

Discover the New You: A Whole New You

Whose opinions, thoughts, and words about you matter the most? In this passage Paul uses the image of stripping off old dirty clothes. What do we need to get rid of and how can they be damaging how we balance out our life as a Christ follower?



Colossians 3:1-17 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. 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 whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And 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.

Reflections

A whole new you (or me)??
Really??

It's probably good that I am trying to write this in the middle of a workweek. I'm not exactly having a time of "repose in the scriptures." With minor upheaval at work and my wife, Karen sick, things feel rather far from "admonish one another in wisdom; sing songs, hymns, and spiritual songs..." and the like.

Yet here comes the apostle Paul, reminding us (me!) of who we are in Christ, and how that looks in daily life. There are any number of jewels here, of admonition, of rich imagery (*clothe* yourselves in honorable things), of Jesus' work (forgive...as Christ forgave), and His present action (you are *being* renewed). All of

this woven into a picture of a life changed, remade, through the action and love of our Lord.

For the middle of a week, there's a check-up here: a good list of don'ts and do's. Fact is, an early indicator that we are losing touch with our faith is that some things that really shouldn't be there start creeping (back?) into our lives, or vice versa. Time to pause. Ask what's going on. Ask a friend, a counselor, God. Paul is pretty clear: we are *active* participants in the process that changes us.

But there is promise, too. This text is striking not just for admonition, but for the presence of Christ, felt throughout. It begins with a mystery: "your life is hidden with Christ." Then look how it ends. What could it be like, especially mid-week, if His peace is in our hearts, if His word *dwells* in us, if

our life at its core is one of praise, thanks, and song to God? This picture has very little to do with "good ethics" and everything to do with a life rooted in Him. It is only because of *His* work that we can imagine such a thing. And therein lies promise. Our God is active too, far more powerfully than we can ever be, and He draws us toward a changed and abundant life.

Our hymnbook has a prayer that seems good for today: "Enable us to receive Him [Jesus] *always* with thanksgiving, and to conform our lives to His." One to pray, as the week goes on.

—Bob Henderson

Reference:
Hybels, Bill. Discover the New You - Colossians. Small Group Workbook. 1999

Readings

Sunday, May 2 — Set our minds on things above

Colossians 3:1-4; Psalm 27:4

What distracts you...from looking into the things of God? Or better, where are the places in your life where the things of God lie hidden, to be touched and treasured? As you prepare for this week, ask God to show you.

Monday, May 3 — Your life is now hidden with Christ

Colossians 3:3-4

How might we read the word "hidden" here. Treasured? Loved? Protected? Perhaps simply not judged in the way the world judges? Where in your life might you be listening to the judgment of the world rather than God? How might you be encouraged by the understanding here? What might you be emboldened to do?

Tuesday, May 4 — Taking off the old self...and putting on the new

Colossians 3:5-10; Psalm 1:1-3

In Colossians, Paul lists a whole paragraph of things to put away! In the Psalm, a very direct image of life rooted in him, and in his ways. Where in your life right now? Do you fall short? What action can you take? What do you need to ask God for?

Wednesday, May 5 — Christ is all

Colossians 3:11; Galatians 3:26-28

Our Lord is one who tears down barriers. Where in your life have you seen him reduce (eliminate?) a barrier that was troublesome, perhaps especially in a relationship? Where might such work still need to be done?

Thursday, May 6 — As God's chosen people

Colossians 3:12-14

A paragraph of things to put on. What comes to mind in the image of "clothing" yourself in these things? How does that look? What characteristic on Paul's "list" can you work on today? In that area, how might you live as one of "God's chosen people"?

Friday, May 7 — The peace of Christ; and spiritual songs

Colossians 3:15-17; Psalm 33:1-4

A climaxing paragraph. Where have you felt His peace in your heart? What was it like? What for you is a time of praise? "Think on these things." Where has it not been so good? Ask his help in drawing you toward a better way.

Saturday, May 8 — Whatever you do, do it in His name

Colossians 3:17

Perhaps a time to reflect on this past week. In word or deed, what has been done? What is well committed to God? What needs forgiveness? Where have you been able to see Him at work through you?

Don't have a Bible? Access these scriptures at biblegateway.com.