**Grace Group Study Guide**

**Greater > Week 5**

**Colossians 1:15-17**

**Christ: Preeminent or Prominent?**

One of my favorite songs is from a Christian rock band called “Disciple.” The particular song is called “After the World,” and is written much like a love song from the Lord to humanity. I love imagery in music, much like I do in written things – it helps me to understand when I can think in pictures. The second verse of this song asks the question (again, from the Lord’s perspective) *“Did I arrange the light of your first day? Did I create the rhythm your heart makes?”* Those questions from this song have been close by me this entire week as I’ve navigated the text and sought the Lord’s direction for our study guide. **Reread Colossians 1:16 and then consider those questions.** Did He arrange the light of your first day? Did He create the rhythm your heart makes? The correct answer is an overwhelming YES! ALL things were created through Him and for Him. What are the implications of that truth in our lives?

But let’s go a step further. Let’s look beyond ourselves at other parts of creation. Let us consider the complexities of those created things that surround us day in and day out. David Guzik makes some interesting observations:

*i. Comets have vapor trails up to 10,000 miles long. If you could capture all that vapor, and put it in a bottle, the amount of vapor actually present in the bottle would take up less than 1 cubic inch of space.*

*ii. Saturn’s rings are 500,000 miles in circumference, but only about a foot thick.*

*iii. The star Antares is 60,000 times larger than our sun. If the sun were the size of a softball, the star Antares would be the size of a house.*

*iv. If the sun were the size of a beach ball, and put on top of the Empire State Building, the nearest group of stars would be as far as way as Australia is to the Empire State Building.*

*v. A star known as LP 327-186 is a so called white dwarf. It is smaller than the state of Texas; yet it is so dense that if a cubic inch of it were brought to earth, it would weigh more than 1.5 million tons.*

*vi. The earth travels around the sun about eight times the speed of a bullet fired from a gun.*

*vii. There are more insects in one square mile of rural land than there are human beings on the entire earth.*

*viii. Bees make their own air conditioning. When the weather gets hot, and threatens to melt the wax in the hive, one group of bees will go to the entrance of the hive, and another will stay inside. They will then flap their wings all together, making a cross draft that pulls the hot air out of the hive, and draws cooler air inside*

*ix. A single human chromosome contains twenty billion bits of information. How much information is that? If written in ordinary books, in ordinary language, it would take about four thousand volumes.*

*x. According to Greek scholar A. T. Robertson, all things were created has the idea of “stand created” or “remain created.” Robertson adds: “The permanence of the universe rests, then, on Christ far more than on gravity. It is a Christ-centric universe.”*

“By Him, ***all things*** were created….” Could Paul have possibly been any more inclusive? I don’t think so. Now consider the implications of that statement because it reaches far beyond creating beautiful mountains and rolling pastures. It also means that Christ was the agent of creating Golgotha. It means that Christ was the agent of creating the thorns that pierced his brow. It means that Christ was the agent of creating the tree that He would be nailed to. He “*arranged the light of their first day and created the rhythm their heart made*,” speaking of the masses who shouted “crucify Him!” How great must be His love for His creation that He would die to redeem it!

Now, we’ve established a couple things. First of all, if we hold to the truth of the scriptures then Christ is the agent of ALL creation; both seen and unseen. Secondly, He loves creation as demonstrated by His willingness to becoming one created and dying a substitutionary death in order to redeem His creation. So what is our proper response to that knowledge? Remember, a right view of the person and nature of Christ affects how we live our lives.

I think the main struggle we have as Christians lies in two different words that sound a lot alike. Those words are *preeminent* and *prominent*. These two words, in my opinion, summarize two different mindsets of the Christian regarding the position of Christ in our lives and in creation. The text that we’ve just read indicates that Christ is **preeminent** – meaning that He is above all. Ken Marino says *“Paul, in writing this letter, is* ***not*** *advocating for Jesus to be prominent—first in the list of many. In American history, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln stand out prominently among the many U.S. Presidents. We have a day dedicated to them in February called President’s Day. The feats accomplished by these premier men at critical junctures at our nation’s history have catapulted them in the national consciousness to a conspicuous place of honor and dignity.*

*Jesus Christ is the King of kings (and presidents). He is preeminent over all the U.S. Presidents, for He that created these great men—Washington and Lincoln—is greater than they, just as the architect excels the house he built (Heb 3:3). The Lord raises up kings and brings them down. The heart of the king is in His hand to turn it whichever which way He desires. The Lord is preeminent amidst the presidents of the United States, for not only is He king over them but over every great world ruler from the ancient times of the Pharaohs and Caesars until the present time. Jesus Christ is not prominent among many like George Washington but preeminent–above all.*

*Here’s another example to aid our thoughts about the weight Scripture gives to preeminence. We might have Jesus first on our list of life priorities along with family, church and work. No, preeminence means that Jesus is* ***above all*** *our lists. This is not just playing with words; it signifies a totally different direction of the heart and life. It is the difference between a life existing, just surviving, and possessing the abundant life of Christ.”*

Christ isn’t something – He is everything. Until the reality of that truth takes root in our lives we will continue to look to things created rather than the Creator for help and provision. We will be content to give Christ a spot on a list that we feel must be checked off every day but neglect to give Him the position He deserves. Look back up 5 lines at the quote from Ken Marino – Prominence vs. preeminence is “*the difference between a life existing, just surviving and possessing the abundant life of Christ.”* The position is His and His alone, the question is this: Will we put Him in His rightful place in our lives?