

# Growing in Christ

## Colossians 3:1-17

August 13, 2017

### DAY 1: Things above: perspective

1. Colossians 1 and 2 describe Christ as the Object of our faith. Colossians 3 and 4 describes Christ as the Source of our Christian life.

*Colossians 3:1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.*

2. “Seek,” here implies a persevering effort. It is not just an effort to “discover” something but to “own” something.

3. “*The things that are above*” are spiritual treasures, which we’ll see later this week.

*Colossians 3:2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.*

4. “*Set your minds*” means to ponder and yearn for. This is a gigantic shift of perspective and values!

5. Paul introduces a vital truth here. The way to overcome the old life is more than “just say ‘no.’”. We also need to replace the old life with something from the new life! (More on that later this week!)

*Colossians 3:3 For you have died, and your life is hid with Christ in God.*

6. We will only seek the new spiritual treasures to the extent we put to death our old way of life.

*Colossians 3:4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

7. In some ways, the “completeness” of the Christian life won’t occur until Jesus returns at His second coming. When that day comes, our lives will take a definitive leap into the life of glory! Paul is once again teaching that the Christian life involves our present tense and our future tense.

8. The new life we live as Christians is centered in Christ.

9. Which of the principles above resonates most with you? Why?

## DAY 2: Putting off sins ...

*Colossians 3:5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*

<sup>6</sup> *On account of these the wrath of God is coming.*

<sup>7</sup> *In these you once walked, when you lived in them.*

<sup>8</sup> *But now put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk from your mouth.*

<sup>9</sup> *Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old nature with its practices*

<sup>10</sup> *and have put on the new nature, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. <sup>11</sup> Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scyth'ian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all.*

1. Paul told us in Col. 3:3 that we “have died.” Here, Paul tells us to “put to death ... what is earthly in you.”

2. When he said “we died” to the old way of life he is talking about our “**state/or standing**” in the sight of God. We are forgiven, we have been cleansed, our future in heaven is certain, our “record” has been expunged in the sight of God.

3. When Paul says “put to death ... what is ...in you” he is talking about our **current condition**.

4. There are five personal sins Paul mentions (v. 5). Later, there are six relational sins. (vv. 8-9)

a. “Fornication” – the Greek word is an “umbrella” term, meaning any kind of sex outside of marriage.

b. “Impurity” – Means both actions and thoughts.

c. “passion” – There are good passions and bad passions. One of the characteristics of bad passions is that they are also “deceitful passions,” “promising” some type of fulfillment that will eventually bite you in the you-know-where!

d. “Evil desire” - Evil deeds spring from evil thoughts which spring from evil desires.

e. “Coveting” – An intense desire to want something that is not mine to have.

5. The seriousness of this is highlighted in v. 6! These sins are serious, partly because in the long run they are destructive of people and relationships.

6. V. 8 highlights six relational sins:

a. “Anger” – Indignation, when the heart is hot as a forest fire.

b. “Wrath” – Human wrath, different than God’s wrath, is meant to make someone pay!

c. “Malice” – The desire to make someone pay or to encounter harm

d. “Slander” –Intentionally sully someone’s character and/or reputation.

e. “Foul talk” – Shameful language, or abuse.

f. “Lying” - Deliberately leaving a false impression about something or someone.

7. What struck you most from today’s verses?

### **DAY 3: Putting on virtues**

*Colossians 3:12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience,*

*<sup>13</sup> forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

1. When Paul talked about stopping sins, he used the image of “putting off,” like taking off dirty, oily clothes. Here, he uses the image of “putting on” as in putting on new clothes. It is not enough just to stop sinning. What’s needed is to be doing something different!

2. Before we look at the virtues Paul points to, notice three items that are important to our new **identity** as Christians!

- a. “Chosen ones” – When parents adopt a child they often say to the child, “We wanted you. We chose you!” God does the same thing with us. Our identity is rooted in what He thinks about us!
- b. “Holy” – Holy means (1) to be set apart for God’s purposes, and (2) to strive for purity.
- c. “Beloved” – In spite of still being sinners in practice, we are still His “beloved!”

3. Let’s look at seven Christian virtues:

- a. “Compassion” - A personal yearning for someone’s comfort when they are hurting, or “understanding” (instead of criticizing) someone’s difficulties.
- b. “Kindness” - Goodness of heart expressed through one’s attitude, whether in words or deeds. It is the opposite of malice.
- c. “Lowliness” – It is a modest self-appraisal, especially in comparison with others. It is not clamoring for attention.
- d. “Meekness” – Not “weakness.” It is the power to take on suffering without having to blame someone else, or the willingness to take on suffering rather than inflict it.
- e. “Patience” – Long-suffering. The virtue of persevering in a situation that is likely not to change.
- f. “Forbearing” – Enduring. It is the quality that understands that we all have weaknesses, and that some weaknesses may never change or change ever so slowly. This person hopes others will afford them the same virtue!
- g. “Forgiving” – Removing the “right” to make someone pay, again, for what they’ve done.

4. What strikes you most from today’s verses?

## **DAY 4: Putting on virtues, continued**

1. Paul finishes his list of virtues with three BIG ones.

*Colossians 3:14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

2. Paul tells us this is the highest virtue! (“Above all these...”)

3. Love is something we “put on” like the other Christian virtues. In other words, love is not just a feeling. It is a decision, an attitude, a commitment, a determination, and finds expression in words and actions.

4. Notice what Paul says about love at the end of v. 14. What do you think he means by love “which binds everything together in perfect harmony?”

5. What would the other virtues in vv. 12-13 look or feel like without love?

*Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful.*

6. Human beings “naturally” assume personal peace is a feeling. That’s not Christian peace! Paul is issuing a command! “LET” meaning “DO THIS!” In other words, peace doesn’t “just happen.”

7. “Rule” means to let peace be your “umpire.” You are not at the mercy of circumstances. When difficulties come, they need not rob you of peace! You dictate to circumstances how you’ll respond, not allowing circumstances to rob you of peace.

8. Personal peace is the well-spring out of which relational peace is made possible. Paul is saying that peace should affect the quality of relationships you have in the church (“in the one body”).

9. The third virtue is gratitude. “Be thankful.” Paul attaches it to the two “biggies” of love and peace. What does this say about the importance of this virtue?

10. What strikes you from today’s verses?

## **DAY 5: Deepening virtue through God's word**

*Colossians 3:16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

1. The “word of Christ” is the bible. What does Paul mean by letting the bible “dwell in you richly?”

2. Beneath each of the following verse, jot down what strikes you about God's word:

*Matthew 4:4 Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*

*2 Timothy 3:16-17 All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training for righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

*Psalms 119:9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.*

*Psalms 119:11 I have laid up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

3. Paul finishes this list of virtues by helping us think about our very approach to life!

*Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

4. Re-write this verse in your own words, especially personalizing the principles in this verse to your life.

5. What strikes you most from today's verses?