

COLOSSIANS: THE SUPREMACY OF CHRIST

Colossians 3:12-17

Live Like You Have Been Made Alive (Part 2)

Last week we learned that we have been made alive with Christ. In light of this fact, Paul instructs us to put off worldly things and seek the things above where Christ (our life) is seated at the right hand of God. This week he continues in this train of thought, taking the second step by telling us what to put on. It is important to understand that when we put off false thinking and sinful behaviors we must replace them with truth and godly choices. We can't simply spend our time and efforts focusing on what we need to put off; rather, our energy must be transferred to what we need to put on. There is truth to the aphorism that says you become what you spend most of your time thinking about. These character qualities we are told to put on are, in fact, a description of Christ Himself, the one whose image is being restored in us (3:10).

Read Colossians 3:12-14

1. In verse 12, Paul opens up by reminding us who we are, ("*God's chosen ones, holy and beloved*" in the RSV, read other versions also). He doesn't say we are sinners. He doesn't call us miserable worms whom God has simply forgiven. He calls *chosen, holy, and beloved*. Discuss each of these and evaluate whether you actually believe that you are these things.

To the right of each word, write what its opposite would be.

Chosen ones –

Holy –

Beloved –

What difference does it make in the way you live your daily life if you believe the list on the right instead of the list on the left?

So, would you agree that it isn't simply pop psychology or positive thinking to say that how you see yourself determines how you live your life?

2. Read verses 12-14 below and circle each of the virtues we are to **put on**.

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Now discuss each one individually—talk about the definition of each one, which ones you have difficulty with, and why the opposites of these are so destructive to the Great Commandment. If you can think of some examples, tell how Christ's life exhibited these virtues.

Read 3:15-17

3. In verses 15 & 16 there are three imperatives (i.e., commands): **Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts; be thankful;** and **let the word of Christ dwell in you richly**. Let's discuss each of these.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.

What type of peace is Paul referring to? Is He referring to a subjective peace that we have in our hearts that is the opposite of anxiety (e.g., *I feel at peace today*)? Or is he referring to the more objective peace that I have with God—I once was His enemy and now there is peace between us? Or is he referring to the fact that Christ brought peace to mankind by making us all part of one body (see Ephesians 2:15)?

And be thankful.

Being grateful is not always easy! Quickly go around the room and each person tell the group one thing you are thankful for.

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.

What is the "word of Christ"? How do we have it dwell in us richly? According to the rest of this verse, then, what is the result?

Reread verse 17 below.

(Colossians 3:17) And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

What is your understanding of what it means to do something in Jesus' name?

I have a theory. Read 1 Corinthians 10:31. There it says "*whatever I do, I should do all things for the glory of God.*" I want to equate the phrase ***do all things for the glory of God*** with the phrase ***do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus***. What do you think of this interpretation of mine?

If this is a reasonable interpretation, how would this change the content of our prayer when we pray in Jesus' name (pray for what glorifies Him)?