

Colossians Bible Study

3:1-17

Questions will be posed and space will be allowed for a written response. Make every effort to answer the questions before looking below for the answer. **The answers will be in bold print.**

1. The word “then” in 3:1 links the doctrinal section of this Epistle (chapter 2) to the practical application of how the Colossians are to live true Christian lives (3:1-4:6). Earlier in his letter (2:12), Paul established the fact that through Baptism, we are both buried and raised with Christ. Verses 1-4 connect what this dying and rising means with how Christians are to live here on earth. Having been raised with Christ, believers are to set their “hearts” (v. 1) and “minds” (v. 2) “on things above.”

Note that the imagery of verse 1, “Christ is seated at the right hand of God” (a phrase we repeat in the Apostles’ Creed) pictures a throne room, with God the Father as King and Jesus as His “right-hand man” – in the position of power and authority. What are some wonderful teachings that are included in this picture?

Ephesians 1:20-23

Romans 8:34

Psalms 110:1

2. Verse 3 says that having died to our sins with Christ, “your life is now hidden with Christ in God.” The new life we have in Christ is, at this time, “hidden” (invisible). What will happen when Christ returns to earth?
Colossians 3:4
- 1 John 3:2
3. Verses 5-11 give a list of sinful behaviors we are to daily “put to death.” While we have already died to our sinful nature in Christ, Satan constantly tempts us to continue to sin. The “putting to death” of temptations is an ongoing process. One of the sins mentioned in Paul’s list is greed (v. 5). Considering the other sins Paul mentioned, why do you think he includes greed?
4. Verses 10-11 describe what life is like being new people in Christ. Verse 11 in particular defines our new identity as Christians. In this description we find a comparison of several different social distinctions present in the world of the Colossians. “Barbarian” refers to anyone who could not speak the Greek language. “Scythian” refers to people who displayed savage brutal behavior. Who do these verses say to you about who you are a person redeemed by Christ Jesus as well as what Jesus means to you in your life?
5. In verse 12 Paul describes the Colossian Christian as “God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved.” Meditate on this reality of what God has made you to be in Christ. Then

think about what thoughts you would include in that prayer as a response to His love. Note these thoughts below.

6. Thinking about your own experiences as a member of a Christian congregation, why do you think Paul emphasizes the importance of forgiveness (v. 13)? See also Matthew 6:12, 14-15.
7. What connection is there between our forgiving others and God forgiving us? See Matthew 18:21-35 and Ephesians 4:32.
8. Reread verses 12-14. Also read Romans 15:5-6. Why is love the most essential of all virtues for Christian to put on?
9. In verses 15-17, Paul continues his description of what it means to live as God's chosen people. The "peace of Christ" is mentioned frequently in Paul's Epistles. What do you learn about the peace of Christ from the following references:
Colossians 1:2

Philippians 1:2

Philippians 4:7-9

Galatians 1:3
10. As we work together in Christian congregations, what effect does the peace of Christ have on our relationships with one another?
11. Five times within this letter, Paul urges the Colossians to "be thankful" (v. 15). How can attitudes of thankfulness improve relationships within a Christian congregation?
12. Paul now turns to the importance of studying and knowing the Gospel – the "word of Christ" (v. 16). As you think about the false teachings the Colossians faced as well as the false teachings Christians face today, why is the continued study of Christ's teachings essential?
Psalm 119:105

James 1:22-25
13. What does verse 16 also say about the importance of the Word of Christ in congregational worship?
14. "Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (v. 16) refer to a number of different types of music used in the early church. "Psalms" are the OT psalms. Undoubtedly most of these were

song by the early church. A “hymn” was song often used in celebrations to praise God for who He is. “Spiritual songs” told of God’s acts and praised Him for them.

How do psalms and other Scripture set to music, hymns, and spiritual songs used today help better remember important truths of the Gospel?

15. Paul concludes this section of his letter with a strong statement that tells the purpose of the lives of all Christians. What do you think it means to do “all” in the name of the Lord Jesus”?
16. Verse 17 further reminds us of the theme of Paul’s entire letter to the Colossians – Jesus Christ is the all-sufficient Savior. For what help can you ask God so that Christ will be honored in your relationships with others and be more prevalent in everything you do?

What is the good life? Prosperity, popularity, pleasure? No, it is the life we receive from Jesus, including gifts that we cannot make or purchase: forgiveness, love, peace, and thankfulness. Jesus’ life fills us with virtues rather than vices and enables us to be a blessing rather than a bane to others. • “Before the dawning day Let sin’s dark deeds be gone, The sinful self be put away, The new self now put on.” Amen. (LSB 331:5). (TLSB)

Some Answers to the above Questions:

- 1. (Ephesians 1:20-23) The exalted God-man Jesus Christ, exercise complete power over everything in the universe – all for the benefit of His church, His people. What an encouragement for us. (Romans 8:34) Jesus our Priest who intercedes for us, speaks to the Father in our defense. (Ephesians 4:10-12) He is our Prophet, who sends people to proclaim His message of His forgiving love.**
- 2. When Christ returns we will be like Him, with bodies glorified and made perfect in Him. Christ, our life, will make it visible to all that we are His and that we will live with in heaven forever.**
- 3. Greed, the desire for more and more material possessions, is deeply ingrained in many people. Our world often measures the importance of people based on how much money they have, how big their house is, how many cars they own, and so on. The popularity of lotteries and gambling boats and casinos fuels the desire of many to get rich quick and thus solve all problems.**
- 4. These verses tell us that as the redeemed in Christ Jesus, we have been given a new self. This new self was created by God Himself and did not exist before. We are also constantly renewed by God in His image as the Holy Spirit works in our hearts, sanctifying us and making it possible for us to grow in faith. As redeemed people, there are no distinctions among us. In Christ, God looks at all of us as holy, precious, and righteous. Jesus Christ is everything to us in every way. No**

outward, earthly things matter because “Christ is all, and is in all” and is all we need.

Our new relationship of faith restores the image of God that was lost because of sin. The image consists in knowledge of God and holiness. “The image of God is the knowledge of God, righteousness, and truth. Lombard is not afraid to say that original righteousness ‘is the very likeness to God which God implanted in man’ ” (Ap II 20–21). (TLSB)

5. Answers will vary.

6. Forgiveness is needed as we deal with one another because we are all sinful human beings. As people work together in Christian congregations, disagreements can and will arise. Human emotions can create responses that bring hurt to others. Christ’s love works in our hearts to help us forgive others who have hurt us and also to help others forgive us when we cause the hurt.

7. Our relationship with God is based on His forgiving us in Christ. If anyone refuse to forgive others – harboring their resentment – it indicates that the person hasn’t truly accepted God’s forgiveness. That’s the point of Jesus’ parable. True believers will struggle with forgiving others from time to time.

8. Love unifies us together as one body in Christ. The selfless love that Jesus displayed enables us to place the needs of others before our own, showing compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and forgiveness.

9. In Colossians 1:2, Philippians 1:2, and Galatians 1:3 peace is linked with grace. Philippians 4:7, 9 – God’s peace guard our hearts and minds.

10. The peace of Christ is to “rule in [our] hearts.” In this usage, “rules’ literally means to “function like an umpire.” Because of what God has done for us in Christ Jesus, we have peace with God, our Father – the confidence that our sins are forgiven and that we have eternal life as God’s children. This peace makes it possible for us to be at peace with one another and to serve one another’s needs. The peace of Christ replaces attitudes of bitterness and anger toward one another with attitudes of love, kindness, and the other virtues we are to on as God’s chosen people (v. 12).

Peace is a relational word; to have peace with God is to have a relationship with Him that is based on the forgiveness of sins, since man’s sin created enmity with God. “Of Christ” is a subjective genitive; the peace of Christ is the peace with God that Christ gives through faith. In extrabiblical Greek, *BraBeuo* (rule) is a term used for judging in the law court and in athletic competition. The peace of Christ is to “referee” or “adjudicate” conflicts and disputes within the body Of

Christ. Hence possible translations are “rule” or “be in control” or “be the decisive factor.” (CC p 146)

11. Attitudes of thankfulness cause our hearts and minds to focus on the good things God does for us, including the gifts He gives us through the words and actions of other people. Thankful hearts stop grumbling and griping and help us appreciate the daily blessings God gives us. As we focus on God’s goodness, God helps us to serve one another and to appreciate one another, thus unifying congregations.

At first blush, the exhortation to be “thankful” seems to be an unrelated afterthought, yet it too is a relational virtue. The apostle very often speaks of thanksgiving as that which is to be offered to God not so much for benefits received by oneself but for those blessings received by others. Thus, we cannot fully practice thanksgiving unless we are in association with others, that we may know of those blessings they have received for which thanksgiving to God is appropriate. Public worship affords a good opportunity to practice thanksgiving as a relational virtue, for in its prayers the assembly of believers will regularly offer thanksgiving for blessings, eternal and temporal, that others have received. (CC p. 157)

12. The Word of Christ points the way to salvation and also guards us in our relationships with others. Having the Word of Christ “dwell” in us means more than merely listening to it. When we also do what the Word says, it truly dwells in us. The Word of Christ is not something that we invite into our homes and hearts on occasion. The Word of Christ should inhabit us constantly and fill every corner of our hearts and lives.

13. The Word of Christ should be the focal point of the worship of a congregation and of every congregational activity.

As the Word of the Lord gives life (John 20:31; Col 1:25-27) and remains to eternity (Is. 40:8; 1 Pet 1:25), as baptism is a resurrection with Christ (Col 2:12) which assures us of being raised with Him in His parousia (Col 3:1,4)., as the Holy Sipper of Christ’s body and blood is a foretaste of the banquet of the kingdom to come, so through the type of singing described in this text, the church on earth participates in the worship of eternity, in the worship of angels, and archangels, and all the redeemed in heaven. Thus, the closest we can get in this life to the joy and glory of paradise is in the church’s worship – for all its faults and shortcomings, real or perceived – highly significant and therefore truly exciting. (CC pp. 158-159)

14. Scripture set to music aids our remembering of it because of the rhythmic tunes and repetition that is a part of the melody. Hymns and spiritual songs reinforce church doctrine that is based on the Gospel and also reinforce sermon themes.

Some of the most important doctrines were expressed in Christian hymns preserved for us now only in Paul's letters (1:15–20; Eph 5:14; Php 2:6–11; 1Ti 3:16). "Psalms" refers to the OT psalms (see Lk 20:42; 24:44; Ac 1:20; 13:33), some of which may have been set to music by the church. "Psalm" could also describe a song newly composed for Christian worship (cf. 1Co 14:26, where "hymn" is lit. "psalm" in the Greek text). A "hymn" was a song of praise, especially used in a celebration (see Mk 14:26; Heb 2:12; see also Ac 16:25), much like the OT psalms that praised God for all that he is. A "song" recounted the acts of God and praised him for them (see Rev 5:9; 14:3; 15:3), much like the OT psalms that thanked God for all that he had done. See note on Eph 5:19. (CSB)

15. As the Word of Christ dwells in our hearts, it reaches into every part of us, influencing all our actions so that we first think of Him and His will for us.

16. Answers will vary.