

## HOW TO BE FAMILY

Scripture used: [Colossians 3:1-2](#) and [Colossians 3:12-17](#) (NIV)

### OVERVIEW

Pastor Frank VanderZwan from Menlo Church was our guest to share the message today. Pastor Frank is on the cusp of retirement, but he shared his feeling that you never truly “retire,” because whatever calling God has put on our hearts, we need to be faithful to carry it to completion as long as He has given us the gift of life. He’s been married 53 years, and his marriage is an allegory for the excellent things that endure. He’s also an aficionado of vintage cars, and owns the quirky Citroen 2CV, which also endures against all odds.

In our Scripture, Paul reminds us that we’ve been forever changed, when God gave us the gift of life - a life that is both here and eternal. Without Christ we are rudderless. With Christ, we stay focused on the things that are truly important. Thus God calls us to forgiveness, compassion, and gentleness, to truly live in a way that reflects our faith. This is how the family of God (all of God’s people, called by His name and brought into His family) are intended to love one another, and to share the love of God with the world.

### KEY POINTS

- 1) **We are holy and dearly loved.** We are chosen and set apart for a special purpose. God has a plan for our lives. It’s exciting and a gift to be alive, even during the anxiety and uncertainty of the COVID pandemic. We must remember that God is in charge, and will lead us to the right place. Just like a spouse in a long marriage, we are able to deepen our appreciation of God and His love for us as we journey with Him, and we can be assured that He looks at our annoying idiosyncrasies and areas of weakness with patience and kindness.
- 2) **He helps us clothe ourselves spiritually every day.** He is not focused on what we say, but on what we do. He recommends that we forgive grievances, and bear with each other. We should not give up after fissures, cracks, speedbumps. We ought to slow down and talk about it, with God and with others. Even if we don’t resolve it, we have started to communicate and we are then ready for the next speedbump. God is approachable, has open arms, and is longing to have the conversation. God loves us like a covering, always going to where we go to shield us from being destroyed by the hardships and traumas of life. He shelters us with His love day after day. Because of His love, we are exhorted to stop our self-centeredness and narcissism, and to make positive changes.
- 3) **Worship during COVID has been disconnected and hard. It’s a reminder that we need one another.** We are challenged to stop whining or complaining about relatively trivial matters, and instead to choose to be thankful for the remarkable provision and grace in our lives. We must allow the Holy Spirit to work in us, to allow us to experience forgiveness, growth in the word of God, and a daily spirit of worship. As we allow God’s goodness to orient our perspective on life, there will be an excitement in our daily walk matching our talk. There is purpose and joy in living life for God, and as we give glory to God, we will draw other people into this abundant life.
- 4) **When we’re able to be thankful for Christ,** we allow Him to sit on the throne of our hearts, and we will be able to have a strong foundation to not be shaken or destroyed by the things of this world.

### DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - What are the things that take up the most bandwidth of your thoughts? Are they concerns about work, money, or other people, or perhaps leisure, entertainment, sports, games, or something else? Consider Colossians 3:1, and reflect on what it would mean to “set our hearts” on things above. What would that personally look like for you?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Consider [Colossians 3:12-17](#). What is the difference between simply “trying harder” to be good or virtuous, and being clothed in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience BECAUSE we are God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved? Have you experienced in your life feeling transformed into greater goodness or wholeness because of love and grace, and not just out of trying harder or because we “have to” or because of “what other people think”?
- 3) **DO** - This week, we are challenged to put into practice the following commitment: I will dwell in God’s word and seek to have dialogue with Him daily. Let’s allow God’s love to cover us each day! Join us next Sunday in Redwood City, San Jose, or online!