

Colossians 3.⁵⁻¹⁷

8. 'The best way!'

Background

Conversion is a supernatural act of God Himself. And it's radical in its repercussions!

You have been brought into a new relationship with the risen Jesus, a relationship of mutual commitment in which you gladly submit to His lordship over your life and in which He gladly gives of Himself to the uttermost to present you at the last 'holy and blameless' (see [Eph.5.22-27](#)).

That relationship has two key consequences.

First, you are a new person – both in terms of 'status' (you've married into the royal family), but also in terms of the whole way you function.

It's not an exact parallel, but it can be helpful to think of the way that a hang-gliding frame, for instance, when 'united' to a knowledgeable hang-glider, is no longer so totally subject to the downward drag of the law of gravity, but is able to fly at the direction of the hang-glider: your relationship with Jesus is such that you're now 'tied' to Him, you become one with Him through the power of the Spirit – and instead of being totally subject to the downward drag of sin, Jesus by His Spirit enables you to 'fly'. There's an old 'ditty' (attributed to John Bunyan) which expresses it like this –

"To run and work the law commands but gives us neither feet nor hands. But better news the gospel brings, it bids us fly and gives us wings."

The second major consequence of that relationship with the Lord Jesus is that you have a new future: as Paul put it at the end of the previous section – *"you also will appear with Him in glory"* (Col.3.4). Believers are being groomed for glory, learning to live in the present the lifestyle of that future.

Those two consequences of a person's entrusting their life to the Lord Jesus Christ – the reality of who you now are as a new person in Christ, and the destiny to which you're headed and for which you're being prepared – they are what inform and drive the exhortations Paul addresses to the believers at Colossae here.

And those exhortations, therefore, pivot round (a) our putting *off*, on the one hand, a way of life associated with the person we once were and with a here-and-now perspective on our lives: and, on the other hand, (b) our putting *on* that way of life which is the hallmark of the King (with whom we're now united), the lifestyle of the Kingdom (within which we're now royalty), and the lineaments of the glory for which we're destined.

Our way of living, therefore, is to be itself a winsome gospel proclamation, which demonstrates the transforming power of the gospel and heralds the future glory.

The whole passage is a unity and is best read and studied in its entirety. If you need to restrict yourselves to a more limited number of 'days' then I suggest that **'days' (2), (3), and (4)** are the ones on which to focus: as ever there are additional questions for CG discussion under these 'days'.

1) Monday 14th November – royalty

Read [Colossians 3.5-6](#)

“.. Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature ..” (Col.3.5)

Being ‘in Christ’ (that’s to say in relationship with Jesus) changes everything! You’re a new person, royalty now rather than any sort of ragamuffin. None of your previous wardrobe (way of life) does the business now before the wrath of God – bin the lot!

How do you ‘put to death’ the traits of your ‘earthly nature’?

What have been the hardest things for you to deal with in regard to those things which, in Paul’s words, ‘belong to your earthly nature’?

Prayer: *Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from Your presence or take Your Holy Spirit from me* ([Ps.51.10-11](#))

2) Tuesday 15th November – walking

Read [Colossians 3.5-8](#)

“.. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived ..” (Col.3.7)

Living life is often described in terms of a ‘walk’ (see [Gen.3.8](#): [Ps.1.1](#): [Mic.6.8](#)). Down what paths are you walking? With whom are you walking? Walking down the aisle as a bride is different from walking in the hills as a tramp. A change of clothes is needed!

How obvious is it to others that your way of life is very different now to what it used to be?

Does the church today (and do you!) tend to downplay the truth that ‘the wrath of God is coming’ in our witness to others?

How do you respond to those who say that none of the things mentioned in vv.5 & 7 really apply to them and therefore they need not worry about the wrath of God?

If the things mentioned by Paul in v.8 are ‘besetting sins’ for an individual, how can they be helped to ‘rid themselves of them’?

Prayer: *Thank You, Jesus, that as You walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus, so You still walk alongside Your people today. Help me to walk humbly with You*

3) Wednesday 16th November – renewed

Read [Colossians 3.9-11](#)

“.. you have taken off your old self .. and have put on the new self ..” (Col.3.9-10)

The grace of the gospel involves something far more radical than some improvement in your outward appearance. You're being made a new person, renewed and restored as part of a new humanity – and the former outward distinctions cease to apply.

What's the implication behind Paul's speaking of believers being 'renewed **in knowledge** in the image of (the) Creator'? How does that renewal happen?

What are the practical implications of 'the new self' being renewed "in the image of its creator"?

How fully does the truth of v.11 find expression in your fellowship – and in what ways is your fellowship enriched thereby?

What are the particular challenges brought by the diversity of background in Christ's church?

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for the rich mosaic of backgrounds and personalities within Your church! Help me today to bless and be blessed by those very different from me.

4) Thursday 17th November – love

Read [Colossians 3.12-14](#)

".. over all these virtues put on love .." (Col.3.14)

Love will be the characteristic of the believer. Paul here spells out what love means, in terms of both the *qualities* it comprises (compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience) and the *challenges* it addresses (bearing with and forgiving one another).

Why does Paul preface his exhortation with this 3-fold description of believers?

How do you develop these qualities if you're conscious of being very lacking in them?

What are some of the situations where you have had to apply the call to 'bear with each other'?

Should you wait for someone to apologise before you forgive them?

Are there people against whom you've been harbouring a grievance and whom the Lord here bids you forgive? Go, do it now!

What does it mean to 'put on love'?

Prayer: 'Your nature, gracious Lord, impart: come quickly from above. Write Your new name upon my heart, Your new best name of love' [[Charles Wesley](#)]

5) Friday 18th November – peace

Read [Colossians 3.15](#)

“.. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts ..” (Col.3.15)

Jesus is the ‘prince of peace’ ([Is.9.6](#)), and peace (Heb. ‘shalom’, wholeness) is so much a hallmark of the gospel that it’s described as the ‘gospel of peace’ (see [Acts 10.36](#)). ‘Peace’ therefore ‘acts as umpire’ as to what’s ‘in’ or ‘out’ in all our living.

The community of believers is itself to be an expression of the gospel: in what ways is the ‘gospel of peace’ shown in the life of your fellowship?

Are you known for your gratitude or your ‘grousing’?

Prayer: *Make me today, O Lord, an instrument of Your peace. Guard my lips and guide my steps in terms of what I do, that my every moment may minister peace to others.*

6) Saturday 19th November – exhorting

Read [Colossians 3.16](#)

“.. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly ..” (Col.3.16)

Another 3.16 verse to go with [John 3.16](#)! The Word becomes ‘flesh’ again in the lives of His people as they learn to engage with one another, and exhort each other, in a spirit of praise and thankfulness, to press on towards the goal ([Phil.3.12-14](#)).

How can a church avoid the dangers of *laxity* on the one hand and *severity* on the other when it comes to admonishing one another?

Paul points to the value of ‘psalms, hymns and songs from the Spirit’ in pursuit of his concern: how does that translate into your fellowship?

Prayer: *Lord, help me to remember I’m nothing more than a learner: and help me to be a good learner, eager to be taught and humble enough to cope with admonition!*

7) Sunday 20th November – glory

Read [Colossians 3.17](#)

“.. do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father ..” (Col.3.17)

A cover-all concluding exhortation. ‘Whatever you do ..’ – every deed you do; every day you live; every one you meet; every word you speak. All the time, every thing, and everywhere – make sure it’s to the glory of Jesus and with gratitude to God.

What does doing something ‘in the name of the Lord Jesus’ mean?

When you join other believers for worship, how is this verse given expression in your life and in your fellowship?

Prayer: *Help me to ‘enter Your gates’ today, Lord, with thanksgiving in my heart: may Your name be glorified in my praise of Yourself and my conversations with Your people.*