

PUTTING OFF

Message by Grant Neuper
Christian Centre Abbotsford



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Text: Colossians 3:1-11

1If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

5Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

8But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Introduction:

Paul presents a perfect picture of who Jesus is and who we are in Him.

A. Identity: (What a journey so far in Colossians...)

Ch 1 +2 Paul says a lot about the identity of Jesus!

- Christ is exalted above all – preeminent
- Exact image of God / He carries the fullness of God / He is creator and sustainer /
- The focal point – everything was created by Him and for Him /
- He is the head of the church / He is supposed to have the preeminence in all things
- All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Him
- Christ is the one who has accomplished everything (no more religious philosophies)
- Lots of religious shadows, but He is the substance
- He is above all principalities and powers

Ch 1 + 2 Paul says a lot about our identity as Christians!

- We have been delivered from darkness and transferred into the kingdom of light
- We have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus and our sins have been forgiven
- We have been reconciled to God
- We are holy and blameless and above reproach in His sight
- We have Christ in us, our hope of glory (This is God's mystery revealed to all!)
- We are complete in Him (complete = full, finished, crammed up, fully satisfied)
- We are alive; resurrected with Jesus

- We have had our debt to God cancelled / all the charges against us dropped/cancelled
- We have been circumcised with a circumcision not done by human hands, but by Christ, PUTTING OFF the body of the sins of the flesh. We will pick up this theme in Ch.3

Ch 3 Living out our new identity in Christ

Read v.1-11

V.1-4 A summary of our identity in Christ as explained in ch.1 and 2

V.5-11 Because of our new identity, certain things are no longer appropriate behaviours

So, the big goal is living true to our new identity! We are in Jesus. We must look like Him!

B. Spot the difference:

Have you ever played this game? Tried to solve the puzzle?

Spot 10 differences between two sketches...

It could be that the person in the first sketch has something that the other one doesn't have OR that the person in the first sketch is missing something that the other one has.

Think about people that look like each other – similarities / differences?

[Photo of many / photo of Messi]

What needs to be added? What needs to be taken away?

How can I look like someone else? (Take off jacket/hair; put on beard/glasses/+)

Back to Colossians 3!! Put off / Put on

Place myself alongside Jesus:

What have I got that He doesn't have? That has to go! Put it off

What has He got that I don't have? That must come! Put it on

This week – put off (tough topic); next week put on (more exciting)

3:9 Put off the old man with his deeds

3:10 Put on the new man created in the image of Jesus

Both are absolutely essential if we are going to look more like Jesus. (This is not an outward show; but a deep work from the heart!) True circumcision is not something visible in the flesh, but of the **heart!** (Rom.2:28,29) We cooperate with the divine surgeon. Something has to be cut away; we get rid of the old man and his deeds.

What does the process look like?

1. **I look at Jesus** (awesome / beauty / perfect character / I am in awe of Him!)
2. **I look at me – through the eyes of my new identity** (I am dead to my old ways)

3:3 You died! And your life is now hidden with Christ in God

I am made new in Jesus – I have a stunning new identity! This is who you are!! (This is your reference point; this is your starting point.)

3. **What is inappropriate behaviour for who I am now?** How do Jesus and I compare? What needs to go?

Let's check out Paul's counsel – he gives very clear instructions...

C. Paul's list:

The nitty gritty stuff:

Paul says we are to put certain things to death (3:5).

And he says we are to put off certain things (3:8). This putting off means to rid yourself / lay aside / renounce the things of the old man (a radical distancing/have nothing to do with)

This is not self-help / try harder / sort yourself out. This is **understanding your true identity and recognizing what is no longer appropriate for you.**

Let's take a look at Paul's list and then we will take some practical action steps to put these things off:

(As I mention these things, please allow the Holy Spirit to flood you with His light - so that you can clearly see what needs to go from your life.)

First group:

- Fornication: sexual immorality / harlotry / pornography
- Uncleanness: any form of impurity (Purity is Christlikeness)
- Passion: lust / depraved passion
- Evil desire: broad statement / going after anything worthless in God's sight
- Covetousness (idolatry): greed, fraud, a desire for advantage; idolatry – the worship of an 'image'

Second group:

- Anger: violent reaction, a desire to punish someone
- Wrath: outbursts of anger or rage
- Malice: depravity, you desire or delight in trouble for someone else
- Blasphemy / slander: abusive language
- Filthy language: foul language
- Lies: deceive, speak falsely, utter an untruth

- Prejudice: (Jew vs non-Jew; Foreigner / uncivilized; Enslaved / delivered from slavery) Distinctions made based on race, culture, religion, privilege. All of us have a new identity. We are all recreated in His image. He is in all of us and He supersedes all other definitions and divisions.

D. Our response

So how do we respond if we recognize any of these things that are inappropriate for our new identity - and need to be put off?

Let's follow Paul's instruction – he just says get rid of it / it doesn't belong! No further steps in this part of the letter. See it for what it is – inappropriate behaviour for who I am now! This is huge! This is behaviour that is incompatible with my new nature. Walk away from it.

- We can **repent** – that is a good step; but not repent and return to it later. Repent for behaving that way in the past and walk free in the future.

- There may be a need to deal with some **roots** – as long as it is not the shifting of blame or the finding of an excuse for what I have been up to - it must be closing the door to who I was, as I embrace who I now am.
- There may be a need for some **practical cleaning out** too.
 What is helpful as I live out who I am in Christ?
 What is unhelpful – and feeds the old man?
 (Record collection – encouraged the behaviours listed above)
 For you? Playlists / subscriptions / follows / friends / places you visit / viewing habits / reading habits
 Change it all up in the light of your new identity! (Old believers / old habits)
- What we need most of all is an openness to the **ministry of the Holy Spirit!!**
 He shows / He convicts / He warns – don't ever stop listening / responding.
 (that would speak to a hardening of heart – which we never want)

Holy Spirit wants us looking like Jesus! Put off / Put on

You died – and your life is now hidden with Christ in God (3:3)

Let's pray!