

**Title:** What Does a True Believer Look Like? (Part 2)

**Text:** Colossians 3:12-17

**Date:** May 23, 2021

## INTRO.

One of the most amazing things about Jesus was his ability to confront sin...without losing the sinner (not losing the sinner personally). Jesus never compromised his convictions or truth...but nor was he ever unkind, or coldhearted.

- Jesus: hard on sin!
- Jesus: really kind to sinners!

**For example both of these things were said about Jesus:**

- Once after preaching a message... *“Many of His disciples, when they heard him, said, ‘This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?’” (John 6:60).*
- But also... *“Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!” (Matt 11:19).*

**Example 1** – In Matt 5-7 at the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus railed against the sins of anger, divorce, lust, selfishness, greed, etc.

- But then in Matt 8:1-3 he came down from the mountain and touched a leper.

**Example 2** – In John 8:1-12, a woman caught in adultery was brought to Jesus. “She should be stoned...” And Jesus spoke over the crowd: *Let the one without sin hurl the first rock.*

- But then he said to the woman, *“Go, and from now on, sin no more.”*

**Example 3** – In Mark 14:47 and Luke 22:51, in Gethsemane as Judas and the angry crowd came to betray/arrest him. They had clubs, swords, fire, and lanterns. Jesus’ disciples weren’t sure what to do!

- Even as he was about to head to the cross...Jesus reaches down and reattaches the ear that was sliced off by the High Priest’s servant, Malchus.

The most amazing thing about Jesus? Grace to meet you where you are...power to get you where you need to be!

**Background of Col 3.** As Paul pivots from doctrinal teaching (Ch. 1-2) to focusing now in his letter upon practical living (Ch. 3-4) → his emphasis is on the believers’ new identity in Jesus.

This is, fundamentally, the story of the Scripture.

- Gen 1-2, God made us.
- Gen 3, Sin obliterated us.
- The rest of the Scripture → God’s Son is redeeming and restoring us.

So in Col 3:1-7, Paul's emphasis for the new believer is this: keep your focus on Christ!

- Four times in vv 1-4 → Christ, in Christ, with Christ.
- In the middle of the thought, v 11 → Christ is all, and in all.
- Three times in vv 15-17 → Peace of Christ, Word of Christ, Name of Christ, etc.

The fastest way to a brand-new life...the fastest way to a breakthrough...the surest way to your best possible life...the best possible you → turn your eyes to Christ! Focus on Christ!

**Recap from last week (part 1)** → When I become a Christian, the new life Jesus forms in me (Galatians 4:19) will demonstrate the undeniable attributes of holiness and Christlikeness.

Paul's argument in Col 3:1-5 is this. The Gospel that saves you will be demonstrated on a daily basis in your Christian life.

- Just as Jesus died on the cross, and then was raised to new life on the third day.
- So sin will "die" in your life – and the new character of Christlikeness/holiness will spring forth in your life by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**Key Idea**. Fundamentally, a true believer – a born again Christian – looks more and more like Jesus, and less and less like their old self.

V5 – something must come off → put these behaviors to death.

Sexual immorality and impurity.

- No fornication. No same sex relationships. No adultery. No bestiality.
- No getting close to the line (1 Thess 5:22).
- God's desire: one man, one woman, one lifetime, in a covenant, monogamous marriage!

Lust – eyes feast, lingering, pornography.

Evil desire – to objectify a man/woman and have them for your own salacious desires.

Greed/idolatry – being driven by money, a lack of contentment, always needing "more."

Anger – always ill...bad mood all the time...

Wrath – Sudden outbursts...sharp mood here and there, make others nervous.

Malice – to plan to hurt someone else. Create a plan to inflict pain.

Slander/bad language/lying – smallest member of your body (tongue) causing the most trouble (James 3:6).

**Paul's key thought is in Col 3:8** → Put it all away, put it aside, get rid of it!

- ILLUS: No one would get clean and then put sweaty gym clothes back on...or bring nasty trash into a clean kitchen.

**Key for Today's Message:** it is not enough to just separate from sin...but we must also wholeheartedly embrace the new life (character) God wants us to cultivate. (2 Cor 5:17).

V12 – something must be put on → “*as God's chosen ones, holy and dearly loved*”

- Yes, God took the initiative to save you – you are elect in Him (John 6; Eph 1).
- Yes, God's election of you is for service/worship...not just for your personal benefit.
- You are not a piece of artwork hanging in a museum to be admired.
- You are a soldier on the battlefield...being changed...fighting sin...to inspire others to do the same!

God choosing to save us (v 12) is a reference to the picture of adoption.

- You and I had no permanent home.
- But God gave us the best opportunity (be saved).
- Now in God's home, under God's roof, let's abide by God's rules.

Lesson: God adopts us as His children...so that as His children we'll reflect His character!

God wants us to live up to who we're made/called to be.

- Holy = separate from the world.
- Loved = filled with something permanent, unchanging...God's love.

**Listen to these Christlike, godly virtues:**

Compassion – to exercise pity...mercy...to “feel” what another person feels.

Kindness – it means gracious sensitivity...gracious to others...your character is “helpful” to others and it helps meet their needs.

Humility – to serve/care for others without having to be recognized. To avoid honor and focus on helping others.

Gentleness – meekness, helping others with love and grace...to help, not condemn. To use my strength to benefit another.

Patience – to refrain from revenge...to be willing to endure wrongdoing/hardship.

V13, Forbearance – to put up with someone's quirks...knowing that I, too, am quirky.

V13, Forgiveness – to pardon, to choose to know the offense and overlook it.

- Just as Jesus forgave me! I betrayed Jesus...but He forgives (Matt 6:12).

**Notice Paul's heartfelt call to now put on love (Col 3:14-15).**

V14, "To put on love above all else" → Put on a feast of charity.

- As someone would serve a delicious meal...many dishes...but from one chef.
- Everything that is served up in your life...must come from a heart of love.

Love = brings every other virtue to perfection (1 Corinthians 13:13).

- Love is like glue that holds it all together.
- Love brings order and balance.

V14, "The perfect bond of unity."

- If I know I'm loved...I am willing to do anything.
- If I'm not loved...I'll eventually lose heart.

**Flowing from this culture of love and unity is peace and gratitude!**

*"Perfect harmony...unity...one body"*

What Paul means is this → the diverse individuals (vv 9-10): Greeks, Jews, circumcised, non-circumcised, barbarians, Scythian, slave, free, etc.

- There can be "unity in community" through Christ, and Christ alone!
- Diverse individuals...joined together in Jesus' body...finding peace/community.
  - Peace/mindset is this: "I'm not more worthy than you..."

**Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you (Col 3:16-17).**

It's the picture of Jesus' word/truth:

- Building a house in your heart.
- Planting a garden in your heart.
- It's come to stay...linger...find a home.

Teaching – literally means to teach, like a teacher to a pupil.

Admonishing – to call attention with warning, to caution, to reprove gently.

Psalms – to strengthen with speech or music...using the sacred words of God. (The Psalms)

Hymns – to celebrate in songs, singable truth to God. Inspired by one's faith/love for Jesus.

Spiritual songs – to sing a supernatural song...a song of life/spirit...it's a general description of all music whether with or without musical accompaniment.

Singing to God with gratitude in your heart – without this, there is no real worship to God! With music, with voice, or with both – if adoration of Christ is not in the heart – it's nothing to God!

**Finally, may all of my words and actions be done in Jesus' name (Col 3:17).**

- Word = talk, something said, reasoning, computation.
  - It's where we get our word for logic/reasoning.

Do the words that flow from my mouth sound like one who is moving ever closer to the Lord Jesus Christ?

- Deed – this means walk. To toil, to labor, to give effort.
  - This means literally where my hands and feet go/do physically.
  - It describes the action, habits, and patterns of my life.

Do I live in such a way it could be said of me – he or she is moving ever closer to the Lord Jesus Christ?

**Bottom Line.** Paul told the Colossians that true believers put away the sinful practices of the old life and put on the holy character of Christ.

**Application**

1. Am I keeping my eyes on Jesus' resurrection? (This is how Paul begins his whole point in Col 3:1-4; we serve a resurrected King!)
  - a. If Jesus did that/then (historical resurrection)
  - b. What can he do for me/now (personal resurrection)?
2. What things need to be put away, to be put off, to be put to death in my life?
3. What holy pursuits do I need to embrace?
4. In what way am I daily/faithfully planting the Word of God in my heart, home, and habits?

Jesus has really clear words about sin: get rid of it.

Jesus has really kind, inviting words for you the sinner: come to Me!