

LESSON 3 • SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2026

A TRANSFORMED HEART LIVING THE NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

Colossians 3:1–25

KJV • KEY VERSE (Colossians 3:12–14)

*12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;
13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.
14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.*

ESV • KEY VERSE (Colossians 3:12–14)

*12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,
13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.
14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

LESSON AIMS

As a result of this lesson, you should be able to:

- Understand how our new identity in Christ becomes the foundation for a transformed life.
- Recognize attitudes, desires, words, and behaviors that belong to the old life.
- Identify Christlike qualities that should increasingly characterize the believer.

KEY TERMS

Mortify – To put to death; to decisively deal with sinful desires rather than making peace with them.

Old man – The former way of life characterized by sin and separation from Christ.

New man – The new identity and way of life believers have in Christ.

Renewed – Continually being made new in our understanding and character so that we increasingly reflect our Creator.

Introduction

There is a difference between knowing something and becoming something. We can know what Scripture says about patience and still lose our patience. We can know that the Bible commands forgiveness and still hold onto an offense.

Paul is not simply giving Christians a list of things they are supposed to do. He begins with who we are in Christ. Then he shows us how that new identity should transform our minds, desires, attitudes, words, actions, relationships, and everyday responsibilities.

Colossians 3 moves us from:

Identity → Mind → Heart → Behavior → Relationships → Everyday Life

Paul begins with the believer’s relationship to Christ. Then he tells us what must die, what must be removed, what must be replaced, and finally, he takes the gospel into the home, the workplace, and ordinary responsibilities. Colossians 3 does not ask do you know what the Bible says but more important is what the Bible says changing you?

Analysis of the Biblical Text

A New Direction for the Heart (Colossians 3:1–4)

KJV • Colossians 3:1	ESV • Colossians 3:1
1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.	If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

Paul suggests to us that our behavior must flow from our identity in Christ. Faith begins with what Christ has done. The believer has been raised with Christ, therefore, something about the believer’s life must change. Paul says seek those things which are above. This does not mean that Christians should stop caring about earthly responsibilities. We still work, raise families, pay bills, etc.. So Paul is not telling us to escape earthly life but to live life with a heavenly perspective where Christ is now the reference point.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What would change in your daily decisions if you consciously asked, what would honor Christ?

Where the Heart Looks

KJV • Colossians 3:2	ESV • Colossians 3:2
2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.	Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

Verse 1 says to seek and verse two then says set. There is intentionality here. We do not accidentally develop a Christ-centered mind. We must intentionally direct our attention toward Christ. What occupies your mind? What do you continually worry about? Our thought life reveals something about our heart. This does not mean that every passing thought represents who we are. It means that what we continually feed will eventually influence us. If we continually feed anger, anger grows. If we continually feed jealousy, comparison grows. But when we continually expose our minds to God’s Word, prayer, worship, truth, and the character of Christ, our perspective begins to change.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

If someone could hear your thoughts for one entire day, what would they learn about what matters most to you?

Our Life Is Hidden With Christ

KJV • Colossians 3:3	ESV • Colossians 3:3
<i>3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.</i>	<i>For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.</i>

Paul is talking about a profound change in identity. The old life no longer has the final claim over the believer. That does not mean we will never struggle. It means our struggle with sin takes place within a new identity. Your past is not your master. Your mistakes are not your master. Other people's opinions are not your master. Your sinful habits do not have to remain your identity. Christ is your life. That distinction matters because transformation begins when we stop saying that's just who I am and begin asking who am I becoming in Christ?

Christ Will Appear

KJV • Colossians 3:4	ESV • Colossians 3:4
<i>4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.</i>	<i>When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.</i>

Paul connects present transformation with future hope. We are living toward something. Christ will appear. The story does not end with today's struggle. Today's temptation, disappointments, difficult relationships, do not define eternity. Christ is coming and that future reality should influence our present behavior.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What are you allowing today to have more power over your heart than Christ does and what would change if you truly believed that your life is hidden with Christ and that your present struggle does not have the final word?

Transformation Requires Putting Sin to Death (Colossians 3:5–11)

Paul now moves from identity to action. Since we have been raised with Christ, something has to happen to the old way of living.

KJV • Colossians 3:5	ESV • Colossians 3:5
<i>5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:</i>	<i>Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.</i>

Paul now moves from identity to action. Since we have been raised with Christ, something has to happen to the old way of living. Paul says we must put it to death! Sin is not something we are supposed to make comfortable. We are not supposed to keep feeding it while asking God to make us stronger.

Notice also that Paul goes beyond outward behavior. He mentions covetousness, and then says it is idolatry. That teaches us something about the heart. The problem can be what we believe that thing will give us. An idol is anything that occupies a place in our hearts that belongs to God.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What is the difference between controlling a sinful behavior and actually dealing with the desire underneath it?

Why Sin Must Be Taken Seriously

KJV • Colossians 3:6	ESV • Colossians 3:6
<i>6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:</i>	<i>On account of these the wrath of God is coming.</i>

Sin is serious because God is holy. Modern culture often treats sin as a harmless mistake, but Scripture does not. Paul wants believers to understand that the things they have been called to put to death are not harmless personality quirks. Sin destroys, separates, deceives, enslaves, damages relationships and distorts our worship. Therefore, we should not treat sin casually.

The Old Life

KJV • Colossians 3:7	ESV • Colossians 3:7
<i>7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.</i>	<i>In these you too once walked, when you were living in them.</i>

Notice the past tense, ye also walked some time. This was their former way of life. Paul is reminding them you don't have to go back. The old life was once where you lived but Christ has given you a new identity.

Put Off the Old Responses

KJV • Colossians 3:8	ESV • Colossians 3:8
<i>8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.</i>	<i>But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.</i>

Notice that Paul now moves from sexual and material desires into interpersonal behavior: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy communication. Sometimes we are comfortable confronting obvious sins while excusing the sins that come out of our mouths. Paul does not give us that option. The way we speak is a spiritual issue, when we are angry it is a spiritual issue, when we talk about people who are not present it is a spiritual issue. We must always ask did my words reflect Christ?

Put Away Lying

KJV • Colossians 3:9	ESV • Colossians 3:9
<i>9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;</i>	<i>Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices</i>

Truthfulness is a part of transformation. Why? Because deception belongs to the old life. The new life is characterized by truth. This applies not only to obvious lies. Sometimes we manipulate through selective

information, we exaggerate, we tell half-truths and we create an impression that is technically not a lie but intentionally misleading. Christ transforms not only our words but our relationship with truth.

Put On the New Self

KJV • Colossians 3:10	ESV • Colossians 3:10
<i>10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:</i>	<i>and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.</i>

This is an alternative to simply stopping bad behavior. God is not merely removing things from us. He is rebuilding us. The goal is restoration into the image of Christ.

Christ Changes How We See Others

KJV • Colossians 3:11	ESV • Colossians 3:11
<i>11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.</i>	<i>Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.</i>

The gospel changes our identity. People are no longer simply categorized according to background, status, culture, or social position. Christ becomes the center. A transformed heart therefore changes not only how we see ourselves but how we see other people.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How does seeing another person through the lens of Christ change the way we treat them?

Putting On Christlike Character (Colossians 3:12–17)

Paul has spent the first eleven verses explaining what needs to be removed. Now he tells us what needs to replace it.

Remember Who You Are

KJV • Colossians 3:12	ESV • Colossians 3:12
<i>12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;</i>	<i>Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,</i>

Look at the order. Who you are comes before what you do. Paul says because you belong to God, put on Christlike character. Identity becomes the motivation for obedience.

Bear With One Another

KJV • Colossians 3:13	ESV • Colossians 3:13
<i>13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.</i>	<i>bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.</i>

People are difficult, they will disappoint, misunderstand, and sometimes offend us. But sometimes, we are the difficult person. So Paul says forbear one another. In other words, learn to live with one another's weaknesses while God continues His work in all of us. Then he says forgive. And the standard is not forgive when they deserve it but the standard is *even as Christ forgave you*.

Above Everything We Ought to Love

KJV • Colossians 3:14	ESV • Colossians 3:14
<i>14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.</i>	<i>And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.</i>

Love holds the other qualities together. A person can appear kind but lack genuine love. Christlike love transforms the motivation underneath our actions.

Let Peace Rule

KJV • Colossians 3:15	ESV • Colossians 3:15
<i>15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.</i>	<i>And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.</i>

Notice the word rule. Something is going to influence our responses. So many other things can rule but Paul says let the peace of God do the ruling. This means our emotions do not have to be our master.

Let the Word Dwell

KJV • Colossians 3:16	ESV • Colossians 3:16
<i>16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.</i>	<i>Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.</i>

Let the Word dwell, not merely visit, or appear on Sunday. Let it dwell. That means to give the Word permanent residence in you. The Word should influence what we think, what we say, what we sing, what we teach, how we make decisions. This is where information becomes transformation. We study Scripture so Scripture can increasingly shape us.

Everything Under the Lordship of Christ

KJV • Colossians 3:17	ESV • Colossians 3:17
<i>17 And 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.</i>	<i>And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.</i>

Whatever you do. Whatever includes everything. Not just church, prayer, bible study, EVERYTHING! That means your conversations, your job, your marriage, your parenting, your friendships. EVERYTHING! We

are not making Christ number 1, we are centering Christ and allowing everything else to flow out of our life with Christ as we talked about during first Sunday’s sermon.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Which command in verses 12–17 is easiest for you? Which one challenges you most?

Christ in Our Closest Relationships (Colossians 3:18–25)

Paul now takes everything he has taught about transformation and places it inside the home and workplace. The real test of transformation often happens around people who know us best.

Wives and Husbands

KJV • Colossians 3:18–19	ESV • Colossians 3:18–19
18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.	18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

These instructions must be read within the larger context of Colossians 3. Paul is addressing relationships under the lordship of Christ. The husband’s command is not permission for domination or harshness. Christlike leadership cannot be separated from Christlike love. Likewise, submission is described as something appropriate “in the Lord.” The larger point is that the gospel transforms the way people use responsibility, authority, love, and service within the household.

Children and Fathers

KJV • Colossians 3:20–21	ESV • Colossians 3:20–21
20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. 21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.	20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Notice that Paul speaks to both sides. Children have responsibility and likewise do parents. Christian transformation therefore changes the way authority is exercised. Parents are not simply asking how can I make my child obey, but they should also ask how can I represent Christ while I lead my child. It is not a do as I say and not as I do. To parent under the lordship of Christ is to do both.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Why is it possible to enforce outward behavior without actually reaching the heart?

Serving With the Right Heart

KJV • Colossians 3:22	ESV • Colossians 3:22
22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God;	Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Who are you when nobody is watching? Eyeservice means performing because someone is looking. We can do that in church too. We can appear spiritual because people are watching. But transformation is deeper than appearance. A transformed heart does what is right because God sees.

Work as Service to Christ

KJV • Colossians 3:23	ESV • Colossians 3:23
23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;	Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,

Whatever you do. Paul does not limit this to religious work. Your ordinary responsibilities matter to God. We must do them wholeheartedly. Because ultimately you are not serving people. You are serving Christ. This changes our motivation. If nobody thanks me, Christ still sees. If nobody notices, Christ still sees. If the task seems insignificant, Christ still sees. If I am tired, Christ still sees.

Serving Christ

KJV • Colossians 3:24	ESV • Colossians 3:24
24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.	knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.

Paul redirects our attention from human recognition to Christ. People may overlook your faithfulness and sacrifices. People may never know how much you have done. But rest assured, Christ knows! Your ultimate audience is Christ. You are performing for an audience of one!

God Sees What People Do

KJV • Colossians 3:25	ESV • Colossians 3:25
25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.	For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

The chapter ends with accountability. God sees. That means that our transformation must be genuine. We cannot hide behind titles, church attendance, or religious jargon. God sees the heart.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Where are you most tempted to perform for people rather than serve Christ?

Your Life

Colossians 3 asks us to look beyond our knowledge and examine our lives. If Christ has changed us, there should eventually be evidence of that change. Not perfection, but transformation. Not a person who never gets angry. But a person who learns to surrender anger to Christ. We must ask, how do I look more like Christ today than I did yesterday?

Your World!

Colossians 3 gives Christians a radically different way to live in a world where anger, pride, division, selfishness, and impatience are common. We are called to demonstrate compassion instead of cruelty, kindness instead of hostility, humility instead of pride, patience instead of impulsiveness, forgiveness instead of bitterness, love instead of selfishness, peace instead of unnecessary conflict, truth instead of deception, and faithfulness instead of performance. The world should be able to see something different about the way Christians handle ordinary life. The Christian witness is not only what happens behind the church doors. It's what happens at work, in traffic, conversations, disagreements, online, with difficult people, when we are tired, when nobody is watching. Did I hit them all?!

A Closing Thought

Colossians 3 begins with our identity (If ye then be risen with Christ...) and it ends with our responsibility (ye serve the Lord). Between those two statements, Paul describes an entirely different way of living. We seek different things, we think and live differently. Because Christ has changed who we are. A new identity produces a new direction, new desires, a new attitude, and a change in our relationships (this is certainly not exhaustive). The challenge of Colossians 3 is what is God asking you to surrender that is keeping you bound where Christ has set you free? Whatever it is, the answer is not merely to try harder the answer is bring it to Christ. And let everything you do become an expression of your life in Christ.

CLOSING PRAYER

Heavenly Father,

Thank You for giving us new life through Jesus Christ. Thank You that we have been raised with Christ and that our identity is no longer determined by our past, our failures, our weaknesses, or the opinions of other people. Lord, help us to seek the things that are above. Search our hearts and reveal the things that do not belong there. Show us the attitudes, desires, habits, and behaviors that we have been trying to manage instead of putting to death. Give us courage to confront our sin honestly and grace to repent sincerely. Lord, do not allow us to leave this lesson simply knowing more about Colossians 3. Show each of us what we need to put off. Show each of us what we need to put on. Give us a desire that everything we say and do will bring glory to You.

In Jesus' name,

Amen.