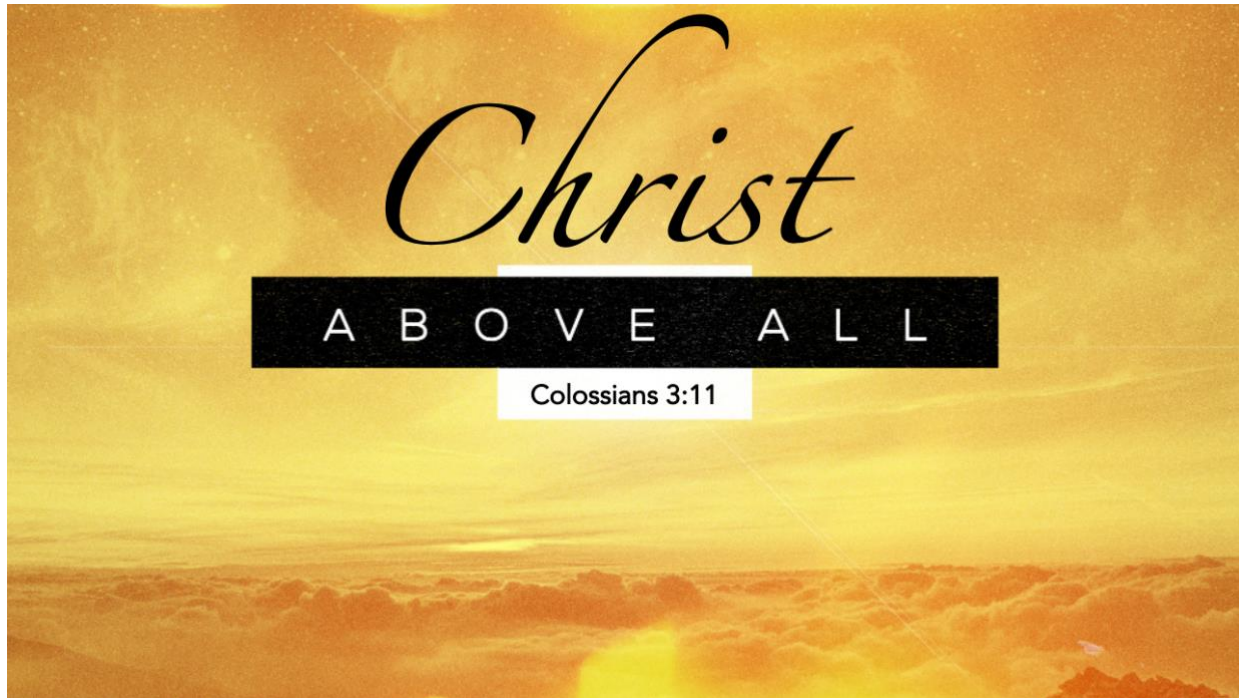




Our motto at West Side is “Christ Is All” (Colossians 3:11). But that means choosing Christ over every other path. There are dangers to the left and dangers to the right. In this class, we will discuss historic dangers of indulging in bad things.

These questions are intended to deepen your experience of the message. Use them for your personal or family study time, or with an open Bible as you share the good news with your neighbor.

Group Ice-Breakers:

(1) Describe a time when you felt trapped between two options, neither of which was a good one.

(2) What is the silliest thing you've ever heard someone call “liberal” or “conservative”? [think of preferences]

NEITHER LEFT NOR RIGHT. Read Num 20:17; Deut 5:32; Josh 23:6 & Isa 30:21. Compare this with the Odyssey’s two choices, or with the hedges around Dooley field, or with the phrase “between a rock and a hard place.” Why is it so common to speak of avoiding the left and the right? Discuss what you think (in general) the Bible means by this.

DON'T START WITH YOURSELF (OR WITH POLITICS). Why is it faulty to think “left” means anything more open than I’m used to, and “right” means anything more restricting than I’m used to? Nathan said “if you start off in a ditch, you might need to move hard right or hard left in order to walk straight.” Discuss the need to have a wide-angled lens and to approach “right” and “left” with humility.

THE GOAL: CHRIST ABOVE ALL. Read Colossians 3:11. Discuss the challenge of the phrase “Christ is all.” Be honest: is Christ more central to us than our politics, traditions, or generations?

THE SEDUCING SPIRIT OF OUR AGE.

Read 1 Timothy 4:1. Nathan suggested “deceiving spirits” means trusting the wrong sources and believing hollow illusions. How can this threaten a church? What happens when we are a mirror of our culture rather than a light? What do we lose when we speak less of sin and repentance and more about self-help?

THE DOCTRINES OF DEMONS. Read 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 John 7-10; Matt 4:1-11; Gen 3:1-5. Nathan suggested “doctrines of demons” means teachings that contradict the central Christian claims about Jesus: such as his sonship, authority, and our need for redemption in him. What happens if a church denies any of the 7 ones of Ephesians 4?

A CAUTERIZED CONSCIENCE. Read 1 Timothy 4:2; Eph 4:17-20. Discuss the idea of being “past feeling.” What does Paul say follows from this? How can a church avoid this?