

# Colossians Sermon Illustrations 3

## COLOSSIANS SERMON ILLUSTRATIONS, DEVOTIONALS AND COMMENTARY

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## COLOSSIANS 3

### COLOSSIANS 3:1 - HOME IMPROVEMENT

Read: Ephesians 2:1-10 ,

We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works. --Ephesians 2:10-note

If you've ever wanted to live in a castle, this is your chance. The state of Saxony in eastern Germany has a dozen castles for sale, each priced at one German mark (which is just over half a US dollar).

There is a catch, however. According to a New York Times article, the historic structures are in advanced stages of disrepair, and buyers must restore each property "consistent with its historical architecture." Estimates for restoration run from \$7 million to \$60 million per castle.

It has occurred to me that buying a fixer-upper's nightmare gives us a picture of what God has done for each of us in Jesus. Ephesians 2:1 bluntly states our condition without Christ--"dead in trespasses and sins." But the hopelessness of the human condition never deters God's love.

The renovation and renewal the Father carries out in all who receive His Son begins with new life. "But God...even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ" (Ep 2:4, 5-note). And what God purchased at the great cost of His only Son, He gives to us freely (Eph 2:5, 6, 7, 8, 9-note).

Like derelict castles restored far beyond their former glory, our transformed lives point others to God, who is rich in mercy, grace, and love. --D C McCasland

Putting It Into Practice = Colossians 3:1 tells us we were "raised with Christ." Because of that, what are some of the practical instructions we are given on how to live? (Col 3:5-17-note).

When we receive Christ, God's work isn't over--  
it has just begun.

### Colossians 3:1-4 -Stolen Thoughts

When my wife and I were traveling in another state, someone broke into our car after we stopped for lunch. With one look at the shattered glass, we realized that we had forgotten to put our GPS (global positioning system) out of sight.

With a quick check of the backseat, I concluded that the thief also got my laptop, passport, and checkbook.

Then came the surprise. Later that evening, after phone calls and hours of growing worries, the unexpected happened. When I opened my suitcase, tucked between my clothes was what I thought I had lost. I couldn't believe my eyes! Only then did I recall that I had not put the items in the backseat after all. I had stuck them in the suitcase, which had been safely stored in the trunk of our car.

Sometimes, in the emotion of the moment, our minds play tricks on us. We think our loss is worse than it is. We may feel like the songwriter David who, in the confusion of the moment, thought God had forgotten him.

When David later recalled what he knew rather than what he feared, his sense of loss turned into a song of praise (Ps. 13:5-6). His renewed joy foreshadowed what is now ours to recall: Nothing can rob us of what is most important if our life is "hidden with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3).— by Mart De Haan

When sorrows assail us or terrors draw nigh,  
His love will not fail us, He'll guide with His eye;  
And when we are fainting and ready to fail,  
He'll give what is lacking and make us prevail. —Anon.

Rest your assurance on God's love in your heart— not on the fear in your mind

### **Colossians 3:1-14 - Guard Your Brand**

A popular clothing retailer requires that its sales clerks dress like the models in the store windows who advertise its clothes. This practice is referred to as "guarding their brand." The idea behind it is that shoppers will be more likely to purchase clothes because they will want to look like the people they see wearing them.

In a consumer-oriented culture, it's easy to be seduced into thinking that we can "buy" acceptance by wearing the things that beautiful people wear. Retailers would have us believe that looking good will make us desirable.

Sometimes we even convince ourselves that we can win followers for God by making ourselves attractive to the world. But the Bible is clear about what's really important to God. He wants us to look like Jesus in our character. In a sense, Jesus is our "brand," for we are being conformed to His image (Rom. 8:29). We attract others to Christ when we put on His attributes, which include tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering (Col. 3:12), and, above all, love (v.14).

Instead of polishing and protecting our own image, we need to be guarding and reflecting the image of God, which is being perfected in us through Christ. — by Julie Ackerman Link

O to be like Thee! blessed Redeemer,  
This is my constant longing and prayer;  
Gladly I'll forfeit all of earth's treasures,  
Jesus, Thy perfect likeness to wear. —Chisholm

One of the Spirit's roles is to form the likeness of Christ in us.

### **COLOSSIANS 3:1 - W H Griffith Thomas**

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1).

The apostle first calls attention to his readers having been "raised together with Christ" (ASV). The English word "if" is employed here in its sense of "since"--"in view of," and the verb is in the indicative mood, so that Paul is clearly assuming this resurrection as a fact, admittance of no doubt. That is to say, these Christians were raised spiritually when Christ was raised physically; and this identification was the foundation of their spiritual position. The resurrection is variously presented in the New Testament as at once a proof, a pattern, a power, a promise, and a pledge. It is the proof of our acceptance of Christ's death and of our acceptance with Him (Rom. 4:24-25); it is to be the pattern of our holy life (Rom. 6:4); it is also the power for Christian character and service (Eph. 1:18-20); it contains the promise of our own physical resurrection (1 Thess. 4:14); and it is the pledge of our life hereafter (John 14:19). In the present passage our resurrection is associated with Christ's because we are united with Him in such a way that, whatever He did, we are regarded by God the Father as having done also (2:12; Rom. 6:8).

### **COLOSSIANS 3:1 - RISEN WITH CHRIST**

IF! SOME one will say, "He, there's the rub! I'm afraid that is not true of me; my life is sinful and sorrowful; there are no Easter chimes in my soul, no glad fellowship with the Risen Lord; no victory over dark and hostile powers." But if you are Christ's disciple, you may affirm that you are risen in Him! With Christ you lay in the grave, and with Christ you have gone forth, according to the thought and purpose of God, if not in your feelings and experience. This is distinctly taught in Eph 2:1-10-note and Ro 6:1ff-note. The whole Church (including all who believe in our Lord Jesus) has passed into the light of the Easter dawn; and the one thing for you and me, and all of us, is to begin from this moment to act as if it were a conscious experience, and as we dare to do so we shall have the experience.

Notice how the Apostle insists on this: "You died, you were raised with Christ, your life is hid with Christ. Give yourself time to think about it and realize it."

The Cross of Jesus stands between you and the constant appeal of the world, as when the neighbours of Christian tried to induce him to return to the City of Destruction. This does not mean that we are to be indifferent to all that is fair and lovely in the life which God has given us, but that the Cross is to separate us from all that is selfish, sensual, and savouring of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1Jn 2:15, 16, 17-note).

Set your mind on things above (Col 3:2-note). "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." With many of us there is little attempt to guard our thoughts. The door of our heart stands open, with none to control the ingress or egress of the tumultuous throng of thoughts that wander in and out. If only we would ask the Holy Spirit to control our thoughts, so that we might think only the things that are true and of good report, a wonderful change would pass over our life (Phil 4:7, 8).

Realize that Christ is your life--He is in you! See to it that nothing hinders the output of His glorious indwelling. Never mind if the world of men misunderstand you. Some day your motives and reasons will be manifested (Col 3:4-note).

PRAYER - Grant, most gracious God, that we may love and seek Thee always and everywhere, and may at length find Thee and for ever hold Thee fast in the life to come. AMEN. - F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

### **COLOSSIANS 3:1 - HEAVENLY PEOPLE**

Christians are a "heavenly" people. That's what Paul meant when he told the Ephesians that God has "raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:6). We live on earth, but "our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20). We should therefore "seek those things which are above," and store up treasures in heaven.

We see a graphic difference between an earthly minded person and a heavenly minded person when we look at two Middle Eastern tombs. The first is the burial place of King Tut in Egypt. Inside, precious metal and blue porcelain cover the walls. The mummy of the king is enclosed in a beautifully inscribed, gold-covered sarcophagus. Although King Tut apparently believed in an afterlife, he thought of it in terms of this world's possessions, which he wanted to take with him.

The other tomb, in Palestine, is a simple rock-hewn cave believed by many to be Jesus' burial site. Inside, there is no gold, no earthly treasure, and no body. Jesus had no reason to store up this world's treasures. His goal was to fulfill all righteousness by doing His Father's will. His was a spiritual kingdom of truth and love.

The treasures we store up on earth will all stay behind when this life ends. But the treasures we store up in heaven we'll have for eternity. When we seek to be Christlike in thought, word, and deed, we will live like "heavenly" people. —P. R. Van Gorder

Wise are those who gear their goals to heavenly gains.

### **COLOSSIANS 3:1 TAKE A GOOD LOOK**

Look ...

- Look around and be distressed.
- Look inside and be depressed.
- Look at Jesus and be at rest. --Corrie Ten Boom

### **COLOSSIANS 3:1 "CELEBRATING" THE RESURRECTION**

One Monday morning, following an Easter Sunday, I picked up a newspaper and saw this headline: Entire World Celebrates the Risen Christ. On the same page a number of smaller head-lines appeared, and some of them read as follows: "Trouble in Vietnam." "Blacks and Whites Clash in Chicago." "Egypt Issues Ultimatum to Israel." There were also others equally discouraging. As I saw this, I thought, how ironic! The major head-line declares: Entire World Celebrates the Risen Christ, and then the balance of the page tells how men and nations go on disregarding the blessings and grace which Christ by His death and resurrection provides. What a

way to "celebrate the risen Christ!" Of course, the headline meant by "celebrate" the fact that millions had flocked to churches all over the world in a ritualistic and traditional manner; yet, that's just what is wrong with the world today. There are great numbers who go through the motions of religion, claiming to honor the risen Christ, and yet they don't really believe in Him, either in the significance of His death or in the literalness of His resurrection. It all becomes a mockery. As a result, the world is slipping even farther on its way to judgment.

But let's make this even more practical. Do you really believe that Christ arose from the dead? It will make a difference in how you act, what you say, and where you go. That's why Paul says in Colossians 3:1, 2, "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

The best way for true believers to "celebrate" the resurrection is to realize that we not only have died with Christ, but also have risen with Him, and that therefore — now that we are living with Him— it is only natural that we should live for Him.

Yes, I'm saved, but do I know Him  
In His resurrection power?  
Does some brightness of His glory  
Fill me every day and hour? — I. G. Hallan

So let the resurrected Christ live in you  
that your life will be a rebuke to sin wherever you go!

### COLOSSIANS 3:1 - THE EAGLE

The Scottish preacher John McNeill liked to tell about an eagle that had been captured when it was quite young. The farmer who snared the bird put a restraint on it so it couldn't fly, and then he turned it loose to roam in the barnyard. It wasn't long till the eagle began to act like the chickens, scratching and pecking at the ground. This bird that once soared high in the heavens seemed satisfied to live the barnyard life of the lowly hen.

One day the farmer was visited by a shepherd who came down from the mountains where the eagles lived. Seeing the eagle, the shepherd said to the farmer, "What a shame to keep that bird hobbled here in your barnyard! Why don't you let it go?" The farmer agreed, so they cut off the restraint. But the eagle continued to wander around, scratching and pecking as before. The shepherd picked it up and set it on a high stone wall. For the first time in months, the eagle saw the grand expanse of blue sky and the glowing sun. Then it spread its wings and with a leap soared off into a tremendous spiral flight, up and up and up. At last it was acting like an eagle again.

Perhaps you have let yourself be comfortable in the barnyard of the world—refusing to claim your lofty position as God's child. He wants you to live in a higher realm. Confess your sins, and "seek those things which are above." You will soon be longing to rise above the mundane things of this world. Like the eagle, it's not too late to soar to greater heights again. — P R Van Gorder

### EXPECT A BLESSING - COLOSSIANS 3:1-17

September 10, 1995

I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the Lord.. --Psalm 122:1

When a person stomps out of a church service complaining about the quality of the music, the length of the announcements, or a poorly delivered sermon, he himself may be the problem.

Getting little or no benefit from a worship service is somewhat like going into a huge department store and coming out with a 99-cent item. Literally hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of merchandise are available, but the shopper will take away with him only what he has come prepared to get.

If we enter a church service expecting a blessing, we have taken the first step to receiving one. If we participate with a genuine desire to hear God speak to us through the Scriptures, we will surely come away with our hearts filled. But we are bound to depart empty handed if we merely go out of a sense of duty, attend with a critical attitude, or bear ill will toward the pastor or fellow members.

The next time you go to church, go in the spirit of the psalmist, who declared, "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of Lord'" (Ps 122:1-[note](#)). Then the hymns of praise, the fellowship of believers, and the preaching of the Word will bless your soul! --R W De Haan

The house of God should be a place  
For praise and reverent prayer;

Let holy thoughts your spirit fill  
And bow before God there. --HGB

To be spiritually fed,  
go to church with a good appetite,  
not a bad attitude!  
(Amen! or O my!)

### **COLOSSIANS 3:1-10**

WHILE taking the back roads to a neighboring town recently, I drove around a bend and suddenly came upon a very narrow railroad underpass. The sharp turn, combined with the confining walls of this mini-tunnel, made the roadway seem unsafe for two-way traffic.

"Somebody is sure to have an accident here," I thought. "I wonder why they don't widen this thing so it's not so hard to drive through." But on my return trip, I noticed that all the cars were negotiating the underpass quite well. All they needed was extra caution, slower speed, and a few additional seconds. If someone were to have an accident at that spot, it would be the fault of the driver not the tunnel. A careful driver could make it through with no problem.

The road through that underpass is similar to our journey through life. When we disobey God and get into trouble, we tend to blame God for making His way too narrow. But that would be like faulting the tunnel for our own careless driving.

God's standards may seem restrictive, but they're there for our protection. With the help of the Holy Spirit we can learn to navigate the narrow way, which is always the safe way.—D D Branon

### **COLOSSIANS 3:1-14 - WHAT'S THE CONNECTION?**

February 8, 2005

Whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, . . . meditate on these things. —Philippians 4:8note

The image on the TV screen captures our attention and we sit down to watch. As we flip from channel to channel, is there any connection between what we decide to watch and what is in our heart? Does our faith in Christ have anything at all to do with our TV choices?

In a world of falling standards, we must think through this question: How does our relationship with Christ affect our TV viewing habits?

One secular writer speaking about today's television programs said, "The notion of indecency has become obsolete." He is suggesting that a standard has been pushed aside. What is that standard? I believe it's the moral standard found in biblical teaching.

Most TV productions are not governed by the guidelines God wants us to follow. The Bible tells us, "Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things" (Philippians 4:8-note). It's hard to do that when we're being bombarded by the ungodly images presented on television.

Let's ask God to help us make godly choices in what we watch on TV.—Dave Branon

Sow a thought, and you reap an act;  
Sow an act, and you reap a habit;  
Sow a habit, and you reap a character;  
Sow a character, and you reap a destiny. —Anon.

Character is formed by making choices in one direction.

### **COLOSSIANS 3:2 - "VULTURE" APPETITES**

While driving along a highway, I have often seen vultures soaring high overhead, swooping down, and then rising up again with the air currents. Every so often, a small group of them can be seen sitting right on the roadway, tearing apart and gobbling up the carcass of some unfortunate creature. I get the impression that these ugly birds are on the lookout continually for what is loathsome and repulsive!

Some people are like that. Nothing seems to satisfy them more than feasting on what is sinful, corrupt, and immoral. The books and magazines they read, the TV programs they watch, the conversations they engage in, and the activities they pursue reveal a

vulture-like appetite.

How much better is the spiritual diet the Bible suggests:

"Whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy -- meditate on these things" (Phil 4:8-note).

What kind of "food" do you prefer? Don't be like the vulture. Rather, "as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (1Pe 2:2-note).-- Richard W. De Haan

O child of God, guard well your eyes  
From anything that stains the heart;  
Forsake those things that soil the mind --  
Your Father wants you set apart. --Fasick

The new birth creates a new appetite and requires a new diet.

### **COLOSSIANS 3:2 - FOOLISH EXCUSES**

"Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse."—Lk 14:17, 18.

IN THIS parable our Lord seems to show that the temptations of life lie in three directions. Our Property. So long as we are pilgrims and strangers, with no settled piece of land to call our own, with no stake in the country, with no accumulation in the bank, we reach out our hands towards the city that hath foundations (Heb 11:10, 11, 12, 13-note). But when we buy a field, we are often preoccupied and engrossed with it, and all it stands for. We must lay it out for building, or plan the crops we are to raise; we think how we can sell it again at some advantage; we hope the railway company may need it. And so, though we may be outwardly punctilious in our religious observance, yet our affections are not set on things above (Col 3:1, 2, 3, 4-note).

Our Activities. There is nothing wrong in having a team of oxen; on the contrary, it is a great and noble thing to plough up the virgin soil, and to make corn grow for the sustenance of the toiling millions of our fellow men. The oxen of Christ's time have their counterpart in the machinery of to-day--the traction engine and the motor-car. All these things marvellously preoccupy our minds. Men become so deeply interested, that they have no time or energy for anything else. They may not give an absolute negative to the invitations of Christ, but their urbane and polite excuse covers a practical refusal--"I pray Thee have me excused."

Our Home and Family Life. Our Lord said no word against these. Did He not honour a wedding feast with His Presence and first miracle? But He knows that we are apt to set aside the claims of the spiritual life when we are surrounded by all the joys and comforts of Material happiness.

The excuses which were offered were very shallow--the land would not have disappeared if its owner had postponed visiting it for a day; the cattle had surely been proved already, or they would not have been bought. As to the newly-married wife, there was no reason why she should not have accompanied her husband, there was plenty of room for both. Let us respond to the love which Christ offers to us, lest we be refused by Him at the last (Heb12:25-note).

PRAYER - We beseech Thee, our most gracious God, to preserve us from the cares of this life, lest we be too much entangled therein. AMEN. F B Meyer in Our Daily Walk

### **COLOSSIANS 3:2 - PROPER PRIORITIES**

In his classic spiritual allegory "Pilgrim's Progress," John Bunyan paints a word picture of a man "who looked no way but downward."

This poor creature was on his knees in the dirt and filth, working constantly with a rake, trying to unearth some choice morsel that would enrich his life. Yet all the while a bright crown of immeasurable worth was within reach just above him.

Bunyan summarizes the tragedy: "There stood One over his head with a celestial crown in His hand, and proffered him that crown for his muck rake; but the man never looked up as he continued gathering to himself the straw, the small sticks, and the dust of the floor!"

Bunyan's words remind us that the rewards of heaven will have no appeal unless we set our mind "on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2-note).

Although we who have trusted Christ as Savior have to live here in this world, we should not cling to material things. We must become so occupied with pleasing Him and working for the crowns of eternal reward that we have no desire to dig in the dirt of this fleeting world.

In the light of Colossians 3:2-note, isn't it time that you and I adjust our priorities? -- Henry G. Bosch

I'm pressing on the upward way,  
New heights I'm gaining every day --  
Still praying as I'm onward bound,  
"Lord, plant my feet on higher ground."-- Oatman

The best way to live "in" the world is to live "above" the world.

## **COLOSSIANS 3:1-2 - LOOKING DOWN**

Colossians 3:1-2

An article in a San Francisco newspaper reported that a young man who once found a \$5 bill on the street resolved that from that time on he would never lift his eyes while walking. The paper went on to say that over the years he accumulated, among other things, 29,516 buttons, 54,172 pins, 12 cents a bent back, and a miserly disposition. But he also lost something—the glory of sunlight, the radiance of the stars, the smiles of friends, and the freshness of blue skies.

I'm afraid that some Christians are like that man. While they may not walk around staring at the sidewalk, they are so engrossed with the things of this life that they give little attention to spiritual and eternal values. Perhaps they've gotten a taste of some fleeting pleasure offered by the world and they've been spending all their time pursuing it. But that is dangerous. When God's children, who are "seated with Christ in the heavenlies," give their affection and attention to a world that is passing away, they lose the upward look. Their perspective becomes distorted, and they fail to bask in heaven's sunlight. Taken up with the baubles of this world, they become defeated, delinquent Christians. Buttons, pins, and pennies, but no treasures laid up in heaven.

The apostle Paul said, "If ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above" (Col. 3:1-note). To live for the things of this world is to miss life's best. Let's set our sights on the heights! P. R. Van Gorder

## **COLOSSIANS 3:2 - FOCUS**

Missionary pilot Bernie May writes,

One of the most difficult lessons to teach new pilots about landing on short, hazardous airstrips is to keep their eyes on the good part of the strip rather than on the hazard. The natural tendency is to concentrate on the obstacle, the danger, the thing he is trying to avoid. But experience teaches us that a pilot who keeps his eye on the hazard will sooner or later hit it dead center.

This makes me think of a spiritual principle in the Bible. Instead of concentrating on the sins we want to avoid, we are told to focus on the positive actions Christ desires for us. Paul told the Christians at Colosse: "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2-note). We are to discard old ways of thinking and acting (Col 3:5, 6, 7, 8, 9-note) and "put on" new ways of living (Col 3:10-17-note).

Bernie May sums it up by saying that experienced pilots focus their attention solidly on the track they want the plane to follow, keeping the hazards in their peripheral vision only.

When Christ and His interests are the focus of our lives, the lure of the old life remains in the corner of our eye, while we aim to land squarely in the center of God's will. —David C. McCasland

THINKING IT OVER- What "hazards" sometimes divert your attention from Jesus? What positive, God-honoring actions can you concentrate on doing instead?

Those who fix their eyes on heaven  
will not be distracted by the things of earth.

## **COLOSSIANS 3:2 - RIPPLES ON THE POND**

April 16, 2001

Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. —A young boy made a toy boat and then went to sail it on a pond. While he was playing with it along the water's edge, the boat floated out beyond his reach. In his distress he asked an older boy to help him. Without saying a word, the older child picked up some stones and started to throw them toward the boat.

The little boy became upset, for he thought that the one he had turned to for help was being mean. Soon, though, he noticed that

instead of hitting the boat, each stone was directed beyond it, making a small ripple that moved the vessel a little nearer to the shore. Every throw of the stone was planned, and at last the treasured toy was brought back to his waiting hands.

Sometimes it seems as if God allows circumstances into our lives that are harming us and are without sense or plan. We may be sure, though, that these waves of trial are intended to bring us nearer to Himself, to encourage us to set our minds "on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2). Because we are prone to drift away from Him, the Lord must discipline us to get us back on the right course (Hebrews 12:9, 10, 11-note).

How are you responding to life's difficulties? They are God's loving way of drawing you closer to Him. —H G Bosch

Lightly hold earth's joys so transient,  
Lightly hold to things of clay,  
Grasp perfections everlasting,  
Where Christ dwells in heaven's day! —Bosch

God uses the waves of trial to draw us closer to Himself.

## **COLOSSIANS 3:2 - THE CHOICE IS OURS**

January 28, 2006

One summer afternoon I climbed a hill near my home. When I reached the top, I stretched out on the grass to relax.

Turning my head to one side, my eyes focused on some blades of grass within inches of my face. This short-range focus not only strained my eyes, but it blurred my view of anything beyond the end of my nose. So I began to adjust my focus, and then the distant city came into view instead. I found I could shift my sights from near to far at will. The choice was mine.

In today's Bible reading, the apostle Paul emphasized that followers of Christ need to keep eternity in view. He wrote, "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2-note). We can choose where to put our focus.

We can succumb to selfish, earthbound thoughts, blurring our view of anything beyond the end of our nose. Or we can gaze through this sinful scene and fix our attention on things above, where Christ is seated at God's right hand-and we with Him! Then, and only then, are we in a position to see what's most important in life.

Only the mind set on things above can say no to sin and yes to holiness. The choice is ours. —Joanie Yoder

Help me to watch and pray,  
And on Thyself rely;  
And let me ne'er my trust betray,  
But press to realms on high. -Wesley

The only way to see life clearly is to focus on Christ

## **COLOSSIANS 3:2 - TEMPTATION TOO GREAT**

In his book *Hurrying Big for Little Reasons*, Ronald Meredith spoke of a quiet spring night when the silence was broken by the sound of wild geese flying. "I ran to the house," Meredith comments, "and breathlessly announced the excitement I felt. What is to compare with wild geese across the moon? It might have ended there, except for the sight of our tame mallards on the pond. They heard the wild call they had once known. The honking out of the night sent little arrows of prompting deep into their wild yesterdays. Their wings fluttered a feeble response. The urge to fly—to take their place in the sky for which God had made them—was sounding in those feathered breasts, but they never raised from the water. The matter had been settled long ago. The corn of the barnyard was too tempting!" - D. C. Egner

## **COLOSSIANS 3:3, COLOSSIANS 3:12-13**

EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY BY MARY WILDER TILESTON

Your life is hid with Christ in God.

--COLOSSIANS 3:3

Put on therefore a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other; even as the Lord forgave you so also do ye.

--COLOSSIANS 3:12-13 (R. V.)



IT is not the deed we do,  
Though the deed be never so fair,  
But the love that the dear Lord looketh for,  
Hidden with holy care  
In the heart of the deed so fair.  
--HARRIET MCEWEN KIMBALL

THESE are duties which belong to us alike, whatever our outward lot be, whether rich or poor, honored or despised, amid outward joys or sorrows. For as our life is hidden in Christ, so have we all an outward and an inward, a hidden life. Outwardly, we seem busied for the most part about common things, with trivial duties, worthless tasks. Inwardly we are, or ought to be, studying how, in all, to please God, walking in His sight, doing them in His Presence, seeking to know how He would have them done. So amid trivial things we may be, nay men are, in every station of life, pleasing God, that is, leading angels' lives, in that they are doing His will on earth, as the angels in heaven. They are "servants of His, doing His pleasure."  
--EDWARD B. PUSEY

### COLOSSIANS 3:3 - WE WERE THERE!

Read: Colossians 2:20, 21, 22, 23, Col 3:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11

Christa McAuliffe was one of the seven astronauts who lost their lives in the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger on January 28, 1986. She had been selected from among many applicants to be the first teacher in space. Her commitment to education and the space program had captured the imagination of many. At a memorial service, one teacher said, "When Christa stepped onto that shuttle, we stepped on with her. And when she died, a part of us died too."

These comments about Christa remind me of a much deeper identification—the believer's spiritual union with Christ. Because of our relationship to Him, we can say, "When He was lifted up on that cross, we were there with Him. When He died, we died!" The apostle Paul said that we died with Christ (Col 2:20-note; Col 3:3-note), and we were also raised with Him (Col 3:1-note). Therefore, in Him we are accepted and forgiven by God (Eph 1:6, 7-note).

What remains to be seen is whether our lives show that we really do believe we were united with Christ in His death and resurrection. Our confession of faith must be more than a memorial statement. It must show that we have put away our old life of sin and have set our mind on things above. —M R De Haan II

I have been to the cross where my Savior died,  
And all my life is made new—  
In the person of Him I am crucified;  
I have been to the cross—have you? —Anon.

To show His love, Jesus died for us;  
to show our love, we must live for Him!  
(See 2Corinthians 5:14-note)

### COLOSSIANS 3:4 - HAPPY ENDING

May 4, 1998

When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. --Colossians 3:4-note

By the end of his life, musician Giuseppe Verdi was recognized as a master of dramatic composition. But he didn't begin his career with such success. As a youth, he had obvious musical ability, but he was denied entrance to the Milan Conservatory because he lacked the required education and background.

Yet time does strange things. After Verdi's fame had spread worldwide, the school was renamed the Verdi Conservatory of Music.

Verdi's experience reminds me of the experience of our Lord and of all who trust in Him. The Son of God was rejected by His countrymen because they didn't feel He had adequate training or the right family background (Mt. 13:53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58). Even though Jesus spoke the truth in a powerful, irrefutable way, and even though His works spoke for themselves, He did not receive the recognition He deserved. Yet someday everyone will bow before Him and give Him the honor due His name (Phil 2:9, 10, 11-note).

We who have put our faith in Christ as our personal Savior will have a part in that great day, for He plans to share the honor with us (Ep 1:18-note; 2Ti 2:12-note; Rev 22:5-note). Even though our beginnings may seem insignificant, we can look forward to a glorious, happy ending. --M R De Haan II

My Father's own Son, the Savior of men,  
Once wandered o'er earth as the poorest of them;  
But now He is reigning forever on high,  
And will give me a home in heaven by and by. --Buell

All that we long to become will find fulfillment when we see Jesus.

### **COLOSSIANS 3:5 - "DYING PROOF"**

December 6, 1997

While walking down a street in Long Beach, California, I was reminded how a person's behavior can misrepresent the message of the gospel and cause an unbelieving world to be confused. I met a man who asked what I had to show for myself in life. When I referred to my confidence in the Son of God, he became very excited. He said he also knew Christ as his Savior and quoted some Bible verses about eternal life.

As we parted, the man reminded me to preach the Word. I had a problem accepting his admonition, though, for he was roaring drunk. With slurred speech, several times he bounced "Praise the Lord!" off the concrete around us, drawing stares from passersby. His inebriated condition shouted a loud protest to the sober truths that echoed through the streets.

As I walked away, I was struck with the stark reality of how Christian credibility is lost when our behavior reveals that we are controlled by sinful desires rather than the Holy Spirit. We can't expect others to believe a message that is contradicted by our actions. Every day we must "put to death" those actions that would tarnish our testimony (Col. 3:5-note). Only then can we be sure of offering "dying proof" of living faith. --M R De Haan II

May all I am and do and say  
Give glory to my Lord always,  
And may no act of mine cause shame  
Nor bring reproach upon His name. --Anon.

A bad example undermines good words.

### **COLOSSIANS 3:5-9 - A WAY OF LIFE**

September 10, 2004

Do not let the sun go down on your wrath. —Ephesians 4:26-note

How did everything get so dirty so fast?" I grumbled as I dusted the glass tabletop. "I had the whole house clean a month ago."

"Cleaning is a way of life, not an event," my husband responded.

I know he's right, but I hate to admit it. I want to clean the house once and have it stay that way. But dirt doesn't surrender that easily. Speck by speck, the dust returns. Piece by piece, the clutter piles up.

Sin is like the dust and clutter in my house. I want to eliminate all of it with one prayer of confession and repentance. But sin doesn't surrender that easily. Thought by thought, bad attitudes return. Choice by choice, un-pleasant consequences pile up.

The apostle Paul told the believers in Colosse to get rid of "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language" (Colossians 3:8-note). And he told the church at Ephesus, "Be angry, and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26).

Christ's death and resurrection eliminated the need for daily sacrifice. But confession and repentance are still essential to the Christian's daily life. Getting rid of such things as anger, rage, and malice is a way of life, not a one-time event. —Julie Ackerman  
[Link](#)

We're thankful, Lord, that when we fall  
We can begin anew  
If humbly we confess our sin,  
Then turn and follow You. —Sper

The best eraser in the world is an honest confession to God

### **Colossians 3:5-11 - THE LIFE THAT IS NEW BY THEODORE EPP**

In Colossians 3:10,11 Paul revealed three truths about those who have put on the new man.

First, they have a divine nature. Each person who trusts Christ as Saviour has "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (v. 10).

It is not just that a person wants a new nature--he has a new nature. We translate our position into daily living as we say yes to Christ and no to sin.

Second, those who have trusted Christ as Saviour also have a new unity: "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free" (v. 11).

The new unity transcends all races, social positions, cultural differences--even economic and political status. Such distinctions belong to the old man, not to the new man.

And because God makes no distinctions between the categories mentioned in verse 11, neither should we who know Jesus Christ as Saviour.

Third, those who have trusted Jesus Christ have a new relationship: "Christ is all, and in all" (v. 11). This is a new relationship where Christ is in absolute control.

Is Christ in control of your life? Not just in control of something, but is He in control of all things? Is He truly "all, and in all"?

"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one" (John 17:22).

### **Colossians 3:5-11 PRACTICING YOUR POSITION BY THEODORE EPP**

It is wonderful to realize that, as believers, we live by the power of Christ's resurrection life. As we do this, we are letting Christ live again in the sense that He is living out His life through us.

This is what Paul desired for the Ephesian believers, for he prayed that they might know "what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:19,20).

This ties in beautifully with Paul's statement in Colossians 1:27: "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

It must be remembered that we are not robots, operated by push buttons. We are beings with the power of choice, and we must decide to apply these truths to ourselves.

God wants us to surrender to Him as an act of faith. When we do this, God works on our behalf. This is not necessarily only a New Testament truth. The psalmist wrote: "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass" (Ps. 37:5).

Philippians 2:12 and Galatians 5:16 also indicate that we are to work out the salvation that has been worked within us and that we are to live by means of the Spirit.

Paul stressed to the believers in Colosse--and to us--that, as a result of their standing in Christ, they had a great responsibility to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1).

"For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). (From Back to the Bible)

**Colossians 3:8 - Welsh Revival of 1904** - In an eyewitness report of the great Welsh revival of 1904, G. Campbell Morgan wrote, "The horses are terribly puzzled. A manager said to me. 'The haulers are some of the very lowest. They have driven their horses by obscenity and kicks. Now they can hardly persuade the horses to start working, because there is no obscenity and no kicks.'" - D.J.D. Our Daily Bread, September 26

### **COLOSSIANS 3:8**

#### **RESTORING GOD'S IMAGE**

**May 28, 2004**

We all . . . are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory. —2Corinthians 3:18

As a young boy, theologian Alister McGrath enjoyed experimenting with chemicals in his school's laboratory. He liked to drop a tarnished coin into a beaker of diluted nitric acid. He often used an old British penny bearing the image of Queen Victoria. Because of the accumulated grime, Her Majesty's image couldn't be seen clearly. But the acid cleansed away the grime and the Queen's

image reappeared in shining glory.

We know, to be sure, that we were created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), but that image has been defaced by our sin. We are still His image-bearers, however.

Once we invite Jesus to enter our lives as Savior, He goes to work to restore the original image. He transforms us to make us like Himself (2Corinthians 3:18). This process is described as putting off some behaviors and putting on others. For example, we are to "put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language" (Colossians 3:8-note) and to "put on love" (Col 3:14-note).

Unless and until our sin-tarnished souls are cleansed by Jesus' forgiveness, God's image is obscured in our lives. But when we trust Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, we are forgiven and the restoration begins.—Vernon C Grounds

Restore in me Your image, Lord,  
So tarnished by my sin and shame;  
And cleanse whatever may conceal  
The shining glory of Your name. —D. De Haan

### **Drawing close to Christ produces a growing Christlikeness.**

#### **COLOSSIANS 3:8**

#### **DANGER! OUT OF BOUNDS!**

#### **Colossians 3:1-I I**

A RESORT in Breckenridge, Colorado, posted signs warning skiers to keep off a certain slope. The signs, large and distinct, warned, Danger! Out of Bounds! In spite of the warnings, however, several skiers went into the area. The result? A half-mile-wide avalanche buried four of the trespassers beneath tons of snow and rock. This tragedy never would have happened if the signs had been heeded.

God has posted clear warning signs in the Bible to tell us what kinds of behavior and attitudes are off limits. The Lord loves us and wants us to avoid tragedy. He warned us about lying, stealing, blasphemy, filthy language, adultery, murder, drunkenness, and a host of other sins. Yet many times we ignore His warnings and intentionally wander into a forbidden area. We convince our-selves that nothing bad will happen to us or that we can turn back if we sense danger.

But God is not kidding. Sinning guarantees His disapproval and opens the door to remorse and tragedy. People who repeatedly commit these sins may be giving evidence that they have never really been saved (1John 3:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9).

When tempted to explore a forbidden area, don't be foolish. God's warning signs are posted for good reason.—D C Egner

#### **COLOSSIANS 3:8**

#### **NOISE POLLUTION**

#### **December 7, 2002**

Profanity and crude language are becoming more common on prime-time television programs. Many writers and producers seem to be intent on pushing the limits of how much immoral and offensive speech the public will allow.

Profane and vulgar language is noise pollution of the worst kind. It dishonors God and degrades men and women. Conversation punctuated by cursing, swear words, and crude and dirty expressions obscures the beauty of noble ideas. Words that condemn others can inflame anger and destroy relationships. They can inflict lasting hurt to sensitive souls who are battered by verbal abuse.

Ungodly language creates an immoral and unspiritual atmosphere, which is hostile to clean thinking and living. Its deafening sound can all but drown out the voice of God's Spirit. That's why the Word of God spells out in clear terms the kind of language that must not come from the lips of followers of Jesus (Colossians 3:8-note), as well as the kind that should characterize our speech (Col 4:6-note).

Centuries ago the psalmist offered a prayer that we would be wise to echo: "Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips" (Psalm 141:3-note). That prayer is needed today more than ever. —Dennis J. De Haan

Lord, guard our tongues so what we say  
Won't hurt and carelessly offend;  
Give us the gracious speech of love,

With words that soothe and heal and mend. —Sper

**Profanity disgraces the user and demeans the hearer.**

## **WELSH REVIVAL OF 1904**

### **Colossians 3:8**

In an eyewitness report of the great Welsh revival of 1904, G. Campbell Morgan wrote, "The horses are terribly puzzled. A manager said to me. 'The haulers are some of the very lowest. They have driven their horses by obscenity and kicks. Now they can hardly persuade the horses to start working, because there is no obscenity and no kicks.'" - D. J. De Haan

### **COLOSSIANS 3:9**

#### **I GOT A TICKET**

When I arrived home from a trip, I announced to my wife, "I got a ticket when I was driving through Indiana." She was about to give me a good scolding, but then I said, "Wait a minute! I can explain everything."

I told her that I had been traveling on the Indiana Toll Road. Everyone who enters it receives a "ticket." It's not handed out because of a traffic violation, but it's used to determine the amount of toll to be paid on the basis of the distance traveled.

This incident reminded me that it's possible to tell a lie while making a true statement. It's done by using words that have a double meaning, or by making incomplete statements to leave an erroneous impression.

People often tell half-truths and use certain terms that are intended to mislead others. When selling a used TV, for example, the seller may emphasize the great picture quality but neglect to tell the buyer that the volume control doesn't work properly. Then, he can later rationalize and say, "I told the truth. I told him the picture was great. He didn't ask me about the sound." This is just another form of lying.

Instead of stretching or bending the truth to serve our own agenda, let's heed the words of Scripture: "Do not lie to one another" (Colossians 3:9-note). —Richard De Haan

With our minds we can conceive  
Of truthful words that can deceive;  
Although we claim the truth was meant,  
In truth, a lie was our intent. —D. De Haan

**The most deceptive liars are those who live on the edge of truth.**

### **COLOSSIANS 3:9**

#### **NO LIE**

A college football coach resigns after admitting he falsified his academic and athletic credentials. A career military officer confesses to wearing combat decorations he did not earn. A job applicant acknowledges that her stated experience in "food and beverage oversight" was actually making coffee each morning at the office.

Within each of us is a tendency to embellish the truth in order to impress others. Whether on a job résumé or in casual conversation, exaggeration comes naturally—but we pay a price. Small lies usually grow larger as we try to avoid discovery. Then we wonder how we ever got ourselves into such a predicament.

The Bible says, "Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him" (Colossians 3:9, 10-note). In other words, if we've placed our faith in Jesus as our Savior, lying is inconsistent with what God expects us to be. The antidote to the poison of self-promotion is a growing Christlikeness—a spirit of mercy, kindness, humility, patience, forgiveness, and love (Col 3:12, 13, 14-note).

If we genuinely care about people, we won't need to try to impress them at any cost. —David C. McCasland

Lord, help me to please You by telling the truth,  
Being honest in words and in deeds;  
And help me to conquer my selfish desires,  
To love others and care for their needs. —Fitzhugh

**Honesty means never having to look over your shoulder.**

## **COLOSSIANS 3:12**

### **Dress For Success**

**May 19, 1997**

#### **Read: Colossians 3:12-17**

In 1975, John Molloy wrote a book called Dress For Success, which became the fashion guidebook for many people trying to climb the corporate ladder. Molloy's advice centered on a basic premise--always dress like your boss.

Every day, for work, school, or recreation, we all have to decide what to wear. And even in the dress-down 90s, people strive for the right look.

But we must also make choices about another wardrobe--our attitudes and actions. If we claim to be followers of Christ, our spiritual apparel is of far greater significance than our physical clothing.

Take a look at God's dress code for us. As His chosen people, we are to clothe ourselves with "kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering" (Col. 3:12-note). We are to demonstrate patience and forgiveness (Col 3:13-note). And above all, we must "put on love, which is the bond of perfection" (Col 3:14-note).

Do I begin each day by acknowledging Christ as the Person in charge, the One for whom I work? Do I take time to clothe myself with attitudes that please Him? Am I wearing what people are most longing to see--compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and love?

If so, I'll be dressed for success in God's service. --D C McCasland

O to be like Him, tender and kind,  
Gentle in spirit, lowly in mind;  
More like Jesus, day after day,  
Filled with His Spirit, now and alway. --Ellsworth

### **Kindness is Christianity with its working clothes on.**

#### **Colossians 3:12 Numbers 12:3; Galatians 5:22,23;**

#### **MEEKNESS:STRENGTH UNDER CONTROL BY THEODORE EPP**

##### **In Strength for the Journey**

In reviewing Isaac's life, we should also take special note of his spirit of meekness. All through his life his temperament was of a passive nature rather than of an active or aggressive nature.

In childhood he was subjected to the insults of Ishmael, but there is no record that he became angry about them. As a young man he was taken to Mount Moriah to be offered as a sacrifice, and in meekness he surrendered and made himself available.

He did not even choose his own wife, as she was chosen for him through his father's arrangements and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Isaac also accepted the rebuke of Abimelech in meekness. There were no reprisals. He and his men yielded whenever they were wrongly driven away from the wells they had redug.

Isaac's meek spirit brought forth praise from even his enemies. They testified concerning his great power and might and their realization that the Lord was with him.

The world thinks little of meekness, yet it is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:23). The Apostle Paul urged all Christians: "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Phil. 4:5).

Meekness involves the self-sacrifice of our own desires and interests. Because Isaac gladly gave up his own personal desires, it pleased God to refer to Himself as "the God of Isaac."

"For thus saith the Lord God,... In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength" (Isa. 30:15). (From Back to the Bible)

## **COLOSSIANS 3:12**

## "IS MY UNIFORM ON?"

Ken Robinson, who is now a pastor, at one time served as a police officer. He said people treated him differently when he was in uniform than when he was off duty and wearing plain clothes. Something about the badge and "blues" gained him instant respect and authority.

He was often addressed as "Sir." When he told people something, they believed him. And when he gave an order, they were quick to obey. Robinson concluded, "I guess the clothes made the difference. And in uniform, I acted with more confidence."

In Colossians 3, the apostle Paul told followers of Christ to put on a new uniform. First he described the clothes we are to "put off" (Col 3:8, 9-note). Then he told us what kind of uniform we are to "put on" (Col 3:12, 13, 14-note). In place of anger, wrath, slander, dirty language, and lies, we are to put on mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and love.

Most people respond positively to someone with these virtues. Their respect grows, They talk and act differently toward such a person. They listen to his words, acknowledge his authority, and are drawn to the God he represents.

What you wear makes a big difference. So ask yourself this question: Do I have my spiritual uniform on?

Lord, may I live that all may see  
The love of Christ revealed in me,  
And help me flee all sin and shame  
Lest others scoff at Your dear name. --DJD

**Can people tell that Christ is in you before you tell them?**

## COLOSSIANS 3:12

### ON WEARING WHITE

**August 21, 2003**

When I was growing up, wearing white in the US after Labor Day was a serious fashion blunder. So even though I love white clothes, every year I dutifully start putting them away at the end of August.

Late one year, while following a Bible-reading schedule, I came to Ecclesiastes 9:8, which states, "Let your garments always be white." I smiled, imagining for a moment that the author was giving permission to wear white all year. But Solomon was not talking about fashion. He was instructing us to find joy in everything we do and to express it in ways that show faith in God even at times when life doesn't seem to make sense.

One way we can do this is to observe the "fashion advice" of the apostle Paul. First-century Christians in Colosse had become confused. They were overly concerned with man-made rules, so Paul reminded them of the holy laws of God and gave them these instructions: "Put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering" (Colossians 3:12).

These are the commands of an infinite God, not the rules of finite humans. So if we put on these "clothes" every day, we'll never be out of season. —Julie Ackerman Link

Help us, O Lord, to live our lives  
So people clearly see  
Reflections of Your loving heart,  
Your kindness, purity. —Sper

Christlikeness is always in season.

## COLOSSIANS 3:12,13 - TURN YOUR EYES OUT BY MARY WILDER TILESTON

Put on therefore, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye.

COLOSSIANS 3:12,13 (R. V.)

THE discord is within, which jars  
So sadly in life's song;  
'Tis we, not they who are in fault,  
When others seem so wrong.

FREDERICK WM. FABER

SELF-PREOCCUPATION, self-broodings, self-interest, self-love,--these are the reasons why you go jarring against your fellows. Turn your eyes off yourself; look up, and out! There are men, your brothers, and women, your sisters; they have needs that you can aid. Listen for their confidences; keep your heart wide open to their calls, and your hands alert for their service. Learn to give, and not to take; to drown your own hungry wants in the happiness of lending yourself to fulfil the interests of those nearest or dearest. Look up and out, from this narrow, cabined self of yours, and you will jar no longer; you will fret no more, you will provoke no more; but you will, to your own glad surprise, find the secret of "the meekness and the gentleness of Jesus"; and the fruits of the Spirit will all bud and blossom from out of your life.

HENRY SCOTT HOLLAND

(From Back to the Bible)

## **COLOSSIANS - BY MARY WILDER TILESTON SHOW LOVE**

"Put on as the elect of God, kindness" (Col. 3:12).

There is a story of an old man who carried a little can of oil with him everywhere he went, and if he passed through a door that squeaked, he poured a little oil on the hinges. If a gate was hard to open, he oiled the latch. And thus he passed through life lubricating all hard places and making it easier for those who came after him.

People called him eccentric, queer, and cranky; but the old man went steadily on refilling his can of oil when it became empty, and oiled the hard places he found.

There are many lives that creak and grate harshly as they live day by day. Nothing goes right with them. They need lubricating with the oil of gladness, gentleness, or thoughtfulness. Have you your own can of oil with you? Be ready with your oil of helpfulness in the early morning to the one nearest you. It may lubricate the whole day for him. The oil, of good cheer to the downhearted one—Oh, how much it may mean! The word of courage to the despairing. Speak it.

Our lives touch others but once, perhaps, on the road of life; and then, mayhap, our ways diverge, never to meet again, The oil of kindness has worn the sharp, hard edges off of many a sin-hardened life and left it soft and pliable and ready for the redeeming grace of the Saviour.

A word spoken pleasantly is a large spot of sunshine on a sad heart. Therefore, "Give others the sunshine, tell Jesus the rest."

"We cannot know the grief  
That men may borrow;  
We cannot see the souls  
Storm-swept by sorrow;  
But love can shine upon the way  
Today, tomorrow;  
Let us be kind.  
Upon the wheel of pain so many weary lives are  
broken,  
We live in vain who give no tender token.  
Let us be kind."

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love" (Rom. 12:10).

## **Colossians 3:12; Titus 3:1-7 GOD'S KINDNESS BY THEODORE EPP**

The believer is to put on "kindness" (Col. 3:12). This refers to a gentle, gracious disposition.

When I think of this quality, a particular godly leader comes to mind. Years ago another leader in the area did him much harm and sought to ruin his reputation. In a board meeting with this godly leader some of us expressed concern about what this other person was doing to him.

This godly leader then made a statement I shall never forget: "I have determined in my heart to show love and kindness toward this Christian leader with all that I have." And he did. This is what kindness is all about.

A biblical illustration of showing kindness is seen from the life of David. The former king, Saul, had despised David and sought to kill him several times.

But David never took advantage of Saul; in fact, Saul's son Jonathan became his closest friend. After the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, David asked, "Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?" (2



Sam. 9: 1).

It was then brought to David's attention that Jonathan had a crippled son, Mephibosheth (v. 3). David sent for Mephibosheth, and 2 Samuel 9 concludes by saying, "So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem: for he did eat continually at the king's table; and was lame on both his feet" (v. 13).

In addition to providing for Mephibosheth continually, David also restored to him the land that had been confiscated from Saul. This was true kindness in action.

"And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32).  
(From Back to the Bible)

## **COLOSSIANS 3:12-14 - F B Meyer - CHRISTIAN LIVING**

COLOSSIANS 3:12, 13, 14, Ephesians 6:13, 14, 15, 16, 17

"I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Gal 2:20-note.

THE HEART of true religion is to believe that Christ is literally within us. We must not simply look to Him as our Mediator, Advocate, and Example, but as being possessed by Him. He is our Life, the living Fountain rising up in the well of our personality. The Apostle Paul was never weary of re-affirming this great fact of his experience, and it would be well if each of us could say every day, before starting forth on our daily duty: "Christ is in me; let me make room for Him to dwell."

We must say No to self, that the life of Christ may become manifest in and through us, and our standing become a reality in daily experience and conduct. When evil suggestions come to us, we must remember that we have entered a world where such things have no place. We are no longer in the realm of the god of this world, but have passed into the realm of the Risen Christ. Let those who are tempted believe this, and assert it in the face of the tempter, counting upon the Holy Spirit to make their reckoning a living experience.

In Eph 6:13, 14, 15, 16, 17-note is described the armour of the Christian soul; in Col 3:12, 13, 14-note the habit or dress which he wears beneath his coat of mail. We must be careful to be properly dressed each day. If we lose our temper over trifles, or yield to uncharitable speech, it shows that we have omitted to put on the girdle of love; if we yield to pride, avarice, envy and jealousy, we must not simply endeavour to put off these evils, but take from the wardrobe the opposite graces. It is not enough to avoid doing wrong. Our Master demands that we should always do and be what is right. When we fail in some sudden demand, it is because we have omitted to put on some trait of Christ, which was intended to be the complement of our need. Let us therefore day by day say: "Lord Jesus, wrap Thyself around me, that I may go forth, adequately attired to meet life's demands." In Christ for standing; Christ in us, for life; we with him, for safety.

**PRAYER** - Set my heart on fire with the love of Thee, and then to do Thy will, and to obey Thy commandments, will not be grievous to me. For to him that loveth, nothing is difficult, nothing is impossible; because love is stronger than death. AMEN. **F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.**

## **COLOSSIANS 3:12**

### **READ: Colossians 3:12-17**

THE alarm goes off. It's morning already. You lie in bed, thinking. You ask yourself the same question you ask every morning,

"What shall I wear today?"

You brush away the mental cobwebs and think through the day. There's nothing really important—just the routine. You listen to the clock radio for the weather report. Then you decide: the comfortable blue outfit with red accents.

What we wear is important. We all want to dress appropriately and look our best. Besides, when we believe that we look good, we go through the day with more energy and confidence.

The Lord Jesus cares about what we wear, too, but His concern is our spiritual apparel. Colossians 3 lists some of the virtues with which we should clothe ourselves every morning: compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. When we are wearing these, we will deal properly with situations that arise, our friendships will be strengthened, and we will have the satisfaction that comes from knowing that we are pleasing the Lord.

When our days are characterized by trouble, anger, hurt, or bad feelings, it's time to invest in a new wardrobe.—D C Egnor

## **Colossians 3:12-17**

### **Always An Upgrade**

When I'm about to leave the house, sometimes my wife, Martie, stops me and says, "You can't go to the office dressed like that!" It's usually something about the tie not matching the jacket or the color of the slacks being out of sync with the sportcoat. Though being questioned about my fashion choices may feel like an affront to my good taste, I have realized that her correcting influence is always an upgrade.

Scripture often calls us to "put on" attitudes and actions that match our identity in Christ. Sometimes we are known by the clothes we wear, but we can make Jesus known by wearing attitudes and actions that reveal His presence in our lives. The apostle Paul advised us to set the fashion standard by modeling the wardrobe of Jesus' compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and forgiveness (Col. 3:12). And, he added, "above all these things put on love . . . And let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (vv.14-15).

Clothing ourselves in Jesus' likeness begins with spending time with Him. If you hear Him say, "You can't go out like that!" let Him lovingly take you back to the closet so He can clothe you with His likeness. It's always an upgrade! — by Joe Stowell

Lord, help us to see ourselves the way You see us. By

Your Spirit teach us to adorn our lives with the

attitudes and actions You have designed for us as a

public statement about our identity with You.

Clothing ourselves with Jesus' attitudes and actions shows His presence in our lives.

## **COLOSSIANS 3:12 - 25**

### **A CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE**

He was a remarkable person. Author of 150 books, Toyohiko Kagawa was a teacher, a poet, a philosopher, a scientist, and an evangelist. He wrote on various subjects ranging from scientific studies to theological issues. During World War II, he was imprisoned for his pacifistic views. But he never ceased to love and serve God. Often he repeated these 3 prayers:

"Father, forgive."

"God, let me live to serve."

"O God, make me like Christ."

Those brief petitions reveal the spiritual dynamics of a truly Christian lifestyle. That 3rd prayer cannot be realized unless we take seriously the other two. Jesus said that He "did not come to be served, but to serve" ( Mt 18:21, 22 ). He became the supreme example of His own teaching when on the cross He prayed for His executioners, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Lk 23:34). Only to the extent that we serve and forgive can we become like Jesus. And that will require God's enabling grace. How He longs to hear us pray.

"Father, forgive,"

"God, let me live to serve," and

"O God, make me like Christ."

These are essential to a Christian lifestyle. ---V C Grounds

Forgiving when we suffer wrong,  
And serving others in the throng---  
Yes, this is what God's grace can do  
When Christ's own likeness we pursue. ---DJD

## **COLOSSIANS 3:13**

### **FREELY FORGIVE**

**February 2, 2004**

If anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. —Studies by a number of psychologists show that it is not great riches that make people happy, but friends and forgiveness. Commenting on these findings in a USA Today

article, Marilyn Elias says, "The happiest people surround themselves with family and friends, don't care about keeping up with the Joneses next door, lose themselves in daily activities, and most important, forgive easily."

University of Michigan psychologist Christopher Peterson says that the ability to forgive others is the trait most strongly linked to happiness. He calls it "the queen of all virtues, and probably the hardest to come by."

An unforgiving spirit is often the last emotional fortress we yield to the power of God. Even as Christians, we may cling to anger and bitterness, feeling that those who have wronged us should suffer for their offenses. But when we realize how much God has forgiven us, we are compelled to extend mercy to others. The Bible urges us to "put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; . . . even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do" (Colossians 3:12, 13-note).

Forgiveness is God's command to us and is part of a life of love, peace, thankfulness, and praise (Col 3:14, 15, 16-note). Freely we have been forgiven; let us freely forgive.—David C. McCasland

Lord, help me be kind and forgiving—  
Your loving forgiveness You've shown  
To me for the sins I've committed;  
Lord, grant me a love like Your own. —Anon.

**When it seems you can't forgive,  
remember how much you've been forgiven.**

### **COLOSSIANS 3:13**

#### **BURYING THE HATCHET**

##### **Matthew 6:5-15**

Old Joe was dying. For years he had been at odds with Bill, formerly one of his best friends. Wanting to straighten things out, he sent word for Bill to come and see him. When Bill arrived, Joe told him that he was afraid to go into eternity with such a bad feeling between them. Then, very reluctantly and with great effort, Joe apologized for things he had said and done. He also assured Bill that he forgave him for his offenses. Everything seemed fine until Bill turned to go. As he walked out of the room, Joe called out after him, "But, remember, if I get better, this doesn't count!"

What a picture of the way we often treat one another! The forgiveness we offer is superficial, and it is given with a selfish motive. We say that we forgive, but when the least little friction arises, how quick we are to resurrect past grievances. We like to "bury the hatchet" with the handle sticking out. That way we can easily pick it up again and use it to our advantage.

If our sinless Lord is willing to forgive us--with all our faults--how can we withhold pardon from those who have sinned against us? True Christlike forgiveness buries the hatchet completely. --R W De Haan

**For Further Thought** - What happens to your fellowship with God when you hold a grudge? (Mt. 6:15-note). Can you think of someone you need to forgive?

### **Colossians 3:13-17 BEWARE OF FALSE PEACE! BY THEODORE EPP**

We must beware of false peace. Some who do wrong may have a peace about it, but it does not come from God. As someone has said, "Peace of heart alone is not always the peace of God."

A significant test to apply to determine the origin of the peace is this: If I have peace in my heart about a matter, do I also have peace with others in the Body of Christ concerning it?

Understandably, not everyone will agree on any single issue, but if only the person himself thinks he is right, he has reason to question his decision. If we are out of the will of God, we will bring discord and disharmony to the Body of true believers. I realize the difficulty in assessing who is a true believer, especially in a group situation. Sometimes those who are part of the group do not evidence salvation themselves. Other times, some may clearly evidence salvation but give little evidence of mature judgment in things related to the Christian life.

One of the best safeguards against a false peace is simply making sure that you have the desire to please Jesus Christ in all that you do.

If it is your concern "that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18), you can trust Him to bring conviction and a lack of peace when your life is not honoring to Him.

"Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them" (Ps. 119:165). (from Back to the Bible)

### **COLOSSIANS 3:14 - RELIGION THAT CHANGES US**

MARY WILDER TILESTON

And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness.

--COLOSSIANS 3:14 (R. V.)

THOU hatest hatred's withering reign;

In souls that discord maketh dark

Dost Thou rekindle love's bright spark,

And make them one again.

--PAUL GERHARDT

WE have cause to suspect our religion if it does not make us gentle, and forbearing, and forgiving; if the love of our Lord does not so flood our hearts as to cleanse them of all bitterness, and spite, and wrath. If a man is nursing anger, if he is letting his mind become a nest of foul passions, malice, and hatred, and evil wishing, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

--HUGH BLACK

Love me always, boy, whatever I do or leave undone. And--God help me--whatever you do or leave undone, I'll love you. There shall never be a cloud between us for a day; no, sir, not for an hour. We're imperfect enough, all of us, we needn't be so bitter; and life is uncertain enough at its safest, we needn't waste its opportunities.

--JULIANA HORATIA EWING

### **COLOSSIANS 3:15 - William Henry Griffith Thomas**

#### **The Peace of God in Our Hearts**

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts..." (Col. 3:15).

What does the peace of Christ do? Primarily it gives assurance of acceptance with God (cf. Rom. 5:1), and the protection of God (cf. Phil. 4:7, Gr., "shall garrison," a paradoxical use of a warlike term). But here Christ's peace is to be received into the heart as the arbiter deciding the course and ruling the life (Gr., "umpire"). A similar idea and practically the same Greek word is found in 2:18, as we have seen, where the apostle is warning his readers not to let anyone judicially deprive them of their reward as though they were unworthy. This word, translated here "rule," suggests that which settles differences, especially where there is any conflict of thoughts and feelings. Under such circumstances "the peace of Christ" is to decide; and if it be asked how peace is able to do this perhaps the explanation is that just as peace with God is the result of our acceptance of Christ as Savior (Rom. 5:1), so the experience of peace in the soul, in union with Christ and through the presence of the Holy Spirit, will at once settle every difficulty, resolve every conflict, and show us what is the will of God. In this case there is a special reason for such divine peace--the essential unity of the body of Christ, the Church, and to this peace, we are told, every believer has been called. When we are one with Christ, in whom God "called us with an holy calling" (2 Tim. 1:9), and also one with Christians, "called in one body," as Paul says here, there is no question as to the great power of divine peace in our lives. We read of "government and peace" (Isa. 9:7), of "righteousness and peace" (Ps. 85:10; cf. Isa. 32:17), and of "grace...and peace" (Titus 1:4). Until these prevail universally, however, "the God of peace himself" (1 Thess. 5:23, ASV) will be with us, keeping us meanwhile "in perfect peace" (Isa. 26:3).

### **COLOSSIANS 3:15**

Colossians 3:1-17

EDDIE Lopat was a baseball pitcher for the New York Yankees in the 1950s. According to the late Red Barber, a former major league sports announcer, Eddie often lost his temper. He knew he had to master his weakness, so he went to a doctor to find out what he could do to control himself. The doctor told him that instead of getting upset, he should pause and count his blessings.

That advice echoes what the apostle Paul said in Colossians 3. After telling us to put on tender mercies, kindness, humbleness, meekness, longsuffering, and love, Paul added, "and be thankful" (Col 3:15-note). Thinking about our blessings directs our thoughts to God, the source of all good, and makes us grateful. It also reminds us of the spiritual blessings we have in Christ.

No one can have a satisfying life without self-control, but struggling to repress sinful impulses like angry outbursts, violent responses, sexual immorality, lustful thinking, blasphemous language, lying, or cheating won't get rid of them. To do that, we need to displace sinful desires with virtues.

It's impossible to hold on to anger when our hands are full of gratitude.—D J De Haan

## **COLOSSIANS 3:15- THE ARBITER IS PEACE - Elisabeth Elliot**

When there are disputes or differences of any sort between people, there are four possible results: estrangement, an armed truce, compromise, or reconciliation. The first of these is the reason for a good many divorces. The second accounts for many unhappy marriages. The third may seem the best that can be hoped for. The fourth is what Christians are called to, always. In marital disputes, or those between labor and management, an arbiter is sometimes called in, often after much wrangling and bitterness. An arbiter has absolute power to judge and decide.

There is another arbiter, too often forgotten. "Let Christ's peace be arbiter in your hearts; to this peace you were called" (Col 3:15 NEB).

Wouldn't it make an astonishing difference in our fellowship with one another if we would let that peace arbitrate, if we would remember the promised parting gift of Christ, "My peace I give you," and the command to live at peace with all?

But, we ask, how? How does it work? The context in Colossians shows us:

You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you, and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love. (Col 3:12-14 JB)

Are we willing to follow Him here? He will help us if we are. He will calm the troubled waters.

## **COLOSSIANS 3:15 - Inner Peace - Mary Wilder Tileston**

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful. COLOSSIANS 3:15 (R. V.)

MAY faith, deep rooted in the soul,  
Subdue our flesh, our minds control;  
May guile depart, and discord cease,  
And all within be joy and peace.  
ST. AMBROSE

THE repose, the quiet balanced rest which marks our Lord's perfected life, is intended to grow more and more steadfast in those who are truly His; not the repose of indolence, not the calm arising from absence of trial and lack of temptation, a mere accidental freedom from inward struggle or difficulty, but the repose which lives in the conquest of passion, in the crucifixion of self, in a subdued will, in the reconciliation of every thought with a perfected obedience, as the whole inner being, entranced in God, yields itself in delighted harmony with His perfect mind. Such repose is attained through the continual progress of a life of grace, as it gradually overcomes the restlessness of nature, the excitements of self, the disturbance of temper or passion, the fruitless impatience of the will. T. T. CARTER

Peace, when "ruling" the heart and "ruling" the mind, opens in both every avenue of joy. SARAH W.STEPHEN

## **COLOSSIANS 3:15 - A LOST ART**

**November 24, 2005**

The apostle Paul had never been to the church in Colosse, but he had heard all about it from Epaphras. He knew it was a church under attack by false teachers, so he prayed fervently for this congregation (Colossians 1:9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14-note; Col 2:4, 5, 6, 7-note).

Among his requests, Paul asked that they would give joyful thanks to the Father because He had rescued them, moving them from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of His Son (Col 1:12, 13-note). We too need to be thankful for what Christ has done for us.

Thankfulness seems to be a lost art today. Warren Wiersbe illustrated this problem in his commentary on Colossians. He told about a ministerial student in Evanston, Illinois, who was part of a life-saving squad. In 1860, a ship went aground on the shore of Lake Michigan near Evanston, and Edward Spencer waded again and again into the frigid waters to rescue 17 passengers. In the process, his health was permanently damaged. Some years later at his funeral, it was noted that not one of the people he rescued ever thanked him.

Let's take time often to recall how God has rescued us from eternal death and has given us eternal life through His Son. Let's make certain that we never allow thanking the Father to become a lost art. —David C. Egner

Give me a spirit of thankfulness, Lord,  
For numberless blessings given;  
Blessings that daily come to me  
Like dewdrops falling from heaven. —Dawe

**With practice, anyone can master the art of thankfulness.**

### **COLOSSIANS 3:15 - THE PEACE OF GOD**

The story is told about a wounded soldier who was being taken to a hospital tent by some of his comrades. After they had carried him but a short distance, he urged them to put him down and go back to rescue someone else. As he was mortally wounded, he knew there was no hope for him anyway. Granting his request, they left him and returned to the combat area. In a few minutes, however, an officer stopped to ask him whether he could assist him in any way. The wounded soldier weakly replied, "No, thank you, sir. There's nothing at all you can do." "But can't I at least get some water to quench your thirst?" the officer inquired. The dying man again shook his head saying, "No, thank you, sir. There is one thing, however, you could do for me. In my knapsack you will find a New Testament. Please open it to John 14. Near the end of the chapter you will find a text beginning with the word 'Peace.' I would appreciate it if you would read just that one verse to me." The officer found the passage and read these words,

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

"Thank you, sir," said the dying soldier. "I have that peace and I am going to the Savior who made that promise. God is with me, I want no more." Shortly after that, the wounded man entered into the presence of his Lord. Because he had Christ, he had peace with God, and since he had learned to commit everything to His care, he also had the peace of God. How important for all of us to remember that the Bible admonishes,

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanks-giving, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God . shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus!" (Php 4:6-note, Php 4:7-note).

Yes, in our joys and in our sorrows, in life's sunshine, or in the "valley of the shadow," we who are at peace with God can also know the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

Peace, perfect peace, in this dark world of sin?  
The blood of Jesus whispers peace within.  
Peace, perfect peace, with sorrows surging 'round?  
On Jesus' bosom naught but calm is found.—E. H. Bickersteth

**Peace rules the day when Christ rules the heart!**

### **COLOSSIANS 3:15 - F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily**

The peace of God is the peace of the Divine nature — the very tranquillity which prevails in the heart of the God of Peace. It was of this that Jesus spoke when He said, "My peace I give unto you"; for his own being was filled and blessed with it during his earthly career. In each of us may be a sea of glass, reflecting on its pellucid and tranquil bosom the untroubled calm and rest, which are unspeakable because eternal and Divine. "The Lord of peace Himself give you peace always."

There are three things against which we must ever be on our guard, lest they rob us of our peace. First, unconfessed sin; second, worry; third, the permission of an unrebuked selfish principle. As on the Sabbath the good Nehemiah carefully excluded the Tyrian fishwives from Jerusalem, lest they should mar its spirit of rest by their cries and traffic, so we must preserve an unbroken Sabbath-keeping within. "There remaineth therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God."

The apostle says, Let it rule. The Greek word means arbitrate. Whenever there is a doubtful issue to be decided, and by one course your peace may be disturbed, whilst by another it may be maintained, choose those things that make for peace, whether for yourselves or others. Let God's peace act as umpire.

At the same time, this does not mean peace at any price. When the cause of truth is assailed, or the rights of others invaded, we must stand up boldly and strongly for Righteousness. Then the effect of Righteousness will be Peace. Melchizedek was first King of Righteousness, and after that King of Peace.

### **COLOSSIANS 3:16 - THE INDWELLING WORD**

**January 10, 1996**

Before Clara Schumann, the widow of German composer Robert Schumann (1810-56), would play any of her husband's music in public, she would first privately read over some of his old love letters. Inspired by his words, she said it seemed as if his very life filled her, and she was then better able to interpret his musical compositions to the public.

In the spiritual realm, if we will read God's words of love to us until we are thrilled by their truth, His Spirit will fill our hearts and minds. The Lord can change our selfish attitudes and fretfulness through our meditation on His Word.

We will then experience an increasing evidence in our lives of the peace and servanthood that characterized the life of Christ. The words of our Lord are crucial if we are to be able to teach and help others effectively.

The apostle Paul encouraged believers by writing, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col. 3:16<sup>note</sup>). We can do nothing by ourselves, but as we let our Savior live through us, others will see Christ in all we do.

Spend time in God's Word today so that others will see Christ in your attitudes and actions. --H G Bosch

Give us, O Lord, a strong desire  
To look within Your Word each day;  
Help us to hide it in our hearts,  
Lest from its truth our feet would stray. --JDB

**When the Word of God dwells in you,  
the love of Christ shines through you.**

## **COLOSSIANS 3:16 - SOUNDS OF SILENCE**

**November 30, 2004**

During a Sunday morning worship service, I was intrigued to see the interpreter for the deaf continue to sign during an instrumental piano offertory. After the service I asked her what she was saying during that time when no words were being spoken or sung. She said that she had signed the words to the hymn being played, and also answered questions her "audience" asked about the pianist, her style, and her training.

"Instrumental music can be a blank place in worship for the deaf," she told me. Instead of taking a break or enjoying it alone, she thought of those who couldn't hear and kept the worship service unbroken for them.

That experience broadened my understanding of Colossians 3:16-note, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." As we allow God's Word to fill our hearts and have free rein in our lives, we can share it with others through words of instruction, encouragement, and praise to the Lord. Imagine the impact it could have in our homes, in private conversations, and in worship together.

As you encourage others by sharing God's Word from your heart, it will be music to their ears. —David C. McCasland

Sing praise to God who reigns above,  
The God of all creation,  
The God of power, the God of love,  
The God of our salvation. —Schutz

**Let God's Word fill your heart and guide your words.**

## **COLOSSIANS 3:16 - HEART MUSIC**

We are encouraged in the Scriptures to sing. Whether songs of praise, worship, adoration, or dedication, they should emanate from the heart. They must never be mere hypocritical vocalizations of nice-sounding sentiments.

Some good questions to ask yourself the next time you pick up a hymnbook in church are these: Do I really mean what I'm singing? Is this coming from my heart, or am I just going through the motions?

On Wednesday evening we sing, "'Tis the Blessed Hour of Prayer" and then allow our thoughts to wander aimlessly while others pray. We plead with enthusiasm, "Bring Them In" and later gripe about the repeated call for Sunday school bus drivers. We sing, "For the Beauty of the Earth" and then litter it with garbage and debris. We raise our voices to ask, "Is it the Crowning Day?" and proceed to live as though we had never heard of the Savior's return. We love the hymn, "Holy Bible, Book Divine" but spend most of

our time reading newspapers and periodicals. We declare in song, "I Love to Tell the Story" and can't remember the last time we spoke a word for Christ. We sing, "Just One Step at a Time" and immediately begin to worry about to-morrow! This is not singing from our hearts. Someone has observed that "when the heart moves devoutly with the voice, true heart-singing results." I would add that it is whenever "the heart and hand move devoutly with the voice." The sincerity of our devotion is demonstrated by what we sing and do. When our songs are matched by our deeds — this is heart music!

Singing and praying and working,  
Zealously walking His way;  
Heart and hand active in service,  
Living for Jesus each day! —G.W.

**A SONG coupled with SERVICE  
will usually outlive a SERMON in the memory.**  
—Giles

## **COLOSSIANS 3:16 - SILENT SERMON**

**September 22, 2003**

READ: Colossians 3:12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17-note; Hebrews 10:24, 25-note

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another. —How important is our fellowship in the local church? Let me answer that question by telling a story.

A minister was concerned about the absence of a man who had normally attended services. After a few weeks, he decided to visit him. When the pastor arrived at the man's home, he found him all alone, sitting in front of a fireplace. The minister pulled up a chair and sat next to him. But after his initial greeting he said nothing more.

The two sat in silence for a few minutes while the minister stared at the flames in the fireplace. Then he took the tongs and carefully picked up one burning ember from the flames and placed it on the hearth. He sat back in his chair, still silent. His host watched in quiet reflection as the ember flickered and faded. Before long it was cold and dead.

The minister glanced at his watch and said he had to leave, but first he picked up the cold ember and placed it back in the fire. Immediately it began to glow again with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it.

As the minister rose to leave, his host stood with him and shook his hand. Then, with a smile on his face, the man said, "Thanks for the sermon, pastor. I'll see you in church on Sunday." —David H. Roper

Lord, help us see how much we need each other  
As we walk along the Christian way;  
In fellowship with sister and with brother,  
You will keep us growing day by day. —Hess

**The warm fellowship of the church will keep your heart from growing cold.**

## **COLOSSIANS 3:16- Robert S. Candlish : Within You**

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly " (Col. 3:16).

Let the word of Christ so dwell in you. Let it be Christ himself, dwelling in you; Christ himself, the living word. Let his word, or himself the word, dwell in you richly; moulding, fashioning, vivifying, regulating, your whole inner man; all its powers, faculties, affections; its susceptibilities and sensibilities; its movements of will. Let his word, let himself in his word, give his own tone and temper to all your emotions of joy and sorrow; of fear, or anxiety or love, or hope. Let all within you be thus imbued, not stiffly and artificially, but spontaneously and gladly, with the word of Christ dwelling in you richly by the Spirit; and so becoming Christ himself dwelling in you as the word of life. Then, let there go forth from you, not stiffly and artificially, but spontaneously and gladly and lovingly, streams of overflowing benignity and benevolence; rich and gracious influences of holy zeal and love and joy; to the glory of God, celebrated in songs of praise; and the edifying of the church, in wise teaching and admonition.

## **COLOSSIANS 3:17 - DRIVE THE PIPE DEEPER**

During Bill Leslie's ministry as pastor of LaSalle Street Church in Chicago, there was a difficult period when he felt as if his soul was becoming a desert. His people were making so many demands that he was becoming spiritually drained.



While in this state of spiritual drought, he struck up a conversation with a devout Christian woman. He told her he felt like a pump, and his people so constantly pumped him that he was running dry. Straight from her heart, she answered, "Didn't you volunteer to be pumped when you prayed to be used by the Lord? Don't ask your people to quit pumping. Drive your pipe deeper. You need to get down where there's water again."

Perhaps you've had the same experience as Bill Leslie. Remember that God may entrust you with duties that seem to be drought-inducing burdens. Yet they are God-given assignments designed for your spiritual growth. Drive the pipe of faith and prayer deeper until once again you strike the living water of God's grace. As you "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" (Col. 3:16-note), you will be able to serve with a heart of gratitude and praise (Col 3:16, 17).

If you sense your spiritual well drying up, drive your pipe deeper. God gives an unlimited supply of grace. --V C Grounds

We shrink from this life's challenges--we plead  
For watered pastures never touched by pain;  
But God will often let us sense our need  
Before He sends His cool, refreshing rain. --Gustafson

**Man has no lack when God is his supply.**

### **COLOSSIANS 3:17 - PRACTICING GOD'S PRINCIPLES BY THEODORE EPP**

Proverbs 3:1-8

God has given us some basic principles to guide us in any situation. One of these is 1 Corinthians 10:31: "Do all to the glory of God." We cannot sin to the glory of God. Let us be sure that whatever we do is for His glory.

Another principle is Ephesians 5:20: "Giving thanks always for all things." If we cannot thank the Lord while we are doing a certain thing, then we should not do it. At the same time, let us be thankful Christians for all God does for us.

**A third principle** is Colossians 3:17: "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Suppose you wonder, Should I go to this place? Could you go there in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ?

A fourth principle is Philippians 4:6: "In every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." We are to pray about everything.

If we cannot do what we plan to do for the glory of God, if we cannot give thanks for it, if we cannot do it in His name, if we would not feel right in praying about it, then we should not do it.

This means we must be saturated with the Word of God so that the Holy Spirit can bring the Word to our remembrance to guide us through every phase of life.

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31).

### **COLOSSIANS 3:17 - DO ALL THINGS FOR JESUS' SAKE - MARY WILDER TILESTON**

Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.  
COLOSSIANS 3:17

YEA, through life, death, through sorrow and through sinning,  
He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed:  
Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning;  
Christ the beginning for the end is Christ.  
F. W. H. MYERS

LET this be thy whole endeavor, this thy prayer, this thy desire,--that thou mayest be stripped of all selfishness, and with entire simplicity follow Jesus only. - THOMAS À. KEMPIS

Do what is pleasing to Jesus Christ, and neglect nothing which pleases Him. - LORENZO SCUPOLI

To "do all things in the name of Jesus" is the lesson of a life; do not be angry with yourselves, nor despair of ever learning it, because thou art slow to learn the first few syllables. When thou hast learned to do all things to Jesus, it will shed pleasure over all dull things, softness over all hard things, peace over all trial and woe and suspense. Then will life be glad, when thou livest to Jesus; and how sweet death, to die in Jesus; with Him, and to Him, and in Him, to live for evermore. - E. B. PUSEY

## COLOSSIANS 3:17 - INDNJC

Latin is a dead language for most people. Yet not too long ago it was taught as an elective in many of our secondary schools. I recall my own struggles to read Caesar and Cicero. But now it's rare to find anyone, except some members of the clergy, who has studied that ancient tongue. At best we can understand a few of the phrases that are still in common use like anno domini (abbreviated as AD), "The year of our Lord."

It would be spiritually helpful, though, if we followed the example of musical genius Johann Sebastian Bach. Often at the bottom of a manuscript he would write the letters INDNJC, standing for the Latin words.

In Nomine Domini Nostri Jesu Christi, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

We aren't geniuses composing timeless music. We are just ordinary people engaged in routine activities. Yet everything we do ought to be done INDNJC. If we're homemakers, we can prepare meals and wash dishes INDNJC. If we're teachers, we can prepare lessons and grade papers INDNJC. If we're builders, we can cut wood and drive nails INDNJC.

Let's carry out Paul's directive in Colossians 3:17-note, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." -- Vernon C. Grounds

In gladness I go forth each day  
Expectantly to serve and claim  
The happiness that service gives  
When freely rendered in Christ's name. -Anon

**WHEN WE SERVE IN JESUS' NAME,  
HE GETS THE GLORY.**

## COLOSSIANS 3:17

### LIFE IS WORTH WHILE

NOTHING IS more disastrous than aimless drift! God endows each soul for a distinct purpose. Probably in every life there is a lucid moment, when we take our bearings, and there flashes before us a glimpse of the life-work for which we were sent forth. We stand on the mount of vision, like Moses, and see the pattern of the tabernacle, which we are presently to erect. God has a purpose for the soul, as well as for the body, all the members of which were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them (Psa 139:16-note). Is it conceivable that He should spend thought and care on the body, and have no purpose for the soul? But if that be so, He will reveal His will; He will gradually unfold our life-purpose step by step. Let us go steadily forward reckoning on our Almighty Friend to supply the needed grace, wisdom, and strength.

When the captain of a cricket team leaves the pavilion for the wicket, the crowds watching his every movement, he is probably saying to himself: "I am going to score my hundred, to say the least!" As he faces the man yonder, who may be one of the swiftest and cleverest bowlers in the county, it is as though he says: "You may do your best, but I am going to win out!" It is in such a spirit that each of us should step out to face life: "I am going to win through, by God's grace."

Never forget that God is working with you. "The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me." He will not desert the work of His own hands! In my long life of eighty-one years, I have experienced more fluctuations and difficulties than fall to many, but I unhesitatingly assert that where God gives the plan He stands Surety for the result! Dare to trust Him and keep in step with Him as He leads you onward.

**PRAYER** - O God, the God of all Goodness and all Grace, Who art worthy of a greater love than we can either give or understand; fill my heart with such love towards Thee as may cast out all sloth and fear, that nothing may seem too hard for me to do or to suffer in obedience to Thee. AMEN. F B Meyer. Our Daily Walk.

### Marriage & Divorce

Many couples are united in wedlock in a rosy fog of optimism. Blinded to the shortcomings, each sees only the other's good points. But as the excitement of the new marriage wears off, they drift to the opposite extreme and view these same traits as faults. Someone has called this "reverse reasoning," giving the following examples: "She married him because he was 'strong and masculine'; she divorced him because he was a very 'dominating male.' He married her because she was so 'fragile and petite'; he divorced her because she was so 'weak and helpless.' She chose him because 'he knew how to provide a good living'; she left him because 'all he thought about was the business.' He married her because she was 'steady and sensible'; he divorced her because she was 'boring and dull.'" - H.G.B. Our Daily Bread, June 3

**Husband's Responsibilities** - Paul tells the husband to love his wife (Eph. 5:25), while Peter tells the husband to dwell together with his wife (1 Pet 3:7). the husband cannot live with his wife as Peter says unless he loves her in the way Paul means. The love that the husband is commanded to have for the wife is not primarily sexual or emotional (though both of those concepts are involved); it is a love that loves in spite of the response (or lack of it) in the one loved. It is the kind of love that God has for the world (John 3:16) and is the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22). A husband can only love his wife properly if he is a Christian and under the control of the Holy Spirit.

The two responsibilities the husband has in the family are to dwell with his wife according to knowledge and to render to his wife the honor which is due her because she is his wife. To "dwell together" with his wife means that the husband must take his wife into every aspect of his life. There are to be no areas of his life where there are signs that say, "Private, husband only—wife keep out."

The husband is to perform his two duties for a spiritual purpose: "That your prayers be not hindered." The man who is not taking his wife into every aspect of his life and rendering to her the honor which is due her because she is his wife cannot communicate with her in the way that God intended; hence he cannot communicate with God either. To make sure that the channel of communication with God is open, the husband must make sure that the channel of communication with his wife is open. Only in this way can he truly love his wife as God intended and manifest his headship properly. New King James Version Notes, Thomas Nelson, p. 1212 ([BIBLE.ORG](http://BIBLE.ORG))

## **COLOSSIANS 3:19**

### **REVERSE REASONING**

Many couples are united in wedlock in a rosy fog of optimism. Blinded to the shortcomings, each sees only the other's good points. But as the excitement of the new marriage wears off, they drift to the opposite extreme and view these same traits as faults. Someone has called this "reverse reasoning," giving the following examples: "She married him because he was 'strong and masculine'; she divorced him because he was a very 'dominating male.' He married her because she was so 'fragile and petite'; he divorced her because she was so 'weak and helpless.' She chose him because 'he knew how to provide a good living'; she left him because 'all he thought about was the business.' He married her because she was 'steady and sensible'; he divorced her because she was 'boring and dull.'" - H. G. Bosch

## **COLOSSIANS 3:22**

### **FEAR OF GOD**

#### **COLOSSIANS 3:18-25**

Servants, obey... , fearing God (Colossians 3:22-note).

Perfect love casts out fear (1John 4:18).

Jesus commands us to love God (Mt 22:37) , yet Paul enjoins us to fear Him (Col 3:22note). But if we love God, shouldn't we be free from fear? Doesn't perfect love cast out fear? My own experience can help answer this question. I love the Lord, but I still have some fear when I think of the day I will stand before Him. I'm not afraid He will send me to hell; I know that Jesus paid the price for my sins. Yet the thought of standing in the presence of a holy God awes me. This element of fear helps me to try to please God. The kind of fear that is cast out by love, though, is a cringing dread of eternal punishment. God has delivered me from that.

The Wind in the Willows, a children's allegory by Kenneth Grahame, illustrates the love-fear relationship.

Two animals, Mole and Rat, meet Friend and Helper, who personifies God. Mole shakes as he whispers,

"Rat, are you afraid?"

"Afraid," murmurs Rat, his eyes brimming with unutterable love—

"Afraid! Of him? Oh, never, never! And yet—and yet—oh, Mole, I am afraid!"

Daniel the prophet must have experienced that same feeling. His love for God was great, yet when he met the Lord in a vision he collapsed in fear (Da 8:15-27) . One glimpse of God's holiness overwhelmed him with a sense of his own sinfulness.

We must love God, but we must also stand in awe of Him. The combination of love and fear is the key to holy living. —H. V Lugt

**He who doesn't fear God should fear everything else.**

## **COLOSSIANS 3:23 - SERVE HIS WILL BY MARY WILDER TILESTON**

And, whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men. COLOSSIANS 3:23

If you love Him as I want you to do, you will offer Him the whole use of your day, as you open your eyes to the light of each morning, to be spent in active service or silent suffering, according to His good pleasure. You will not select the most agreeable task, but His task, whatever it may be; you will not disdain humble service, or be ambitious for distinguished service; you will lie, like a straw, on the current of His will, to be swept away and be forgotten, if it pleases Him, or to be caught up by His mighty hand and transformed thereby into a thunderbolt.

ELIZABETH PRENTISS

Let us pray Him, therefore, to shed abroad in us the mind that was in Christ; that we may offer up our-selves to be disposed of as He sees best, whether for joy or sorrow; to be slighted, or esteemed; to have many friends, or to dwell in a lonely home; to be passed by, or called to serve Him and His kingdom in our own land, or among people of a strange tongue; to be, to go, to do, to suffer even as He wills, even as He ordains, even as Christ endured, "who, through the Eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God."

HENRY EDWARD MANNING

## COLOSSIANS 3:23

### GLORY IN THE GRIND

The life of slaves in the Roman Empire was not easy. They were regarded as "things," and they had no rights. Some had good masters and challenging work, but most were given menial tasks to perform. They worked long hours with little rest.

Christians, however, could catch a glimpse of glory in the grind. Whether slaves or masters, they could do their work with dignity. They were Christ's servants, and they represented Him in the marketplace or the home. Each worked for his Master, Jesus Christ, and labored for a commendation that would ultimately come from Him.

Someone captured the heart of this truth when he observed, "If a man is called to be a street sweeper, he should sweep streets even as Michelangelo painted, or Beethoven composed music, or Shakespeare wrote poetry. He should sweep streets so well that the hosts of heaven will pause to say, 'Here lived a great street sweeper who did his job well.'"

Your work may be tedious. You may have an employer who doesn't appreciate you or pay you what you're worth. You may want to quit. But you are working for Christ. Do your daily work so that your Master in heaven can one day say to you, "Good job. Well done."  
--H W Robinson

To do our work as to the Lord  
Gives us the motivation  
To always do our best because  
We want His commendation. --Sper

**All Christians have the same employer--  
they just have different tasks.**

## COLOSSIANS 3:23 - TOMORROW TRAP

**September 4, 2001**

Sue Shellenbarger, "Work & Family" columnist for The Wall Street Journal, has encountered hundreds of people who, she says, "essentially live for the future, taking refuge in visions of a relaxed, rewarding personal and family life somewhere down the road." She calls this "the 'tomorrow trap'—a kind of mirage that people chase while in reality they are burying themselves in work and other pursuits."

Many of us who say our families are important don't live as if they are. Perhaps without realizing it, we have devalued today in favor of an imagined tomorrow that may never come.

As you read Colossians 3:12-25-note, try including the word today with each verse. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts" today (Col 3:15-note). "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly" today (v.16). Along with the specific instructions given to wives, husbands, children, and fathers (vv.18-21), include the word today. The Word of God comes to us with a sense of urgency and immediacy, calling us to obey now, rather than somewhere down the road of life.

The only way to escape the "tomorrow trap" is to begin following God's guidelines in our work and in our family relationships—today!  
—D C McCasland

Today Christ calls, "Come, follow Me!"  
Do not look back to yesterday;  
Fresh grace He'll give to do His will,  
His joy you'll find as you obey. —D. De Haan

**God is looking for obedience,  
not just good intentions.**

### **COLOSSIANS 3:23 - "KEEP THE WORKDAY HOLY"**

If you're into bumper-sticker philosophy, you've probably seen the axiom, "I owe, I owe, so off to work I go." For a vast portion of the workforce, that's the best reason they can muster for going to the job each day.

According to one poll, only 43 percent of American office workers are satisfied with their jobs. In Japan, the figure dips to 17 percent.

In the first century, Christian slaves had even less reason to be enthusiastic about their work. But Paul gave them a way to grasp a glimpse of glory amid the grind. He wanted them to "adorn the doctrine of God," that is, to show the beauty of their faith in Christ by how they work (Titus 2:10-note).

A significant and often overlooked way that we serve God is in our everyday tasks. Martin Luther understood this when he wrote, "The maid who sweeps her kitchen is doing the will of God just as much as the monk who prays - not because she may sing a Christian hymn as she sweeps but because God loves clean floors. The Christian shoemaker does his Christian duty not by putting little crosses on the shoes, but by making good shoes, because God is interested in good craftsmanship."

Today in the USA we honor labor. As Christians, whatever we do, let's remember the workday, to keep it holy.- Haddon W. Robinson

They who tread the path of labor  
Follow where Thy feet have trod;  
They who work without complaining  
Do they holy will of God. - van Dyke

**Do good works for God by doing good work for your employer.**

### **COLOSSIANS 3:23 - MATTERS OF THE HEART**

**February 11, 2002**

In a book called *The Second Shift*, Arlie Hochschild describes how working couples share home responsibilities. Husbands and wives who both have careers generally agree that it is only fair for them to divide household chores. Yet studies show that men tend to do less than their share.

Why? One possible reason is that a husband today compares his efforts to how much his father did around the house. But a working wife today is looking for more than that. As a result, roles become a source of conflict. Hochschild, however, directs us to a deeper issue. She writes, "When two-career families struggle, it is seldom simply over who does what. Far more often it is over the giving and receiving of gratitude. . . . In my interviews, a surprising number of women spoke of their fathers helping their mothers 'out of love' or consideration. . . . But not one man . . . made this link between help at home and love."

There's an important insight here. Good relationships are built not only on what is done but why. This is true of marriage, but it is even more important in our relationship with God. Love grows not only by what we do but also by our reason for doing it (Colossians 3:23). The Lord wants us to do what is right, and to do so out of love for Him. —M R De Haan II

Lord, grant to me a loving heart,  
A will to give and share,  
A whispered prayer upon my lips  
To show I really care. —Brandt

**We may give without loving,  
but we cannot love without giving.**

### **COLOSSIANS 3:23 - MISTER ROGERS**

**September 6, 2004**

The late Fred Rogers, creator and host of the much-loved children's television program Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, had a special understanding of his ministry and his work. His widow, Joanne, told a journalist: "I always remind people that he was an ordained Presbyterian minister and this was his ministry. His work was his ministry, and he loved his work; my, did he love his work. That's what makes me sad about losing him. Because I think he would have worked for a long time more if he could have, yet he accepted that with all of his heart and was ready to go to heaven."

We may feel that work is secular, but view leading a Bible study as spiritual. The Bible draws no such distinction, however. Paul instructed Christians to work "not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:22, 23, 24-note).

When we honor God and help people, then our work and ministry blend together in pleasing service to the Lord. Mister Rogers showed us how we can do that in our own neighborhood.

—David C. McCasland

No matter what my daily chores might be  
To earn my livelihood, still may I see  
My job, the real position that I hold,  
Is bringing others to the Master's fold. —Stalter

**Daily work done for God takes on eternal value.**

## **COLOSSIANS 3:22-25 - WHAT'S MY MINISTRY?**

**October 30, 1995**

How is my life helping to spread the gospel? Does that question ever haunt you? Does it seem that day after day you slave away at a humdrum job, performing repetitious tasks?

If so, you may also feel you're in a chronic state of spiritual frustration. What you do might seem far removed from the grand design and purpose of God's kingdom.

But if God's purposes are to be fulfilled, we must not neglect the ordinary tasks in pursuit of the glorious ones. Meals must be cooked, trash must be collected, assembly lines must be manned, and children attended to.

We can profit by listening to Puritan preacher John Dod, who wrote, "Whatsoever our callings be, we serve the Lord Christ in them . . . They are the most worthy servants, whatsoever their employment be, that . . . serve the Lord, where He hath placed them."

Does your work seem like a waste of time? Imagine what life would be like if nobody bothered to do the job you do. Consider your office to be a sanctuary, your home a place of ministry. Then, perform your duty as if you are doing it for Jesus Himself. After all, He's the One you're really serving (Col. 3:23-note). --V C Grounds

Are you busy in the corner  
God entrusted to your care?  
One small portion of God's vineyard  
Is appointed as your share. --Harrington

**No service for Christ is insignificant**

## **COLOSSIANS 3:23 - HARD LABOR**

**September 5, 2005**

READ: 2Th 3:7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13

Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men. —

It's one of life's ironies that on Labor Day in the US and Canada, most of the workers get the day off. But that's for good reason. What better way to reward a hard-working populace than to give the laborers a holiday!

Labor Day seems like a good time to take a closer look at what it takes to offer our employers our best.

1. No matter what our task, it's our duty to work for God's glory (Colossians 3:23-note). In this sense, no job is better than another. Each should result in honor to God.
2. The way we work can earn the respect of those who do not follow Christ (1Th 4:11, 12-note). A boss shouldn't have to tell a Christian to use time well or to work hard.
3. Our work is one way to fulfill our dual purpose: to love God and others. Showing love to our co-workers is a good way to show that we love God (Matthew 22:37, 38, 39, 40).
4. We must work to provide for those who depend on us. Harsh words of criticism are reserved for those who don't take care of their family (1Ti 5:8).

Having a job can be hard work. Even for those who truly enjoy their jobs, it's nice to have a Labor Day breather. But until the day comes when our work is over, our task is to make our labor a testimony to God's glory. —Dave Branon

Whatever you are working on,  
Engage in it with zest,  
Because your work is for the Lord,  
And He expects your best. —Sper

**It's not the hours you put in that count,  
but what you put in the hours.**

## **COLOSSIANS 3:23 - KEEP GOING FOR GOD!**

**March 28, 2006**

READ: Psalm 92

They shall still bear fruit in old age; they shall be fresh and flourishing. —Psalm 92:14

A familiar saying goes something like this: "Old age is a matter of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter!"

That must have been John Kelley's attitude. Kelley, who died in 2004 at the age of 96, ran in 58 Boston Marathons (that's 26.2 miles each time)—including his last one in 1992 when he was 84 years old.

Kelley's remarkable feat is a reminder to each of us that we must stay active as long as we can. Far too many folks hit middle age and put the body in neutral. And Christians too often put their service for Jesus Christ in the same inactive mode.

Each of us has a responsibility to God, as long as He gives us physical and mental strength, to work heartily "as to the Lord" (Colossians 3:23-note). We are never called to retire from life and coast home to heaven.

The psalmist said that the righteous "shall still bear fruit in old age" (Psalm 92:14-note). For those who are physically able, that means continuing in active service. For those who can no longer move about, that means being active in prayer and in quiet service.

Let's make sure old age doesn't stop us from bearing fruit. We need to keep going for God. —Dave Branon

Growing old but not retiring,  
For the battle still is on;  
Going on without relenting  
Till the final victory's won. —Anon.

**To stay youthful,  
stay useful**

## **COLOSSIANS 3:23 - MOTIVES ARE ESSENTIAL**

Proper motives are essential in Christian service. This is especially true in the giving of our money. The Lord is more concerned with why we give than with how much we give. We must have a right heart attitude. Therefore we should never give in order to receive the praise of others, but because we love God and desire to see His name honored and glorified.

An experience in the life of English preacher and theologian Andrew Fuller illustrates this truth. James Duff, in *Flashes of Truth*, told of a time when Fuller went back to his hometown to collect money for foreign missions. One of his contacts was an old friend. When presented with the need, the man said, "Well, Andrew, seeing it's you, I'll give you five dollars." "No," said Fuller, "I can't take your

money for my cause, seeing it is for me,” and he handed the money back. The man saw his point. “Andrew, you are right. Here’s ten dollars, seeing it is for Jesus Christ.” Duff concluded, “Let us remember, it is not the amount we give toward helping the Lord’s work; it is the motive He looks at.” When we have the opportunity to contribute to some worthy Christian cause, may we do so with the right purpose in mind. We should never give just because we feel obligated to organizations or persons, nor because we desire to receive selfish recognition or reward. The apostle Paul said, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver” (2Cor. 9:7). We should honestly say, “It’s for the Lord!” - R. W. De Haan

In all the daily tasks we do,  
The Bible helps us clearly see  
That if the Work is good and true,  
We’re living for eternity.- DJD..

## **COLOSSIANS 3:23 - BE ALL THERE**

**March 20, 2000**

Read: Jeremiah 29:4-14, Colossians 3:23

A friend of mine has a view of life that is summed up in one of his favorite sayings: "Wherever you are, be all there." That is, whatever your situation, be the very best you can be.

During his college years, my friend got a job one summer at a resort. He expected it to be exciting, but when he arrived he was told that he would be washing dishes. He could see only two options—leave and be happy, or stay and be miserable. But a friend encouraged him to consider a third option: Stay and maintain the right attitude, then watch for positive results.

He decided to stay and be the best dishwasher he could be, concluding that he was really working for the Lord (Col. 3:22, 23-note). As a result, even in washing dishes, he was "all there."

In today's Scripture reading, God told the people of Israel, who were captive in Babylon, to "seek the peace of the city," and to "pray to the Lord for it; for in its peace you will have peace" (Jer 29:7). Instead of sitting around lamenting their fate and wishing they were somewhere else, they were told by the Lord to be faithful where He had sent them.

We can't always choose our circumstances in life. We may not be able to change our job or location. Our situation may be difficult. But we can "be all there." —D C McCasland

Your work for God will always count,  
Although it may be small;  
For He marks well your faithfulness  
When you have given all. —DJD

**Wherever you are, be all there for God.**

## **COLOSSIANS 3:23 - GOOD WORKERS**

**November 23, 2005**

READ: Exodus 35:30-36:1

Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings. —Proverbs 22:29

During the early years of our marriage, my wife and I attempted to wallpaper our dingy Chicago apartment. We completed the project, but not without a great deal of difficulty. At one point I even had to remove a poorly-hung section of paper and go to the store to buy more. I learned to appreciate someone who could do a job like wallpapering with skill.

I marvel when I see a carpenter make things fit without measuring and remeasuring again and again. I admire the truckdriver who masterfully backs his big rig into a tight space more easily than I do a small trailer on a 16-foot-wide driveway. I take my hat off to the plumber who so easily and good-naturedly installed a water heater in a small, seemingly inaccessible area—especially when I think of all the frustration I experienced when trying to attach a simple water filter.

We read in today's Scripture about the skilled designers and weavers who helped construct the tabernacle. Proverbs 22:29 says that a person who excels in his work "will stand before kings." And Paul wrote, "Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord" (Col 3:23-note).



God is pleased with work done well. He honors good workers, and so should we. —Herbert Vander Lugt

O Lord, I ask for strength to do  
The task that You've assigned;  
Help me to work with diligence,  
Lest Your name be maligned. —Fasick

**Work done well will receive God's "Well done!"**

## **COLOSSIANS 3:23 - WORKING IN GOD'S GARDEN**

**July 6, 1998**

Read: Colossians 3:22, Col 4:1

Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men. --Colossians 3:23

Kemmons Wilson, founder of an international motel chain, quoted some advice for planting a "garden" that would enhance our work skills:

Five rows of "peas"--prayer, preparedness, promptness, perseverance, politeness.

Three rows of "squash"--squash gossip, criticism, and indifference.

Five rows of "lettuce"--let us love one another, let us be faithful, let us be loyal, let us be unselfish, let us be truthful.

Three rows of "turnips"--turn up for church, turn up with a new idea, turn up with the determination to do a better job today than you did yesterday.

Today let's evaluate our attitude toward our work. Do we see it as a necessary evil that deserves the least possible effort? As an unfortunate prerequisite to retirement? Or do we see it as an opportunity to serve God?

"Whatever you do," wrote Paul, "do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:23, 24-note). With that attitude, we can work enthusiastically and wholeheartedly, not just for a paycheck but for the glory of God. --D C McCasland

If I have the gift of health,  
No effort I must shirk;  
I must give it back to God  
In good and honest work. --Strong

**Work becomes worship when done for the Lord.**

## **COLOSSIANS 3:23 - UNSUNG**

**February 19, 2004**

READ: Romans 16:1-16

She has been a helper of many, and of myself also. —Romans 16:2-note

James Deitz has produced paintings of airplanes and their crews that are so realistic they look like photographs. His works hang in many aviation galleries in the United States, including the Smithsonian Institution.

One of the paintings by Deitz, titled *Unsung*, depicts a crew of four mechanics who are working on a dive bomber. They are far below the flight deck of an aircraft carrier somewhere in the Pacific during World War II. The pale, serious-looking, grease-stained men are working tirelessly to get the plane ready to go back into battle.

We too may be performing unnoticed tasks as we support the church's mandate to spread the gospel and train believers. Without many volunteers, no church or mission agency could do its ministry effectively.

As the apostle Paul closed his letter to the believers in Rome, he listed several people who receive no other mention in Scripture. For example, Paul referred to Phoebe and said that she was "a helper of many" (Ro 16:2). Phoebe and the others were essential to the life and work of the early church.

Are you working "below the flight deck"? Remember, your service for Christ is essential. Even if no one shows appreciation for your hard work, you can be sure that one day the Lord will reward you (Colossians 3:23, 24-note). —David C. Egner

Our works of service in Christ's name  
May not be noticed by our peers;  
But what we've done in love for Him  
Will be revealed when He appears. —Sper

**No service for Christ goes unnoticed by Him.**

#### **COLOSSIANS 3:23-24 - WOMEN IN THE WORK WORLD - Elisabeth Elliot**

"Because I want to be faithful to what Scripture does say I often refer to that passage which tells me, as an older woman, what I am supposed to say to younger women: Titus 2:3-5. But, they want to know, is it wrong for a single mother to work? Is it wrong for a woman who has no children at home to work? Is it wrong for a woman to work because her husband insists on it? The last question is not quite so difficult, since a wife must submit and trust the results to God. I cannot answer the first two. So, for you who so far have found it necessary to work I want to offer some encouragement and comfort.

1. "My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19, NIV). Just remember that God must be the judge of your needs. Being wise, powerful and loving, He can be fully trusted to do just what He says.
2. You only know what you have to do today. None of us knows the future. Be faithful today—do your work faithfully, thoroughly, honestly, and gratefully. "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving" (Colossians 3:23-24, NIV).
3. Be a lady. Betty Greene, pilot during World War II and later with Mission Aviation Fellowship, told me, "I made up my mind if I was to 'make it in a man's world,' I had to be a lady." A true lady is recognized and respected by men. Keep your honor, your distance, and your close touch with God. He will protect you.
4. If you are truly abandoned to the Lord, He will show you if/when He has a different assignment for you. Stay in touch with Him."

#### **Motives are Essential**

Proper motives are essential in Christian service. This is especially true in the giving of our money. The Lord is more concerned with why we give than with how much we give. We must have a right heart attitude. Therefore we should never give in order to receive the praise of others, but because we love God and desire to see His name honored and glorified.

An experience in the life of English preacher and theologian Andrew Fuller illustrates this truth. James Duff, in *Flashes of Truth*, told of a time when Fuller went back to his hometown to collect money for foreign missions. One of his contacts was an old friend. When presented with the need, the man said, "Well, Andrew, seeing it's you, I'll give you five dollars." "No," said Fuller, "I can't take your money for my cause, seeing it is for me," and he handed the money back. The man saw his point. "Andrew, you are right. Here's ten dollars, seeing it is for Jesus Christ." Duff concluded, "Let us remember, it is not the amount we give toward helping the Lord's work; it is the motive He looks at."

When we have the opportunity to contribute to some worthy Christian cause, may we do so with the right purpose in mind. We should never give just because we feel obligated to organizations or persons, nor because we desire to receive selfish recognition or reward. The apostle Paul said, "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). We should honestly say, "It's for the Lord!" - R.W.D. [FROMBIBLE.ORG](http://FROMBIBLE.ORG)

Our Daily Bread, August 15

**The Cobbler** "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Col. 3:17).

When I was a boy, I felt it was both a duty and a privilege to help my widowed mother make ends meet by finding employment in vacation time, on Saturdays and other times when I did not have to be in school. For quite a while I worked for a Scottish shoemaker, or "cobbler," as he preferred to be called, an Orkney man, named Dan Mackay. He was a forthright Christian and his little shop was a real testimony for Christ in the neighborhood. The walls were literally covered with Bible texts and pictures, generally taken from old-fashioned Scripture Sheet Almanacs, so that look where one would, he found the Word of God staring him in the face. There were John 3:16 and John 5:24, Romans 10:9, and many more.

On the little counter in front of the bench on which the owner of the shop sat, was a Bible, generally open, and a pile of gospel tracts. No package went out of that shop without a printed message wrapped inside. And whenever opportunity offered, the customers were spoken to kindly and tactfully about the importance of being born again and the blessedness of knowing that the soul is saved through faith in Christ. Many came back to ask for more literature or to inquire more particularly as to how they might find peace with God, with the blessed results that men and women were saved, frequently right in the shoeshop.

It was my chief responsibility to pound leather for shoe soles. A piece of cowhide would be cut to suit, then soaked in water. I had a flat piece of iron over my knees and, with a flat-headed hammer, I pounded these soles until they were hard and dry. It seemed an endless operation to me, and I wearied of it many times.

What made my task worse was the fact that, a block away, there was another shop that I passed going and coming to or from my home, and in it sat a jolly, godless cobbler who gathered the boys of the neighborhood about him and regaled them with lewd tales that made him dreaded by respectable parents as a menace to the community. Yet, somehow, he seemed to thrive and that perhaps to a greater extent than my employer, Mackay. As I looked in his window, I often noticed that he never pounded the soles at all, but took them from the water, nailed them on, damp as they were, and with the water splashing from them as he drove each nail in.

One day I ventured inside, something I had been warned never to do. Timidly, I said, "I notice you put the soles on while still wet. Are they just as good as if they were pounded?" He gave me a wicked leer as he answered, "They come back all the quicker this way, my boy!"

"Feeling I had learned something, I related the instance to my boss and suggested that I was perhaps wasting time in drying out the leather so carefully. Mr. Mackay stopped his work and opened his Bible to the passage that reads, "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of god."

"Harry," he said, "I do not cobble shoes just for the four bits and six bits (50c or 75c) that I get from my customers. I am doing this for the glory of God. I expect to see every shoe I have ever repaired in a big pile at the judgment seat of Christ, and I do not want the Lord to say to me in that day, 'Dan, this was a poor job. You did not do your best here.' I want Him to be able to say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'"

Then he went on to explain that just as some men are called to preach, so he was called to fix shoes, and that only as he did this well would his testimony count for God. It was a lesson I have never been able to forget. Often when I have been tempted to carelessness, and to slipshod effort, I have thought of dear, devoted Dan Mackay, and it has stirred me up to seek to do all as for Him who died to redeem me. [FROM BIBLE.ORG](http://FROMBIBLE.ORG)

In all the daily tasks we do,  
The Bible helps us clearly see  
That if the Work is good and true,  
We're living for eternity.  
- D.J.D.

#### **Illustrations of Bible Truth by H.A. Ironside, Moody Press, 1945, pp. 37-39 Potato Peeler**

To suggest that peeling potatoes offers an opportunity for success would provoke a laugh from most people. Yet one sailor in the British Merchant Navy turned potato peeling into an art. He was a man who believed in doing his best, no matter what the task. Finding himself on KP and facing a huge mound of potatoes, he peeled those potatoes with all the care of a sculptor carving in wood. The eyes and bruised spots were carefully cut away. Cooks on the ships he served began to boast about the clean, smooth spuds he peeled, until his reputation spread throughout the shipping lanes. The ex-sailor became a small businessman in London, supplying select potatoes, peeled to perfection, to the best restaurants in the city. His name will not go down in history. He may never enjoy more than a small but profitable business. But of the millions who have peeled potatoes all over the world, Gerald Pereth was one who saw his opportunity for achievement in doing the job better than anyone else. - Bits and Pieces, November, 1989, p. 4 [FROM BIBLE.ORG](http://FROMBIBLE.ORG)

#### **The Radish Lady**

About six years ago, I was speaking at a luncheon held in the civic auditorium of a city in Oklahoma. I settled myself at my place at the head table. I picked up my fork and noticed that two rose-petaled radishes adorned my salad plate. Someone had take the time to pretty up two radishes, just for me. Then I noticed that each salad at the head table had two neatly curled radishes. I turned to the lady sitting to my right. "I'm impressed by the radishes," I said. "You're impressed by what?" she asked. "The radishes," I said. "Look, each salad plate at our table has curled radishes." "Yes," she said, exercising a questioning smile. "They're pretty." "They're more than pretty," I said. "Someone took special care to do these." "Don't they all have them?" she asked, gazing out at the tables.

I looked and was astonished. Each salad plate was adorned with two curled radishes! "They are curled! That took a lot of time!" "I'm not on the planning committee, but Gertrude is," my table mate responded. She turned to get the attention of Gertrude, three chairs down. "Mrs. George wants to ask you something about the radishes," she whispered. "The what?" Gertrude mouthed "The RADISHES!" "Is there something wrong with your radishes?" she asked. "No. They are fine. I just thought it was nice to have them all curled." "Oh, Marietta does those." "All of them?" I knew the head count in the room and was astonished. "That's almost eight

hundred radishes!" "Yes, but Marietta wants to do it. Would you like to meet her? She's in the kitchen." So Gertrude and I went into the kitchen, and there I met Marietta, the lady of the radishes. "Gertrude tells me you curled all those radishes. They're lovely. Each salad looks so festive." "I don't mind doing it. It just takes time," Marietta replied. I didn't know what more to say so I left. Later, I spoke, and there was an encouraging response. Afterward, ladies scurried past me with murmured greetings, and a few lingered to speak of God in their lives. When we finished, it was raining heavily so we hurried across the parking lot to the car. Through the rain, I could see a lady, carrying a large polka-dot umbrella that had collapsed on one side waiting by our car. It was Marietta! She was smiling as though we had found her on a sunny day in an especially delightful garden.

"I had to see you. I heard your speech. It was good!" she said. "I have to go home now." I slipped inside the car. Marietta crouched down close to the window and called to me, "Just remember this. You keep telling people about Jesus, and I'll keep curling the radishes." The rain and my tears splattered the picture of her face as we started to back out of the driveway. Ah, dear Marietta, I haven't forgotten. We are to do our jobs in the love of him who does all things well. - Jeanette Cliff George, Travel Tips From A Reluctant Traveler, 1987 [FROMBIBLE.ORG](http://FROMBIBLE.ORG)

**Coffee Breaks** - The old plumber was admonishing his young helper, who was always taking coffee breaks. "When I was an apprentice," he said, "we used to lay the first two lengths of pipe—then the boss would turn on the water and we'd have to stay ahead of it." Source unknown [FROMBIBLE.ORG](http://FROMBIBLE.ORG)

## **COLOSSIANS 3:23 MARY & GOD**

**March 17, 2003**

READ: Colossians 3:22-4:6

Her bright smile and cheerful voice seemed unusual for someone working at a discount store checkout counter early in the morning. I glanced at her nametag, then looked more closely to make sure I had read it correctly. It said: MARY-N-GOD. So I asked her if she and the Lord were doing this job together. "Oh, yes!" she said, beaming. "He works with me and walks with me and talks with me, and we share the most wonderful life together. I couldn't do it without Him."

Mary was a winsome representative of Christ and a vivid illustration of Colossians 3:23, "Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men." Although not in the limelight, Mary, through her attitude and actions, witnessed to hundreds of people every day. Mary's pulpit was a checkout counter, and her smile was the opening sentence in a powerful sermon about the difference Christ makes in a life. If someone asked, she was happy to tell them more.

When I told my wife about Mary, she said, "I think she's one of those who seem to be last here on earth but will be first when they get to heaven." I had to agree.

You and I can also be effective witnesses if we know, love, and walk with Jesus the way Mary does. —David C. McCasland

THINKING IT OVER -What kind of attitudes are revealed in my daily work? Does my fellowship with Christ shine through in my demeanor? For whom do I work? Christ or the boss?

**Often it's the joy behind our words  
that makes our testimony ring true.**

## **COLOSSIANS 3:23 GIVE IT YOUR BEST!**

**May 6, 1996**

Read: Colossians 3:16-25

Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. --1Corinthians 10:31

On the 80th birthday of the famous musician and conductor Arturo Toscanini, someone asked his son what he considered to be his father's greatest achievement. He replied, "For him there can be no such thing. Whatever he happens to be doing at any moment is the biggest undertaking in his life, whether it be conducting a symphony or peeling an orange."

We ought to have a similar attitude as we serve Christ. By yielding to the Holy Spirit, we can have such a strong assurance of doing the Father's will that we'll be able to engage in every endeavor with zest and enthusiasm.

Toscanini gave himself so completely to every task that he could become totally involved in peeling an orange or in conducting a symphony. How much more we as God's children should take continual delight in the deeds of love we do for the Lord and for others!

Whether we are engaged in a project of great magnitude or simply helping a neighbor, we must consider our responsibility to God and man. The apostle Paul said, "Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord" (Col. 3:23). Anything we do for Jesus, whether large or small, should be "the biggest thing" in our lives. --R W De Haan

Whatever you are working on,  
Engage in it with zest,  
Because your work is for the Lord,  
And He expects your best. --Sper

**It's a great thing to do a little thing well**

## **COLOSSIANS 3:23 A NEW JOB**

**September 2, 2002**

Read: Colossians 3:1, 2, 3, 4,22, 23, 24, 25

A survey by the Families and Work Institute found that 70 percent of people in the United States often dream about doing something different for a living. Books, consultants, and employment agencies offer to help us land our dream job. But is finding a different occupation always the solution to job dissatisfaction? Or could the key be discovering a new approach to our present situation?

Twice in Colossians 3, Paul used the phrase "whatever you do" as a call for wholehearted service to the Lord. He wrote, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" (Col 3:17-note). And again, "Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men" (Col 3:23-note).

If we're working for a critical, ungrateful boss, we'll tend to put forth minimum effort. But if our work is done for Christ, we'll strive to do our best all the time. The boss may sign our paycheck, but the Savior issues our reward (Col 3:24-note).

It's not wrong to seek work that fits our skills and interests. But it's futile to move from one job to another without settling the issue of whom we are serving.

An old job can become new when we choose to do it for the Lord. —D C McCasland

**Thinking It Over** - What is your dream job? What makes it hard to do your work with a good attitude? How will doing your work "as to the Lord" change your attitude and work habits?

**Daily work takes on eternal value when it's done for God.**

## **COLOSSIANS 3:24**

### **MUDPIES AND MOTIVES**

God wants us to make the most of the talents He's given to us. That's His will for a student writing a term paper or for an architect designing a soaring skyscraper. But as history rolls on, we also know that the greatest of human work will eventually become dust and ashes.

Even our greatest achievements are like sand castles children build on the seashore, which quickly wash away. J. M. Thornburn wrote, "All the genuine, deep delight in life is in showing people the mudpies you have made; and life is at its best when we confidently recommend our mudpies to each other's sympathetic consideration."

While that may sound cynical, it's a realistic view of our lives--if we have no belief in a world to come. But our view of life changes dramatically if we put God into the picture and take into account the eternity that stretches beyond time. If we are motivated by love for God, obedience to His Word, and a burning desire to glorify the heavenly Father (Col. 3:22, 23), our works will have an imperishable value and we will receive God's approval (1Co 3:14; 9:24, 25).

Work that is done to glorify the Lord gives Him pleasure and brings us blessing. Remember, it's our motive that counts. --V C Grounds

All service rendered to the Lord  
Is sure to gain His rich reward,  
And if we work with motives pure  
Our weakest efforts will endure. --DJD

**The highest motive for obeying God is the desire to please God.**

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