

Text: Colossians 3:1-17 *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above... Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature... Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*¹³ *Bear with each other and forgive one another... And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

Introduction

Understanding we are walking with Jesus and understanding how He is personalizing our relationship with Himself, puts this message in the proper context. Without understanding the context, we will consider this instruction restrictive and oppressive instead of liberating. When a personal and personalized relationship with Jesus remains our focal point, we begin to find that our behavior and attitude choices become more closely aligned with the directives from God's word found in places like Colossians 3 and other Bible passages. Not perfectly aligned, but increasingly.

Four practical steps. These four steps capture much if not most of the New Testament instruction on our practical walk with Christ .

1. Have an eternal perspective. (Vss 1-2)

- We can set our minds on things above by remembering the One who created earth.
- There is no logical reason to believe that Heaven will be a less colorful, less exciting, less creative and less fascinating place than earth. What would the imagination of God lovingly unleashed on our behalf and without restriction look like?
- We have a checkout date for this earthly tent, and we'll be checking into our eternal dwelling with Christ.

2. Pay attention to our personal habits. (Vss. 5-9)

- In Ephesians chapter 4:1 Paul prefaces his call for them to pay attention their personal habits by writing "I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received."
- The old behaviors are not fitting for who you who have become in Christ. Don't dress up in rags when you have been given royal robes.
- When we say "Thy will be done," we are not resigning ourselves to something less, we are yielding to something greater that God wants for us." That something greater is not found in the behaviors listed here in verses 5-9.

3. Be preoccupied with love. (Vss. 12-14)

- 1 Cor 14:1 (Berkely) "Make love your great quest."
- Philippians 2:3-4 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

- Ephesians 4:26 adds this instruction “In your anger do not sin”^l Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry,²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ***In other words, keep short accounts with grievances.***
- Hilary of Poitiers (A.D. 315-368). “I must pray for the gift of Your help and mercy that You may fill the sails of our faith and profession which have been extended to You with the breath of Your Spirit and direct us along the course of instruction that we have chartered.”
- The more energy we direct towards love, the less energy goes to the stuff in verses 5-9

4. **Share a celebratory spirit. (Vss 15-17)**

- In each of these three verses he references a spirit of appreciation for what we have in Jesus.
- Philippians 2:14 Do *everything* without grumbling or arguing, (like passing our annual budget last week).
- We are celebrities, not because we walk around expecting others to cater to us, but because the Scripture says in Zephaniah 3 that God celebrates us. He exalts over us with shouts of joy!
- As celebrities we have reason to celebrate.