
EQUIP 5.1

End of The Tunnel – Small Group Session One
Week beginning 4th June



And now the end is near...

This is it. The final part of EQUIP. This is where the journey begins to come together.

Let's get back to the heart of EQUIP and it is this - we only have one life to live and we want to make it count for God. All of us want to stand before our Heavenly Master on the Day of Judgment and hear Him say, "Well done good and faithful servant". None of us want to waste our lives. We all want to make the most of the years that are left to us. So EQUIP is about helping us decide what it might look like for each of us if we gave our lives completely to God. Maybe more importantly, EQUIP has also been reminding us of the truths which are powerful enough to make that change.

You might remember that right at the beginning we heard a quote from John Piper - "You just have to know a few basic, simple, glorious, majestic, obvious, unchanging, eternal things and be gripped by them and be willing to lay down your life for them..." So we have tried over the last year to ask some simple questions and let those truths grip our lives.

Part One - What is the Gospel?

Part Two - What is a Christian?

Part Three - What is the Church?

Part Four - What is the Bible?

So now is the time to make some decisions. To reflect, to pray and to make a plan. During the week beginning 9th July you are going to be asked to share your plan with your group. Then at our end of term EQUIP BBQ event (20th July) you are going to be asked to share your plan with other EQUIP groups together - and the rest of us will agree to pray for you and encourage you as you seek to live your life for God!

Of course some might choose not to do this, but we want to encourage everyone to have a go. Some plans might be big changes, some might be small tweaks. Some might involve a change in life's direction, others might be about personal lifestyle changes. There are no right or wrong answers. It is you, before God, sharing your heart's desire - and we want to cheer you on.

The next four sessions are all designed to help you prepare. Each week we will look at different aspects of discipleship in the book of Colossians. So let's get started with our first session today. Why not pray together for next few sessions and then let's dive in.

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 2:10

Gospel Freedom

1 Don't just do what is expected of you

Much of what we do as in the Christian life we can do for bad motives. Maybe we do certain things because we are trying to earn God's favour. Maybe we do certain things because others expect us to do them. When Paul writes to the Christians in Colossi the first two chapters tell us that Jesus has already done everything for us - He is all we need. The centre of the letter (2:6-7) summaries the point!

Now because Jesus has done it all, it gives us remarkable freedom to live lives for Jesus. Read Colossians 2:16-23.

The passage has three 'do not's' (16-17, 18-19, 20-23). Look at each one in turn answering the following three questions for each:

1. What are the Colossians not to do?
2. Why are they not to do it?
3. What would be our modern-day equivalent in the church?

2 Our Freedom

This is radical gospel freedom. There are no rules, regulations or 'compulsory spiritual experiences'. We have everything we need in Christ and we are now called to live lives of freedom in Him. Let's try and work this out in practice. Spend time reflecting on some of these questions:

4. In what ways has your/our discipleship lost sight of this freedom?
5. In what ways have we forgotten that we have everything we need in Christ.
6. What might our lives look like if we started to live 'freely' in response to all that Jesus has done for us?

3 Life Goal

Earlier on in EQUIP we talked about writing a life goal and some of us had a go. (If you have forgotten what you wrote or you never developed or finalised your life goal, now might be a good time to start. It is a simple statement of a couple of lines that summarises what living the whole of your life for Christ would look like for you.)

As we come to the end of EQUIP, start to re-work your life goal. Maybe start to share some of your thoughts with the group. Now ask how might our weeks in EQUIP and this teaching tonight modify your goal.

Now turn to pray for one another given everything we have thought about in this session.

