

Colossians 3:10-17 – Put on Love

The Colossians were to seek and to set their minds on the things that are above where Christ is. As they were focusing on heavenly things they were to put to death earthly things. They formerly were walking in sin but now they were to put away their old sinful way of life and put off their old self. Putting off the old self also involves putting on the new self. In place of the old sins they were to put on godly thoughts, words and actions which were fitting to their new life in Christ.

Read Colossians 3:10-11.

In verse 9, the Colossians had put off their old self with its practices. In verse 10, what had the Colossians put on? The Colossians were “being renewed in knowledge”. What is the model or standard for this renewal? For a cross reference on being renewed, see 2 Corinthians 4:16. (3:10)

Verse 11 may remind us of Galatians 3:28, “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” What groups are mentioned in verse 11? Galatians says that all are in Christ. Colossians says that Christ is in all. What is the impact of Christ being in all no matter what category a believer in Christ might be in? There appear to be four pairs of contrasting words. Three pairs of words have obvious contrasts. The “barbarian, Scythian” pair is difficult. The word translated “barbarian” can also mean someone who does not speak Greek or who is not culturally Greek. It is sometimes translated “foreigner”. Scythians were known for being barbaric. Trying to contrast these words is a stretch and so some suggest that “barbarian” and “Scythian” are subsets of “Greek” / “uncircumcised”. While both groups would fall under the uncircumcised category, I don’t think Greeks would appreciate barbarians (non-Greeks) being included in their number. For a Jew, the words might be synonymous, but not for the Greeks in Colossae. (3:11)

Read Colossians 3:12-17.

The “put on” from verse 10 is repeated in verse 12. How were the Colossians described in verse 12? What were the Colossians exhorted to “put on”? The list is somewhat reminiscent of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. (3:12)

In the TV show, MASH, Dr. Frank Burns said that “It’s nice to be nice to the nice”. It is also a lot easier to be nice to the nice as opposed to being nice to someone who is acting like a jerk. How can we, as those in Christ, be compassionate, kind, humble, meek and patient towards those who are “not nice”? (3:12)

What does it mean to be “bearing with one another”? Are we to tolerate other believers’ sins or just things we find personally irritating but not sinful? What are we to do if we have a complaint against someone? What do you think “complaint” means in this context? Is it something like “you didn’t say “hi” to me”? How are we to forgive others? This is also why we are to forgive others. Are these exhortations primarily for relations with other believers or do they apply to all people? (3:13)

Based on verse 14, what was the most important attribute / quality? Why is it the most important one? (3:14)

How do we let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts? How will the peace of Christ ruling in our hearts affect the peace and unity of the church? At the end of verse 15, what were the Colossians exhorted to do? What happens when we are not thankful? (3:15)

The peace of Christ is to rule our hearts and the word of Christ is to indwell us. How can we have Christ’s word dwelling in us richly? (3:16)

Who is to teach and admonish one another? How is the teaching and admonishing to be done? In verse 16, what else were the Colossians to do? Is there any relation to this and the word of Christ dwelling in us? (3:16)

Based on verse 16, what was to accompany the singing? (3:16)

What does it mean to “do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus” in everything we say and do? (3:17)

Verse 17 again mentioned thanksgiving. Thanksgiving was mentioned in verses 15, 16 and 17. Why do you think Paul mentioned thanksgiving in three consecutive verses?