

# Colossians 3

# Serving the Lord Christ

Introduction

The New Self  
3:1-17

The Godly  
Household  
3:18 - 4:1

Conclusions



Photo from: <https://leonmauldin.blog/2022/09/02/biblical-colossae/>

# Introduction

## The Main Theme of Colossians

- Paul's Primary purpose in writing to the Colossians was to point them to **the preeminence of Christ**.
- There was some complicated false teaching that was making inroads among them.
- Whatever it involved - and it had several aspects - the biggest problem was that Christ was diminished.
- If we get nothing else out of this letter, we need to remember that **Jesus gets the highest place**.
- He deserves more worship and glory than we can give.

Previously in  
Colossians

What's in  
Colossians 3?

Key Verses



# Previously in Colossians

- In **Chapter 1**, Paul dug into the important truths of who Christ truly is and what he has done for us.
- He is truly God and he has saved us from our sins.
- In **Chapter 2**, he emphasized what that means from our perspective.
- We were dead, but God has made us alive in Christ.
- We were condemned, but Christ took our sin upon himself when he died for our transgressions.

From  
Colossians  
1

From  
Colossians  
2

# From Colossians 1

## **Colossians 1:16-20**

16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. 17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, 20 and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.



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## From Colossians 2

### **Colossians 2:13-15**

13 And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. 15 He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.



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## What's in Colossians 3?

- The chapter opens with instructions to set our minds on heavenly things.
- Heaven is already our home.
- We need to begin centering ourselves there in anticipation of the life to come.
- Paul reminds us that we should be constantly putting off the old self and putting on the new.
- One way of saying it would be, "We need to become who we truly are."
- Finally he gives us instructions for Christian households.

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# Key Verses: Colossians 3:15-17

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- Therefore, we need to set our mind on heavenly things.
- Paul also points us to Christ's return. We should constantly be looking forward to this event.
  
- **3:5-14** Here we see the vital **put off and put on** principle.
- As long as we are still walking around in this body of death we need to put forth effort to leave the old life.
- Our thoughts and actions must line up with our new identity.
  
- **3:15-17** In our **key verses** Paul gives us a wonderful picture of the Christian life.

From  
Philippians  
3 & 4

Putting Off  
and Putting  
On

Key Verses



# From Philippians 3 & 4

From Tony  
Evans

## **Philippians 3:20 -21**

20 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

## **Philippians 4:8**

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

Paul ... says in essence, “Take a good look at heaven’s perspective on every issue, so you will know how to live on earth.” ... To help the Colossians develop a new mentality, Paul reminds them of their new identity. ... If Christ is your new identity (that is, if you’re a Christian) and heaven is your new location (you’re physically on earth but participating in the spiritual realm), then you’re called to live from that new perspective. Decisions are to be informed by an eternal, heavenly perspective rather than an imperfect, earthly one. We need a Christian view of the world—a kingdom worldview.



Tony Evans, Bible Teacher  
and Commentator



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# Putting Off and Putting On

Paul lists **two sets** of things to put off.

- The first set, in **v.5**, deals with sins that seem to stress a sexual component.
- This was probably needed because ancient Greek culture, much like ours, was highly sexualized.
- The second set, in **vv.8-9**, has to do with our general attitude toward others.
- It includes hateful speech as well as hateful actions.
- His language toward these vices is very strong.
- He might have said something softer, "Try to refrain from..."
- Instead he starts by saying "**Put them to death.**" Then later, "**Put them all away,**" and "**Put them off.**"

Changing  
Clothes

United in  
Christ

# Changing Clothes

- The "put off and put on" picture is a lot like changing clothes.
- Think back to when Jesus rose from the dead. He left his graveclothes behind. We need to do the same.
- Similarly, when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, it says,

**John 11:44** The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "**Unbind him, and let him go.**"

- I think sometimes we need the help of others to take the graveclothes off the old, dead former self.

Christian  
Virtues

Romans  
13:11-12

Ephesians  
4:17, 20-24



# Christian Virtues

- Paul expects us to replace the vices of our former life with virtues of a specifically Christian sort.
- The philosophers among the ancient Greeks and Romans were keen on cultivating virtues.
- Notably absent from their lists is the concept of humility.

## **Colossians 3:12-14**

12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

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## Romans 13:11-12

11 Besides this you know the time, that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed. 12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand. So then let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

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## Ephesians 4:17, 20-24

17 Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. ...

20 But that is not the way you learned Christ!—

21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

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# United in Christ

## Galatians 3:27-29

- In v.11, Paul reminds us that just as we are all made in the image of God, social barriers are broken down when we are *remade* in his image in Christ.
- The Jews looked down on the Greeks, the Greeks looked down on the "barbarians," those without Greek language and culture.
- The Scythians were barbarians especially despised for their nomadic, warlike tendencies.
- And while Paul will give special instructions to slaves and masters in just a moment, he reminds them both that they are now equal in the sight of God.

**Scythian Warrior  
(British Museum)**





## Galatians 3:27-29

27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

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Philippians  
3 & 4

Putting Off  
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On

Key Verses

# Key Verses: Colossians 3:15-17

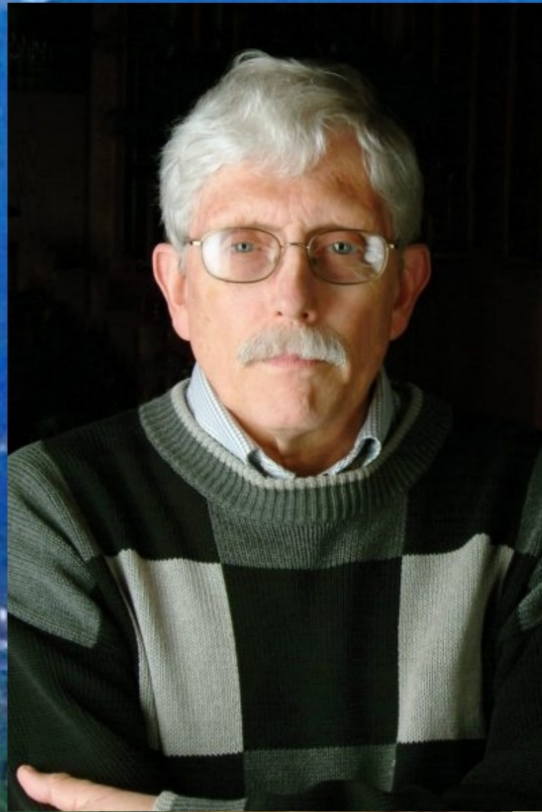
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From Grant  
Osborne

From Chuck  
Smith

Giving  
Thanks





This **peace** is three-dimensional - vertical (**peace with God**, as in 1:20; reconciliation achieved by "making peace through his blood"), horizontal (**peace in the church**, Eph. 4:3: "the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace"), and internal (**peace in the heart**). In one sense all three dimensions are active here. As Christ sends his peace to rule the community, the church allows it to control its relationships, and the people experience this heartfelt peace concretely in their daily lives.

Grant R. Osborne (1942 - 2018)  
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

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We study the Word of God so that as we become rich in our understanding and knowledge of God, His Word becomes at home in our lives. ...

Rich and varied worship is a sign that the word of Christ is dwelling in your heart. But it is also a great way to plant His word in your heart as we sing songs that teach us the Word of God and help us meditate on His truth.

Chuck Smith (1927-2013),  
founding pastor of the  
Calvary Chapel Movement

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# Giving Thanks

## **1 Thessalonians 5:16-18**

16 Rejoice always, 17 pray without ceasing, 18 **give thanks in all circumstances**; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

## **Ephesians 5:18-20**

18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, 19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, 20 **giving thanks always and for everything** to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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## The Godly Household 3:18 - 4:1

- Here Paul breaks down the three categories of relationships that would be found in an ancient household.
- They are:
  - Wives and Husbands
  - Children and Fathers (Parents, but mostly fathers)
  - Slaves and Masters

**Wives and  
Husbands**

**Children  
and Fathers**

**Slaves and  
Masters**

# Wives and Husbands

- The husband/wife relationship can be summarized as:
  - **Loving leadership** from the husband.
  - **Respectful submission** from the wife.
- Paul's instructions here are consistent with what he says in **Ephesians 5** and what Peter says in **1 Peter 3**.
- Some translators, including Bill Mounce, give a slightly different take to v.19

**"Husbands, love your wives and do not become bitter toward them."**





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# Children and Fathers

- Again, this is similar to what Paul says in **Ephesians**.
- For children Paul uses the word "**obey**" which has a sense of following direct commands.
- The concept of the wife's **submission** is more of an attitude, of recognizing who is in charge.
- For the child it is more like "**Do as you are told.**"
- And yet there is a warning **for fathers** - and Paul is specifically addressing fathers here.
- Do not provoke your children to the point of discouragement.
- The idea is that if children feel they can never measure up, they will quit trying altogether.





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# Slaves and Masters

- Some of us may have to get past the slave/master relationship altogether before we can hear what Paul is saying.
- He did not immediately disrupt the social order in which perhaps 1/3 of the people in any given city were slaves.
- He does, however, redefine the master/slave relationship in both **3:11** and here in **4:1**.

**"Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven."**

On  
Onesimus

Working as  
for the Lord



# On Onesimus

- Paul spends more time talking to the slaves than the masters here.
- It might make us think there was some sort of tension among some disgruntled slaves.
- One possible source of such information might have been **Onesimus**, mentioned in **4:9**, was a runaway slave from Colossae who had now returned.
- It seems he met Paul in Rome, and Paul then led him to Christ.
- In a few months we will look at Paul's letter to **Philemon**, Onesimus's master.

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# Working as for the Lord

From Tony  
Evans

- Paul draws attention to the fact that slaves have certain responsibilities.
  - They should obey their masters.
  - They should serve sincerely and not just when their master is watching.
  - They should remember that the Lord is ultimately their master, so they are really serving him.
- By extension this would apply to all of us who are employees of someone else.

Ultimately, regardless of our occupations, we all serve God and are accountable to him for the quality of our work. Therefore, we should serve our employers wholeheartedly, rather than being people-pleasers who work only when being watched. You live before a sovereign God who sees everything you do. His rewards for your faithfulness are better than any raise you can receive. ... Let your motivation be spiritual. Since you work for God, you are to produce excellence. Since you produce excellence, you should satisfy your earthly employer and your customer. Make no mistake: with God, nothing goes unnoticed.



Tony Evans, Bible Teacher  
and Commentator



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# Conclusions

- In **Colossians 3** we are reminded that our lives in Christ need to look different from what they looked like before Christ.
- There should be a distinct BC and AD contrast as we **put off** worldly vices and **put on** Christian virtues.
- Further, these changes have the ability to transform whole households.
- The Christian home will look and feel different from a household in the world.

From Warren  
Wiersbe

From Grant  
Osborne

Key Verses

A Final  
Prayer



Warren Wiersbe  
(1929 - 2019),  
pastor and Bible  
teacher.

The Word will transform our lives if we will but permit it to “dwell” in us richly (3:16) The word dwell means “to feel at home.” If we have experienced the grace and the peace of Christ, then the Word of Christ will feel at home in our hearts. We will discover how rich the Word is with spiritual treasures that give value to our lives.



# Conclusions

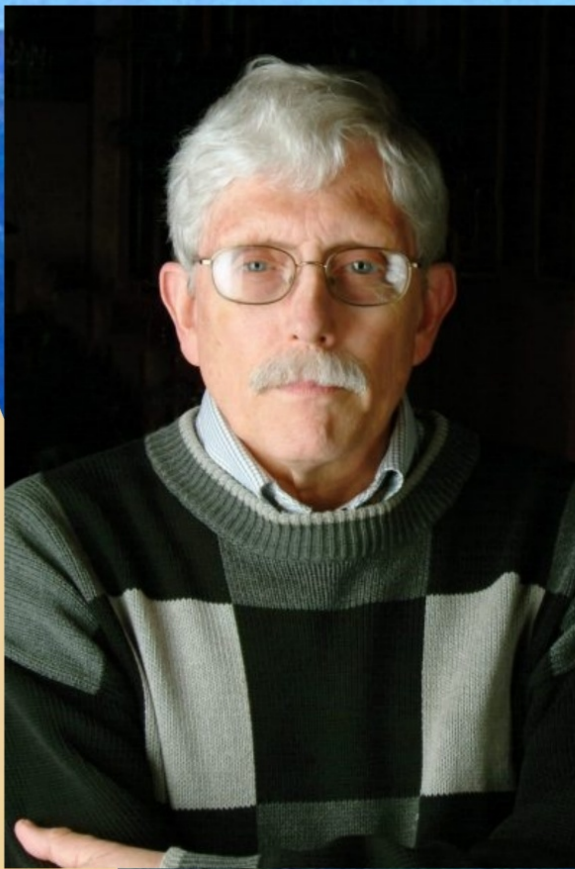
- In **Colossians 3** we are reminded that our lives in Christ need to look different from what they looked like before Christ.
- There should be a distinct BC and AD contrast as we **put off** worldly vices and **put on** Christian virtues.
- Further, these changes have the ability to transform whole households.
- The Christian home will look and feel different from a household in the world.

From Warren  
Wiersbe

From Grant  
Osborne

Key Verses

A Final  
Prayer



Grant R. Osborne (1942 - 2018)  
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

No, Paul did not call for the end of slavery or the manumission of all slaves, but he did challenge owners to consider their slaves as equal before the Lord and to treat them rightly at all times. This in itself would produce a social revolution and, in time, help to undermine the institution of slavery.



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# Key Verses: Colossians 3:15-17

15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.



# Conclusions

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# A Final Prayer

Dear Father in heaven,

- You have made us new creatures in Christ. We pray that you would empower us now to live for you.
- Help us to put to death those things of the old nature that are not pleasing to you.
- And help us to put on those attitudes and behaviors that would allow us to reflect your image in this world.
- And help us to order our home and work relationships in such a way as to exemplify relationships in your kingdom.
- All this we pray for the glory of our Lord Jesus,
- Amen.



# Conclusions

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# Colossians 3

# Serving the Lord Christ

Introduction

The New Self  
3:1-17

The Godly  
Household  
3:18 - 4:1

Conclusions



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