

Colossians 3:5-17

Verse 5:

--**Therefore** . . . give us a transition. Paul is now going to practically show the type of fruit or conduct that is not fitting for our new life, and that is fitting to our new life in Christ.

--Paul was always careful to make sure Christians understood good doctrine produces good works. Belief determines behavior. Good roots will sprout good fruits.

--Some people get a little too tied up theologically when it comes to believers putting to death and putting off the old man. They are mentally confused about what is experientially obvious.

--The basic truth is that *before* salvation, we had no ability to put to death or put off the old man. We *were* the old man. Now after salvation, because we have new life in the Holy Spirit, we have the ability to put to death or put off.

--This putting off and putting on becomes a continual process in all of our lives. We are all at different stages. You will notice how, even in this verse, sinful conduct goes from outwardly obvious sinful fruits to the inward and hidden evil roots.

--**Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth** . . . **put to death** could also be translated *mortify* or *consider dead*. There is reckoning for sure but that does not exclude self-denial and the taking up of our crosses.

--Putting to death our **members** is putting to death the sin we once gave our body to.

Romans 6:19+7:23-24: For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. . . But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

--Putting to death our members as described as slaves of sin can be a very painful experience. That is why the Biblical language is divinely appropriate. It is a true death to self. It is putting the "I want!" in each of us on the cross, which is what we least want to do.

Tozer (The Pursuit of God): "Let us remember that when we talk of the rending of the veil we are speaking in a figure, and the thought of it is poetical, almost pleasant, but in actuality there is nothing pleasant about it. In human experience that veil is made of living spiritual tissue; it is composed of the sentient, quivering stuff of which our whole beings consist, and to touch it is to touch us where we feel pain. To tear it away is to injure us, to hurt us and make us bleed. To say otherwise is to make the cross no cross and death no death at all. It is never fun to die. To rip through the dear and tender stuff of which life is made can never be anything but deeply painful. Yet that is what the cross did to Jesus and it is what the cross would do to every man to set him free."

--It hurts to die to our reputations, desires, lusts, selfishness, comforts, convenience, etc. but that is where the life of God is leading when these sins are found in our members. God knows that if our old man is not crucified, he will lead us to terrible places.

--God will deliver us if we desire His freedom with all our hearts.

--In C.S. Lewis' book *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* there is a part fondly called by some: 'The Undragoning of Eustace.' Eustace, a troubled boy, finds a dragon lair with gold, greedily puts on a bracelet, and falls asleep. Lewis writes: '*Sleeping on a dragon's hoard with greedy dragon thoughts in his heart, he had become a dragon himself.*'

--This being a picture of our becoming wholly the sin we only wanted in part.

--Unable to change, Aslan (a Christlike lion figure) brings him to a pool of crystal water and commands him to undress but he cannot scrape off the dragon skin. There was just another layer underneath.

--Picturing our need to come before God and present Him with what we are and not necessarily what we know we should be.

--Aslan then says he will have to do it. Eustace's description is: '*The very first tear he made was so deep that I thought it had gone right into my heart. And when he began pulling the skin off, it hurt worse than anything I've ever felt. The only thing that made me able to bear it was just the pleasure of feeling the stuff peel off.*'

--He also notices that he is "smaller" and his skin was tender and stung when he entered the water but soon turned cool and enjoyable. Aslan gives him new clothes and sends him back on his journey.

--We are not ready to put our sin to death until the joy of seeing it die is greater than the pain of having it die.

1) **Fornication:** This is the Biblical word for any sexual sin outside of God's appointed place for our sexuality—which is the marriage bed (**Lev. 18; Mk. 7: Heb. 13:4**). It is mentioned at the beginning of numerous Biblical lists of sin (**1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:3-5; 1 Thess. 4:3**).

2) **Uncleanness, passion, evil desire:** These are all descriptions of the twisted desires, designs, and delights in our sexuality.

--A recent Barna survey claims 68% of non-Christians and 54% of Christians view pornography. 75% of Christian men and 40% of Christian women. Unclean sexual desire is a plague in the church, in ministry positions, and in society. It must be brought into the light and repented of.

The Freedom Fight as a resource

3) **Covetousness, which is idolatry:** One of the first things we are told not to covet is a neighbor's wife (**Ex. 20:17**)! This is sex worshipped as god—the master passion of someone's life. *Don't despise God's provision for your life in your spouse!*

Ephesians 5:5: For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolator, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

Verses 6-7:

--(6) Paul wants to remind them these are not "little" trite sins to God. The wrath of God is coming on those who continue in disobedience as **the sons of disobedience**.

--(7) Paul also reminds them it was not so long ago that they lived under the wrath of God as slaves of sin!

1 Peter 1:14: *as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance, but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct.*

--Put to death any identification with the life outside of Jesus Christ that will one day very soon be judged by God!

Verses 8-9:

--(8) Paul calls them to further conformity to the life of Christ in their attitudes and speech. These are moods and dispositions we live in, wrapping us like a jacket.

--***But now you yourselves are to put off all these.*** . . This idea of putting off or laying aside is a common biblical exhortation: **Rom. 13:12; Eph. 4:22+25+31; Heb. 12:1; James 1:21; 1 Pet. 2:1.**

1) **Anger:** Is something good in its right place but wrong when misplaced.

2) **Wrath:** Is explosive outbursts.

3) **Malice:** Is temper with intention to do harm.

4) **Blasphemy:** Abusive and slanderous speech of God but also men.

5) **Filthy Language:** Is literally just dirty and unclean speech. This is the subtle undercurrent in youth world—cursing/sexually charged slang, songs, conversation, etc.

Ephesians 4:29+5:3-4: *Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. . . But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints, neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.*

--(9) ***Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.*** . . Falsehood violates brotherhood.

Ephesians 4:25: *Therefore putting away lying, "Let each of you speak truth with his neighbor," for we are members of one another.*

--Truth and love are to be the deciding forces in our interactions with one another in the Body of Christ. Lying would then include the various modes of deceitful interaction such as: understatement, overstatement, evasion, deflection, denial, etc. Fear the Lord, not the responses of people!

*Jones (Victorious Living): "Get hold of two principles that Presbyterian mission leader Robert Elliot Speer lays down: First, *God cannot lie*. Second, *He cannot delegate to you the privilege of lying for Him*. Truth is inviolable. The early Christians, while standing before Roman tribunals with their lives in the balance, could tell the slightest lie and save themselves. They refused. They could die, but not lie.

“If we lie, we are not Christian. The Scripture is unequivocal at this point. ‘Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices’ (Colossians 3:9). If lies are still within us, no matter how religious we may be, we are still in the old self.”

--God calls us to put our old, lying self to death.

Verses 10-11:

--**(10) and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him.** . . . This new man we have put on lives with the sense of himself as a creation and God as His Creator. The true me, true authenticity, is found in the renewing of *His* image in my life, not my own self-made sinful image. We become like our Maker and have **knowledge** of new truth. The knowledge of Him as The Truth.

--**(11)** New life in Christ has no human boundaries. There are no racial, religious, or cultural barriers to the life that is hidden with Christ in God.

--There is no worldly social structure that can help me live or learn this new man because **Christ is all and in all!**

Verse 12:

--**Therefore, as the elect of God, holy be beloved, put on.** . . . Paul now spells out what putting on the new man created in Jesus’ image looks like practically.

--In the end, when we are putting on the new man, we are simply putting on the true character of the Lord Jesus Christ—**But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts (Romans 13:14).**

--The virtues Paul lists here are just so many descriptions of the life of Jesus Christ. In Him, they are perfected, but in us, they should still bloom. At the very least, these things should be “in character” and not “out of character”. Which list is most truly descriptive of our true character? Is it the last list or this one? *Some people want to be known as Christians, but they don’t want to be known as Christlike!*

--**Tender Mercies:** God’s pitiful compassions—not hard mercies! Paul even calls God **the Father of mercies and God of all comfort (2 Cor. 1:3).**

--**Kindness:** This is one of those traits that is immediately known but hard to define. In Romans, Paul exhorts believers to consider both the kindness and severity of God **(11:22)**. God’s greatest and highest kindness is seen in the work of Christ on the cross: **But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared (Titus 3:4).**

Ephesians 2:7: That in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

--How far does His kindness go? To the cross and eternity beyond! Our problem is that we are so self-conscious that our true kindness is strangled. Godly kindness is God-conscious and others-conscious.

--**Humility:** Without humility we have a wall between us and God!

Isaiah 57:15: For thus says the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

Micah 6:8: He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?

--Jesus' humility was most directly shown by His obedience.

Philippians 2:8: And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

--**Meekness:** Was Jesus' description of Himself (**Mt. 11:29**). Meekness is power under control.

Moses murdered a man in cold blood but was the meekest man on the face of the earth.

--**Longsuffering:** Is patience with people or circumstances, or *long-mindedness* as is seen in (**Heb. 6:12 & James 5:10**).

--Can you take the long-view with people? You want them to do so with you!

Verse 13:

--**bearing with one another.** . . Paul is calling them not to *hold back from one another*. Isn't it a shame how one little wrong can ruin everything for some people? One argument with Abraham sent Lot in a downward spiral from which he never recovered. *One evidence of spiritual maturity is patience with spiritual immaturity.*

--All people are effort, and yes, some more than others. Yet to Jesus Christ, we were all worth the effort of the cross.

--**and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.** We are called to forgive even when we have a genuine complaint. Sometimes, people cannot even forgive when there isn't a genuine complaint or a questionable one at best.

--Now, there are deep and hard things to forgive. Places where only the answer is a literal supernatural work of God, but most of the forgiveness we are called to covers stupid and petty wrongs.

--Forgiveness doesn't exclude rebuke.

Luke 17:3: Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.

--How are we called to forgive? **Even as Christ forgave you.** . . How have we received forgiveness? So we give.

Verse 14:

--**But above all these things.** . . None of the other things mentioned are the true central agent here. What is? **Put on love, which is the bond of perfection.**

--Paul sees Christian love as the bond that keeps the community of Christ together. All our Christlikeness must be expressed in love, with love, and from a heart of love.

--The ultimate Christian bond is not the King James Version of the Bible, Calvinism, speaking in tongues, or attending a Calvary Chapel. It is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. ***Being knit together in love (2:2).***

--Ultimately, I should see and love something of the image of Jesus Christ in my brothers and sisters in Christ.

Verse 15:

--The focus here is not necessarily the peace we have with God because of our justification. The focus is collective: ***to which you were also called in one body.***

--Paul sees a community united in Christ, living in peace, love, and thankfulness. We should know something of this in our Christian fellowships today. The church as a community of Christians is real life—not a bubble! It is a miracle!

--The ***peace of God*** should ***rule*** in our hearts. The Greek word for ***rule*** (*brabeuo*) is used only here in the NT. It has the idea of *directing, deciding, determining, umpiring, or controlling.*

--God helps to direct His community through His own peace. We all know what it feels like to have that peace disturbed in our lives!

--***and be thankful.*** . . Thankfulness is a theme in this letter: **1:3, 12; 2:7; 3:15, 17; 4:2.** The language gives the sense of *keep on becoming thankful.* *Should be natural for us to move from one expression of thanks to another.*

Verse 16:

--***Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.*** . . Have you ever entered a house where you were not welcome? Awkward right?! Well, the Word of God is to ***dwell*** in us—both corporately and individually (you cannot have this be true corporately if it is not first true individually).

--Is God's Word comfortable in your heart and life? How about your home?

--Does it dwell in us ***richly***? The Greek word for ***richly*** (*plousios*) is used four times in the NT (**1 Tim 6:17; Titus 3:6; 2 Peter 1:11**) and is translated *richly* twice and *abundantly* twice. Does God's Word abundantly fill our lives? Does it dwell in every area?

--***in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.*** . . The Word of God should inhabit all our interactions and praises!

--There doesn't seem to be a clear distinction between the different types of songs Paul lists here. ***Psalms*** were likely OT psalms. ***Hymns*** may have been early creeds put to song. ***Spiritual songs*** were likely impromptu or creative praises.

--***singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.*** . . Two things should be evident in Paul's exhortation to praise.

1) Our praises should not be worldly songs of godless pride or foolishness. Christian praises should be fitting dwelling places for the Word of God.

2) We are called to sing **with grace in your hearts to the Lord**. The Lord Jesus Christ should be the focus of our words and worship. Not men. Not ourselves. Not the band. Not how much we are getting paid at the venue. Not ticket sales. Christians don't sing for entertainment.

--Christians sing for one reason—for Christ.

--Don't you see? Our hearts are involved. If we sing for anything else, we attach our hearts to something else. Do we mean the words we sing?

Hosea 2:15: I will give her her vineyards from there, and the Valley of Achor as a door of hope; she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.

--Like the children of Israel, does God know that our best praises are behind us? May it never be true of us!

--The new man sings because Christ is all and in all.

Verse 17:

--God never intended us to live with a big list of do's and don'ts. Instead, He gives us His name, His Spirit, His character, and His truth and tells us to use them in every area of our lives.

--We can be sufficiently led with spiritual principles like these. *I say and do such-and-such in the Name of Jesus Christ.*

--The Lord Jesus Christ, who has the Name above all Names, has given us His Name to put on every word and every deed in our lives. That is a privilege we all take for granted much too often.

--There are two types of Christians:

1) Those who fear to proclaim the name of Jesus. Who deny His name. Who don't want all they say and do to stand the light of His name or Word. They want distance between themselves and the name of Jesus.

2) Those who refuse to speak or do anything unless they know Jesus goes with them. They want everything they say and do to be manifested in the warmth of His light. They are incredibly blessed to know He has invited Himself into **whatever** they do and **whatever** they say.

--Their response is a lifetime of **giving thanks to God the Father through Him**.