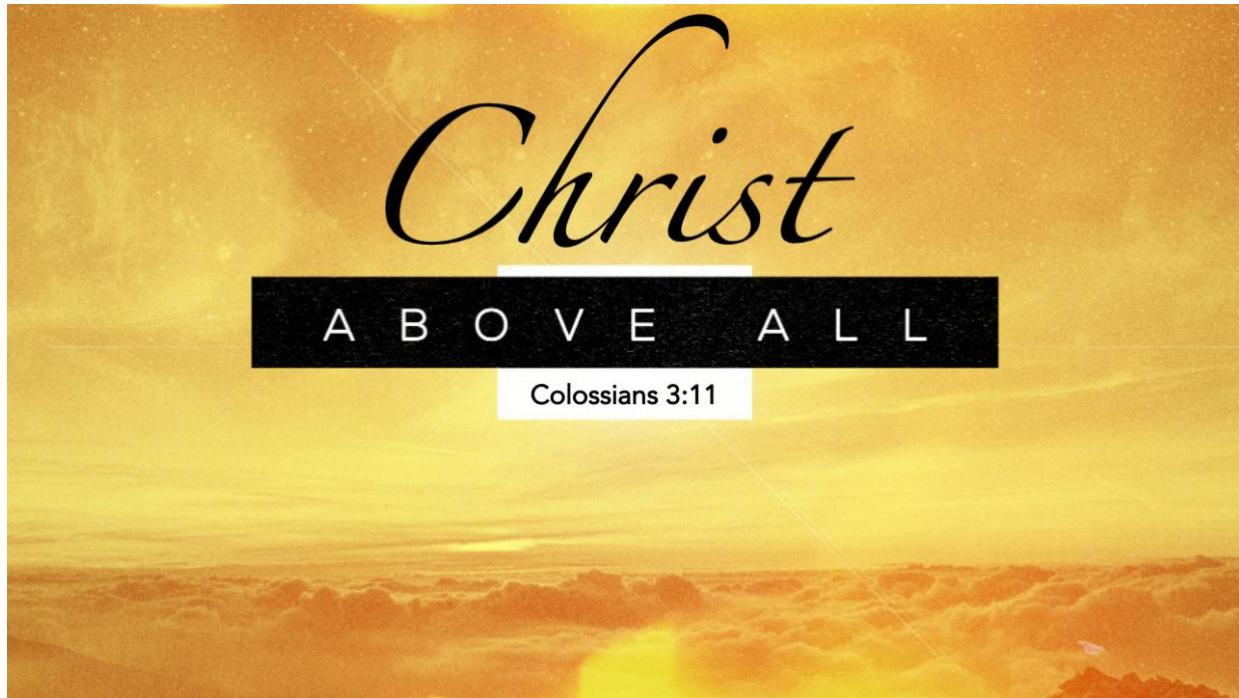




Our motto at West Side is “Christ Is All” (Colossians 3:11). But that means choosing Christ over every other path. There are dangers to the left and dangers to the right. In this class, we will discuss historic dangers of forbidding good things.

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) Share “rules” from your childhood. Which were too loose and which were too strict?

(2) Can you think of a situation in your own life where “knowing the rule” was only half of the story needed to appreciate the whole story?

FORBIDDING & ABSTAINING. Read 1 Timothy 4:3-5. Name some things both Scripture and Christian practice would say we should forbid or abstain from. Since Christians do forbid and abstain, why is Paul so concerned in these cases? Does this passage only address a weird view in Ephesus in the first century, or are there universal principles in these verses? Discuss.

THE PHARISEES. Read Mk 3:1-6 & Matt 23:13-28; Acts 15:4-11. Why are the Pharisees described so badly? Is it their rules, or is it something deeper? Discuss how their conclusions lead to bad consequences for others (Mt 23:4, 13, 15, 23; Acts 15:10). Discuss how their attitudes are bad for their own hearts (Mk 3:5; Mt 23:25-27).

TOUCH, TASTE, HANDLE NOT. Read Col 2:20-23. Why is Paul concerned here with rules that restrict and forbid? How can forbidding lead to a kind of “indulgence”? (Compare Mt 23:25).

REFUSING TO WELCOME THE BROTHERS. Read 3 John (the whole letter). What is Diotrephes’ problem? Since 2 John says to forbid false teachers (who deny central Christian claims about Christ) from entering the church or your house, why is John so concerned with Diotrephes being cautious?

THE PRODIGAL SON(S). Read Luke 15:11-32. One could say the prodigal son veered left by leaving “rules at home” to become a law to himself and gratify his desires. But, if so, how does the older brother veer right? Name the problem.

HISTORICAL AND PERSONAL EXAMPLES. Share your own stories. Nathan said that when you veer right, “fear of disagreement and a spirit of intolerance become requirements in order to feel any sense of safety and assurance.” Do you agree? What does that breed?