



eLesson 008

Text: Colossians 3:1 - 3:17
Subject: Attitudes and Actions

Colossians - Part 6

A change. The book of Colossians changes at the beginning of chapter 3. The emphasis moves from doctrine to commandment ... from truth taught to truth to be lived ... from explanation to application. For us, that means that after learning the facts of chapters 1 and 2, it is time to obey the commandments of chapters 3 and 4. Read Colossians 3:1-17 before going on in this lesson. Make two lists. Make one list of the facts (there are some in those verses) ... and make another list of the commandments. Can you find 16 facts and 28 commandments in these verses?

Packed verses. Paul and Timothy sure wrote a lot in those few verses. There are two facts and one commandment in just the first verse. Fact #1 ... we have been raised up with Christ. Commandment #1 ... we are to keep on looking up to where Christ is seated. Fact #2 ... He is seated at the right hand of God. We see here that we must mentally strive for the things of heaven. We must aim at, or crave for, the things above. That is restated in verse 2 ... "*set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.*" Your mind is powerful ... it could be said that it leads your life. Your life follows your mental focus. Set your mind on the things of heaven and you live a holy life. Set your mind on the things of earth and you live a sinful life. How are you directing your mind? What is your focus? What monopolizes your thinking? Are you a good steward of your mind?

Why set our minds on things above? We should do that because we have died with Christ and because our lives are hidden with Him in God, 3:3. When you were born again "*you died to sin*" Romans 6:2 ... you were "*crucified with Christ*" Galatians 2:20. Now your life is hidden in God. That is very comforting. We are safely hidden or sheltered in Him. He is our hiding place, Psalm 31:19-20, 32:7, 119:114. However, there is more to our lives being hidden with Christ in God. There is also concealment. Today we are not seen as whom we really are as Christians. The world does not see us as we are ... as children of the King. However, a day will come when we will be brought out into the open. When Jesus is revealed, He will be glorified in us, 2 Thessalonians 1:10. When He appears, we will receive our unfading crowns of glory, 1 Peter 5:4. When He appears, we shall be like Him, 1 John 3:2. Today we are concealed ... but one day we will be revealed with Him in glory, Colossians 3:4. His day is coming ... our day is coming.

Make the decision now! That is the grammatical force of verse 5 ... *do it now!* Make the decision that your earthly body is dead to sin. Do it now. Do it decisively. What is the *therefore* there for in verse 5? You have died (past) ... your life is hidden (present) ... you will be revealed (future) ... therefore, conclusively make the decision that you are dead to sin now. As a Christian you can be dead to sexual sin ... dead to all uncleanness ... dead to

depraved passions that include homosexuality, Romans 1:26-27 ... dead to evil cravings that can choke a believer, Mark 4:19 ... and dead to greed which is a form of idolatry. However, if we are dead to these sins, then why are so many Christians still entangled in them? The answer is that they have not made this decision. They have not conclusively considered their earthly bodies as dead to sin. They are undecided. Their minds are torn between an earthly and a heavenly focus. Without consistently looking up ... without continually setting their minds on the things above ... without conclusively deciding that they are dead to sin ... they continue sinning. Undirected minds produce undirected lives. Undecided Christians live undedicated lives. The wrath of God is coming because of these sins, 3:6. Once we walked and lived in them. However, now we can be dead to these sins. We no longer have to walk and live in them. The choice is ours. The choice is yours.

Is such a life possible? God would not command us to do what we cannot do. In verse 8, He commands us to put aside five things. It is like taking off dirty clothes. Take off, or put aside, anger ... that chronic attitude of displeasure and disapproval. Put aside wrath ... the sudden emotional outbursts that punish or take revenge. Put aside malice ... the inward evil desire to hurt others. Put aside slander ... the outward, verbal expression of malice. The word translated as *slander* could be translated literally as *blasphemy*. Therefore, slander can be thought of as blaspheming another person. In addition, we are to put aside all filthy, vile, shameful speech. All five of these sins are to be set aside. All five of these sins *can* be set aside. We are to strip them away like dirty clothes. It is within our power to do it. God would not command us to do what cannot be done.

Do not lie to one another. Verses 9-11 are about this one commandment ... do not lie to one another. Is lying to each other that big of a problem? Yes! Is being honest that important? Yes! We should not lie to one another because each of us has laid aside the old self with its sinful deeds. We should not lie to one another because each of us has put on the new self, which is being renewed to a true knowledge into the image of Christ, our Creator. We should not lie to one another because in that new image there are no human distinctions or divisions. We, as believers, are all being renewed into the image of the One who is the truth, John 14:6. To be Christ-like is to be truthful. Therefore, following Jesus and lying is a contradiction. Many Christians are very honest. However, do we still lie to one another? Have you ever said, "I will pray for you" ... and then did not? Have you ever made a commitment to support a ministry and then did not? Moreover, singing is dangerous. We can be swept into all sorts of lies when put to music. Think about the words when you sing that hymn or chorus. In addition, there certainly is no place for bigotry and prejudice in the life of a believer. A bigoted and prejudiced Christian is a liar. Hating a fellow Christian for any reason makes you a liar. You may think that I am exaggerating in this last statement. However, do not blame me for this harsh statement ... it is Biblical. *"If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen."* 1 John 4:20. This is very important ... we must not lie to one another!

Take off the dirty and put on the clean. Verses 8-9 tell us what to take off. Verses 10-14 tell us what to put on. Uniforms are required for different lives and occupations such as the police, soldiers, nurses, waiters, or chefs. There is also a uniform for us as Christians ... as those who are elected by God, holy and loved, 3:12. We must put on the uniform that matches our calling and position. We should clothe ourselves with compassion ... mercy toward those who are suffering. We are to put on kindness ... goodness and graciousness toward all. We are to clothe ourselves with humility ... the true humbleness of mind and spirit that is so different from the false humility of 2:23. We are to put on gentleness ... meekness. Biblical meekness is not weakness. It is a gentleness that comes from strength. We are to clothe ourselves in patience ... the long-suffering attitude that produces self-restraint in the face of provocation. These new clothes require new behavior. Having put on these five things, we are to be forbearing and forgiving, 3:13. *Forbearing one another* means putting up

with one another. Sometimes another Christian may hurt you. When that happens, you are to exercise self-control. Consciously hold back from retaliating even if striking out seems justified. We are to forgive one another as the Lord has forgiven us. That can be very difficult ... but we must do it. I have some tough questions for you. Would you want God to forgive you in just the same way that you forgive other Christians? Would you be satisfied if God's forgiveness mirrored your own? Do you really mean the words of the Lord's Prayer ... especially the words in Matthew 6:12? Forgiveness is not simply overlooking sin. For more teaching about forgiveness, see pages 9-6 and 10-5 in *Disciplemaking 1* (found in *Level 2* training on www.MyDisciplmaker.org).

"Beyond all these things put on love" Colossians 3:14. Love binds us together in the Body. Love, like ligaments, holds the Body together in perfection, harmony, and unity. Remember that the Body is an organism ... not an organization. We are to be melted together in love ... not frozen together in programs. In addition, we are to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts, 3:15. His peace can umpire, preside over, and direct our personal lives as well as our corporate lives in the Body. In the midst of conflict, an honest answer to a simple question can bring peace to a fellowship of believers. That simple question is ... *What would our Lord do in this situation?* Let His peace rule in your heart ... because we have been called to peace in one Body. We must have peace in our fellowship. We are one Body ... not two bodies... not three ... not many. There is only one Body. We are part of the larger, universal Body of Christ. My particular group or church is not the first, best, or only example of a true first century church ... nor is yours. Love should bind us together as one in peace, unity, and thankfulness.

Thankfulness. *"Be thankful ... singing with thankfulness ... giving thanks"* 3:15-17. Be thankful when you are alone and when you are together in your fellowship. It is a command to be obeyed in attitude and in action. Thank Him for the big things, and thank Him for the little things. Thank Him for the eternal things, and thank Him for the temporal things. In all things, be thankful. Remember that one of the major themes of the book of Colossians ... to grow more, you must know more. You must *"let the word of Christ richly dwell within you"* 3:16. Abide in ... be rooted in ... dwell in His Word. That distinguishes disciples from plain believers ... and it will set you free, John 8:31-32. Dwell in His Word and let His Word dwell in you. If you do not know the Word, you cannot live the Word. We can help each other in this. We should teach one another with all wisdom. We should admonish, warn, and exhort one another. We can do part of this with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Christian songs have two purposes ... to teach each other ... or to praise God. Our songs should be based on those two elements and not on entertainment value. Verse 16 literally states that we should, with grace, sing in our hearts to God. We should have thankfulness in our hearts. This verse states that it is the singing that should be in our hearts. Our singing should come from our innermost being. Singing should be in and from the heart.

"Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Colossians 3:17. Whatever you say ... say it in the name of Jesus. Whatever you do ... do it in the name of Jesus. Give thanks through Him to the Father. This verse applies to all the commandments in 3:1-17. In addition, it applies to the commandments covering the interpersonal relationships of 3:18 - 4:6. Read ahead ... those verses will be the taught in the next lesson.



Study Questions Answers at end of lesson.

1. How does Colossians change at the beginning of chapter 3?
2. What are the first two commandments in chapter 3?
3. According to 3:5, what decisive act should every believer make?
4. According to 3:8-11, what should you put aside or take off?
5. According to 3:12-14, what things should you put on?
6. According to 3:15, what should umpire in your heart?
7. According to 3:16, what should dwell in you?
8. Jesus spoke the words of John 8:31-32 to believers rather than to non-believers. Therefore, what is one difference between a believer and a disciple?



Personal Reflection

No answers provided for these questions.

1. We are to set our minds on things above. What are the main three or four things on your mind each day? Are they things above?

2. If we can be dead to sin, why are so many believers still entangled in sin? Are you?

3. How have you seen Christians lying to one another? Do you really pray for those you have said you would pray for? Have you ever lied while singing a hymn or chorus?

4. What type of Christian or church irritates you the most? Is that right?

5. Are you prejudiced or bigoted? Are your closest Christian friends your same age, race, color, or denomination? What does that say about you? Are you still friends with those who switch to another local church or ministry? Why?

6. What question should be asked, and answered, when there is a decision to be made in, or a controversy in, the Body?

7. According to John 8:31-32, are you a believer or a disciple?

8. Look at the article, *Believer or Disciple?*, from the left side of the homepage of www.MyDisciplemaker.org. Do you need to do something to become a disciple?

9. What adjustments do you need to make to *do all in the name of Jesus*?

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Answers to Study Questions

1. How does Colossians change at the beginning of chapter 3? **Paul and Timothy's letter changes from explanation to application.**
2. What are the first two commandments in chapter 3? **Keep seeking the things above ... and set your minds on the things above.**
3. According to 3:5, what decisive act should every believer make? **To consider as dead, or put to death, the sinful propensities of our bodies.**
4. According to 3:8-11, what should you put aside or take off? **Anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive speech, and lying.**
5. According to 3:12-14, what things should you put on? **Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forbearance, forgiveness, and love.**
6. According to 3:15, what should umpire in your heart? **The peace of Christ.**
7. According to 3:16, what should dwell in you? **The word of Christ.**
8. Jesus spoke the words of John 8:31-32 to believers rather than to non-believers. Therefore, what is one difference between a believer and a disciple? **Disciples abide in the Word.**

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