

Who Am I?

Discussion guide

Based on **Judges 6:1-15 & Col.3:5-10** (Linked to sermon of 12/2/17)
which can be accessed at www.stjamesbythepark.org/current-sermon-series

This series looks at some of life's big questions - questions about meaning, identity, happiness and hope. Everyone asks these questions - and as Christians we have a distinctive approach to them.

Intro: (maybe in 2-3s) Imagine you were at a new church or small group: what three things about you would it be most helpful for others to know?

The context: Judges 6:1-5 is a description of the symptoms, and v.10 the cause, of a failure by God's people to appropriate and enjoy the fruitful land he had provided. Paul's letter to the Colossians suggests they were losing their focus on Jesus. Gideon has to decide who he really is!

Read Judges 6:1-15, and Col.3:5-10.

Up (relationship with God):

The anonymous prophet (Judges 6:8) said their situation was because they 'feared' (or worshipped) 'other Gods'. ['Worship' has been described as giving your life to something in the belief it will give you meaning, happiness and security]

Q. What are the 'symptoms' identified here? (Think about Gideon as well!)

Q. Are we as God's 'chosen people' tempted to worship 'other gods' than Christ? What might they be?

Q. Gideon's 'trump card' would be that God was with him. Any similarities with Paul's instructions to the Colossians? Who would make the difference in their situations?

In (relationship with each other):

To quote Tim Keller, in modern society, it is claimed that we follow our own dreams, desires and ambitions to create our 'selves'. He claims this is impossible: our desires conflict, and we always seek worth from the approval of our familial, ethnic, professional or academic peers, and circumstances affect the outcomes of our lives.

Q. Do you recognise beliefs about 'self-creation' among those you know? Or yourself?

Q. There is one specific command in Colossians 3:5-10, about how we relate to each other (a 'do not'). How well do you, in your group/church, obey that? Why do you think Paul chose to emphasise this? What does it mean for our view of the truth?

Out (relationship with the world):

Q. You probably put on a suit or a uniform to go to work. How consciously do you put on Christ? How could you remind yourself to do this on Monday morning?

Pray

Read aloud in Colossians, where Paul says (v.15ff) 'Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.'

Pray that Christ's peace will 'rule in your heart' in all the busyness of the week.

Pray the Christ's 'message' (the Gospel) will enrich your lives together as a group.

Pray that what you do - especially the difficult things! - you will do for Jesus

Give thanks - in each of these three verses, Paul talks about thanks!