more like Jesus?
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Part 3 – Everyone Matters (6 Minutes)

Read Colossians 3:11

Paul reminds believers that Christ removes barriers.

Teaching

The world divides people by:

- popularity
- race
- money
- sports
- political views
- appearance

Jesus brings people together.

The church should be the place where everyone belongs because everyone needs Jesus.

Discussion Questions

- Why do cliques naturally form in schools?
 - Have you ever felt left out?
 - How can our youth group become more welcoming?
 - What does it look like to love people who are different from you?
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Part 4 – Putting on Christ (8 Minutes)

Read Colossians 3:12-15

Paul gives believers qualities to wear every day.

Read them slowly:

- compassion
- kindness
- humility
- gentleness
- patience
- forgiveness
- love

Teaching

These aren't personality traits.

They're evidence that Jesus is changing us.

The hardest one may be forgiveness.

Forgiveness doesn't mean pretending nothing happened.

It means choosing not to hold someone's sin against them because Christ didn't hold yours against you.

Discussion Questions

- Which character quality comes naturally for you?
 - Which one is the hardest?
 - Why is forgiving someone so difficult?
 - How does remembering God's forgiveness help us forgive others?
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Part 5 – Worship Is More Than Music (6 Minutes)

Read Colossians 3:16-17

Teaching

Many people think worship only happens during singing.

Paul says worship is every part of life.

Real worship means:

- knowing God's Word
- obeying God's Word
- thanking God
- encouraging others
- honoring Jesus in everything

Even school...

Sports...

Homework...

Jobs...

Friendships...

Social media...

Everything can become worship.

Discussion Questions

- When you hear "worship," what's the first thing you think about?
 - What area of your life is hardest to honor Jesus in?
 - How can your social media reflect Christ?
 - What would change this week if you asked, "Does this honor Jesus?" before making decisions?
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Application Challenge (5 Minutes)

Have students silently answer these questions.

Identity Check

What is one thing you've been allowing to define you more than Jesus?

Put Off / Put On

This week I need to stop:

This week I want to replace it with:

Forgiveness

Is there someone I need to forgive?

What is one step I can take this week?

Worship

What is one part of my life that doesn't currently reflect Jesus?

How can I change that this week?

Weekly Challenge

Choose ONE challenge before next Sunday:

- ☒ Read Colossians 3 every day.
- ☒ Memorize Colossians 3:17.
- ☒ Pray each morning:
"Jesus, help me live like You today."
- ☒ Encourage someone who usually gets overlooked.

- ✓ Forgive someone you've been avoiding.
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Memory Verse

Colossians 3:17

"And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

Challenge students to recite it next week.

Closing Prayer (3 Minutes)

Pray together, asking God to:

- Help students find their identity in Christ instead of the opinions of others.
 - Give them strength to put off sinful habits and put on Christlike character.
 - Help them forgive those who have hurt them.
 - Make them people who welcome others.
 - Teach them to worship God through every part of their lives.
 - Help them honor Jesus in everything they say and do.
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Teacher Notes (Optional)

Total Time Guide

- Opening Activity – 5 minutes
- Scripture Reading – 2 minutes
- Identity – 8 minutes
- Living Differently – 10 minutes
- Everyone Matters – 6 minutes
- Putting on Christ – 8 minutes
- Worship – 6 minutes

- Application & Prayer – 5 minutes

Teaching Tip: High school students respond best when discussion outweighs lecture. Aim for about 40% teaching and 60% conversation. Allow students to wrestle with the questions, share personal experiences, and point them back to Scripture rather than simply giving them the "right" answers. This approach typically fills a 35–45 minute class while encouraging meaningful engagement with God's Word.