

Colossians: Identity in Christ
Lesson 6 “Living From a New Reality”

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 his 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. Last week, we saw that much of *Colossians 2* is about what we’ve been delivered from. God never intended for us to keep chasing shadows once the substance came in Jesus. Legalism, mysticism, and man-made religion pull us back into bondage, but real freedom and transformation are found in holding fast to Christ.

B. Tonight, as we begin *Colossians 3*, Paul shifts from what we’ve been delivered from to the new reality we’re called to live in.

II. Living From a New Reality

A. *Colossians 3:1-12*

1. *Verse 1* This passage says we have already been raised with Christ (past-tense).

a. Why we must understand spirit, soul, and body (**1 Thessalonians 5:23**). It’s our spirit that has been raised, not our soul or body. **Once our spirit has been raised, the rest of the Christian life is training our soul to think like our spirit.**

b. **Ephesians 2:4-7** This process of showing the exceeding riches of His grace and kindness toward us has already begun (it’s not just in the future).

c. It’s important to realize this isn’t escapism or being so heavenly minded we are no earthly good. **John 3:13** - The goal is to bring God’s world here.

d. Many theologians believe Eden was the original temple of God on earth (had tree of life, river flowing out of it **Revelation 22:1-2**. God placed man there to walk with Him, minister to Him, and extend His rule throughout the earth. So when Paul tells us to seek those things that are above, he's not telling us to disconnect from earth—he's telling us to live from heaven's reality so we can bring heaven into the earth. From the beginning, God has wanted "days of heaven upon the earth" (**Deuteronomy 11:21**). The tabernacle of Moses was patterned after a heavenly reality (**Exodus 25:9, Hebrews 8:5**), and Jesus taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (**Matthew 6:10**).

2. **Verse 2** We have to set our mind just like we set our alarm clock every day. It's not automatic. **Mind - phronéō** mind/affections. This is more than our intellect; it is also our emotional realm/desires (Must be done by the power of the spirit).
3. **Verse 3** The fact that our life is hidden in Christ means it must be searched out. It's not readily apparent. Ex: Being seated in heavenly places.
 - a. **Proverbs 25:2** FYI - It's not hidden from us, it's hidden from the devil. It's hidden for us to go search it out.
 - b. We search it out and discover it in the word and by praying in the spirit.
4. **Verse 4** There are two applications to this passage.
 - a. The first is what the context is about. When Jesus appears (returns to the earth, we will be with Him in glory (glorified body, heavenly realm).
 - b. The second is the more clearly we behold Him and the more He reveals Himself to us, we become like Him. **2 Corinthians 3:16-18**.
5. **Verses 5-9** Out of our relationship with God and our new position in Him, we as believers are to put to death various sinful actions that we walked in prior to salvation when we lived out of our old nature.
 - a. I can't emphasize enough how we do all of this out of our new position and new identity, by the power of the spirit.
 - b. Creflo Dollar story
6. **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.**
7. **Verse 11** Who we are in Christ has nothing to do with our flesh. That means we have to stop relating to ourselves primarily based on the color of our skin, our socioeconomic status, the religion we were raised in, or other cultural distinctions. 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.
8. **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 compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

a. The key is we can put these things on because we already possess them in Christ. Just like we already own clothes hanging in our closet before you put them on, these qualities already exist in your born again spirit. We're not trying to become these things through self-effort—we're learning to live from who Christ already made us to be.

III. Conclusion - This passage shows us that Christianity is not about trying harder in the flesh—it's about learning to live from a new reality. We've been raised with Christ and seated with Him in heavenly places, so we're no longer supposed to live from the limitations of this world alone. As we renew our mind to who we are in Him, we begin bringing the reality of heaven into the earth—His nature, His peace, His love, His power, and His Kingdom flowing through our everyday lives.

IV. Discussion Questions

1. What was your top takeaway from tonight's message?
2. Why do you think Paul connects setting our mind on things above with bringing heaven's reality into the earth?
3. Many Christians think mostly about going to heaven one day, but Jesus taught us to bring heaven's reality into the earth now. How does that perspective challenge the way you think about Christianity, and how would your daily life change if you truly believed you were seated with Christ in heavenly places?
4. What is the difference between trying harder as a Christian and living from a new reality in Christ?
5. In what areas of your life are you most tempted to live from your flesh, past, emotions, or natural limitations instead of your identity in Christ?
6. What does it mean practically that compassion, kindness, patience, and humility already exist in your born again spirit? How do we "put them on"?