

Journey Through the New Testament

Colossians 2 – 1 Thessalonians 2

Series: An Apostle's Epistles

The Message to the Colossians

9-15-19

Introduction

In the letter to the Colossians, a new pattern of living is described. New life in Christ isn't just for heaven. It results in a new way of living in the world, when we set our minds and hearts on Christ. That means the usual, selfish behavior—"the old human nature"—is no longer practiced. Instead, love and the peace of Christ are to guide all our actions and relationships. And, in Christ, the usual labels of race, nationality and religion do not apply, for the new self is defined by the image of Christ within.

Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness are to replace the "earthly" human responses that belong to the "old self." What a challenge to live up to! As God's "people, holy and dearly loved," this is our calling in a world that bombards us with philosophies, conflicting viewpoints, and endless schemes for success and deception. Paul is clear in his guidance to the church in Colossae, "You have been filled by him who is the head of every ruler and authority." (Col 2:9)

Opening Prayer

Lord, you make all things new, but we confess that sometimes we like our old, comfortable habits and selfishness. We confess that living a new life often seems too difficult and unattainable. Give us power, courage and grace to live into who it is that you have called us to be.

Bible Study Colossians 3:1-11 (CEB)

What?

1. Having received new life in Christ, what are we to be focused on in our lives? (v. 1-2)
2. What will be required in order for us to put the "new life" into practice?
3. What behaviors and social distinctions must we "put to death" when we are committed to living our life in Christ?
4. Have you ever tried to rid yourself of a bad habit or behavior? What are the challenges?

Read Colossians 3:12-17

1. What are we to “put on” that will show the love of Christ within us?
2. What is the foundational trait that holds all of this together?
3. What can help us attain this kind of life?

So What?

1. Summarize what it means to “take off the old human nature” and put on the “new nature.” (3:10-17)
2. New life in Christ is an inner, spiritual process with outwards results. Putting on the “new nature” requires our commitment and obedience to Christ. How does the body of Christ, the church, help us persevere in our spiritual journey?
3. How will Christ-like living make a difference in our relationships, families, workplaces and communities?
4. In what ways can our actions speak louder than words?

Now What?

1. What are some of the obstacles we face as we live by faith and focus on becoming more like Christ in this world?
2. How is it possible to actually be changed and freed from habits and sinful ways? (Col 3:15, Romans 12:1-2)
3. What spiritual practices can help us stay focused and connected to the Spirit of Christ?

Lesson Notes: Christians have already died and have been raised with Christ; and they will be revealed with him at his last return. The life of the church is oriented around “things that are above”—the values, practices, and desires determined by Christ, not by this world. (Commentary, *Wesley Study Bible*)

Closing from the *Message*

So, chosen by God for this new life of love, dress in the wardrobe God picked out for you: compassion, kindness, humility, quiet strength, discipline. Be even tempered, content with second place, quick to forgive an offense. Forgive as quickly and completely as the master forgave you. And regardless of what else you put on, wear love. It's your basic, all-purpose garment. Never be without it.

--Colossians 3:12-14