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Experiencing Christ in Colossians

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Week 6 | Colossians 3:5–17

## Memory Verses for the week:

Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (Colossians 3:12–13)

# Day 1

## Read

### Colossians 3:5–8 (NIV)

5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

## Study

* Notice the “therefore” in verse 5. Go back and read [Colossians 3:1–4](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col3.1-4). What connection is Paul making? What impact should a Christ-centered mindset and union with Christ have on the thoughts and actions of believers?
* Summing up his discussion of verse 5, Scot McKnight contrasts “earth” centered and Christ-centered views of sexuality: “If the Roman world’s sexuality was shaped by themes of dominance, status, and indulgence (in all directions), for Paul it was shaped by holiness, love, and fidelity.”[[1]](#footnote-2)

## Think about

Our union with Christ changes everything. There is no aspect of our lives that should remain unaffected. There are ways of living that were common in the ancient world and are common now that are out of step with who we are as a new creation in Christ. God’s judgment will come on these behaviors because they violate God’s good and loving will for humanity. Yet to all who sin, Jesus offers forgiveness and the power to walk a different path.

In this passage, Paul specifically names sins that have to do with sex, money, and speech. Why do you think he focused on these? How can these sins in particular be harmful to Christ’s body — both by harming individual members and the community as a whole?

## Pray

As you read through the list in Colossians 3:5–8, did you feel the Holy Spirit convicting you of sin? Remember what you’ve learned in the first two chapters of Colossians — you have been qualified for an inheritance in the kingdom of God and rescued from the dominion of darkness (1:12–13), you have been redeemed and forgiven (1:14). In Christ, you have been reconciled and made holy in God’s sight and are free from accusation (1:22). Your sin-debt has been canceled and nailed to the cross (2:14).

With all that in mind, be honest with yourself and God about your struggles to obey in the areas Paul mentions, receive God’s forgiveness, and ask the Spirit to empower you to walk in a new way.

## Talk about

*Have a meaningful conversation about this passage with one of your CF Encouragers, your small group, or join us virtually in the Faithlife Community. (Search groups for Engage God Daily. For full instructions,* [*click here*](https://cfhome-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/lscheffler_cfhome_org/EYNh8cUxJRxClFV-Wt6QNe0BtkK34MHJDqeHamAwxlGmbQ?e=RL3RSh)*.)*

Paul?

* What are some of the ways people can hurt themselves and others when they fail to follow God’s will in regards to sexuality, money and/or speech?
* What encouragement from Colossians would you offer to someone struggling with chronic sin in any of the areas Paul highlights?

# Day 2

## Read

### Colossians 3:9–11 (NIV)

9Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

## Study

* In the *Faithlife Study Bible*, read the notes on [3:10](https://biblia.com/books/fsb/Col3.10) and [3:11](https://biblia.com/books/fsb/Col3.11) to help you interpret these verses.
* N.T. Wright gives a possible explanation for Paul’s “taking off” and “putting on” language in this passage: “In the early church it was frequently the case that a candidate for **baptism** would take off the old suit of clothes they were wearing and then, after coming up from immersion, would be given a new set of clothes to wear. They would be coloured white to signify the purity of the new **life** they were now entering. This may well be in Paul’s mind here.”[[2]](#footnote-3) Think back to the baptismal imagery used in [Col. 2:9–12](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col2.9-12). Does this explanation make sense to you?

## Think about

* Verse 10 gives a stunning picture of the “new self.” As the New Living Translation states it, “Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him” Humanity was created in the image and likeness of God ([Genesis 1:27](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Ge1.27)) and in Christ can at last live out of that design. How does this truth inspire you to know God more and more?
* How does verse 11 motivate us to welcome all kinds of people into the family of God? What does God think of racism or any kind of social, ethnic, or economic prejudice? How can these sins keep the body of Christ from living out its purpose in the world?

## Pray

Revelation 7:9 gives us a beautiful picture of our future with Christ in eternity: “After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands.” Pray that we would begin to see this future reality in our churches now. Pray for the Spirit’s love, power, and guidance to lead Christ’s church to repent of any prejudice and welcome, embrace, and see the value in all kinds of people.

## Talk about

*Have a meaningful conversation about this passage with one of your CF Encouragers, your small group, or join us virtually in Faithlife Community. (Search groups for Engage God Daily. For full instructions,* [*click here*](https://cfhome-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/lscheffler_cfhome_org/EYNh8cUxJRxClFV-Wt6QNe0BtkK34MHJDqeHamAwxlGmbQ?e=RL3RSh)*.)*

* Discuss how could you revise Colossians 3:11 for your context. The gospel obliterated divisions in the early church. What divisions do we need to let it overcome in our world? Rich/poor, black/white, college educated/high school diploma? What else can you think of?
* Discuss what you can personally do to make the family of God a place of welcome, grace, and acceptance for all kinds of people. For example, is there someone different from you with whom you could have meaningful conversations?

# Day 3

## Read

### Colossians 3:12–14 (NIV)

12Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

## Study

* Look! Another “therefore.” What connection is Paul making now?
* The [Faithlife Study Bible](https://biblia.com/books/fsb/Col3.12) helps us understand the term “chosen people” and how verse 11 connects to verse 12: “Originally, God chose the nation of Israel to be his people ([Deut 14:2](https://biblia.com/reference/Dt14.2); [Rom 9:4–5](https://biblia.com/reference/Ro9.4-5)). However, because such distinctions are rendered irrelevant in Christ ([Col 3:11](https://biblia.com/reference/Col3.11)), Paul affirms the Colossian believers as being among God’s chosen people.”
* Compare the traits Paul mentions in verse 3:12 to the fruits of the Spirit in [Galatians 5:22–24](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Ga5.22). What similarities do you notice?

## Think about

According to scholar Douglas Moo, “the Christian community formed by and in Christ, transcends the boundaries of religious background, ethnicity, and social status—and any other ‘boundary’ drawn from this world that we might like to draw.”[[3]](#footnote-4) All kinds of people make up God’s “chosen people, holy and dearly loved.

Yet coming together as a group of people, especially as people from different backgrounds and cultures with differing experiences, can be difficult. Here Paul tells us how to approach one another. We need to demonstrate the character of Christ, and when we fail (which we will), forgive one another.

How are you at cultivating relationships with other believers? How can meaningful conversations help build bridges when you struggle to get along?

## Pray

Pray that the Spirit will teach you how to clothe yourself with the character of Christ. Ask him for supernatural power to forgive when you are hurt. Ask him to clothe you with love for your fellow Christians. If he brings to mind any specific situations where there is conflict, invite the Spirit to give you wisdom in how to pray for them.

## Talk about

* How can we show one another more of what Paul talks about in this passage? What are some practical ways to show kindness, compassion, humility, etc.

# Day 4

## Read

### Colossians 3:15–16 (NIV)

15Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

## Study

Consider this analysis of verse 15 from Scot McKnight and click through to read the verses he lists: “Peace is at the heart of ethics for Paul in Colossians. This peace is something connected to Christ, and as such, peace emphasizes divine initiative and peace as a model for life (see [2 Thess 3:16](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/2Th3.16)).”

For Paul, peace:

comes from God ([Gal 5:22; 1 Thess 5:23; Rom 14:17; 15:33](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Gal+5%3A22%3B+1+Thess+5%3A23%3B+Rom+14%3A17%3B+15%3A33&version=NIV))

is a blessing we receive from our redemption ([Rom 5:1; Phil 4:7; also in Col 1:20](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Rom+5%3A1%3B+Phil+4%3A7%3B+Col+1%3A20&version=NIV))

results in peace toward others ([2 Cor 13:11; Rom 14:17, 19; Eph 2:14–15, 17; 4:3](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=2+Cor+13%3A11%3B+Rom+14%3A17%2C+19%3B+Eph+2%3A14%E2%80%9315%2C+17%3B+4%3A3&version=NIV)).[[4]](#footnote-5)

How should this divine peace affect the way we live?

## Think about

From N.T. Wright on “teaching” and “admonishing”:

“The tasks Paul described as his own in [1:28](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1.28) are not his alone: they are for the whole church, *as you teach and admonish one another*, in the mutual forgiveness and trust he discusses in verses [2:12–15](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col2.12)…

This word is to dwell in them ‘richly’: the church is to be stocked with good teaching as a palace is filled with treasures. The teaching is to be *with all wisdom*: the ‘word’ concerns Christ, Wisdom himself (2:3, etc.), and will be characterized by wisdom in the teachers.”[[5]](#footnote-6)

Many of us aren’t comfortable “teaching” or “admonishing” one another, yet we all have something we’ve learned that we can pass on and some wisdom that we’ve gained (sometimes the hard way) to share. How can we all help strengthen and unify the body of Christ by teaching and/or admonishing one another?

## Pray

As Christ’s body, we aren’t called to division, conflict, or rabble-rousing. We care called to peace. Pray for the peace of Christ to rule in your heart, and the hearts of those around you. Allow your thankfulness to overflow in psalms, hymns, and songs.

## Talk about

* Letting Christ’s peace rule means framing our desires and actions with him in mind. Discuss areas of your life where you need to yield to Christ’s rule.
* If the church lived out its calling to peace, what kind of difference could that make in our community and world? Imagine together what that would look like.

# Day 5

## Read

### Colossians 3:17 (NIV)

17And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

## Study

* Scot McKnight says of verse 17:

“One’s actions come first: “Whatever you do, whether in speech or action, do it all.” The English translations smooth out what is said in Greek, which could be rendered literally as “Everything, whatever you do—word or deed—everything, in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Nothing escapes the lordship of King Jesus because everything has been transformed in union with Christ… Second, Paul’s concern follows their actions: he instructs them to have an all-consuming passion to act and speak in the name and under the name of Jesus as their King.”[[6]](#footnote-7)

## Think about

* Reflect on all we’ve learned in Colossians so far. Take a few minutes to go back and read the [entire letter](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col1). Knowing who Christ is and what he has done for us, what does it mean to you to do EVERYTHING in the name of the Lord Jesus?

## Pray

As you reflect on verse 17, enter into a time of prayer. Ask the Spirit to bring to mind things that you have to be thankful for. Express your gratitude to God. Allow that feeling of gratitude move you into a time of confession and repentance. Allow the Spirit to show you areas of your life that are not under the lordship of Jesus. What would need to change in your life so that you could live out Paul’s command in verse 17?

## Talk about

* Share your biggest takeaways [Colossians 3:5–16](https://biblia.com/books/niv2011/Col3.5). What will you be taking off? What will you be putting on? How can you encourage one another to continually put on your new self?

1. Scot McKnight, [*The Letter to the Colossians*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nicnt72colmcknight?ref=Bible.Col3.5&off=8359&ctx=xual+sins+in+Torah.+~If+the+Roman+world%E2%80%99s), ed. Ned B. Stonehouse et al., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 304. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Tom Wright, *Paul for Everyone: The Prison Letters: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2004), 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Douglas J. Moo, [*The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*](https://ref.ly/logosres/pntccolphm?ref=Bible.Col3.12&off=104&ctx=out+the+%E2%80%9Cnew+self.%E2%80%9D+~This+%E2%80%9Cnew+self%2c%E2%80%9D+the), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2008), 275. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Scot McKnight, [*The Letter to the Colossians*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nicnt72colmcknight?ref=Bible.Col3.15&off=414&ctx=ctive+genitive).147%0a~Peace+is+at+the+hear), ed. Ned B. Stonehouse et al., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 326. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. N. T. Wright, [*Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary*](https://ref.ly/logosres/tntc72colus?ref=Bible.Col3.16&off=1082&ctx=+man+Jesus+himself.+~This+word+is+to+dwel), vol. 12, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 148–149. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Scot McKnight, [*The Letter to the Colossians*](https://ref.ly/logosres/nicnt72colmcknight?ref=Bible.Col3.17&off=925&ctx=the+name+of+Christ.+~Second%2c+Paul%E2%80%99s+conce), ed. Ned B. Stonehouse et al., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 334. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)