

16. Learning to Put Off the Deeds of the Old Man

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children learn how to recognize false teachings. The goal of those who teach these false teachings is to cause Christians to lose their spiritual freedom and blind those who are not Christians so that they do not come to the truth. The goal of false teachers is to bring people into bondage to the rules of people instead of learning to be led by the Lord. In order to be led by the Lord, we need to learn to put off the deeds of the old man and learn to put on the new man. Those two actions will be the focus of our next two topics.

In Colossians 3:1-2 we read, “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” When we placed our faith in Christ, we were given spiritual life. Romans 6:3-4 says, “Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Here, we see that Christ raised us to resurrection life. This resurrection life makes it possible for us to walk in newness of life.

Since we have been raised with Christ, we have been given new desires. Those new desires cause us to seek those things which are above. The word that is translated “seek” means to *greatly desire or to crave*. Christ said in Matthew 6:33, “But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.” When we seek the things that are above, we are seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness. As we are seeking the things that are above, we are reminded that Christ is sitting on the right hand of the Father. Here, we see that Christ sits in the place of authority and speaks for us to the Father. Romans 8:34 says, “Who *is* he who condemns? *It is* Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.” As Christ speaks to the Father for us, we know that the Father continues to work in our lives.

We also see that we are to set our mind on the things that are above. The word that is translated “set your mind” means to *think, to have understanding or to be wise*. Romans 8:5 says, “For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those *who live* according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.” Here, we see that we are either living according to the flesh or according to the Spirit. The way that we live our lives is determined by the way that we think. If we set our minds on the things above, we will live to please the Lord. That is also why we are told not to set our minds on the things of this earth. 1 John 2:17 says, “And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” The earth and the desires of this earth will soon pass away. In contrast, when we set our minds on the things above, we will desire to do the will of God and that will produce eternal results.

Colossians 3:3-4 says, “For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.” Here, we see that we died,

which means that it is something that happened in the past. Galatians 2:20 says, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” For all people who place their faith in Christ, they have been united with Christ. That means that when Christ died on the cross, we died with Him because the penalty for our sins was paid. Galatians 6:14 says, “But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” As a result of our death with Christ, the world has lost its power over us.

That is also why we have risen with a new life. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” We are a new creation with a new nature and new desires. Our life is now hidden with Christ in God. The completeness of this new creation is explained in 2 Peter 1:3-4 where we read, “As His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption *that is* in the world through lust.” We are no longer slaves to sin because we have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Like Adam and Eve before they sinned, we can now choose to sin or we can choose to please God. Galatians 5:13 says that we are to use this freedom to serve one another in love.

The day is coming soon when Christ will appear. As Christians, we can eagerly look forward to that day. In 1 John 3:2 we read, “Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.” All Christians can look forward with eagerness to that day because of the fact that in that day we will be like Christ and never sin again. 1 Peter 5:4 adds, “And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.” Here, we see that godly leaders can look forward to that day because we will be rewarded with a reward that does not fade away. In addition, we are also promised that we will appear with Christ in glory.

Based on the fact that Christ is coming for us, Colossians 3:5-7 says, “Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.” Before we came to faith in Christ, we used the members (parts) of our bodies to commit sin. Now, Romans 6:19 says, “I speak in human *terms* because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members *as* slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness *leading to more* lawlessness, so now present your members *as* slaves *of* righteousness for holiness.” Here, we are encouraged to make the choice to put the sinful actions or deeds of the flesh to death so that we can live our lives to bring glory to the Lord.

The word that is translated “fornication” speaks of any form of sexual sin. The word translated “uncleanness” refers to thoughts about any form of sexual sin. The word translated “passion” speaks of sexual sin with a person of the same sex. The word is used in Romans 1:26 where we

read, “For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.” The word translated “evil desire” means *a craving for anything that is forbidden*. The word that is translated “covetousness” means *a greedy desire to have more*. Christ warned in Luke 12:15, “And He said to them, ‘Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.’” God says here in Colossians that this desire to have more is actually idolatry.

The “sons of disobedience” speaks of all those who are in opposition to God and face eternal judgment. Ephesians 5:6 says, “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” We walked in that same disobedience until we came to Christ by faith. Ephesians 2:2 says, “In which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience.” We walked in disobedience to God because we were under the control of our sin nature until the day that we placed our faith in Christ.

As a result, we are also to put off the attitudes of the old man. Colossians 3:8-9 says, “But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.” Our old man died with Christ when we accepted the payment of Christ by faith for all of our sins. However, we are instructed here to put off the attitudes of the old man. These inner attitudes determine the words that we speak as well as the sinful actions that we commit. The word that is translated “anger” speaks of the inner attitude of an angry person. It is translated “wrath” twice in James 1:19-20 where we read, “So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” Here, we see that such anger does not produce the righteousness of God. The word translated “wrath” here speaks of anger that boils up and usually soon subsides.

“Malice” speaks of a desire to hurt others, especially with words. 1 Peter 2:1-2 says, “Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.” “Blasphemy”, when it refers to people, speaks of slander. “Filthy language” speaks of language that is obscene. We are also told that we are not to lie to one another. The reason that we are to be an example ourselves and help our physical and spiritual children learn to avoid the attitudes that cause these kinds of words is the fact that we have put off the old man. We want to show our children by our example that we have put off the old man with his actions, attitudes and words at the moment that we placed our faith in Christ. In our next topic, we will see how to help our children learn what it means to put on the new man in their lives. May the Lord richly bless you as you show your children how to put off the deeds of the old man.