



"REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

COLOSSIANS LESSON 3

This week we will be studying Colossians chapter 3, in which Paul moves from teaching theology to instruction in practical living. His desire is that the Colossians would understand how the death and resurrection of Jesus should affect their lives. Paul spent the first two chapters combating error that had crept in the church, showing them that they have everything they need in Christ.

The supremacy and preeminence of Christ is the theme of Colossians. There are also "mega-themes" that support this truth, such as: Christ is God, Christ is the head of the Church, the union we have with Christ, and the fault of man-made religions. Look for Scriptures as you study that support these themes. Make sure you open with prayer, inviting the Holy Spirit to fill you and open your eyes to the truths God has for you.

First Day

Paul began his letter by stating what Christ has done for us (1:1-2:23). In chapters 3 and 4, he turns the table to show what it is that Christians should do as a result.

1. Read Colossians 3:1-25. Observe and list the facts you find. Are there any repeated words or phrases? How many "ifs," "therefore's," "but now's," or other transitional words do you find?
2. Why do you think many scholars see this chapter as the key chapter in the book of Colossians?

3. What would you choose as they key verse?
4. How does this chapter move from general to specific?
5. Are there any:
 - A. Promises
 - B. Commands
 - C. Challenges
 - D. Exhortations
6. Describe Paul's tone.
7. In verses 1-4, what two great phrases describe the intimate relationship believers have with Jesus Christ?
8. What phrase in verse 11 represents the main theme?
9. What specific verse spoke to your heart? Why?

That's it for today. Isn't this chapter wonderful? It's packed full of application for you and me. May God richly bless you with the knowledge of Him as you study this week.

Memory Verse of the Week: "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." Colossians 3:17

Second Day

Memorize and apply your verse today.

It has been said, "Paul does not preach a system nor a philosophy, but a person - Jesus Christ." I believe one of his goals is to show us how believing in Jesus should affect our daily Christian living. In this chapter, he shows us "Christianity in action."

1. Read Colossians 3:1-4. Explain the meaning of the following phrases:

(These Scriptures will help you explain your answer. Feel free to use other verses as well.) Romans 6:6-7, 11; 7:4-6; Galatians 2:20, 5:24, 6:14; and 1 Peter 2:24.

a. Died and hidden with Christ

b. Raised with Christ

2. How many times is Christ referred to in verses 1-4? What is being emphasized?

3. "If" or "since" we are raised with Christ, what should we do?

The word "seek" is from the Greek word "zeteo," which means to "keep seeking," implying a continuous action. The phrase "set your mind" can be translated "think," or "have this inner disposition."

4. How do we practically live out verses 1 and 2?

5. If we are seeking those things which are above, what becomes our priority?

6. As believers, we are no longer "of this world." Read the following verses and explain our relationship to the world.
 - a. John 18:36
 - b. 1 John 5:4-5
 - c. Philippians 3:20
 - d. Ephesians 2:6
 - e. Hebrews 11:13
 - f. Hebrews 13:14
 - g. 1 Peter 2:11
 - h. Romans 12:2

Dead people do not desire this world, do they? If we have died to the world, we, then, shouldn't desire the pleasures of this world either. We are now called to "live in Christ" (Philippians 1:21, John 15:1-11) instead of "living in" the world.

7. Paul says to "set" your mind on things above. Set is an action word. Where is your mind? Are you actively and purposefully setting your mind where it belongs?

In the book St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon, Lightfoot said, "You must not only seek Heaven, you must also 'think' Heaven." Are you "thinking" Heaven?

8. How does being "preoccupied with Heaven" result in practical holiness? (Or how "should" it? I should say.)
9. The word "hidden" means "concealed and safe," or "security and satisfaction." As believers, how is our life "hidden with Christ"?
10. Have you hidden your life in Christ? Are you resting in the security of His love and grace? Write your thoughts.
11. How does verse 4 give us hope for the future? (Also read 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 and Romans 8:17-25, 30.)

I've always looked at being "hidden" in Christ as being so invisible, that when others look at me, they see Him. When people look at you, whom do they see?

I love the description of Christ as "our life." Is He your life? Jesus is sitting at the right hand of the Father, a position of honor and majesty. He is exalted forever and ever. (Psalm 110:1, Luke 22:69, Acts 2:33, 5:31, 7:56, Romans 8:34, Ephesians 1:20, Hebrews 1:3) Is the Risen and Glorified Christ the focus of your life? Think about it ...

Third Day

What's your memory verse? Meditate on it throughout the day.

I've heard it said that "our feet are on earth and our minds are in Heaven." Paul goes on to give examples of that by showing us how identifying with Christ in His death and resurrection should affect our personal life. Our doctrine should determine our actions.

1. Read Colossians 3:5-11. What is the word "therefore" there for?

When Paul says to put to death "members of your earthly body," he is actually referring to the sins associated with those members. He wants them to put to death, or "kill," sin in their lives, bringing their flesh under subjection to the Spirit.

2. If we "died with Christ" at salvation, why do we still need to put sin to death? (Isn't it dead already?) Read Romans 8:13, 7:14-25, and Luke 9:23.

John MacArthur said it best, "Although believers are new creatures on the inside (2 Corinthians 5:17), the new creatures live in old bodies."

3. How do we "kill" the sins we battle in the flesh? What steps can we take?

4. How will sin "kill" us if we don't "kill" it first?

Paul is telling them to cut off anything that supports the desires of the flesh, or that is contrary to godliness. He gives us two lists of what to "kill." John MacArthur points out that the first list (3:5) are sins of perverted love, while the second list (8-9) are sins of wicked hate. The first list begins with acts and progresses to motives, while the second list begins with motives and progresses to acts. The first is a personal list, relating to feelings, where the second is social, relating to speech.

5. What sins are we to kill according to verse 5?

6. What sins are we to kill from verses 8-9?

7. Between the lists, what reason or reasons does Paul give for putting them to death?

Here is a very brief but pointed description of each sin listed. As you read the definition, search your heart to see if any of them are lurking there.

1. Fornication (immorality): sexual sin, illicit sex (any sex outside of marriage)
2. Uncleanness (impurity): filthiness, going beyond the immoral sexual act to the evil thoughts and intentions of the mind.
3. Passion: sexual passion set loose in the body
4. Evil desire: sexual lust created in the mind.
5. Covetousness (greed): the insatiable desire to have more, to have what is forbidden.
8. Why is covetousness considered idolatry?

9. Are you coveting anything right now? How is contentment an antidote for covetousness?

God's wrath (vs 6) is "His eternal detestation of all unrighteousness. It is the holiness of God stirred into activity against sin." (Arthur Pink, The Attributes of God.) Because that list of sin brings down God's wrath, believers should have no part of them. Also, Paul reminds them that they once knew what it was like to live in sin, so why go back to their old ways? Spurgeon said, "Christian, what hast thou to do with sin? Hath it not cost thee enough already? Burnt child, wilt thou play with the fire?" (Evening by Evening)

10. Read over the second list found in verses 8-9. Do any of these characterize your life? Think back on your week. Did you commit any of these sins of speech? Are you willing to take drastic action and "kill" it?

The word "put off" is a word that is used for taking off clothes. We are called to put off the dirty rags of the self-life and put on our new robes of righteousness.

11. Why is lying not characteristic of the new man? Read John 8:44 and Titus 1:2. You may also use other verses to support your answer. (Do you have a tendency to lie? Is there such a thing as a "white lie")?

12. In whose image were you created?

I want to end with a quote by a Puritan by the name of Richard Baxter. He said, "Use sin as it will use you; spare it not, for it will not spare you; it is your murderer, and the murderer of the world: use it, therefore, as a murderer should be used. Kill it before it kills you; and though it bring you to the grave, as it did your Head, it shall not be able to keep you there." Hmm ...

Fourth Day

Work on your memory verse.

In verses 9-11, Paul tells the Colossians what God has done for the believer. Now, in verses 12-17, Paul explains what the believer's response should be.

1. Read Colossians 3:12-17. How does Paul describe believers in verse 12?

The word "elect" means "chosen by God." (Ephesians 1:4, 2 Thessalonians 2:13) We were not chosen according to our good works, but according to His own purpose and grace (2 Timothy 1:9). Holy means "set apart" or "separate." We are His "beloved" because we are the objects of His love and affection.

2. Now Paul tells them to "put on" or be clothed in some things. What virtues does Paul name?

3. Tender mercies can also be translated as a "heart of compassion." Are you wearing compassion lately?

Kindness refers to "the grace that pervades the whole person, mellowing all that might be harsh." Kindness is as concerned with the well being of others as their own.

4. What do we know about the kindness of God? Read Luke 6:35 and Titus 3:4-5.

5. How is the story of the Good Samaritan a good example of both compassion and kindness? Read Luke 10:29-37.

6. How does the story of the Good Samaritan speak to your heart?

7. How is humility the opposite of self-love? (Which best characterizes you?)

Meekness (or gentleness) can be defined as the willingness to suffer injury instead of inflicting it. Patience, or longsuffering, is the spirit which never loses patience with its fellow man. Bearing with one another means "to endure, to hold out in spite of persecution, threats, injury, indifference, or complaints and not retaliate." Believers are to endure one another.

8. Is God calling you to "bear with" someone? (Are you being a "bear" instead?)

9. What's the key to forgiving others, according to verse 13?
10. Is there someone God is calling you to forgive? Will you "put on" forgiveness?
11. Picture yourself putting on all these virtues as if they were clothes. According to verse 14, what do we need to put on to hold all the others in place? Why?
12. As elect of God, how else should Christians live, according to verses 15-16?

The word "rule" is an athletic term used to describe the job of an umpire or referee, deciding the outcome of an event.

13. How does the peace of God act as a referee in our hearts?

In verse 16, Paul tells us to let the Word of God "dwell" or "live in" us. He is basically saying to allow the Word to take up residence in our hearts. His Word should govern and control every aspect of our lives.

14. Have you let God's Word "dwell" in your heart? Does it govern and control your decisions, your steps, and your entire life? Are there still areas in which you haven't quite yet "surrendered all"?
15. In your own words, explain verse 17. (Read also 1 Corinthians 10:31.) Why does John MacArthur call this verse "the simplest, most basic rule of thumb for living the Christian life"?

16. Last question: Do you use verse 17 to govern all your behavior? Are you doing what you're doing "in the name of the Lord," bringing Him glory and honor, pleasing Him with your attitude and your choices?

God bless you little ladies! See you tomorrow!

Fifth Day

Write out your verse from memory. Has it changed your life this week?

Paul now moves into the area of personal relationships and how believers should respond to one another.

1. Let's finish up this chapter by reading Colossians 3:18-25. (As God's Word dwells in our hearts (vs 16), we can be obedient to these verses.) Wives, what are we called to do?

The word "submission" means to subject oneself, or "put oneself under, not by compulsion, but willingly." Jesus was subject to His parents (Luke 2:51); we are subject to ruling authorities (Romans 13:1, 5), etc.

2. Does this word imply inferiority, or lack of value?
3. Is there ever a time where a wife doesn't have to submit to her husband's desires or will?
4. Why does this topic arouse so much controversy in today's world?
5. Are you submitting to your husband willingly or begrudgingly? Are you allowing your husband to lead you? Are you respecting and honoring his authority? (Any changes you need to make?)

6. What is the husband's responsibility to his wife?
7. Why are children called to obey their parents? As we instruct our kids, why is it crucial to teach them to obey us if we want them to learn to obey God?

"Provoke" can mean exasperate, stir up, or irritate. We can easily discourage our kids, causing them to lose heart. The word "fathers" can be translated "parents," as in Hebrews 11:23.

8. Name at least five ways that we can provoke our kids. Are you guilty of doing this?
9. Paul continues to show them how to act in their work relationships. What are servants called to do? What should be their attitude? What is significant about the phrase "in all things"?
10. Verse 23 can apply to every area of our life, not only as a servant or an employee. How does it apply to us as:
 - a. A wife?
 - b. A mom?
 - c. A single?
 - d. A Christian woman?
11. According to verses 24 and 25, why should slaves obey their masters? Does that apply to everything we do "in the Lord"?