

4. How Then Shall We Live? Putting Off the Old Man

Colossians 3:1-9

A Christian should be different. If we have exactly the same priorities, tastes and aspirations as everybody else, then we've got nothing to offer anybody. Our difference is the witness we should be to others. We really need to understand what this difference is.

In Peter's first letter, he speaks to Christian women whose husbands aren't believers. If their husbands don't listen to them, they can still be a witness simply by the way they live:

1 Peter 3:1-4

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

你们作妻子的，要顺服自己的丈夫。这样，若有不信从道理的丈夫，他们虽然不听道，也可以因妻子的品行被感化过来。这正是因看见你们有贞洁的品行，和敬畏的心。你们不要以外面的辫头发，戴金饰，穿美衣，为妆饰，只要以里面存着长久温柔安静的心为妆饰。这在神面前是极宝贵的。

Our witness to others is about our “*hidden man of the heart.*” Having a “*meek and quiet spirit.*” So how can we develop this inward life, this inward witness?

1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

[1] 所以你们若真与基督一同复活，就当求在上面的事。那里有基督坐在神的右边。

This passage is for those who have been “*risen with Christ.*” If we don't know Him for ourselves yet, this isn't for us. We'll find we can't do the things that are mentioned here.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

[2] 所以你们若真与基督一同复活，就当求在上面的事。那里有基督坐在神的右边。你们要思念上面的事，不要思念地上的事。

We're to “*set our affection on things above,*” because that's where Christ is. If we're not “*risen with Christ,*” we won't understand what heavenly things are. This new life changes our desires. Things we once loved, we now have no delight in any more. John says:

1 John 2:15-17

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust

of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

不要爱世界，和世界上的事。人若爱世界，爱父的心就不在他里面了。因为凡世界上的事，就像肉体的情欲，眼目的情欲，并今生的骄傲，都不是从父来的，乃是从世界来的。这世界，和其上的情欲，都要过去。惟独遵行神旨意的，是永远常存。

Do we chase after “*The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life?*” The people all around us every day pursue these things – self-gratification and self-exaltation. And they encourage each other to do the same. But if we do these things, “*the love of the Father is not in*” us. When it says “*love not the world,*” it doesn’t mean we shouldn’t deal with anything in the world ever again. Go off and become a hermit somewhere. No. The Lord keeps us in this world for a purpose. We’re still called to deal with the things of this world every day. But our desires shouldn’t be set on them any more. We’ve now got far more important things, heavenly things, to love.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

[3] 因为你们已经死了，你们的生命与基督一同藏在神里面。

We’re dead, but yet we’re alive at the same time. If we’ve had a spiritual resurrection, then we’re told here the old nature we used to have is now dead in the sense we don’t desire to follow it any more. It’s still there, and it drags us back. Christians still sin against God. The apostle Paul talks about a battle going on within us. We won’t be perfected until we die. So at the same time we’re “*dead*” in our own sins, and yet alive in Christ.

Romans 7:22-25

For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

因为按着我里面的意思。（原文作人）我是喜欢神的律。但我觉得肢体中另有个律，和我心中的律交战，把我掳去叫我附从那肢体中犯罪的律。我真是苦阿，谁能救我脱离这取死的身体呢？感谢神，靠着我们的主耶稣基督就能脱离了这样看来，我以内心顺服神的律。我肉体却顺服罪的律了。

It’s so easy to do what the flesh wants. We do it without thinking. It’s always an effort to do what the Spirit wants. But that’s what we’re called to do.

Romans 8:10-14

And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of

the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

基督若在你们心里，身体就因罪而死，心灵却因义而活。然而叫耶稣从死里复活者的灵，若住在你们心里，那叫基督耶稣从死里复活的，也必借着住在你们心里的圣灵，使你们必死的身体又活过来。弟兄们，这样看来，我们并不是欠肉体的债，去顺从肉体活着。你们若顺从肉体活着必要死。若靠着圣灵治死身体的恶行必要活着。因为凡被神的灵引导的，都是神的儿子。

Who are we going to be led by? The flesh or the Spirit? The old man or the new man? Whenever we fail in doing what we ought to do, we grieve ourselves, and the Lord. Our new life is now “*hid with Christ in God.*” It’s hidden from the world. It’s spiritual. It’s to do with “*things above.*” The world will notice a change in us, and that change is our witness to them. But they won’t understand us. We no longer want to please ourselves, but to please Christ. We don’t follow the crowd. This world is no longer our home. Abraham:

Hebrews 11:10

...looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

[10] 因为他等候那座有根基的城，就是神所经营所建造的。

4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

[4] 基督是我们的生命，他显现的时候，你们也要与他一同显现在荣耀里。

We’ve got a sure hope in heaven after our death. We’ll one day “*appear with Him in glory.*” But it says here “*Christ, who is your life.*” He’s our life here now. He’s the one we love, the one we desire to please now. He is our life here, now, as well as after death.

Philippians 1:21

For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

[21] 因我活着就是基督，我死了就有益处。

So, if we’re different because we follow Christ rather than ourselves, we need to know how He wants us to live. It’s more than following a set of rules outwardly, like other religions would teach. Our witness is to come from from the Holy Spirit in our heart:

John 14:15

If ye love me, keep my commandments. [15] 你们若爱我，就必遵守我的命令。

So, with this in mind, the rest of the passage gives us a few instructions. And first of all we’ve got a list of things to put to death, or “*mortify*”:

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:.

[5] 所以要治死你们在地上的肢体。就如淫乱，污秽，邪情，恶欲，和贪婪，贪婪就与拜偶像一样。

“fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence.” That’s *“the lust of the flesh.”* These are sins against the seventh Commandment, *“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”* The Commandment doesn’t just forbid adultery, it includes *“idleness”* [David], *“gluttony”* [Esau], *“drunkenness”* [Lot]. These are all *“the lust of the flesh.”*

Then we have *“covetousness, which is idolatry.”* That’s *“the lust of the eyes.”* When we covet our neighbour’s ox, ass or Ferrari, we’re really idolising it. *“The lust of the eyes.”*

6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.

[6] 因这些事，神的忿怒必临到那悖逆之子。

It’s because of these lusts and desires, there’s going to be a judgment. The world is full of sin. There has to be a judgment, otherwise everybody would get away with what they do. But before we start complaining about others, look at the next verse:

7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

[7] 当你们在这些事中活着的时候，也曾这样行过。

This verse brings us right down to earth. We’re no different from anybody else. We too deserve the very same judgment. The reason I’m going to heaven and my neighbour isn’t, is due to the grace of God, and not me being better than him. That fact ought to break *“the pride of life”* in us. We should no longer be proud of anything in ourselves. We’re called here to put to death what belongs to our earthly nature. So we should hate ourselves, and everything we are by nature. Modern psychologists tell us we ought to have a sense of self-worth, self-acceptance, self-esteem, but that’s just another way of telling us to be proud, to nurture *“the pride of life.”* No. We should put pride to death.

1 Samuel 2:3

Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.

[3] 人不要夸口说骄傲的话，也不要出狂妄的言语。因耶和华是大有智识的神，人的行为被他衡量。

8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.

[8] 但现在你们要弃绝这一切的事，以及恼恨，忿怒，恶毒，毁谤，并口中污秽的言语。不要彼此说谎，

Another list of things we need to put to death. We’ve got a natural tendency to get angry, to take vengeance, to lie, to laugh at questionable jokes. It’s these natural instincts the Christian is called to put to death. Only the Holy Spirit within a believer can do that.

We're called to put off the old man and to put on the new man. We mortify the old man, we put it to death. We're finished with our old life. And we're to put on the new man. Next time, we'll look at what that involves.