

November 30, 2025 (Lesson 13)

LIVE WITH CHRIST

1. **Live by a New Affection** (Colossians 3:1-7)
2. **Put On Your New Nature** (Colossians 3:8-14)
3. **Imitate Christ** (Colossians 3:15-17; 4:2-6)

Central Truth: Every Christian should live to please God.

Focus: Discover the principles of living with Christ and put those principles into action.

Evangelism Emphasis: Living to please God is essential to effective witnessing.

Golden Text: “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Colossians 3:17).

Biblical concepts can be analyzed and discussed, but the application can be a challenge.

Sometimes a believer feels like the mighty conqueror standing on top of the mountain with the “sword of the Spirit” thrust triumphantly in the air, ready to take on any and all enemies. The next day a spiritually draining battle makes the mountaintop appear far away from the depressing valley. The conqueror’s lion-like roar becomes a mouse-like squeak.

The Colossian church was noted for its love and faith. Yet, it was a church under attack by false teachings, designed to enslave and deny them the power of Christ. In theological terms, we must have *orthodoxy* (correct beliefs), but we must also have *orthopraxy* (correct application). We must have a foundation that stands regardless of the attacks. We must also apply what we believe in our daily lives. The latter is Paul’s focus in this lesson’s material.

Throughout the letters, Paul emphasizes the need for believers to understand and live “in” or “with” Christ (thirty-plus times). This is foundational, essential, and the answer to all problems. He continually reinforced the theme. He understood if the Colossians could fully grasp this truth and internalize it (mind, heart, will, emotions), they could overcome the attacks and turn the battle around. This is living in Christ!

1. LIVE BY A NEW AFFECTION

A. Hidden With Christ (Col. 3:1-4)

¹ If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. ² Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

Previously, Paul emphasized believers are “dead with Christ” and dead to the things that could ensnare us (2:12, 20). Here, he emphasizes the resurrection power of Christ (3:1). One requires and informs the other. “If ye then be risen” is better understood as “therefore, since you are risen.” Here, *risen* literally means “to be raised together.” It is different from the usual New Testament term for *resurrection* (“to rise up”). Paul’s usage is an obvious reference to Christ’s resurrection, but it emphasizes joint participation in two ways. First, Scripture indicates the Godhead was fully involved and active participants in the Resurrection. Christ raised Himself through His own power (John 10:18), He was raised by the Father (Gal. 1:1), and He was raised by the Spirit (Rom. 8:11). Second, we are participants in Christ’s resurrection. Just as we have died in Him, we are now raised to new life together with Him. The same power that moved on His lifeless, crucified body and raised Him to life is the same Spirit of power that moves on us and raises us to new life, no longer encumbered by sins past, but empowered to live “with Christ.”

Justification declares we are forgiven because of faith in the blood of Christ (Rom. 5:9). However, *regeneration* also takes place, whereby we are transformed from dead sinners to righteous, living saints (1 Cor. 6:9-11; Titus 3:5). Therefore, we are no longer carnally minded (Col. 1:21), but actively search for, inquire into the nature of, and pursue the things Christ values (“seek” 3:1)—“set [focus] your mind” (v. 2 NKJV). His values are based on who He is, so to seek the things Christ values is to pursue Him with passion and intentionality. Then, the “things above” (heavenly things) which are consistent with His current place and position will be brought to realization in our lives. The “things above” also include the divine principles and Christ-centered truths established in the epistle. We have confirmation of Christ’s ability because He now sits at the right hand of the Father—a

designation of honor (Ps. 110:1), authority (Rev. 1:20), power (Dan. 7:13-14; Isa. 62:8), and victory (Ps. 20:6). This is contrary to the carnal spirit of religiosity embraced by enslaving teachers or leaders and their false doctrines.

“For” (Col. 3:3) means “since” or “because” in this context. It points back to what Paul just said, but introduces material that explains why it is important. Paul develops two thoughts in the next two verses. First, he reminds believers we are “dead” in Christ, a recurring theme. The repetition should not be ignored, as this death of self is an ongoing event in our walk with God. Therefore, our “life is hid.” This is not a reference to biological life, but rather the totality of who we are and what we value, which is revealed in our daily living. Our old sinful life is dead and no longer visible (Ps. 103:12). Christ becomes our life, and we live in His provision (1 Cor. 15:22). Second, we live in the hope of the benefits yet to come (Col. 3:4). Paul’s theology includes the “two-age motif.” That is, we live in the intersection of the present evil age and the age to come. We are already living in salvation’s provision, but we are not yet fully changed into what we shall be at Christ’s appearance. When that happens, not only shall we “appear with him in glory,” but we shall also be fully transformed (1 Cor. 15:51-58)—and for the first time see Him in the absolute fullness of His glory (1 John 3:2).

The Most Logical Step

I didn’t become a Christian because God promised I would have an even happier life than I had as an atheist. He never promised any such thing. . . . Rather, I became a Christian because the evidence was so compelling that Jesus really is the one-and-only Son of God who proved His divinity by rising from the dead. That meant following Him was the most rational and logical step I could possibly take.—Lee Strobel

B. Past Life (Colossians 3:5-7)

⁵ Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: ⁶ For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: ⁷ In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

On the basis of what Paul has written (“therefore”), the Colossians are instructed to apply these truths (v. 5). They are to kill once and for all (“mortify”) earthly or carnal “members” or anything that succumbs to sin (Rom. 6:12). This is consistent with Jesus’ admonition to correct any aspect of our lives that leads to carnality (Matt. 5:29-30). We are not to chop off our right hands or blind ourselves or shoot ourselves in the foot, but we must get to the root cause. Paul listed five ungodly actions and attitudes we must “put to death” (Col. 3:5 CSB): (1) “fornication,” or sexual activity outside of Biblical marriage; (2) “uncleanness,” or any activity motivated by immorality; (3) “inordinate affection,” or passion driven by lust or impure motives; (4) “evil concupiscence,” or harmful desires; (5) “covetousness,” or avarice, greed, or any evil desire that can take advantage of others. All these can become idols that we “worship”; however, the language indicates “covetousness” is “idolatry.”

These carnal or earthly desires (“which things”) and those who commit them (“children of disobedience”) incur “the wrath of God” (v. 6). The “disobedience” is motivated by doubting that God knows what is best for us and doubting He will punish us for our disobedience. Some people believe they are special and not subject to the warnings or wrath (see Ezek. 18:4, 20; Rom. 8:13). The Colossians are reminded that before salvation (“some time,” or “previously”) they were guilty of these transgressions (Col. 3:7). Paul’s admonition to the Corinthians parallels this verse and is pertinent here: “Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:11 NLT).

§ *Why is “a greedy person” considered “an idolater” (v. 5 NLT)?*

2. PUT ON YOUR NEW NATURE

A. Renewal and Unity in Christ (Colossians 3:8-11)

⁸ But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. ⁹ Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; ¹⁰ And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: ¹¹ Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

False teaching brought division into the Colossian church, and it still does. Having addressed evil actions that promote sin (Col. 3:5), Paul now addressed issues connected to the fiery little member of our bodies that inflames and empowers division (vv. 8-9). Christ's followers are commanded to "put off" what follows ("all these"). The term conveys completely removing "every hindrance" (Heb. 12:1 CSB). Paul then listed six old habits that should be dead in Christ: (1) "anger," or impulsive outbursts of indignation; (2) "wrath," or internal emotional fury; (3) "malice," or a wicked desire to injure; (4) "blasphemy," or slanderous speech that intends to defame someone's reputation; (5) "filthy communication"—usually implying filthy talk, but here the context includes abusive speech; (6) "lie not," or stop using deliberately deceitful speech (Col. 3:8-9a). He again utilized "put off" (v. 9b) here, meaning "to completely disarm and renounce" the old nature (pre-salvation), so our internal motivations and external actions are transformed through ("renewed") and governed by the "knowledge" of Christ (v. 10).

Colossae had a diverse population, composed of individuals from all parts of the Roman Empire. Ethnicity and status may have caused some division in the church (v. 11). Paul instructed them to stop seeing fellow believers based on earthly credentials, heritage, position, or national identity. The New Testament writers were aware of national and political boundaries (Acts 22:24-30), but emphasized the citizens in Christ's kingdom (Phil. 3:20) "are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal.

3:28). Once we embrace Christ, He becomes our identity (1 Peter 2:10). He is our “all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28); therefore, mutual love and esteem should mark our relationships.

Church “As Is”

A minister was being interviewed for a pastoral opening. After answering questions from the church’s committee, he asked, “What reputation does this church have in the area?” One member stated without concern, “It’s terrible, because of our disagreements.” The minister asked, “Doesn’t this hinder growth?” The same member said, “It doesn’t really matter. We like our church just as it is.” The minister told them that would change under his leadership. He was not selected.

B. Christ-like Characteristics (Colossians 3:12-14)

¹² Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. ¹⁴ And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

Paul moved from what we should not *do* to who we should *be*. Since we have been renewed and are identified with Christ (“therefore”), we must be clothed by or endowed and endued with attributes worthy of God’s chosen (“elect”), who are “holy and beloved” (v. 12). The core attributes of God are *love*, *life*, and *holiness*. He chooses to share those attributes with us. Just as they are evident in His dealings with us, they should be evident in our dealings with others—especially those who are a part of our faith journey.

He then commanded seven attributes (vv. 12-13): (1) “bowels of mercies” is compassion motivated by love; (2) “kindness” is generous benevolence in action; (3) “humbleness of mind” is a continual attitude of humility; (4) “meekness” is gentleness extended to others; (5) “longsuffering” is patience that does not expire; (6) “forbearing” is speech and actions that lift others up and esteem them; (7) “forgiving” considers a complaint (“quarrel”) that carries blame, but chooses to release the person from the offense and extend them favor. These are not always easy, especially the last one (or

seven!); however, we are to “put on” these attributes based on our forgiveness in Christ. It is not optional (Matt. 18:35; James 2:13).

Technically, Paul’s list of admirable attributes consists of eight qualities; however, the last one is intentionally separated, for it is the foundation of and motivation for the other seven (“above all these things,” Col. 3:14). “Charity” is love that flows out of God’s love. As we embrace that love fully in our lives, it becomes a gift we extend to others with the goal of restoring our relationships to godly standards. This results in a stronger relationship (“bond”) that brings completeness and harmony (“perfectness”) to both parties.

§ *What Christian attribute is “above all” (v. 14), and why?*

3. IMITATE CHRIST

A. Glorify the Indwelling Christ (Colossians 3:15-17)

¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. ¹⁷ And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

The end result of actively incorporating and expressing the attributes above is “the peace of God” (v. 15). *Peace* is often thought of as the absence of conflict resulting in a perfect life. It is better understood as the absence of turmoil in our souls, whereby we have a deep, abiding confidence that God is in control of all situations and is actively working to bring His best to us, regardless of what we see. This results in a calmness of the mind, heart, and emotions (Rom. 8:28, 35-39). We allow that peace to govern all aspects of our lives (“rule”). This results in a wholeness in us and the church (“body”). A church in conflict is not a convincing witness of God’s love and power.

No building, institution, or individual can stand without a strong, solid, and proper foundation. For us, that foundation is Christ (Isa. 28:16; 1 Cor. 3:11). Thus, the Apostle Paul cautioned us to

make certain “the word of Christ dwell[s]” in our lives (Col. 3:16a). “Word of Christ” is found only here in the New Testament, though elsewhere Paul refers to the “word of the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:15) and “the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). It is an exaltation of Christ and reveals the equality of the Trinity. The phrase can be taken two ways: (1) the word *from* Christ; or (2) the word *about* Christ. Paul had both in mind in light of the verses prior to this passage. The Word is to make a home in our lives (“dwell”) without predefined limits (“richly”). This is not a suggestion, but is to be applied with “all wisdom,” or great skill and forethought. It is internalizing the Word and living accordingly. Spiritual endeavors should not be haphazard or spur-of-the-moment blemished “offerings” (Mal. 1:6-14).

The influence of the “word of Christ” will be evident. We are to be intentional in the dissemination of our doctrine or beliefs (“teaching”) and our practice of those beliefs, and encourage and warn (“admonishing”) others to do the same (Col. 3:16b). As Paul pointed out here and elsewhere, the result may take many forms, but it has a special place in worship (1:28). *Worship* is not a “preliminary” function; that is, it is not something we do as part of the service, without planning and active participation. It is a foundational and purposeful encounter with God that radiates to others. Paul identified four specific forms of worship that lend themselves to fulfilling this verse: (1) “psalms” refers to the Book of Psalms, usually accompanied with music, which is very helpful in worship and life; (2) “hymns” includes the songs New Testament Christians composed to sing of God’s glory and works; (3) “spiritual songs” or better, Spirit-inspired songs; (4) “singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord,” which probably includes the previous three (3:16c). These address the heart of our worship, which must be dedicated solely and completely to the Lord.

Finally, Paul said everything we do, whether in “word or deed,” is to be done in the power, character, and example (“name”) of Jesus Christ (v. 17). This is a powerful command. Every action

we undertake and every word we speak should be subjected to the lordship of and for the glory of Jesus Christ. Appropriately fulfilled, it will lead to a lifestyle of thanksgiving and uplift our heavenly Father.

Set Your Spiritual Compass

I want to take my focus off myself and focus on God. It's like setting your spiritual compass so no matter which way you turn during the day, whatever comes up, then my thoughts go back to Him and whatever He said that morning.—Anne Graham Lotz

B. Live Prayerfully and Wisely (Colossians 4:2-6)

² Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; ³ Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: ⁴ That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. ⁵ Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. ⁶ Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

Someone once noted the life of Christ reveals He went from one place of prayer to another and performed mighty miracles along the way. Paul commanded the Colossians to “continue in prayer” (v. 2a). This implies devotion or dedication powered by love and perseverance, even when prayer does not come easily (“continue”). For emphasis, he also instructed them to “watch in the same”; they were not to become weary in well-doing (Gal. 6:9), or allow themselves to be less than fully alert and engaged (Matt. 26:40). It was not to be as a perfunctory requirement, but with joyfulness and “thanksgiving” (Col. 4:2b). This last term is where we get our word *eucharist* from the Lord’s Supper. As Jesus broke the bread (as a symbol of His broken body), He “gave thanks” (1 Cor. 11:24). In a sense, in prayer we are breaking ourselves (our will and desires) and offering them up with thankfulness for what Jesus has done for us and what He is going to do in us and for us. We follow His example.

Paul instructed the Colossians to continue praying for “us” as they prayed (4:3). In the letter’s opening verse, Paul noted Timothy was with him during this time of house arrest. The young man was part of Paul’s ministry team (Acts 17:14-15) and a minister in his own right (1 Tim. 1:2-3). Young people (especially those called to ministry) need the prayers, training, and support of the congregation and elders.

Paul had three specific requests in mind. First, he desired open opportunities (“door,” Col. 4:3) for preaching. The Greek term for “utterance” is the same term usually translated as *word*; Paul clearly had the Gospel in mind. Second, included in that proclamation is the “mystery of Christ.” This phrase refers back to the “mystery” preached to the Gentiles: “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (1:26-27). For this message, Paul was imprisoned (“in bonds”). Third, he wanted to preach with clarity (“make it manifest”) so the message is clearly understood and embraced (4:4).

The Colossians were also firmly instructed to be aware of their testimony and witness as revealed in actions (v. 5). Again, Paul emphasized our relationship with Christ is revealed daily as we conduct ourselves publicly and privately (“walk”). “Wisdom” is required to influence those who “are without” Christ. This is the continued application of skill based on knowledge and intelligence, infused by the provision and power of the Holy Spirit (James 1:5-6). They must also be good stewards (“redeeming”) of God’s “time,” looking for opportunities to promote Christ (Col. 4:5).

Finally, Paul instructed their “speech” (v. 6), or declaration of the Gospel directly or indirectly, be: (1) accompanied by “grace,” or with favor and concern that may not be deserved; (2) “seasoned with salt,” or with content that makes the hearer thirsty for Christ and preserves his integrity (Matt. 5:13); (3) informed by the Word (1 John 2:14) and guided by the Spirit (“how ye ought to answer”). May it be so in us.

§ *According to Colossians 4:5-6, how must we witness to individuals who need Christ?*

STUDY THE WORDS OF THE WORD

The Colossians were fully informed their past was dead in Christ. They were no longer slaves to the carnal nature. Their present life was to be lived through the knowledge and provision of Christ. Thus, they had the promise of a future life with Christ. Those truths were to inform and influence their thinking, emotions, motivations, speech, actions, and relationships.

The Epistle to the Colossians requires more than a cursory reading to fully grasp the significant truths revealed therein. However, as we have seen in this series of lessons, our in-depth study is rewarded and brings new appreciation for what Christ accomplishes in us. Daily Bible readings are essential. However, there are times we must examine the words of the Word. Paul informs us Scripture is timeless and always beneficial (2 Tim. 3:16)—even when it cuts us to the core (Heb. 4:12). The message to the Colossians is applicable today, and it is necessary for our perfection and performance (2 Tim. 3:17).

Daily Devotions

- M. Walk With God (Genesis 5:21-24; Hebrews 11:5-6)
- T. Avoid the Path of the Wicked (Proverbs 4:10-19)
- W. Honor God (Daniel 6:1-10)
- T. Pursue Holiness (Romans 6:15-23)
- F. Live in the Spirit (Romans 8:1-11)
- S. Be Justified by Christ (Galatians 2:15-21)