

## Colossian 3 Series #7

*“Shedding Old Habits”*

### Review

Since the first of the year we have been dissecting the third chapter of Colossians. It serves as a great personal and challenge to refocus or sharpen our focus this coming year. I challenge you to memorize it and then seek to implement it.

Here is the flow of the passage so far!

Paul affirmed that God brings all those who embrace Jesus as Savior into new life.

*When you were dead in your transgressions, He made you alive together with Him... Colossians 2:13*

*having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. Colossians 2:12*

*For in Jesus all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form, and you are in Him having been made full, Colossians 2:9-10*

Salvation goes beyond a religious system of rules and believes. Salvation goes beyond information. Salvation is all about transformation.

*Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, he has become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17*

Having established the reality of new birth and the establishment of a new core, Paul laid out the next logical step.

*Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ (and you have), keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.*

As a newly created, born, converted, transformed adopted child of God complete with His divine nature and wonderfully connected to Him and His realm, continually pursue and ponder the things associated with your NEW life. Continually live as a citizen of God's kingdom and not of this earthly realm or system. Allow your newly granted elevated status to dictate your life standards.

Paul reviewed the reason “things above” should be our life-long pursuit and focus.

*For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.*

There is a new connection. There is a new reality available to us; proximity to the right hand of God along with Christ. Not only that, but our new status guarantees a phenomenal future.

*When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory. Colossians 3:1-4*

We have been glorified; renewed, reborn by the power of God. The part of us that God made alive at conversion radiates the glory of God's own nature.

*He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. 2 Peter 1:4*

That sharing of God's nature radiates a glory that dramatically grabs attention, attracts. Just as Jesus took on flesh to radiate the Father's glory, so God established a new core in our spirit in order to radiate His glory in a dark world.

Last message we discussed the fact that even though we have been glorified (at salvation) at the core of our being, we are also still being glorified in other aspects of our being. These experiences continually bring transformation as we continually focus on the glory of God in the face of Jesus.

*But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed** into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18*

Israel abandoned their focus on the glory of God and took more interest in earthly things.

*Go all around the world and observe closely and see if there has been such a thing as this! Has a nation changed gods even though they are really not gods? But My people have changed their glory For that which does not profit. Be appalled, O heavens, at this, and shudder, be very desolate," declares the LORD. "For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water. Jeremiah 2:10-13*

Unfortunately is also true for some Christians today. We have abandoned the glory granted through relationship with Christ for things that have no eternal value. We fail to fix our eyes on Jesus the source of ongoing transformation from glory to glory. And we look to other things to quench the thirst due to ignoring the true source of water.

*"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.'" John 7:38*

We spent considerable time on these ideas. I urge you to go back and review notes available on the internet from the past several weeks. Jesus didn't tell His followers to become light.

*"You **are** the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5:14-16*

The most glorious (attention grabbing) aspect of the follower of Jesus is their "good works", their nature, their lifestyle, their reflection of God's nature. God created us to operate within the sphere of these "good works" which reflect God's nature.

*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them. Ephesians 2:10*

Paul further explained how our new life as a new creation pursuing and pondering our new status was to be different from the old life of pursuing and ponder "earthly things."

Since we are alive in Christ we are to pursue and ponder things above.

Since we are alive in Christ we are not to pursue, ponder or practice earthly things.

*Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. Colossians 3:5-7*

"Therefore" ties the next lifestyle command to the previous argument. Since we died and were raised up with Christ Jesus... Since our life is NOW hidden with Christ at God's right hand... Since we will be revealed in glory with Christ at His return...deadens the members of your earthly body (different than your spirit) to sin, the old ways.

Perhaps this is the earthly things Paul had in mind earlier. Rather than pursue and ponder (stir up) the earthly passions still embedded in our physical members, deaden you members to carry out those passions. These things used to be the focus of your life outside of Christ.

*and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. (Lifestyle, way of life)*

These were what used to characterize the way you lived. These are the things that make God mad.

*For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, Col 3:6*

Paul addressed the same issue with the Ephesians.

*And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. Ephesians 2:1-3*

We need to clarify the use of the term “world” or “earthly”. We all know from John’s gospel that “God so loved the world.” (John 3:16) Yet, John wrote in his letter not to “love the world or the things in the world.” (1 John 2:15-17) One has to do with people made in God’s image; who God loves. There is the actual physical world which God loves and cultivates. There is system of operation and focus designed and driven by the devil which God hates. This world system includes a way of thinking, a focus of attention, a way of behavior that ignores God, excludes God and even denies God. The devil set out to persuade Adam and Eve to live their life and seek satisfaction apart from obedience to and intimate connection with God.

John instructed his readers...

*Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever. 1 John 2:15-17*

John provided insight into the basic foundational elements of the world system.

The world focuses on what appeals to our fleshly appetites. (Pleasure)

The world focuses on what appeals to our desire for stuff. (Possessions)

The world focuses on what appeals to our desire for significance. (Power and prestige)

Whatever makes me feel good

Whatever allows me to live good

Whatever makes me look good

These are the driving passions of a world system seeking meaning without God. The interesting thing about these things is that in themselves they are not evil. They are only become evil when they become the end of our pursuit.

Look at these sample verses.

*You will make known to me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; In Your right hand there are pleasures forever. Psalm 16:11*

Paul condemned those who were lovers of pleasure rather than God. Moses followed Christ rather than the “passing pleasures of sin.”

*Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. 1 Timothy 6:17*

God establishes worth and significance by connection with Him. These are longings imbedded in every image bearer. God experiences pleasure. God enjoys things. God IS significant. It is when these things are pursued apart from God or instead of God. True life can only be experienced in connection with God. These passions came imbedded in the member of every person since Adam and Eve.

Now the members of our body are different than the newly resurrected core. They include our physical aspects.

There are passions and addictions imbedded in our thinking and physical makeup.

There are mental and emotional patterns developed in our past life.

There are behaviors developed in our past life.

Conversion does not instantaneously transform all of these things. Conversion provides the core from which these issues can be trained to pursue and ponder “above things.” Our members need to be retrained to think, feel and live differently according to our newly imbedded passions to please God. Here, Paul instructs us to deaden our members to the imbedded passions of the old life.

There are numerous translations of this verse. Consider the members of your body as dead. Mortify (kill) your members. The term can mean to deaden yourself to something, deny stimulation. Illustration: You are dead to me and me to you. Meaning: I will not associate or allow you to interact with me or I with you. Rather than allowing these passions to affect me by exposure and contemplation or expression, we are to ignore them, refrain from allowing them to find expressing and fill our mind with godly things.

*“Your word have I hidden in my heart that I may not sin against You.” Psalm 119:11*

Paul expresses a bit differently in his letter to the Romans.

*Consider(continually think) yourselves (your core) to be dead to sin (the old ways), but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but (continually) present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead (that’s who we are), and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.*

*Romans 6:11-14*

Paul also told the Romans to make no provision for the flesh. (old passions)

*But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts. Romans 13:14*

Paul provided a sample of the clothes associated with the old life. These clothes were like a uniform that identified you with people of like nature. Paul instructed them to putt of the old clothes and put on the new uniform that identifies you as a follower of Jesus Christ.

*Deaden the members of your earthly body to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.*

Why? This behavior makes God mad and His wrath will descent on the sons of disobedience.

So don't associate with them by your behavior. You are **not** a son of disobedience, so don't act like one. Act like the beloved son that you are!

Paul compiles two lists. One list contains out of control personal passions. The other contains out of control personal relationships triggered by out of control passions.

### **Immorality (pornos)**

The word used by God here was a word for prostitution, homosexuality, sex outside of marriage. It is where we get our word pornography. I think that this includes visual or verbal images that stir sexual passions outside of the Biblical boundaries established by God that guard the God-established marriage relationship.

We live in a society that has no clue as to the true design for sex. Sex is viewed as a tool to get something not express oneness. Sex for money. Sex to sell something else for money. Sex for power. Sex to fill emotional voids. Sex for soothing pain. Sex to feel alive. All motivated out of selfishness and seeking life apart from God and His design.

Sex is used for everything but to communicate and celebrate oneness of spirit and soul within the safe marriage boundaries established by God.

### **Impurity (Uncleanness)**

This is the word for clean or pure in both the physical and spiritual sense with a negative put in front of it. Unclean spirit, unclean food, sexual perversion, sin in general, impure thoughts. I feel that the core idea of "impurity" is a desire to operate independently of God's will. This is the bent of the rebel. A stiff-neck attitude to the will of God.

### **Passion & Evil desire**

These words indicate on driven by unbridled passion rather than the will of God. They show up frequently in lists of destructive issues to addresses. Lust of the eye, lust of the flesh, lust of pride. It describes living life from one passion to another. Usually it is a desire to satisfy some self-serving passion. It is evil because it general pursues this passion apart from or instead of God.

### **Idolatrous Greed**

The word translated "greed" is the marriage of two words. "to have or possess" and "much". Here, Paul equates this desire lurking within our members with idolatry. Greed, or desire to possess much gets in the way of the desire to know God.

We are to seek first the kingdom of God.

We are to love the Lord with all our being.

We are to have no other object of devotion before us.

He adds more to his list.

*But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another Colossians 3:5-9*

These are things that destroy relationships. Interestingly the inability to control our actions and attitudes toward people has direct relationship to our refusal to deal with our passions.

*For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there will be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances; I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced. 2 Corinthians 12:20-21*

These like the ones found in numerous lists of unaddressed issues all deal with relationships. When our bent is self-satisfaction and self-focus we will continually struggle with broken relationships caused by:

Anger (angry outbursts)

Wrath (simmering anger)

Malice (inner desire to hurt)

Slander, Abusive speech (external expression of hurtful words)

Lies (hurt by telling lies)

As was typical of Paul, he returns to the reason why we should shed the old way of life.

That is not who you are!!! That is not your true nature.

*since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him— a renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all. Colossians 3:9-11*

Deadened your members to and put off the old ways...

Having discarded the old self (core) along with its way of operation.

Having put on the new self (core) which God is continually renewing according to the nature of Christ.

It is Christ who is all and in all that is in you, that generates a hope of renewal; glory. The old self-centered passions are still imbedded in our members. The devil-directed world system continually appeals to those unbridled passions. On the basis of our new core nature we are to restrain our members from expressing the old passions and restrict our members from stimulation by the world system. Shed the old passion to find comfort in certain foods. Restrict access to the comfort foods. Deny the flesh. Request denied! Deny exposure or expression of our members and flesh in regard to the old ways.

Consider ourselves (our core) dead to sin and continually present our members to God as those who are alive from the dead. Offer all your physical capacities to serve God and HIS purposes.

Shed the old habits and establish some new ones. Change out your wardrobe. Wear the clothes that identify you with the Kingdom of Christ.