

COLOSSIANS: THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST

Colossians 3:1-11 Live Like You Have Been Made Alive!

The immediate context for this section of Colossians actually starts in 2:20. Follow Paul's argument below:

2:8	Jesus Christ, not worldly philosophy, is the core of Christianity.
2:9-10	He is central to your faith because He is the God who became a man. Because of His identity, your salvation is complete.
2:11-12	You were united with Him in his death, burial, and resurrection.
2:13-15	Because of this union with Christ, you have been made alive and have been completely forgiven your sins. The Law's claims against you have been nailed to the cross and even the demonic realm no longer has power over you.
2:16-19	Now, due to all this, stop allowing legalistic people with their legalistic rules and rituals control your life. All those things are the shadow for which Christ is the reality.

With this context on your mind, now think about Paul's two questions:

2:20 ***If you have died with Christ*** to the elementary principles of the world, why do still submit to the world's legalistic rules?

3:1 ***If you have been raised with Christ***, keep seeking things above.

Our union with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection is core to all of Paul's theology. Romans 6 goes into great depth regarding this topic. Ephesians uses the phrase "in Christ" or "in Him" a dozen times to describe our new life that comes from this union. In some mystical way, when Jesus died on the cross, you died. When Jesus was buried in the tomb, you were buried. When Jesus was raised from the dead, you were raised from the dead. ***You now have a new life***, so you can live differently than you used to. The old is gone, behold all things are new, you are a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) we could go on for hours referring to Scripture that alludes to this union. But let's return to Colossians 3.

Read 3:1-4

1. The phrase, "if you have been raised with Christ" is supposed to be understood as the NIV translates it, "*since you have been raised with Christ, now live in light of this.*" Paul follows this truth with the admonition to seek things above not things that are on earth. What exactly are these things "above" that we are to seek? How do they differ from earthly things?

2. Think for a moment on the truth that ***Christ is seated at the right hand of God***. What is the significance of the words ***seated*** and ***right hand*** of God?

Verses 3-4 further develop the idea of being united with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. These verses teach us that we also in some mystical way ascended with Christ and are seated with him in heaven (see Ephesians 2:6). This is the reason that we are to seek things above where He is. This truth takes us to the next set of verses.

Read Colossians 3:5-11

Paul, in many of his letters, likes to use a contrast of words to describe what we are to stop doing (sometimes he says “put off” as though they were clothes), then he follows these sections with start doing (“put on”). In 3:5-11 we have the “put off” section, then next week we will look at the “put on” commands which start in verse 12.

3. Look at the list of things that we are to stop doing (*put off*) in verses 5 and 8-9. What is it about these sins that is so offensive to God that He will bring His wrath on those who practice them? Take a few moments and think through this question.
4. Our conduct is supposed to match our identity. Reread 3:9-10. The *old me* lived a certain way, the *new me* is suppose to live differently. Also read Ephesians 4:17-24, paying special attention to verses 22-24. Who exactly is the old self and the new self? Why is it so important to know who I am in Christ?

