

Put Off and Put On (Part 2)

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[0:00] Last week we started working our way through Colossians chapter 3 verses 5-17.

! That's one long section of scripture. And in these verses Paul gives us more specific examples of how Christians should and should not behave. Verses 5-9 focus mainly on the behaviors to avoid. So let's go ahead and read verse 5 through the first part of verse 9 for some review. Paul said, Put to death, therefore, what is earthly in you, sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming.

In these you too once walked when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away, anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices. So we titled that first section, Out with the Old. And if you'll remember, it was a difficult passage to study. We won't spend much more time on the review, but there are three things that we need to remember that sets up tonight's lesson. First, the battle with sin is common to all believers, even Paul. The desire of the new inner man is a life pleasing to God, but that's held back by the old sinful flesh with its fallen patterns. And although believers are new creatures on the inside, the new creatures live in old bodies, and our bodies, including our tongues, can either be instruments for righteousness or for iniquity.

Despite the negativity in verses 5 through 9, we did see some good news there. For believers, that way of life is in the past. We saw that by the past tense of verse 7. Verse 7 is the verse that said, in these you too once walked when you were living in them. So you can see that that way of life is behind us now. The passage also reminded us of God's grace. And we talked about this quote from Leon Morris. We said, unless we hold that men really deserve to have God visit upon them the painful consequences of their wrongdoing, we empty God's forgiveness of its meaning. When the logic of the situation demands that he should take action against the sinner, and he instead takes action for him, then and then alone can we speak of grace. But there is no room for grace if there is no suggestion of dire consequences merited by sin. The evidence of God's grace in our lives should remind us that God is capable of saving anyone, and that is also good news that we saw last week. In verses 9 and 10,

[2:57] Paul makes a transition. He stops writing about the behaviors to avoid and begins talking about the behaviors that we should pursue. In verse 9, Paul finished that verse by saying that believers have put off the old self with its practices. And then in verses 10 through 17, 10 through 17, Paul says believers have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Then continuing on with verse 11, he said, here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free, but Christ is all and in all. Put on then as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another. And if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other, as the Lord has forgiven you, so you must also forgive. And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 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, and your hearts to God. 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. We talked last week about how Paul uses wording here that typically was used for taking off dirty clothes and putting on clean clothes. So we've put on the new self like a brand spanking new classy set of clothes. Now we just need to live like we have done that. So tonight we'll learn more about what our classy new clothes look like. And if last week's focus was out with the old, this week's focus is in with the new. So in with the new is what goes into your blanks there.

We probably could spend all night on verse 10 and still not grasp its full significance. So listen to verse 10 again. Paul says believers have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. We talked about verse 7 a little bit a while ago, and verse 7 reminded us that our past involved walking in sinful behaviors. Verse 10 shows us that our present and our future, we are being renewed in knowledge after the image of our creator. And the tense there of is being renewed implies continuous action. So this renewal is more than a one-time thing. It's a daily thing as we're being made more and more like Christ every day that we walk with him. So we put on Christ, literally the new man. So we've joined the new human race in him, which is being renewed. It's made into what humanity was meant to be in knowledge, and that, of course, is knowing God. And the renewal of humanity is after or according to the image of its creator. And we know that Christ himself is the image of the invisible God. We saw that back in chapter 1, verse 15. So as we are joined to Christ, we have died with him. And as we are raised with him, we are being restored, just as the whole creation is being restored.

So this is not just happening to each of us individually, but to all of us who are in Christ. So this is Christ's body that Paul spoke of back in Colossians 1.18. We know that Christ is already the head of the body, and he's preeminent there. And he one day will be preeminent over all things.

And actually, he already is preeminent over all things. It will just be evident that he's preeminent over all things. When he talks about the body, remember that he's talking about the assembly or the church that Paul serves by suffering in his proclamation of Christ. He's warning every person and teaching every person so that every person will become perfected in Christ.

Verse 10 sets the foundation for how we can do the Christ-like behaviors that Paul advocates later in this passage. And obviously, in verse 10, Paul is talking about our sanctification.

[7 : 22] The sanctification process is a process and not a singular or a momentary event. That's why you often hear it referred to as progressive sanctification. Becoming what God desires of us is incremental, not instantaneous. So divine wisdom dictates that we grow by fits and starts, by trial and error, and often by three steps forward and two steps back. Without showing hands, can anybody identify with that? Although we certainly have a responsibility to use the means of grace, we know that God is always the initial cause. And if he weren't at first at work for us, there would be no work by us. So the renewal is ultimately God's doing. And that's why Paul uses the passive is being renewed in that verse. God is the ultimate and efficient cause of all things that changes from selfish to selfless and from rebellious to repentant and from bond leads to our fleshly impulses to the freedom of becoming more and more like Jesus. And this is very much like what Paul told the Philippians in Philippians 2.12 and 13. In the last part of Philippians 2.12 and on in the last part of Philippians 2.13, Paul said, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

When he talks about being renewed there, he's referring to being new in quality. The structure of the Greek verb there has the sense of contrast to what was already there.

So things have become different. So it's a new quality of life that never before existed. And unlike the decaying and depraved human nature of the old self, the new self is continually being renewed by God. And when he talks about knowledge there, he's referring to a deep, thorough knowledge. It's the type of knowledge he talked about way back in verse 9 of chapter 1. And the process of this renewal brings increased knowledge itself. There's no growth in the Christian life apart from knowledge.

And from mature knowledge flows holy living. And if you look elsewhere in Paul's writings, we can find what the source of this knowledge is.

[9 : 46] 2 Timothy 3.16 and 17 give us the source of this knowledge. 2 Timothy 3.16 and 17 say, All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

The word of God is the food that fuels the growth of the new self. How fast we grow as believers depends on how much knowledge we put into practice in our lives. And the goal of this knowledge is to conform the believer to the image of the one who created him.

And of course we know that that is Christ. And the new self becomes progressively more and more like Christ, who was the creator as we take in more of his word. So let's look at three cross-references that illustrate Paul's point here even more.

The first is 1 Corinthians 15.49. 1 Corinthians 15.49 tells us, Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

Romans 8.29 is where Paul wrote, For those whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. And then John wrote these words in 1 John 3.2-3.

[11:13] 1 John 3.2-3 say, Within the new community of Christ, all barriers are abolished.

Distinctions that normally divide people, whether it's racial, religious, cultural, or social, no longer have any significance. And we see that from verse 11.

Colossians 3.11 says, Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free, but Christ is all and in all.

This new humanity is defined by one thing. He says, Here there is not Greek and Jew. So it makes no difference if you're a sophisticated Greek or a pious Jew.

And it doesn't matter if you're circumcised or uncircumcised. That is, it doesn't matter whether you're a Jew or a Gentile. Here it also makes no difference if you were once a despised barbarian.

[12:27] And that was a term generally used by the Greeks to describe those of non-Greek culture. In other words, they thought they were the only ones that were civilized. And it doesn't even matter if you're an even more despised Scythian.

And that referred to the lowest class of barbarians, which were usually slaves. And then he goes on to emphasize that a little more because he says it doesn't matter whether you're slave or free. He says that Christ is all that matters here.

Christ is all and in all. So when you think about it, we had all of these people in the Colossians church sitting in Philemon's house listening to this letter being read.

And likely all of those categories of people were part of the Colossian church on that day. So Paul's telling them that their differences are utterly irrelevant.

Because if you've received Jesus Christ as your Lord, that is what matters. You've been filled in Christ and you've died and been buried with him. So you've been raised with him as well.

[13:29] And we know from Colossians 2.13 that all of our sins have been forgiven if we're believers too. And these are the things that mark you out as God's people. And these are the things that you share with God's people regardless of what your previous background has been.

So what he's really emphasizing there is that it's wrong to build the fellowship of the church on anything other than Jesus Christ himself, his person, and his work.

So any ministry that's built on human distinctions like race, color, or social standing is not biblical. That's very clear from this passage here. One of the evidences of spiritual growth and the renewing of the mind is the willingness to receive and love all who sincerely know Jesus Christ and seek to glorify him regardless of whether you might have thought they were different from you to begin with. So we've seen several times, not just here, that Christ is all and in all and that's the emphasis of all of Colossians. Because we're complete in Christ, we can look beyond the earthly differences that separate people and then enjoy a spiritual unity in the Lord.

Remember all the way back to Colossians 1.18. That's the verse that said, and he, talking about Christ, is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

[14:56] Verses 10 and 11 serve more as the introduction to what we as believers should do. And the verses reminded us of why we should do the things that Paul advocates in the next several verses.

They also remind us of how we can do the things that Paul advocates. So keeping verses 10 and 11 in mind, let's look at 12 through 17 again. Paul has a long list here.

He says, Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 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. And above all these, put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called in one body.

And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, seeking psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

[16:00] 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. So verse 12 immediately reminds us of some good news.

Paul says that we are God's chosen ones, holy and beloved. Nobody is converted solely by his own choice, but only in response to God's effectual, free, uninfluenced, sovereign grace.

Election means believers are the objects of God's incomprehensible special love. Now when you think about it, some might say that the worst possible thing that Paul can do after all the negatives in verses 5 through 9 is to remind his readers of their privileges.

Those people might say that doing so would undermine the urgency with which they have to respond to the many exhortations and imperatives that follow. Because after all, they might say, if you tell people that God has already chosen them and already consecrated them and already loves them, don't you then rob them of any incentive to be holy like God?

So what they might say is, shouldn't such blessings be held forth as the reward for obedience or as the proverbial pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, as the reward for effort and diligence?

[17:18] But actually, far from undermining the holiness of life, Paul actually believed that the glorious blessings undergird it. So it's precisely because you're chosen of God and beloved of God that you must heed what Paul asked you to do here.

So it's as his elect, sanctified, beloved people, that Paul commands that we put on compassion and humility and love and everything else he says there. And anyone who might reason otherwise really knows little, if anything, of God's grace.

So to say to yourself that as God's elect people, we're exempt from excessive concern with behavior is to really betray a massive distortion of the nature of saving grace.

Indeed, it really betrays the nature of Christianity itself because to think that privilege and status and security somehow release the soul from accountability is really contrary to everything that Paul has written and will write as we go through the rest of his letter.

I put part of this quote from Sam Storms in your handout. He says, Paul's design in describing the Colossians and us with such exalted language isn't to lull them into spiritual slumber and moral indifference, but to shock them, so to speak, with the stunning realization of who they are in Christ.

[18:39] He's determined to awaken them to the awesome task of living a life that honors the Lord and distinguishes them from the ways of the world. And then he goes on to say, I can almost hear him shouting, People, do you have any idea who you are?

Elect, holy, beloved, and do you know who's responsible for this? It's God who's responsible for this, not you. Here then is how you are to live.

Be compassionate, kind, humble, meek, patient, bearing with one another, forgiving one another, and all the other things he goes on to say in that passage. So with that setup, let's go on to explore what Paul means by this list of behaviors, starting with the ones in verses 12 and 13.

Compassionate hearts is the first character trait that's to mark the new man. Heart translates a word that's a Hebrewism that literally refers to the inward parts of the human body, so it could be heart, lungs, kidneys, liver, etc.

It's often used in the New Testament to talk figuratively as the seat of emotions, and that's how it's used here. Then the word for compassion means pity, mercy, sympathy, or actually compassion.

[19:54] So taken together, the phrase could be translated put on heartfelt compassion, because remember, we're talking about what we put off, now we get to what we put on. And one of the things we should put on is that heartfelt compassion.

Or it could also be translated as have a deep gut level feeling of compassion. So that's a divine quality that was so perfectly exhibited by Jesus, and it was sorely needed in the ancient world.

Back in the ancient world, sick people, injured people, or elderly people were often left to fend for themselves. And because of that, many died. So Paul's telling us that believers must not be indifferent to suffering, but should be concerned about meeting other people's needs.

He talks about kindness next, and that's closely related to compassion. The Greek term there refers to the grace that pervades the whole person. So in other words, it's mellowing all that might be harsh.

Jesus used the word back in Matthew 11:30 when he says, my yoke is easy. It means it's not harsh and not hard to bear. So the kind person is concerned about his neighbor's good just as much as he is about his own.

[21:12] God is kind to even ungrateful and evil people. And in fact, it was God's kindness that led us to repentance. We know that from Romans 2:4. The next thing we see there is humility, and it's related words, along with humility itself, always have a negative connotation in classical Greek.

Actually, Christianity reverses that because Christianity elevates humility to a virtue. Humility is the antidote for the self-love that can poison our relationships with other people.

And Paul advocates genuine humility in contrast to the false humility that the false teachers exhibited. We know that humility characterized Jesus, and it's the most cherished Christian virtue. Paul talks about it elsewhere in Ephesians 4.2, Philippians 2.3, and then we also hear about it from Peter in 1 Peter. When we talk about meekness, meekness is the opposite of self-interest. So meekness is what goes into your blank there. It's the opposite of self-interest and reveals itself in gentleness. So meekness is a spirit of quiet submission.

[22 : 28] It's not weakness, but rather a spirit of Christian courtesy. Thomas Watson once said, meekness is a grace whereby we are enabled by the Spirit of God to moderate our passions.

Meekness also has been described as power under control. And one thing that might help you understand that image is the picture of a powerful horse that's under the control of its master. So the horse is not meek, but it definitely has power under control. And Jesus spoke of the meek in the Beatitudes when he promised to them that they would inherit the earth that comes from Matthew 5.5.

So are these descriptions of meekness the way that unbelievers view meekness today? For an example of how the world views meekness, consider this quote from Bobby Knight.

And yes, that is the former Indiana and Texas Tech basketball coach. Bobby Knight said, the meek may well inherit the earth, but they rarely get rebounds. So maybe we should send him the recording of this lesson so that he gets the real explanation about what it means to have power under control.

[23 : 42] That might be the only time I ever quote Bobby Knight in a theological lesson. The thing, though, to remember is that the key to meekness and humility, too, is a healthy acknowledgement and submission to the sovereign grace of God.

Listen to this cross-reference from 1 Corinthians 4.7. Paul said there, For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive?

If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? So in other words, everything we have is a gift from God anyway, so there's no reason for us to boast because we didn't have anything to do with it.

It was all God's doing to begin with. Meekness should always be in direct proportion to one's grasp of grace. And pride is the fruit of the lie that I earned what I have.

Meekness or humility become the fruit of the truth that everything is from God. Listen to this quote from John the Baptist in John 8.27. John answered, A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.

[24 : 53] Patience is the next virtue that is listed. The patient person does not get angry at others. Patience is the opposite of resentment and revenge.

And of course, it's another characteristic of Christ. So we've talked about how this list is more positive than the list we looked at last week, but are you starting to see that it doesn't make it any easier to live up to?

We still have to rely on God's grace and God's enablement through the Spirit to help us live up to the qualities here. And verse 13 may have the toughest challenge of all.

Verse 13 says, 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 put these quotes in your handout because forgiveness is often misunderstood just like meekness is misunderstood too. Forgiveness does not mean that you are to ignore that a wrong was done or to deny that a sin was committed.

[25 : 58] Forgiveness does not mean that you close your eyes to moral atrocity and pretend that it didn't hurt or that it really doesn't matter whether the offended person is called to account for his or her offense.

Neither are you being asked to diminish the gravity of the offense. And here's the key. Forgiveness simply means that you determine in your heart to let God be the avenger. He is the judge, not you. So listen to that part again. Forgiveness simply means that you determine in your heart to let God be the avenger. He is the judge, not you. And often we refuse to forgive others because we mistakenly think that to do so is to minimize their sin.

You might hear things like, well that's not fair, he really hurt me or she really hurt me. Or you might say, if I forgive, who's going to care for me and take up my cause and nurse my wounds? Well what's the answer to that? If you forgive, who is going to care for you? Exactly, God will. So we must never buy into the lie that to forgive means that sin is being whitewashed or ignored or that the perpetrator is not being held accountable for his or her actions.

[27 : 07] Forgiveness simply means that we consciously choose to let God be the one who determines the appropriate course of action in dealing with the offending person. So another way to look at it is forgiveness is deciding to live with the painful consequences of another person's sin.

And it goes on to say you're going to have to live with that anyway so you might as well do it without the bitterness and rancor and hatred that threaten to destroy your soul. Paul says why we should forgive and that is we should forgive like Christ has forgiven us.

So consider how God in Christ forgave us. God in Christ forgave us by absorbing in himself the destructive and painful consequences of all of our sin against him.

And God forgave us in Christ by canceling the debt that we owed him. Remember we saw earlier in Colossians that that debt was nailed to the cross. So we're no longer held liable for our sins in any way or made to pay for them in any way because Christ has already paid for them on our behalf. Forgiving others as God has forgiven us also means that we resolve to revoke revenge. Forgiving others as God has forgiven us means that we determine to do good to people rather than evil.

[28 : 24] We won't look at it too much tonight but if you go to Romans 12 verses 17 through 21 you'll see that. And God forgave us in Christ by reconciling us to himself by restoring the relationship that we had with him before our sin shattered that relationship.

None of this is going to make sense to someone who's yet to experience the joy and the forgiveness of God in Christ Jesus. So are you seeing how much counter to society this is that Paul calls us to be?

And Paul's still going strong about the things that we should do. He's not done yet. Look at verse 14. He says, And above all these put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony. So now he's signaling out one characteristic above all others and that characteristic is love. And it's the most common New Testament version of love.

That's the agape love. So consistently it describes God's love as well as the love that Christians should have for God. God's love. It's willing to give up yourself for another.

[29 : 30] And like the Old Testament in Jesus, Paul advocated love as the fulfillment of the Mosaic law. So when you look back at the start of this passage in 3.5, you see how love contrasts with the immorality of 3.5.

So all of the spiritual qualities that Paul has named are aspects of true Christian love. love. And you can see that if you go read 1 Corinthians 13. So love is the first fruit of the spirit and all the other virtues follow from that.

Because when love rules in our lives, it unites all these spiritual virtues so that there's beauty and harmony. And all that taken together shows that we have spiritual maturity. One thing we know is that supernatural love poured into the hearts of believers is going to be the glue that holds the church together.

In verse 15, Paul says, and let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts to which indeed you were called in one body. And then he adds, and be thankful. So only by truly understanding what Paul means by the grace and peace of Christ can we be thankful like we should.

So the peace is the peace which Christ has won for us by the blood of his cross. So it embraces all things, yet it's a gift from God the Father. That's particular to believers in Christ Jesus.

[30 : 54] And this peace accounts for the fact that we're no longer God's enemies but God's chosen ones who have been loved by him. And it's the same peace that can be described like this.

He forgave us all our sins. We saw that in 1.14 and 2.13. So this peace is now the reality between us and God because of Jesus Christ.

And this peace should rule in our hearts and in the collective hearts of the church because we are all called in one body. And the word translated rule there is an athletic term.

It means to preside at the games and distribute the prizes. In the Greek games there were judges and today we call them umpires. And they rejected the contestants who were not qualified and they also disqualified the contestants who broke the rules.

in our case the peace of God is the umpire in our believing hearts and in our churches. And when we obey the will of God we have his peace within. But when we step out of his will even unintentionally we lose his peace until we reconcile ourselves with him and bring that peace back into harmony with him.

[32 : 05] So when a Christian loses the peace of God he begins to go off in directions that are out of the will of God. He turns to things of the world and the flesh to compensate for his lack of peace within.

And he often tries to escape but the thing is he can't escape himself. So it's only when the believer confesses his sins, claims God's forgiveness and does God's will that that peace comes back and then he experiences God's peace within.

So consider the last part of verse 15 now. It says and be thankful. When there's peace in the heart there's going to be praise on the lips.

A Christian outside of God's will is never found giving sincere praise to God. Think about David's example in the Old Testament. When David covered up his sins with Bathsheba and Uriah he lost his peace and his praise.

You can read about that in Psalm 32 and 51. But when he confessed his sins then his song returned. Verses 16 and 17 in tonight's passage with these words.

[33 : 11] 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.

You think Paul wants us to be thankful? Then in verse 17 he says 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.

So most likely the word of Christ that he mentions there in verse 16 is identical to what Paul wrote about back in verse 5 of chapter 1. And there he said the word of the truth is the gospel.

So the word of Christ then is the totality of biblical revelation concerning Jesus who he is, his mission, his redemptive work, his character, his will, and his ways.

And Paul says that we should let the word of Christ dwell in us richly and dwell means to live in obviously or to be at home. And richly can be more fully rendered abundantly or extravagantly rich.

[34 : 16] So scripture should always permeate every area of the believer's life and control every thought, word, and deed. And this concept is parallel to being filled with the spirit and Paul talks about that in Ephesians 5:18.

In both cases the results are the same. Paul's point is that every human relationship, every human responsibility, whether it is entailing conquering some obstacle or enemy or coping with yet another problem or person, must be seen in the person and work of Jesus Christ and be governed in the light of that.

So in other words, the person and work of Jesus must be the controlling principle in our lives. The redemptive suffering of Christ for his church, his dominion as Lord, and his authority as the judge of all things all have a direct and practical impact on how we function on a daily basis.

And if the word of Christ is not allowed to have this formative influence on our beliefs and behavior, whatever conquering and coping skills we develop won't be pleasing to God or honoring to Christ.

Paul's point also is that we must grant the word of Christ the highest priority and place it in the corporate experience of the church. So the word of Christ must be preached, proclaimed, explained, and applied.

[35 : 39] So whenever we make use of drama, multimedia displays, or other forms of communication, the word of Christ should always be the focus. It should dwell in us individually and it should dwell among us corporately as a church.

And of course, remember, it doesn't just dwell in us, but it should dwell in us richly. So in other words, we should let the truth about Jesus be taught and known and obeyed in all its glory and beauty and richness.

And the last part of verse 16 talks about how we should express the word of Christ that deals richly within us. Teaching has to do with doctrine.

Admonishing has to do with duty. So we owe it to our brethren to share our knowledge of Scripture with them and to seek help by practical and godly counsel. And when teaching and admonishing are given in wisdom, they're more likely to find acceptance.

Psalms are things that describe utterances which are found in the book of Psalms. And of course, we know that they were sung as part of Israel's worship. And when he talks about hymns, on the

other hand, he's most likely referring to things that are songs of worship and praise that are addressed to God the Father or the Lord Jesus Christ.

[36:56] And then most people think that spiritual songs refer to religious poetry that describes Christian experience. So we should use these things to express the thankfulness in our hearts to God.

So let's look now at verse 17. We've looked at it several times already, but we need to focus on it for just a bit. It says, whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

So verse 17 is an all-inclusive rule by which to judge our conduct. So as we consider our conduct, the great test should be, can I do this in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Would this be to his glory? Could I expect his blessing to rest on it? Would I want to be doing it when he comes back again? So notice that this test should apply to the words we speak and to the deeds that we do.

Obedience to this command elevates all of life. It's a precious secret when the Christian learns to do all to the Lord and for his glory. And once again, Paul says there that we should give thanks to God the Father through him.

[38:05] And giving thanks is a perpetual duty for all of those who have been saved by grace and who are destined for heaven. So over the last two weeks, we've considered a lot of weighty material from verses 5 through 17.

Consider this partial summary from Warren Wearsby. Warren Wearsby said, we were formed in God's image and deformed from God's image by sin. But through Jesus Christ, we can be transformed into God's image.

We must be renewed in the spirit of our minds. As we grow in the knowledge of the word of God, we will be transformed by the spirit of God to share in the glorious image of God. God transforms us by renewing our minds, and this involves the study of God's word.

It is the truth that sets us free from the old life. So there are five good words in that quote to describe key stages in believers' lives. You probably heard those as we went through.

Formed, deformed, transformed, then renewed and freed. Remember this quote from Jesus in John 8, 31 and 32.

[39:12] He said, so Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, if you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples. You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

Knowing that truth enables us to believe and behave like we should. Knowing that truth also reminds us to be mindful of God and thankful to God in everything that we do.

And we can have no better conclusion than Colossians 3, 17 itself, and that's what we should remember as we go forward from tonight. Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Let's go ahead and close in prayer. Father, we thank you for the reminder of the things that you expect us to do as believers. And although they're a little easier to study than some of the negative things we talked about last week, they're still difficult to do.

And help us be mindful that we need to rely on your spirit and the knowledge of your word to help us exhibit these behaviors more and more. Continue to help us do that as we learn more and more about you.

[40:19] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Thank you.