

A Study of Colossians 3

I. Outlines.

Taken from G.G. Findlay in *Pulpit Commentary*, p. 147 and Coffman.

1. The Colossians are urged to maintain a lofty spiritual life (Col 3:1-4).
2. They were to put off old vices (3:5-8).
3. They were to put on new Christian virtues (3:9-14).
4. The sovereignty of Christ was to rule them (3:15-17).
5. Instructions given regarding reciprocal relationships (3:18—4:1).
 - 1) As wives and husbands (3:18-20).
 - 2) As parents and children (3:21).
 - 3) As servants and masters (3:22—4:1).

Taken from H.L. Wilmington, *The Outline Bible*.

I. HOLY LIVING: THE PRINCIPLES (3:1–17)

A. In regard to the believer's affection (3:1–4)

1. *The place of our affection* (3:1–3): We must transfer our affection from earth to heaven.
2. *The person of our affection* (3:4): We must direct our affection toward Jesus.

B. In regard to the believer's spiritual apparel (3:5–17)

1. *What to put off* (3:5–9): God's anger comes on those who practice:
 - a. Immorality and idolatry (3:5)
 - b. Anger, malice, slander, and filthy language (3:8)
 - c. Lying (3:9)
2. *What to put on* (3:10–17)
 - a. A new nature (3:10–11)
 - b. Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience (3:12)
 - c. Forgiveness and love (3:13–14)
 - d. God's peace and thankfulness (3:15)
 - e. The words of Christ (3:16–17)

II. HOLY LIVING: THE PEOPLE (3:18–25; 4:1): Paul addresses six types of individuals.

- A. **Wives** (3:18): Submit to your husbands.
- B. **Husbands** (3:19): Love your wives, and never treat them harshly.
- C. **Children** (3:20): Obey your parents.
- D. **Fathers** (3:21): Don't aggravate your children.
- E. **Servants** (3:22–25): Serve your master as you would serve the Lord.
- F. **Masters** (4:1): Treat your servants as you would have your heavenly Master treat you.

II. Summary.

Warren Wiersbe is correct in the observation: “**It is not enough for Christ to be preeminent in the Gospel, the cross, creation, and the church; He must also be preeminent in our lives. Paul states very specifically how we should ‘practice the preeminence of Christ’**” [*Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament*]. When Paul begins the third chapter with--If ye then be risen with Christ--he is not casting any doubt about whether or not that was the case; rather, this is, in Greek grammar, a first class conditional statement, which means the same as saying SINCE you have been risen with Christ. He goes on to give in this chapter some very serious, important, and practical instruction

about what that person who has been risen with Christ is to do in day-to-day living of the Christian life. This is a section of Scripture which ought to be studied frequently and carefully by every Christian. We must not ignore the instructions Paul gives to us here. He gives instruction regarding the kind of music that is to be used in worship to God (3:16). Also, there is a most vital statement about authority (3:17).

III. Chronology.

BIBLE PERIOD: The Period of the Church.

If you are not familiar with the 15 Bible Periods, please click here:

<https://maplehillchurchofchrist.files.wordpress.com/2018/05/15bibleperiods.pdf>

IV. Words/Phrases to Study

Colossians 3:1... IF YE THEN BE RISEN WITH CHRIST—“The argument is, that there was such an union between Christ and his people, that in virtue of his death they become dead to sin; that in virtue of his resurrection they rise to spiritual life, and that, therefore, as Christ now lives in heaven, they should live for heaven, and fix their affections there” [*Barnes’ Notes*]. ||||| “Christians have died with Christ in baptism and been risen with Him to walk in a new life (Col 2:12; Col 2:20; Rom 6:3-4). Because the Christian has risen with Christ, he should seek spiritual things instead of sensual (1 Cor 3:1-3). Christ rules in a spiritual realm, rather than a physical, and expects His followers to concentrate on spiritual living (John 18:36)” [Gary C. Hampton, *The Sufficiency of Christ*, an e-Sword Module].

Colossians 3:3... FOR YE ARE DEAD...--“He is certainly not pleading for an other-worldliness in which the Christian withdraws himself from all the work and activities of this world and does nothing but contemplate eternity. Immediately after this Paul goes on to lay down a series of ethical principles which make it quite clear that he expects the Christian to go on with the work of this world and to maintain all its normal relationships. But there will be this difference--from now on the Christian will view everything against the background of eternity and no longer live as if this world was all that mattered” [William Barclay, *Daily Study Bible*, an e-Sword Module]. ||||| “The word HID is an interesting term in this verse: (a) Clearly, the people in Colossae would see that these Christians had changed. In addition, Jesus calls upon Christians to demonstrate to others their new life (Matthew 5:14-16). So, Paul isn’t saying that they are HIDE this new life. And neither is he saying that nobody ever knows who is a Christian and who isn’t. (b) To me Paul is saying that when you became a Christian, you completely handed over your whole life to God, self was completely given up (Matthew 16:24; Gal 5:24). In that sense your life was HID, Christ and His will is now the predominant consideration in your life (2 Cor 5:9). Paul’s statement in Gal 2:20, ‘it is no longer I who live’, seems equivalent to the statement ‘your life is hidden with Christ.’” [Mark Dunagan, *Mark Dunagan Commentaries*, an e-Sword Module].

Colossians 3:5... MORTIFY—“The word mortify means to put to death (Rom 8:13, note; Gal 5:24, note), and the meaning here is that they were entirely to subdue their evil propensities, so that they would have no remains of life; that is, they were not at all to indulge them” [*Barnes’ Notes*]. ||||| “These members are those which seek only fleshly and sensual gratification, and pertain only to the flesh. They are those of the fleshly body in contrast with the faculties and desires of the spiritual body. The exhortation is to put them to death. Hold them in

restraint, check them. Unrestrained they lead to the sins enumerated” [David Lipscomb Commentaries, e-Sword Module].

Colossians 3.6-7... THE WRATH OF GOD ... WHEN YE LIVED IN THEM—“Here Paul tells us that Jehovah’s aroused and justified wrath falls upon sons of Satan and daughters of the devil. Such are ‘**the children of disobedience.**’ They are labeled such, for they take on the character and conduct of said vice just as the children of obedience take on the character and conduct of this valiant virtue. The Colossians walked and lived in such sinful practices. This description of them is accurate. The Colossians actually took part in everything listed among these sensual and selfish sins. They had lived in fornication, which is inclusive of adultery. Fornication is the broader term of the two. Therefore, people can live in fornication, adultery, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness. Persistent practitioners of such can die in these sinful escapades. To deny that people can live in these sensual sins, as some among us arrogantly do, is folly gone to seed and then some!” [Robert R. Taylor, Jr., “The Object Worthy of Our Ambition,” in *Studies in Philipians and Colossians*, 2000, Editor: Dub McClish, p. 159].

Colossians 3.10-11... WHICH IS RENEWED IN KNOWLEDGE AFTER THE IMAGE OF HIM THAT CREATED HIM ... NEITHER GREEK NOR JEW, CIRCUMCISION NOR UNCIRCUMCISION, BARBARIAN, SCYTHIAN, BOND NOR FREE—“In place of the old clothing of sin, Christ’s followers put on the new man in baptism. Their renewing is an ongoing process through growth in knowledge of Christ. The goal is to grow more and more like the Lord and the Father (1 Pet 2:21; John 14:9). The new creature is in Christ where there is no distinction between people. The Jews divided the world into Jew and Gentile, or circumcision and uncircumcision. The Greeks divided it into Greeks and Barbarians, who Weed says, were despised by Jew and Greek. Of course, there was also a social distinction between slaves and free men. All of these distinctions are meaningless in Christ, where the redeemed are many members but one body. Christ loves all categories of people and is in all those people who come to Him for salvation (Col 3:7-11)” [Gary C. Hampton].

Colossians 3.14... PUT ON CHARITY, WHICH IS THE BOND OF PERFECTNESS--“ We so trust and confide in God that we take his direction as our guide in all good, and do all that he directs, that we may do the greatest possible good. It, then, accepts God as the standard and inspiration of right and the source of all good; and so in discharging the obligations of love we do all that his law directs—what God would have us do to them. So love is the one thing that includes, binds in one, all that goes to make up perfection” [David Lipscomb].

Colossians 3:16... SINGING WITH GRACE IN YOUR HEARTS TO THE LORD—“What is the bearing of this passage on the use of instrumental music in Christian worship? The answer is this: By the apostolic injunction ‘to sing,’ thus commanding a special kind of music, all other kinds are eliminated. It is contrary to the injunction here for congregations to ‘whistle’ or to play mechanical instruments, the latter having been associated throughout history with pagan worship (Dan. 3:4-7). Historically, no mechanical instruments of music were used in Christian worship until the seventh century, despite the fact of such instruments having been known and used throughout the whole world at the time of the beginning of Christianity and for centuries prior to that time. There is no refutation of the fact that the founder of Christianity, namely, the Christ and the blessed apostles simply left them out” [Coffman]. ||||| “There is little reason to expect that God should have specified that He did not desire the use of instruments of music. The truth is, He has already excluded these instruments. He has done so by specifying what He does desire, which is singing—automatically excluding anything else. We apply the

principle all of the time. Suppose a parent sends a child on an errand to the store. The child goes to the store, plays in the park, visits at the home of a friend, and finally arrives home. The child’s explanation usually is that he was not told he could not go to the other places. The parent’s response is that the child knew where he was to go, and there was no need to try to list all of the places he could not go. We apply the same principle throughout life. God said what He wants, and there is no need to list those things that He does not want or to say that anything otherwise is forbidden. In addition, the Scriptures contain abundant examples and instructions that tell us we are not to deviate from God’s commands” [Kenneth E. Ratcliff, “Do All in the Name of the Lord Jesus,” in *Studies in Philipians and Colossians*, 2000, Editor: Dub McClish, p. 168].

Colossians 3:17... DO ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS—“This means to respect the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ in everything. The sectors in which this applies are: (1) that of personal morality and conduct; (2) the province of things done in public assemblies of Christians; (3) in the whole area of thought and action (word or deed); and (4) even in the secret purposes of the soul. In short, ‘do all’ in the name of the Lord” [Coffman].

Colossians 3:21... FATHERS PROVOKE NOT YOUR CHILDREN TO ANGER—“One cannot accept the role of being a father without taking the responsibility that goes with it. Fortunate indeed are children born to parents who know God’s Word and do their best to live by it. After all, though the parents had a part in bringing the child into the world, it is from God (Eccl 12.7). Each child is placed in the hands of its parents with the God-given responsibility of rearing the child so that it knows, loves, reveres, and obeys the Lord. Just as children are fed, clothed, and cared for physically, so also are they to be nurtured and trained spiritually. Their training is not the responsibility of government, schools, or the local congregation. Hopefully, these work in harmony with the efforts of parents, but the responsibility belongs first to the fathers” [Kenneth E. Ratcliff, p.]. ||||| “Men are urged to restrain their anger and any other attitudes that can embitter their children (cf., Eph 6.4), lest they despair of pleasing their parents” [*ESV Study Bible*, p. 2299].

Colossians 3:23... DO IT HEARTILY—“God has his own way of rewarding honorable and faithful work, regardless of the failure of human authorities to do so; and the difference is brought out in the very next verse” [Coffman].

V. Lessons & Applications.

01. Jesus NOW Reigns (Col 3:1; cf., Mk 9:1 + Acts 1:8 + Acts 2:1-4).
02. Misplaced Affections (Col 3:2).
03. Security of the Christian (Col 3:3-14).
It is CONDITIONAL...'
 - 1) Seek things above.
 - 2) Set your affections on things above.
04. MORTIFY THEREFORE YOUR MEMBERS WHICH ARE UPON THE EARTH; FORNICATION, ... 3:7 IN THE WHICH YE ALSO WALKED SOME TIME, WHEN YE LIVED IN THEM. *It is possible to LIVE IN Adultery* (Col 3:5-7). Adultery is a branch or subsumed under the term FORNICATION, thus if it is possible to LIVE IN fornication, as this verse clearly teaches, it is likewise possible to LIVE IN adultery, by continuing to commit fornication with a companion not scripturally your own!

05. The Christian's Apparel (3:8ff & 10ff).
 - 1) PUT OFF's (3:8).
 - 2) PUT ON'S (3:10-14).
06. ONE ANOTHER Responsibilities (Col 3:13).
 - 1) Forbearing one another (*putting up with things we dislike in others*).
 - 2) Forgiving one another.
07. The PEACE OF GOD and the INDWELLING OF THE WORD are inseparable (Col 3:15-16).
08. The church is SINGULAR (Col 3:15).
09. THE PRAISE REQUIRED (Col 3:16).
Mt 26:30; Acts 16:25; 1 Cor 14:15; Col 3:16; Heb 13:15; Mk 14:26; Rom 15:9; Eph 5:19; Heb 2:12; Js 5:13.
10. Bible Authority (Col 3:17).
 1. Whatsoever—COMPREHENSIVE.
 2. Word—DOCTRINE.
 3. Deed—PRACTICE.
 4. Lord Jesus—AS HE AUTHORIZES.
11. Husband/Wife Relations (Col 3:18-19).
12. Parent/Child Relationships (Col 3:20-21).
13. Employee/Employer Relationships (Col 3:22—4:1).
14. God is NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS (Col 3:25).
15. Whatever you do, do it HEARTILY (Col 3:23).
16. WHO are we? (Col 3:12).
 - 1) Elect of God—POSITION.
 - 2) Holy—CHARACTER.
 - 3) Beloved—ATTITUDE.
17. The Christian and his THINKING (Col 3:2, 12, 15, 16, 23).
18. What Jesus is to ME (Col 3).
 - 1) King (3:1).
 - 2) Protector (3:3).
 - 3) Life (3:4).
 - 4) Coming One (3:4).
 - 5) Everything (3:11).
 - 6) Forgiver (3:13).
 - 7) Mediator (3:17).
 - 8) Authority (3:17).
 - 9) Master (3:24).
 - 10) Revealer (3:16).

VI. Questions.

True or False

01. _____ In a sense, in a manner of speaking, Christians are DEAD.
02. _____ It is possible to LIVE IN sins.
03. _____ Paul mentions seven PAIRS that are united in Christ.

04. _____ Solos and choirs would be excluded by the reciprocal language used in 16.
05. _____ Paul never talked about REWARDS for Christians.

MATCHING

06. _____ Mortify... A. Anger
07. _____ Put off... B. In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs
08. _____ Let the peace of God C. Anger
09. _____ Teaching and admonishing D. Covetousness
10. _____ Fathers, provoke not your children to E. Rule in your hearts

Fill in the Blanks

11. And whatsoever ye do, do *it* _____, as to the _____, and not unto men.
12. Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not _____ against them.
13. _____ not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the _____ man with his deeds.
14. Whatever Christians do is to be done in the _____ of the _____!
15. For children to obey their parents in all things is _____ to the Lord.

Each Question is worth 7 Points

My Score is: _____

Answers will be found on next week's handout

ANSWERS to Colossians 2 Questions... **01**—True (20); **02**—True (14); **03**—True (12-13); **04**—False (4); **05**—True (3); **06**—D (21); **07**—A (13); **08**—C (9); **09**—E (5); **10**—B (18); **11**—walk (6); **12**—12; **13**—reward (18); **14**—treasures, wisdom (3); **15**—Blotting, against, nailing (14).

VII. Seek-A-Word Puzzle. The words may be backwards, diagonal, upside down, etc. See if you can find them all. The more you use the words of the Bible, the greater blessed you will be! You might be surprised at how much this little exercise will help you retain important truths. THANK YOU for the good effort you are putting forth in Bible study. -DRL

W H E N A R H C O B E Y
 R F G T P F I H T T C H
 A L S O P E A R T H H O
 T A N G E R L I F E I A
 H U S B A N D S D N L F
 F K L O R D A T H F D F
 A N O T H E R E F O R E
 T H A N K S F D D R E C
 H E A R T I H H G G N T
 E B O N D E E D S A H I
 R T H I N G S F S V B O
 E G H R E C E I V E F N
 H R F W I V E S W O R D

AFFECTION	ALSO	ANGER	ANOTHER	APPEAR
BOND	CHILDREN	CHRIST	DEED	EARTH
FATHER	FORGAVE	HEART	HUSBANDS	LIFE
LORD	OBEY	RECEIVE	THANKS	THEN
THERE	THEREFORE	THINGS	WHEN	WIVES
WORD	WRATH			

IX. EXTRA CREDIT FOR “SUPER” Bible Students...

Will you please consider answering these three SIMPLE questions based on the Bible text of this chapter? I will try to make use of your answers. Bring them with you next week. Tear out this last sheet from the Study Guide and be prepared to put it in a basket. I think it will be a great help to all of those in the class if you will do so. Thank you in advance for your marvelous cooperation!

W O R D: What word would you like to know more about in this chapter?

W O N D E R: I wonder what this phrase, verse, or series of verses means...

W I S H: I wish myself—or others whom I know or even don’t know—would understand this fact, principle, or concept from this chapter...