

# The Christian Arsenal

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## COLOSSIANS 3:1-17

In **chapters 3 and 4 of Colossians**, Paul turns his attention away from **doctrine** to **daily living**. He turns his attention to the **practical application of the truths he has been teaching**.

We've said this before...we can know the Bible from cover to cover and we can know Bible doctrine up one side and down the other, but if we don't apply it to our daily lives what good does it do us?

We need to keep in mind that an unbeliever of Paul's day...especially the idol-worshippers could go and bow down before the idol, put his offering on the altar and go out of that pagan temple and live the same old life of sin he was living before he ever came to the temple to worship...this was perfectly acceptable.

**How a person *believed* had no bearing on how a person *behaved*.**

Christianity brought a completely **new** mindset. **Faith** in Christ means being **united** with Christ. It means being **indwelt** by the Holy Spirit. **It means being guided and directed and controlled by Him.**

And we cannot live in sin if we're being controlled by the Holy Spirit of God!

And for that reason, Paul connects **doctrine with duty** in these last two chapters and he does this by giving certain **specific instructions** on how to apply Bible doctrine to our everyday life!

### **Colossians 3:1-4...**

Several times already in this book we have seen Paul begin a sentence with the word **"if."** And we said several weeks ago that this word many times is translated **"since."**

In the Greek, there are **four class conditions** of the word **"if."**

**"If"** and **it's not true**...EX: If I had stayed home this morning, I would have missed seeing all of you.

**"If"** and it **may be true, or it may not be true**...EX: If you get to church before I do tonight, will you save me a place?

**"If"** and it **might be true, but it is very doubtful**...EX: If I get to church before you do tonight, I will save you a place.

And there's one more...

**"If"** and **it is true** (or since or because)...EX: If you are going to be here early any way, you might as well save me a place.

And this "if" means just that...It's "if" and it's true. **It means "since" or "because."** **It denotes "reality."**

Paul reminds the Colossians that they **have** been raised up with Christ, and **this is the path to holiness**...not **self-denial**, or **angel worship**, or **rites and rituals**, or **human wisdom** or **knowledge** or **philosophy**.

And Paul says, **"Since** you've been raised up with Christ, **keep seeking things above, and set your mind on the things above, not**

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on things on this earth."

Does this mean we're to go around with our heads in the clouds and we're never to **enjoy** serving the Lord this side of heaven? Does this mean we are to become so **heavenly minded** that we're no **earthly good**?

No...it simply means that the believers' perspective of this life should be different from that of the unbeliever.

I heard this past week about a certain key battle in WWII. On the ground, this battle seemed to going very, very badly...in fact it looked like the allies were losing. But, the pilots flying over and giving support came back and said, "No, the allies aren't losing...they're winning. It was a matter of perspective!

Isn't it wonderful to know that this world truly is **not** our home...that we're only passing through? Isn't it great to know that the "here and now" is not all there is?

**Verse 3** tells us we are dead.

Last week we saw that **before** we came to know Jesus, we were dead. Here we see that **after** we came to Jesus **we're both dead and alive!** Look at **verse 3** again. Paul mentions our death and our life in the same sentence, doesn't he?

Consider some of the things Jesus said.

Jesus said, "**The way you gain is to lose.**"

Jesus said, "**The way you receive is to give.**"

Jesus said, "**The way you are exalted is to be humbled.**"

And Jesus said, "**The way you live is by dying.**"

**In many ways, the Christian life is a paradox.**

**Before** salvation, our death was a **hopeless death - a doomed death**. **After** salvation, our death is **directly identified with the Lord Jesus Christ**.

**Galatians 2:20:**

"I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me."

**Romans 6:6:**

"...our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin."

What does the death of a Christian mean? It means we are dead to the enslavement of sin in our lives. It also means we are dead to the penalty of sin in our lives.

**Verse 4** tells us that Christ doesn't just **give** us life...He **is** our life! Without Him, we **have no** life! Without Him, we're still dead in our trespasses in sin. We're still enslaved to sin and under the penalty of sin!

But, **verse 4** doesn't stop with the fact that He is our life...I mean, that's enough right there...but it also says when the Lord Jesus Christ is revealed, then we also will be revealed with Him in glory!

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Do you see what Paul is doing? He's saying, "Look Christian,  
don't look at the world around you and get discouraged!  
Keep seeking the things above.  
Set your mind on the things above.  
You've been raised with Christ. One day, you'll be  
revealed with Him in glory!"

We're to look at earth from heaven's point of view. Our physical bodies are on this earth, but our minds and hearts should be in heaven.

Remember when the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years because of their **unbelief**?

Well, there were two **believing** men, Joshua and Caleb, who were on that forty-year trek through the wilderness. What kept them sustained...what kept them from discouragement? Their minds and hearts weren't in the **wilderness**, their minds and hearts were in **Canaan**! They knew they had an inheritance coming and they lived in the light of that!

And this is exactly what Paul is saying here. **Live your lives in the light of your inheritance that is coming!**

**Verses 5-9...**

We're to lay aside those old sins...  
those things that once **controlled** our lives...  
those things that once **consumed** our lives...

Once we walked in darkness, now we walk in light. I believe in **verse 5** we see sins of **perverted passion...sexual sin**. And in **verse 8**, we see sins of **wicked hatred...social sin**.

**And Paul is specific in this list. Have you ever noticed that we're not too very uncomfortable when a preacher talks about "sin"? But, when that preacher begins to make a list of specific sins, that makes us a little uncomfortable, doesn't it? Why? Because sooner or later he's going to name one that we commit!**

Remember Paul is addressing Christians! Well, **do** Christians still struggle with these sins? **YES!** By the way when we look at the list of sins in **verse 5**, we would all say, "What a terrible list of sins." But, when we look at the list of sins in **verse 8**, we would say, "Well, **this** list may not be so bad."

Because it's this second list that believers commit more often and therefore have become desensitized to the most. Dr. G. Campbell Morgan called this list **"the sins in good standing."** I'm sure Dr. Morgan said this facetiously, because there are no such sin as **"sins in good standing"** with God!

And did you notice the sins in **verse 8**, for the most part, have to do with the **tongue**? It's so easy for us to open our mouths and say something that is hurtful and harmful! **Even those things which may be true!**

Let me ask you...is sin in the life of a believer the same as sin in the life of an unbeliever? **NO! It's worse.**

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WHY? Because we have the Holy Spirit **after** salvation and if we sin, we are acting in direct opposition to the Holy Spirit. He whispers to the believer, "My child, this is the way...walk ye in it!" And when the believer goes on and sins anyway, he is **directly opposing** the Holy Spirit of God!

Well, how can we become victorious over these sins? Over **any** sin?

Paul tells us in the next verses...

## **Verses 9-11...**

Paul says, "**...put on the new self...**" and this is used as in *putting on a piece of clothing*.

Well, if we're to put on this **new** self, **what is it?**  
And if we're to lay aside the **old** self, **what is that?**

Let's look at the "old self" first.

The "old self" is the person you were before Christ saved you. This person **acted** a certain way, **talked** a certain way, **thought** a certain way, even maybe **dressed** a certain way! **It's the old lifestyle you lived before Christ saved you.**

And I believe Paul is saying, "Slip out of that old garment and put on the new garment. Slip into something more comfortable...more in keeping with being God's child."

And I believe the Lord Jesus would agree with Paul. I believe He says to us... **"Take off that old robe stained with all that sin and put on My spotless robe of righteousness."**

The **"new self"** seeks to please the Heavenly Father in all that he does, says, thinks and is.

**"If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away, behold, new things have come."**

## **Verse 11...**

God makes no distinction among any of His children.

God doesn't look at someone from **one nation** any differently than He looks at someone from another nation.

God doesn't look at someone from **one religious background** any differently than He looks at someone from another religious background.

God doesn't look at someone from **one culture** any differently than He looks at someone from another culture.

Nor does He look at someone from **one economic position** any differently than He looks at someone from another.

God is not willing for any to perish for **all** to come to repentance!

Paul says in the **Book of Galatians** that God doesn't even make a distinction between male and female.

All people, no matter what their **gender**, or **race** or their **religion** or their culture or their **social** or **economic** positions...all must come to the Father through the blood of His dear Son!

## **Verses 12-17...**

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Paul continues the "putting off and putting on" metaphor. As Warren Wiersbe put it... **"Paul exhorted his readers to put off the 'graveclothes' of sin and the old life, and to put on the 'graceclothes' of holiness and the new life in Christ."**

Paul is exhorting you and me today to do the same thing. But why? Why should we? Well, Paul gives several reasons in this passage of Scripture.

What we see first is that God **chose** us. Now, we could go into a long discussion on election and being chosen, but let me just say this...if you have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, you have been chosen.

No one is going to hell because God arbitrarily predestined him to go to hell. And no one is going to heaven because he deserves to be there. No one is going to hell who does not deserve to be there, and no one is going to heaven because he deserves to be there.

People go to hell because they have refused to repent and receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.

People go to heaven because there was a time they knew they were a sinner and they knew they needed a Savior and they knew they could not save themselves and they came to the Cross and repented of their sin and called upon the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ to wash them white as snow!

**Have you ever done that? Then, you are one of the chosen!**

Election is Bible truth...but it doesn't need to be taught as something it isn't. It simply means that God took the initiative in your salvation. It means that you could have never loved Him unless He first loved you. You could have never come to Him unless He first came to you.

Being chosen simply means that you and I are saved not because of something you and I have done, but because of what Christ has done!

And if you belong to Christ, then God has **set you apart**. That's the meaning of the word **"holy"** in **verse 12**. Not only have you been set apart, but you are **loved by God**. In **verse 12**, Paul calls believers **"beloved!"**

When an **unbeliever** sins, he is a creature breaking the laws of the holy Creator and Judge. but when a **Christian** sins, he is a child of God breaking the heart of his loving Father.

Not only are we **chosen** in Him, and **set apart** as holy by Him, and **loved** by Him, we are also **forgiven** by Him...**verse 13**.

And all this expresses to us **the grace of God!**

What a motivation for us to put on the new self! Knowing we could do nothing to warrant any of these blessings...they are ours because of the amazing grace of God!

I love to hear other people pray...especially those of my own family...and many times when Brent prays he thanks God for His "amazing grace."

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And Paul tells us because of the gifts that come to us from the grace of Almighty God, we bear some responsibility to put on the grace garments Jesus gives us...

We must put on a **heart of compassion** and we must put on **kindness** and **humility** and **gentleness** and **patience**. We must put on **forbearance** and **forgiveness** and **love**.

Do you see what God is calling His children to do? He is calling them to a life that expresses **many of His own characteristics**.

How many of these characteristics do you exhibit to those with whom you come in contact day after day?

**Would you agree with me that it is hardest to consistently show these characteristics to those in our own family?**

Not only should we put on these characteristics because of the **grace of Christ**, but we should put them on because of the **peace of Christ**.

God's Word promises you and me that there is a peace that we cannot comprehend. It is the peace that comes to us only from the Lord Jesus Christ. And this peace will guard our heart and mind in Christ Jesus!

I don't know about you but the older I get, the more peace means to me. And I'm so grateful for the peace of the Lord Jesus Christ! He wants this peace to rule in my heart! And I believe this means that in order for His **peace** to really rule in my heart, I can't let **anything else** rule in my heart!

In **verse 16** we see the **word of Christ**.

I read this week: "When the **child of God** looks into the **Word of God** and sees the **Son of God**, he is changed by the **Spirit of God** into the **image of God** for the **glory of God**."

Does this happen to you? I don't think we can draw close to the Lord Jesus without getting into His Word! I don't think you and I can exhibit the characteristics of Christ without getting into His Word!

I hope you do this. I hope you have a hunger and thirst for His Word! I hope you and I look upon His Word, as Job said, as more necessary to us than the food we eat!

Then, Paul goes on to tell us we should be teaching and admonishing each other with **psalms and hymns and spiritual songs...singing with thankfulness in our hearts to God**.

Have you ever thought about the fact that you could admonish someone or someone could admonish you with singing? I have to say that my singing would do more than **admonish**...I'm afraid it would **offend**.

I hope we never ever stop singing the old hymns...but you know, we should appreciate the choruses that are really verses of Scripture set to music. That's why the book of **Psalms** was written. Those were the songs of the early Christians. And I believe God likes it when we sing His psalms back to Him! I mean, He must like them, He wrote them!

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Well, let's close by looking at **verse 17...**

We are to do all we do in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Have you ever noticed that folks get real quiet when you mention the name of Jesus? I mean, you can tell folks you are a Baptist or a Methodist or an Episcopalian...but if you say, "I'm a Christian" or, "I'm a follower of Christ" folks get real quiet. You can talk about God, but folks don't really want to hear you talk about Jesus.

I believe it's a very sobering thought that you and I are identified with the name of Christ. My prayer is that we will never take that name in vain. People take the Lord's name in vain in more ways than just cursing. People take the name of the Lord in vain by bringing dishonor and shame to it.

Paul exhorts you and me today to do all that we do in the name of the Lord. And I believe the test for anything we would say or think or do is this... "Am I **doing** this...am I **saying** this...am I **thinking** this...in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ? Will what I'm about to do or say bring His name honor or dishonor?"

If He were here right now in the flesh, would I still **say** or **do** or **think** the same thing? Well, He is here...He lives in you and He lives in me...and that should be enough to inspire us to bring honor to His name!

The last phrase we see in **verses 16 and 17** is that we should have thankful hearts! Christians, of all people, should be thankful. I believe we live in a time of "easy-believism" and "seeker-friendly churches" and I believe this promotes hearts that take their salvation for granted...hearts that cease to be grateful for what God has done for them.

Have you ever poured your life into a child or someone else...and have that someone cease to be grateful? Well, just as that grieves our hearts, I believe it grieves the heart of God for His children to be ungrateful.

May I say that this Thursday, as our families gather together to celebrate Thanksgiving, we should first of all give thanks through Jesus to God the Father for all that He has done for us...

Paul has taught us today some very practical ways to live out our Christianity. There are things we are to do and things we're not to do. There are things we should "put off" and things we should "put on." There are things we should do and things we should not do. This is Christianity in "shoe leather"! May all we do this coming week be done in the name of Jesus!