

# “The New Perspective In Everyday Life”

Text: Colossians 3:5-17

Series: Book of Colossians [#8]

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Theme: **Your New Perspective Should Lead To Christ-Like Living.**

## Introduction

The book of Colossians is rich with truth to know and live. The overall message is that “*You Are Complete In Christ.*” You do not need man-made add-ons that limit, bind and choke your freedom in Christ. You do not need the latest new trend in thinking and experiences. To know God and life as He designed it to be, you need *Christ. You are complete in Him.*

When we come to chapter 3, we find Paul writing about practical, everyday life. He lays down the core principles in the first four verses, which we saw last week. What Christ has done for you should change your perspective. Heavenly things should now have top priority in your thinking and living.

It is common to think of perspective as relative. “You have your view, I have mine.” “Whatever works for you.” Some perspectives *are* relative, with one view being as valid as another. Think about one example...the *ideal hot dog*. A weighty matter that I am sure keeps you up at night. First, what’s inside that hot dog you take out of the package? Beef? Or...? Perhaps its best not to explore the full range of possibilities! Second, the size: standard, jumbo or foot long? Then, what do you put on the *ideal hot dog*? Catsup? Mustard? Relish? Chili? Cheese? Sauerkraut? Believe it or not, your perspective on that is relative, not absolute in the grand scheme of things.

When it comes to God and His truth, to how we are to think and live, there is only one true, accurate perspective—God’s. And He graciously gives us His perspective in the Bible. Starting at verse 5, Paul gets specific. He talks to us about “*The New Perspective In Everyday Life.*” We are looking at the first section of this today, verses 5-17. In short, Paul tells us that *Your new perspective should lead to Christ-like living.* Let’s begin with ...

## The Motivation For Christ-Like Living.

We start with one negative motivation. Verse 6. “For it is because of these things that the *wrath of God* will come upon the sons of disobedience.” The “these things” are the sins listed in verse 5.

Christians should clearly know that God hates sin. God is holy. Sin provokes His anger. God’s judgment on sin is certain. We read in the gospel of John, 3:36,

“He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.”

When Christ died on the cross He took the judgment for our sin on Himself. Those who place their faith in Christ, Romans 5:9 tells us, “shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him.” Jesus Christ, we read in 1 Thessalonians 1:10, “rescues us from the wrath to come.”

Even though we are saved from that, since we know sin arouses God’s anger, why would we even consider continuing to tolerate, let alone play with it? *Why?* Why would we think that if no one gets hurt, it is not a big deal? Why would we think since no one else knows, it is okay?

There is a second part to this negative motivation for Christ-like living. Turn ahead to Hebrews 12. We pick it up at the middle of verse 5.

“... ‘My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor faint when you are reprov’d by Him; for those whom the Lord loves He disciplines, and He scourges every son whom He receives.’”

Drop down to the middle of verse 10.

“...He [God] disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

Believers are kept secure with Christ in God, but our heavenly Father disciplines us for our sin as part of His love to keep on molding us to be more like Jesus.

Not every bad thing that happens to us is God’s discipline for our sin. After all, we live in a fallen, sinful world. We don’t need to stay awake at night trying to figure out the reason for every bad thing that happens.

While we will never be perfect or without sin this side heaven, we should never take lightly God’s call to Christ-like, holy living.

Let’s move to the positive motivation. Paul gives us not one, but a full handful of positive motivation to live a Christ-like life. First, you are a new creation in Christ. Verse 10.

“[you] have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.”

God has worked the miracle of cleansing and forgiving you, and giving you His everlasting life. Every believer now has spiritual life and the ability to please God... including living a Christ-like life. With sin around and within there also is the ongoing process of God renewing us, bringing us to be more and more like Christ.

Yes, you are a new creation in Christ. So, in thankfulness, because God has freed you from your old futile way, move forward with Christ to be like Him!

Second, you “have been,” Paul writes in verse 12, “chosen of God.” Ephesians 1:4 tells us that God “chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.” We don’t know everything about God’s choosing people. But what we know and understand is wonderful! God chose you in His grace and mercy, not because of your abilities or qualities. So, God chose you regardless of who you are or are not, of what you have or do not have. Being chosen by God should propel us to Christ-like living.

The third in our handful of positive motivation is that in Christ we are “holy and beloved (12). Stop. think about these descriptions. If you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ, you are “holy and beloved.” We *know* we fail. We blow it. God knows it better than we do—He knows it perfectly.

The holiness of Christ is given to us. The love of God has been poured out within our hearts (*cf.* Romans 5:5). Think about it. “Holy” before God, “loved” ones of God. Recognizing this, why wouldn’t we trust God to enable us to live a Christ-like life day by day?

Moving on to number four. Go to verse 13, where we are told to

“[bear] with one another, and [forgive] each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; *just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.*”

Our forgiveness was costly: Jesus gave His life for us. The slate is clean. Our sins are removed. Because Christ has forgiven us, we should live as forgiven, thankful, holy, loved people.

And, finally, the last positive motivation Paul gives here for Christ-like living is because we are called to peace and unity. Verse 15:15. “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.”

We are called for the purpose of being individuals and churches where Christ’s peace rules. Christ, the Prince of Peace, has made peace between us and Himself, between us and all other believers. In light of this, put on Christ! Follow Him! Live like Him!

*Your new perspective should lead to Christ-like living.* So let’s move from *the motivation* to...

### **The Mandate Of Christ-like Living.**

We start with three negatives to eliminate. First, there is a group of sinful desires and their results. Go back up to verse 5.

“Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.”

At the start notice what he says and does not say. He *says* consider your body dead to these sins, *Kill them!* He does *not* say be careful or do not go to excess. These sins are to be eradicated. The force is similar to his command in Ephesians 5:3-4,

“But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.”

First in this group is “immorality.” This term is a broad term that covers every kind of sexual immorality and, as Jesus pointed out in Matthew 5:28, extends to thoughts as well as actions.

Next is “impurity.” This term is the opposite of clean, and means “unclean,” “dirty,” or “filthy.” Used in a figurative moral sense, as it is here, it refers to any impure, immoral motives and their resulting actions including, but not limited to sexual immorality.

Third we see “passion.” In one sense this word referred to what people experience or endure and so, “suffering.” The “Passion” of Christ refers to the “Suffering” of Christ. But the predominant use, as here, refers to desires, to *passions*—especially sexual desires. The saying is true, either you control your passions or they control you.

Next is “evil desire.” This refers to a broad, almost all-encompassing range of evil desire. With the emphasis on sexual sins here in verse 5, it certainly includes, but is not limited to them. James pictures how these evil desires work, 1:14-15,

“But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust [or, *desire*]. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.”

Last on this list is “greed.” Greed is the desire for more, and more, and more. It is a focus on getting more regardless of how little or much you already have. It is serious because it “amounts to idolatry.” It is idolatry because it seizes control and takes the place God is to have. Remember Jesus’ warning in Matthew 6,

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth” (24).

This is the *First Negative*—five sinful desires and their actions we are to kill in order to live a Christ-like life. Remember, doing this does not earn us a place in God’s family, in fact, you cannot do this without already being in God’s family. It takes God’s power in us. *Your new perspective should lead to Christ-like living.*

The second negative includes three relational sins we are to put off. Paul says put or take them off as you do with dirty clothes. Look ahead at verse 8. “But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth.”

The first member of this trio is anger. The word refers to an ongoing, slow smoldering fire, to coals of resentment and hostility that may be hard for some to see, even though they are constantly glowing.

Then anger's partner joins in, "wrath," or rage. This is the sudden, hot outburst of anger. It's like the tall trees in a forest fire that get so hot from the fire around them that they suddenly explode into flames. How much damage and devastation have been done by these partners, anger and wrath? Relationships singed, or left as black dead stumps. Reputations burned to a crisp.

Malice joins these two relational sins to fill out the trio. This is a general term for morally evil attitudes which often lurk in the shadows. Self-centered, vicious, hurtful thinking, the actions which spew out from it, and the destructive results. Paul says, "Take off these old, dirty clothes! Throw them out!"

The final negative is also a collection of three sins. Three sins of speech. Let's pick it up at the middle of verse 8 where Paul says we are to put aside "slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices."

Slander leads off. Slander includes insults and false statements. It includes anything and everything that is not accurate and edifying. When this word is used of speech toward or about God, it is translated "blasphemy." In fact, it is the word from which we get our English word blasphemy.

Then there is abusive speech. Literally, "shameful words." It includes both obscene and abusive language. Slander and abusive speech should never, Paul tells us, come out of our mouths since we are those who have been cleansed by the blood of Christ, since we are in Christ, and are striving to be like Him.

The third kind sinful speech we are to put off is lying. Go on to verse 9. "Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices." God our heavenly Father is truth. He does not lie. He cannot lie (Titus 1:2). It is Satan who lies and is the father of lies (John 8:44). So forget about *spinning* the truth, shading or shaving the truth, *little* lies, *white* lies. As Paul wrote in Ephesians 4, "laying aside falsehood, speak the truth" (25).

These are the three negatives to eliminate: (1) sinful desires and their results; (2) relational sins; and, (3) sins of speech. Now we can move on to the positive, to...

Two handfuls of positives to develop. Starting in verse 12, number one: "put on a heart of compassion." Have a compassionate heart. Truly care for others from the core of your being. This goes against the grain of our natural, self-focused nature. But it is what Christ is like, and what we should be like. While it is difficult with people who don't care about us, who don't do what is right, or who are not wise, nonetheless, it is part of being like Christ.

Number two: kindness. This kindness goes beyond natural human kindness, as admirable as that is. The word is used in the Old and New Testaments to describe God's good and gracious acts to us, including leading us to repentance (*cf.* Romans 2:4). It means to be as concerned about my neighbor and his good as I am about myself. It is possible only through the work of the Holy Spirit as we faithfully rely on God.

Number three: humility. True humility. Paul gives a good description of what it is like as he writes in Philippians 2:3-4,

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Number four: gentleness. Gentleness is a result of self-control. It is the opposite of sharp, harsh attitudes and actions. We are to be gentle at all times, but this quality is especially seen and important when others are not behaving as they should be. So we are to give a defense of the faith and to correct false, non-believing teachers with “gentleness” (1 Peter 3:15; 2 Timothy 2:25). In the same way we are to restore fellow-believers who are caught in sin “in a spirit of gentleness” (Gal. 6:1).

Number five: patience. Being “long-tempered,” long-suffering, not giving up. Listen to Paul's testimony of God's patience with him. 2 Timothy 1,

“I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service, even though I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief; and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate *His perfect patience* as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life.” (12-16)

Patience. We are to *hang in there* with others, keep looking and working for the best in them.

Moving into verse 13, number six: bearing with one another. Flowing out of the five qualities in verse 12, we are to endure, to bear with, to put up with each other. To have a sense of belonging, to build a community, all of us have to bear with the limitations and idiosyncrasies of each other. Negatively, we are not to become exasperated or exhausted with each other.

Number seven: we are to constantly be forgiving each other. The word Paul uses is not the most common New Testament word for forgiving. It is one which emphasizes forgiving as an act of grace—forgiveness offered freely, even if not deserved. Christ’s graciously forgiving us is both the cause and model for our forgiving each other. Go back to chapter 2, verse 13,

“When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, [God] made you alive together with Him, *having forgiven us all our transgressions*, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”

Christ’s forgiveness was total, complete. Ours should be also. There is no place for “I will never forgive him/her.”

Number eight, in the next verse: love one another. Paul writes, “Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity” (14). “Beyond all these things,” “Above all these things,” or, keeping the clothing image, “on top of all these things,” *put on love*—that considered, resolute caring for each person with God’s best in view. Literally he says that love is “the bond of perfection.” It is complete, unmarred unity. Love for each other is the bond that leads to or produces unity in the church. Without this love of God, as 1 Corinthians 13 tells us, we *accomplish* nothing of true worth in service for God, for others or ourselves. Without God’s love, we *are* nothing. *Put on love!*

Number 9 is in verse 15. “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.” Allow Christ’s peace to rule in your heart. In the objective sense of our relationship with God, Christ has established peace. The war is over. Turn back to chapter 1, verse 20, where Paul tells us that God through Christ reconciled “all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.” Similarly in Romans 5 the first verse, “having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Here, however, he tells us to let Christ’s peace *rule, to be in control*. We do that as we by faith live the qualities we see in this section. We find a similar statement in Philippians 4:4-9. “Allow Christ’s peace to rule in your heart.”

Then finally we complete the two handfuls of positive things to develop with allowing God’s Word to saturate our souls. Verse 16.

“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.”

God’s word is to dwell—to settle down and stay—at the core of our being. Not just a bit, but *richly, extravagantly!* That takes places as we regularly listen to, ready, think about, study and live God’s Word. Putting a Bible under you pillow when you go to sleep won’t help!

## Conclusion.

*Your new perspective should lead to Christ-like living.* We've covered a lot of specifics today. The last verse in this section sums it up. Verse 17,

“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”

Do everything “in the name of the Lord Jesus.” This is not a phrase to christen our actions. It involves recognizing and relying on all that the “name” of the Lord Jesus means” His character, priorities, standards. It involves recognizing and relying on His power. It is sometimes said that the phrase “What Would Jesus Do?” is a trite cliché. It can be. It also can be a profound summary of what God tells us through Paul here in verse 17.

“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”

Remember, this perspective is not relative, not “If it sounds good to you, okay. If not, that’s okay too” thinking. During lunch after church a family was discussing the Pastor’s sermon which, on that day, was on Christ’s return. The teenage son had questions, some of which were hard for his Dad to answer. So Dad summed it up this way, “The best preparation is to live each day as if it were your last.” His son answered, “I tried that once. You grounded me for a month.”

No, God’s perspective. Our new perspective should lead to Christ-like living.

Is this new perspective on thinking and living with the things of heaven as top priority your perspective? How are you doing? How Christ-like were you last week? As you take these next moments with God,

- Thank Him that He has called you and made you His child.
- Thank Him that you are free from the old, futile way of thinking and living to the new perspective, to His perfect way for you.
- Ask Him to show you one or two specific truths from those we have looked at this morning which you will begin working on with Him, starting now.

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