

Colossians: Identity in Christ
Lesson 7 “Living From a New Reality 2”

I. Review

A. Background - Last week we began studying the book of *Colossians*, which was a letter Paul wrote to the church in Colossae when he was imprisoned in Rome in 62 A.D.

1. Paul did not found this church. It was founded by one of his disciples, Epaphrus (who was from Colossae). He met Paul in the revival in Ephesus (which lasted from 52-55 A.D) and then he moved back to start a church and bring the hope of Jesus to him community.

2. Paul wrote this letter from Rome to strengthen this church and deal with some issues this church was facing. The main issue was **syncretism**, which is the mixing the worship of Jesus Christ with beliefs, values, practices, or worldviews that compete with Him.

a. In that day - legalism, gnosticism, mysticism, folk superstition, angel worship, and asceticism.

b. In our day - consumerism, politics, psychology, self-help, new age, and modern cultural values (ex: marriage) so Christianity is diluted.

c. In *Colossians 2*, Paul showed us we’ve been delivered from shadows—legalism, man-made religion, and everything that pulls us away from Jesus, who is the substance. Last week, in *Colossians 3:1-12* we learned how to live from our new reality in Christ. We’ve been raised with Him and seated with Him, so we are no longer called to live from our flesh or limitations, but from heaven’s reality in us.

B. Tonight, as we continue in *Colossians 3*, we’ll keep looking at the new reality we’ve been brought into through Christ and how to actually live from this new reality.

II. Living From a New Reality 2

A. *Colossians 3:12-17*

1. **Verse 10** We put on the new man like we put on new clothes. This is a choice and we must be intentional. We don’t just accidentally wake up dressed for work each day. **We do this by renewing our mind to who we are in Christ.**

a. **Ephesians 4:23-24** Paul makes it clear the way we think and behave is a choice. It’s a choice to put off or put on. The new man is righteous and truly holy.

2. **Verse 11** Who we are in Christ has nothing to do with our flesh. That means we have to stop relating to ourselves based on our natural limitations. (IQ, looks, natural charisma, socioeconomic status, etc). Our identity in Christ so far

surpasses who we are naturally that there's really no comparison. Christ is now our life, our identity, and our reality—and if we'll believe Him, He'll make up the difference in every natural limitation.

3. **Verse 12** Paul shows us what living from this new reality looks like. Because we are chosen, holy, and beloved, we're called to put on:

- a. Tender mercies - not giving people what they deserve
- b. Kindness - goodness (generous)
- c. Humility - dependent on God, not thinking higher of ourselves than we ought.
- d. Meekness - power under control.
- e. Longsuffering - patient

4. **Verse 13** We are then told to bear with one another as Christ has already forgiven us. We are told to do this for people who are probably difficult because we have a complaint against them.

- a. Compare this with **Matthew 6:14-15**. Prior to the cross we had to forgive to be forgiven. Under the New Covenant we forgive because we've been forgiven.

5. **Verse 14** All things includes a lot of things: Holiness, purity, the gifts of the spirit. This emphasizes the importance of agape (unconditional one way) love. It is the bond (glue) that holds the body together. The word perfection has more to do with the idea of maturity than being sinless. Ex: Good doctrine is important, strategy is important but if the strength of our relationship is doctrine, agreement on strategy, worship style....what do we do when we disagree, which inevitably we will. **This is true for church, but it is also true for marriages.**

a. **1 Peter 4:8**

- b. Ex: Autoimmune disease in the body where we attack one another.

5. **Verse 15** The understood subject of this verse is you. We can make a choice to let God's peace rule in us when we meditate on His word.

- a. Great way to be by the spirit of God. **Peace - brabeuo - umpire**. The umpire makes the call. Also **Isaiah 55:12**.
- b. Ismael the house example and Dan Mohler giving examples.
- c. Thankfulness comes from our communion with God.

6. **Verse 16** We are to let the word is to dwell in us richly (with abundance, overflow) in wisdom.

- a. The word we let dwell richly will be what we use to teach others with. We teach out of overflow. **Question: How long does it take me to**

prepare a message? A lifetime in Christ because I don't so much prepare "teachings" as I am transformed and then share out of the overflow. That's where the power is!

- b. Another way of teaching is through songs, hymns, spiritual songs (worship).
- c. For many the word of God dwell so richly it becomes a psalm, hymn and spiritual song. That's the power that brings change because we've been brought to a place of worship. Ex: Paul and Silas - "See a Victory" takes what the enemy meant for evil and turns it for good.

7. **Verse 17** Because we live from a new reality (Christ in us and we have a new nature), now everything we do, we do unto the Lord with a heart of thankfulness.
- a. This includes our jobs, school, marriages, friendships, the way we take care of our bodies, personal conduct when no one is looking. We do it unto Jesus in His ability!

III. Conclusion These verses us what living from our new reality in Christ actually looks like. Christianity is not behavior modification through self-effort—it's Christ's life flowing through us. Because we've been raised with Him and given a new nature, we can now walk in love, peace, forgiveness, worship, thankfulness, and victory in every area of life. As the word of God dwells richly in us, heaven's reality begins flowing out of us everywhere we go.

IV. Discussion Questions

1. What was your top takeaway from tonight? What is the difference between behavior modification through self-effort and letting the life of Christ flow through you?
2. Which of the qualities in **Colossians 3:12-17** (love, peace, forgiveness, thankfulness, worship, etc.) do you most need to "put on" right now?
3. **Colossians 3:15** says to let the peace of God rule in our hearts. The word "rule" means umpire. How can peace help us be led by the Spirit and make decisions in everyday life?
4. Why do you think Paul connects peace and thankfulness together? How does thankfulness help us stay in peace?
5. What does it practically look like for the word of God to dwell in you richly instead of just occasionally visiting your mind?
6. If we really believed we were doing everything "unto the Lord," how would it change the way we handle work, marriage, friendships, private decisions, and everyday responsibilities?