



Colossians 3:5-17

Put on the New Self

Our daily practice as believers must conform to our new position in Christ Jesus.

The apostle Paul makes an uncompromising and clear statement of the ethical demands of Christianity. What does Christ demand of us? How then shall we live since we have been raised up with Christ and are seated with Him in the heavenlies?

"Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1). This is the basis upon which Paul calls for a different ethical standard of living for the Christian.

Therefore consider, or remember that you are a dead man. Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry (v. 5). Paul takes a hard look at the "wants" in life.

The believer is to put into daily practice the principles of the Word of God by the power of the Holy Spirit.

A NEW PRINCIPLE TO LIVE BY

What is it that we are to consider dead? The idea is to reckon as dead. It reminds us of Paul's summary statement on the first ten verses of Romans chapter six. He says, "Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus" (Romans 6:11). It is an imperative statement. Be constantly counting upon the fact or reckon yourself to be dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Put to death or treat as dead that which is dead. This ideal status or position stated in the first four verses is to be put into daily practice. Put into practice today what is an accomplished fact in eternity. You died to sin, now bury the beast.

The believer who died with Christ has been raised with Christ. "

Therefore consider the member of your earthly body as dead to . . . Literally, put to death the members which are upon the earth. What is it in your life that raises its head up against Christ? What thoughts, attitudes, behaviors, values keep you from doing the will of God? Is there some self-centeredness that needs to be removed from your life?

The apostle Paul calls for a radical transformation of the will. He calls for a change at the center of your life.

So put to death whatever in your nature belongs to the earth (NET).
Something has to die.

What are the members of your earthly body that is used to carry out the desires that oppose the will of God? Everything that is against God has to go. Treat it as dead. Everything that will keep you from fully surrendering yourself to Christ must be removed.

PUT TO DEATH THE OLD SELF

The word translated "mortify" or "put to death," tells us there are some things that must take place in the Christian's life. They must go; they must be cut out like a cancer; they must be removed. It is a command that requires a decisive action on the part of the believer.

God has done His part; now we must act on it. We are to count upon this fact and make personal application to our lives.

Let's take the knife and remove it because it is dead. "Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry" (Colossians 3:5).

Immorality (*porneia*) refers to any kind of illicit sexual behavior outside of marriage relationship. It is all sexual immorality including adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals, close relatives, etc.

Impurity (*akatharsia*) means uncleanness, filthiness in a moral sense. It is a perverted immoral life-style.

Passion (*pathos*) means inordinate affection, a strong drive that does not cease until it is satisfied. This strong desire can be either good or bad, but in this context indicates depraved passion. This person is a slave to his evil desires. He is a driven person who obsessed by his evil passions.

Evil desire (*epithumia*) means, desire, longing for something that is forbidden. It is a list for all evil in a broad sense for anything evil. Paul probably includes the word here to cover every conceivable evil thing that is against holiness of God.

Greed (*pleonexia*) is covetousness, insatiableness with the idea to desire more and more. It is a selfish greed that cannot be satisfied. Here is the person who wants that which is forbidden to him. It is beyond his means so he takes it anyhow. It leads to rape, murder, robbery, wars, etc. If I cannot have what you possess by legal means, I will take it by any means.

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Greed amounts to idolatry, says the apostle Paul. Material possessions and passions take the place of God. Jesus made it very clear in Matthew 6:24 when He said, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

What are you worshipping today? Jesus said you must make a choice. "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33). That does not mean we are to use God as a means to get material riches.

Paul reminds his readers once again this is the way you used to live but not any more. For an account of these things the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience (Col. 3:6).

The wrath of God is a deep-seated anger of God against these sins. It displays itself in a future judgment resulting in eternal punishment. The wrath is the result of God's holiness and righteousness against sin.

No amount of modern day wishing away the wrath of God will get rid of it. God will not tolerate sin, and He will not go away. The Day of Judgment will arrive and God will deal with our sins either by the atoning sacrifice of Christ Jesus or the unrepentant sinner will pay (Rom. 6:23; Ezek. 18:4; Rev. 20:11-15).

"Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:6).

Those who oppose God Paul calls children of disobedience. Disobedience is their life-style.

BUT YOU ARE DIFFERENT

If they also once walked, when you were living in them (Col. 3:7). Your life style before coming to Christ was characterized by these sins. The idea is you as well as those who are still living this way even now.

Walked and living indicates their attitudes and behaviors. It characterizes the kind of life they have chosen to follow. They walk about or conduct life in this manner. The believers used to partake of this life-style, but it no longer characterizes them. You used to live this way, but thank God you don't anymore. "You also lived your lives in this way at one time, when you used to live among them" (Colossians 3:7, The NET Bible).

Not only has there been a change in your life-style, but verses eight and nine says your defensive reactions to life have also changed.

Now that you have been raised with Christ go ahead and take some old behaviors off.

"But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices" (Colossians 3:8-9).

Here are some other things that must go in the Christian's life. Paul says, But now you also, put them all aside . . . (v. 8).

Put off is figurative of getting rid of some behaviors. Lay aside these sinful behaviors just like you would take off some old dirty clothes. The idea is to rid yourself completely of these old sinful attitudes, passions

take off some old dirty clothes. The idea is to rid yourself completely of these old sinful attitudes, passions and resulting behaviors.

Anger (*orgē*) is the long-lasting, slow burning anger. It tends to stay around a long time.

Wrath (*thumos*) refers to a burning anger that flares up quickly and burns with the intensity of a fire. It just as quickly dies out. It is like burning dry pine straw that blazes up quickly and burns itself out.

Paul tells us in verse eight that whether our reactions to life are long lasting or sudden outbursts, both are wrong and need to be dealt with properly.

Malice (*kakia*) is an all-pervading evil mind-set that conceives of evil things to do. It is a vicious nature that is predetermined to do evil to others. This person is just plain bad, evil, wicked. He has a deliberate intention to do evil.

Slander (*blasphemia*) is the word from which we get blaspheme in English. This person will use abusive speech to belittle other people and cause them to lose their good reputation. They insult people with their speech.

Abusive speech from the mouth is obscene, foul-mouthed, filthy talk.

Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices (v. 9). Paul states imperatively to forbid completely these behaviors. Stop lying. Don't do it anymore.

Every one of these behaviors in verses eight and nine are used to defend wounded egos and our reactions to blocked goals.

PUT OFF THE OLD SELF

You laid aside the old self with its evil practices (v. 9). Put off, 'lay aside (*apekduomai*) is to take off completely, strip off of oneself clothes. It is used figuratively here of the old nature.

Keeping in mind the context Paul is saying if the old sinful human nature really has been put off, don't be tempted at a critical moment to behave the way you did before you believed on Christ. You are to consistently behave differently.

"Put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth" (Ephesians 4:24).

Put off the old man or old self refers to the old nature, now as he is in old Adam and dominated by the sinful nature.

In Romans 6:6 the apostle Paul wrote, "Knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin."

Not only are we to take off the old man but we are also to put on the new one who lives in a new sphere of existence in Christ.

You have taken off the old self that you used to be with its sinful attitudes, thoughts, feelings, volitions,

You have taken off the old self that you used to be with its sinful attitudes, thoughts, feelings, volitions, behaviors, etc.

PUT ON THE NEW SELF

In verses 10-17 Paul tells us to put on the new person in Christ. Put on the new self or new man. The metaphor is the same in verse nine. Put on some fresh, new clothes. The present tense refers to the continual action which is ever being renewed in the believer. Put on the new spiritual man who is Christ.

This new self is our new spiritual nature because of our vital union with Christ. It is the regenerate self that is united with Christ.

"Put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him" (Colossians 3:10). This renewal is true of all born again believers because Christ is all, and in all (v. 11).

This new person in Christ is continually being renewed in true knowledge of the image of God. The image of God in us that was marred by the fall and depravity has been passed along to each of us has been renewed by the new birth. Because we have been regenerated or born again spiritually, we are being constantly renewed by the Holy Spirit with the goal that we are being conformed to the image of His Son (Rom. 8:29). The Holy Spirit reproduces more and more of Christ likeness in the believer (Phil. 3:32; Col. 3:10; 1 John 3:2). The Holy Spirit does this sanctifying work by the renewing of the spirit of the mind (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 4:16; Eph. 4:23). It is something that is going on all the time as the believer cooperates with the Holy Spirit. Even in our subconscious mind the Holy Spirit is at work applying His Word to our inner self. His goal is to conform us to the character and likeness of Christ. This sanctifying work of the Spirit is going on in the inner life of every true believer.

A radical change has taken place in the believer's life, but there is also a continual renewal and spiritual growth in grace and knowledge of Christ until he reaches a level of maturity that is manhood in the image of God.

What is it that we are to put on? "So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity" (Colossians 3:12-14).

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and dearly beloved, cloth yourself with . . . (NET). Who is to put on these new clothes? The Christian is to act on what he knows to be the truth. You have been chosen of God, holy and beloved (v. 12). You belong to Him because He chose you. You are the elect of God, picked out by God Himself for His glory (Eph. 1:4). You are the object of His love that He has set apart for Himself; therefore live in such a manner to be pleasing to Him.

Put on a heart of compassion (v. 12). Clothe yourself with a heart of compassion (*splagchnon*) meaning the seat of emotions. In English we usually think of the heart metaphorically as the seat of the emotions and have a tendency to place our hands to our bosom when referring to our emotions. The ancients thought of the inward parts including heart, liver, and lungs, but with the same basic idea of the seat of emotions. Put on a heart full of compassion (*oiktirmos*). In a world full of hurt the people of God are equipped to touch lives with compassion and mercy. We are called upon to empathize with the hurts of humanity.

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It can clearly be demonstrated from history that over the centuries it is Christianity that has responded to the needs of humanity the world over. Hospitals, clinics, welfare organizations, emergency relief agencies, homes for the elderly, were created by Christian organizations to meet the critical health and social needs.

Kindness (*chrestotes*) means goodness, kindness, generosity and is always seeking the highest good in others. Kindness is an attitude that always demonstrates itself in action. It reaches out and touches people.

Humility (*tapeinophrosune*) is an attitude of self-evaluation that recognizes one's own weakness and failures, but also the power of God working through the person. This is the kind of person God can use in His kingdom. It is a wholesome esteem, lacking any taint of arrogance. There is a false humility that is deceitful.

Gentleness (*prautes*) is often translated meekness but is really power under control. It is the gentleness that is strong, but humble and courteous, considerate. This gentleness does not imply weakness and is a better word than meekness. It is an obedient submission to the will of God and gives strength to put on the other characteristics in this list. It is a fruit of the Spirit and a beatitude of Jesus. Here is the power of our personalities brought into submission to God by the Holy Spirit.

Patience (*makrothumia*) is longsuffering when someone provokes us. It patiently endures when under pressure of life and refuses to retaliate. It is that quality that takes time before action is taken.

Bearing with one another (v. 13) (*anecho*) has the idea of putting up with another person. It is to endure, bear with, put up with people and situations. The present tense emphasizes the continual action on the part of the believer.

"Bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you." Have you been around any complainers lately? The only solution is to forgive just as Christ set the example for us.

The most important moral quality to put on is love (v. 14). "Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity." On top of all the others put on love. This is what holds all the other characteristics together. Love is the outer garment or belt binding it all together. Love is the bond that keeps everything in perfect harmony.

The goal is the perfect bond of unity. In Ephesians 4:3 Paul admonished believers to be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. "

Jesus said, "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44). He also prayed for us in His high priestly prayer. "The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me" (John 17:22-23).

We are to pursue this goal of complete maturity in our relationships with one another. Put on the perfect bond of unity. "When the love binds all Christians together, the ideal of Christian perfection is attained, " says A. S. Peake.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts (v. 15). The peace of Christ is the umpire that regulates the unity in the relationships in the Body of Christ. "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful" (v. 15). The healthy body preserves the unity in the bond of love. Every believer has a responsibility to maintain this oneness.

Our hearts should be filled with thankfulness and gratitude for all God has done through Christ Jesus. He is our peace and we have this peace through our vital union with Him. That peace should rule our hearts in whatever circumstances we face.

HOW DO YOU DO IT?

I can hear someone asking how in the world do you put on all these characteristics in the new life? You may be amazed that we cannot do it by ourselves. Yes, we need help, and God provides it.

The apostle Paul tells us how to do it. "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father" (vv. 16-17). These words remind us of Colossians 1:27b-28. "Christ in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ."

The Word filled life accomplishes God's will. The Word of God has a sanctifying effect upon the life of the believer. It cleanses and empowers us to live the Christian life. How rich and powerful are the words of Christ when we allow them to settle down into our hearts and abide permanently.

"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you . . . The idea is to let the word of Christ make itself at home, settle down and be at home within the believer. It becomes a daily habit. The presence of Christ in the believer should govern every attitude, thought, word, and behavior. We are to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5).

The word teaches us with infinite wisdom, admonishes us and encourages us, puts a song in our hearts and causes us to sing with a thankful heart to God.

The motive of service is well stated in verse seventeen. "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

Paul could not have chosen more fitting words to conclude his admonition to change our wardrobe. In everything we do, let the name of Jesus be exalted. To God be the glory.

We need to daily remind ourselves to whom we belong. We are members of the Body of Christ. We belong to His family. When we keep that in mind, we will correct a lot of our thoughts and behaviors.

If you need help in becoming a Christian here is [A Free Gift for You](#).

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