

THE OLD LIFE
Colossians 3:5-11 – Part 2

Intro: I like to encourage all of you as much as I can to be reading your Bibles. The Bible is to our souls what food is to our bodies. The Bible tells us so many wonderful things which we cannot learn from any other source. It is God's Word for us, and God's Word to us. The people of the world don't appreciate the Word of God because they don't have the ability to understand it. But we as Christians do. We will never in this life be able to understand it all, but that is why we need to keep reading it, and studying it, and living the way the Bible teaches us to live. It tells us what God wants us to be, and it tells us what He wants us to do as well as what He does not want us to do. The more we read it, the more we love it. The Bible tells us about the past and it tells us about the future. And there is so much of it that applies to us every day that we live. There is a real move on in our world today to get rid of the Bible altogether, and there is nothing more tragic that people can possibly do. I love to watch little children, really little children, those too young to walk, and those who are just starting to walk and to talk. Mothers often do such a great job dressing their children, but I often mention to Lucille that I wonder if anyone is talking to them about the Lord like my mother and dad talked to me, and like her parents talked to her. The only parents who can talk to their children about the Lord are the parents who know the Lord, and who are reading the Bible.

This week as I was reading Colossians I tried, as I often do, to put myself back in ancient Colosse where as a member of the Colossian church I was listening as an elder of the church read what the Apostle Paul had written to us. But I am sure that Paul wanted them to hear the epistle read, not just "to us," but "to me!" Most of his instructions to the church were written in the second person plural, that is, to all of them, but he wanted every believer to know that his message was for each one of them personally. And that is the way we ought to read this epistle. It was originally written, not in English, but in Greek, and it has been translated into English. And in spite of the many attempts that have been made in the past to destroy the Bible, God has preserved it for us. He preserved it for you; He preserved it for me. We need to know what Paul wrote to them because the Christian life is 100% today what it was a little over two thousand years ago. I hear people talk about the Christian life today as though it was something different from it was in Paul's day, that somehow we have to modernize the Bible to bring it up to date. That is

sheer nonsense! It is worse than that, it is a major sin to tamper with the Word of God. God is just the same today that He was then. And people are just the same today as then. We were all born sinners in need of a Savior. That which was sinful in Paul's day, is still sin. And the remedy for sin is still the same: the transforming power of the Gospel.

So this epistle of Paul to the Colossians is just as much for us as it was for the Christians in Colosse in the first century. The truth of God does not change. What pleased God then is no different from what pleases God now. And the same can be said about what displeased God, not only in New Testament times, but in Old Testament times as well. So don't let a day go by without taking some time, as much time as you can, just to sit down to read your Bible prayerfully and thoughtfully. And those of you who have children growing up in your home, take time to read the Bible to your children. 'We never outgrow our need for the Word of God. In fact, some of us know that the older we get, the more we need the Word.

Now let me practice what I am preaching. Please turn in your Bible to Colossians chapter 3. I am going to read again the first eleven verses of this very important chapter. (Read Col. 3:1-11.)

I want to begin today with verses 9, 10, and 11. If we understand what the Apostle Paul wrote here, we will understand in a better way his exhortations in verses 5 and 8 and, in the section following our text, verse 12. I am referring to the Apostle's use of the verbs,

I. "PUT OFF" AND "PUT ON" – AN ACCOMPLISHED FACT (Col. 3:9-11).

But you might say, "Why did Paul wait until verses 9, 10, and 11 to give a better explanation of what it means for us to "put off" certain things, and "put on" other things?" Or we might ask another question: "Why does Paul tell us to "put off" certain things, and to "put on" others when, according to verses 9-11 we already have done that?"

Well, actually this is not the first time he has mentioned "putting off." He mentioned it in Col. 2:11. (Read.)

I hope you remember that when we considered verse 11 of chapter 2 along with verses 12 through 15, we saw that Paul was not talking about the rite of circumcision which Jewish parents observed, and continue to

observe, with their boy babies, but he was speaking of the spiritual truth which circumcision represented. In His death, as I have said, the Lord Jesus, by His death, not only paid the penalty of sin, but, as Col. 2:11 tells us, He put off “the body of the sins of the flesh.” “The circumcision of Christ” does not refer to the time when Christ was circumcised, but “the circumcision of Christ” speaks of His death as a spiritual circumcision by which the power which “the sins of the flesh” had over us, was broken, and we were freed from sin’s mastery over our lives. Spiritually we were all circumcised when Christ died. He, as we are told in Heb. 9:26, appeared once-for-all time, to “put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.”

That is the reason that Paul could write what he wrote in Col. 3:9 and 10. But in these two verses he was speaking as though we had done it. The way we have done this is by turning to Christ, believing the Gospel, which means that by faith in Christ we have put off the old man and put on the new man because we have entered into what Christ did for us when He died for us on the Cross. This is not something that we consciously experience. This is a great truth which we accept because the Holy Spirit gave the Apostle Paul the knowledge of this so he could tell us. When Christ died on the Cross, He not only died in our place so that our sins might be forgiven by a holy God, but He died to crush the power of our old sin nature which enslaved us as it does all who do not know and believe the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Actually when we talk about the forgiveness of our sins, it may be some time before we enter into the peace of heart that the truth of forgiveness is meant to give us. Sometimes people who profess to have trusted in Christ will say, “But I don’t think I am forgiven because I don’t feel forgiven. I still remember my sins.” God doesn’t say in His Word that we won’t remember our sins. We believe that our sins are forgiven because we believe that Jesus Christ died in our place, taking upon Himself the full penalty for every sin we have committed and every sin we ever will commit.

So our sins were put off, put away, by the sacrifice of Christ. And we have entered into that great work of Christ when we believed in Him as our Savior. How important it is that we understand this truth, and yet I imagine that only a minority of the Lord’s people really understand this part of the work that our Lord did when He died on the Cross.

This does not mean that we can’t sin anymore. It does not mean that any

child of God will reach perfection in this life. But it does mean that sin is not longer our master, nor are we any longer slaves of sin. Christ has delivered us from the penalty of eternal judgment we were under, and he has also delivered us from the bondage to sin we all experienced before the Lord brought us to Himself.

But that raises another question, doesn't it? The question is this: If by trusting Christ I have not only put off the old man, but also I have put on the new man, then why do I have to put off the old man in my daily life and put on the new man? And the answer to that question is: Because as I put off sins, and put on godly characteristics in their place, by faith I am claiming the blessings of victory over my habits of sin which I had when I came to Christ. This is not a second blessing by which I get to the place where I can sin no more. It is a part of what it means to live by faith. I learn more about what God intends for the death of Christ to mean to me. It is a battle. This is spiritual warfare. This is what sanctification is. You and I are saved by faith, but we need to learn to live by faith, to act upon what the Bible teaches about the way to be holy.

Now let us go back to verse 5 of Col. 3, and notice carefully what the Apostle Paul said that we are to do. And notice that although this may cover our text for today, what Paul said in these verses 5 through 11 is only a part of what we need to do. There are other things that need to be put on. We will be doing both, putting off and putting on, as long as we live on this earth. But the day will come when our putting off and putting on days will be over, but that will only come when we are with the Lord.

What do verses 5 through 8 tell us to do?

II. "MORTIFY" AND "PUT OFF" AS A WAY OF LIFE (Col. 3: 5-8).

Actually there is no difference as far as the meaning of these words is concerned. They both are calling upon us to act upon the truthfulness of what we have learned about the Gospel, or, to state it another way, what Christ accomplished for us when He died on the Cross.

When you look at the sins which are mentioned in verse 5, we are looking at sins for which the Lord died to render them powerless in our lives. So the verb νεκρώσατε means *put to death*," but the idea is that we are to *treat it as dead!* The NASB renders this verb, "Therefore consider the

members of your earthly body as dead to immorality . . . ,” but the Greek text seems to make the sins our members, the sins that belong to us by nature.

So again it looks like something we are doing, but the “therefore” here in verse 5 establishes a close tie between verse 5 and verse 4 where we are told that Christ is our life and that we are headed for glory.

So we have a responsibility to take action in our own lives against sin, but the power to resist sin arises from our risen Savior Who has rendered sin powerless to make us submissive to its demands. We can all be tempted, but the sin is not in the temptation, but in yielding to it. By the grace of God we have the right to say “no” to sin.

Look at the five sins he mentioned in this first list:

- 1) “Fornication” is all sexual behavior between unmarried persons, or with between people who are married to someone else, or all relationships between people of the same sex.
- 2) “Uncleanness” speaks of the kind of a person we would describe as dirty. They have filthy minds. They interpret everything they can is an immoral way. Their speech is disgraceful, and yet they take pride in it.
- 3) “Inordinate affection” is depraved passion, lust. This word is used in Rom. 1:26 for homosexual behavior.
- 4) “Evil concupiscence” is wicked sexual lust.
- 5) “Covetousness” in context with the four words which go before it seem to link this also with sexual immorality. In the tenth commandment, after mentioning your neighbor’s house, the second is your neighbor’s wife.

Sin has perverted everything that God intended to be holy when he created Adam and Eve, and made them husband and wife. We have quickly become a nation that is absorbed with sex, obsessed with it, until adultery is looked upon today as a way of life. The terrible sex crimes against little children and young girls is one of the results of our rejection of God and the truth of his word. And think of all of the others sins that are connected today with sex. The temptation toward pornography which has become so widespread and so lucrative for those who are involved in it, shows how powerful the appeal to sexual immorality is.

We live in a world like this. And yet God has made provision for us in the death of Christ, in the Gospel, so that by His grace, we can say “no” to such sins. We do not have to go the way of the world. We must and can

treat them as dead to us. But this is only a part of the battle. As we go on in our chapter we learn that the bad must be replaced by the good. Sin must be driven out by a desire to please God, a desire for holy living. We are to avoid looking at things that can arouse the wrong thought and feelings. The Word must be in our hearts, and we need to seek an ever closer relationship with the Lord, meeting with His people regularly and as often as we can. The world worships that which is abominable to God in coveting that which He forbids.

But notice verses 6 and 7 as we close.

Looking back at the sins mentioned in verse 5, the Apostle Paul said, "For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh." The rest of the verse does not appear in the better MSS. But how forceful this statement is. People think that they are getting away with whatever they want to do. It has become so that whatever a person wants to do, he ought to be able to do. We hear a lot today about *our* rights, but very few people seem to be thinking about what is right in the sight of God. Let every person who subscribes to the American way of life today *BEWARE!* "The wrath of God cometh." That is absolutely certain. God is going to have the last word, and woe to the person who leaves this life in his sins.

But there is another emphasis in verse 7, and it would be wonderful if these two verses together would awaken any here today who are strangers to the saving grace of God. Paul told the Colossians believers that there was a time when they approved of the sins mentioned in verse 5. That was their way of life. But a great change took over in their lives when they heard the Gospel and were drawn to Christ. This is the only remedy for sin. Man sometimes seeks reformation, but what we all stand in need of is regeneration, a new life, a change of heart, being made a new person so that the desire for all of those evil things is taken away, and we live to please God.

Concl: I hope this has made you who know the Lord realize in a little better way what a wonderful salvation we have. Paul concluded the second chapter by telling us that all of the teaching of the legalists and the mystics who felt that they had information about God that surpassed what the Christians had, was of absolutely no value in dealing with the flesh and its sins. But Christ alone is all we need for deliverance from that judgment of God which is coming, and Christ alone is all that we need for the power to live godly, holy lives, lives that are pleasing to God.

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So let us do three things. Let us thank God for saving us. And let us by faith consider ourselves dead to sin and sin dead to us because of the work of our Savior on the Cross. Let us thank God that we are delivered not only from sin's penalty, but from sin's power.

Third, let us not be hesitant about telling others about what we have in Christ, praying that God would use us to be His instruments in turning others to our dear Savior. May the Spirit of God draw any of you who do not know the Savior to trust in Him for this full salvation which can only be found in Christ.