



Focus on Forever (Colossians 3:1-17)

We all sense the need to take a break from the hustle and bustle of life and consider what matters most. God challenges us to view life through a different lens, and focus on forever.

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teachingnotes

* All Scripture is from CSB (Christian Standard Bible) unless otherwise noted.

Colossians 3:1-4 ¹ So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

Several key truths help us to **Focus on Forever**.

- 1) Jesus is **seated at the right hand of God**, the place of authority and honor.
- 2) To **set your mind on things above, not on earthly things**, one must focus beyond this temporary life, to please Jesus above all others.
- 3) **When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory**. Jesus will return and we should look forward to it!! Your future salvation is now **hidden with Christ**, but will soon be revealed. You will see Jesus 1) on the day of your death or 2) on the day of His return.

If we believe these claims to be true, we should **focus on forever**, with the ultimate desire to please our Savior.

Colossians 3:5 ⁵ Therefore, **put to death what belongs to your earthly nature**: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry.

Trusting Jesus does not destroy our sin nature (Gal 5:16-17). It is very rare that God simply removes your sin struggle. Instead, the believer is now empowered to overcome the sin by the power of the Spirit and is to **put to death** his sinful desires that are part of his **earthly nature**. Paul uses the imagery of crucifying sin nature to the cross of Jesus in Gal. 5:24.

These sins should have NO PLACE in the believer's life:

X sexual immorality - The Greek term is **porneia** can refer to all sorts of sexual misbehavior,¹ and is obviously the word from which we got "pornography". This ALWAYS heads the list when Paul mentions sins. Any sexual activity outside of the marriage relationship damages YOU, your relationship with others, AND your relationship with God.

🔁 **My sexual purity impacts my spiritual intimacy.**

X Greed comes from Greek term meaning "to have more" (*Pleonexia* from *pleon*, "more," and *exō*, "to have").²

X Greed = idolatry. When we live for stuff, want what is not ours (**lust**), and hoard what we have, we are bowing down to a false god of ME.

¹ Ben Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), 176.

² John F. MacArthur Jr., *Colossians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992), 139.

Jesus used graphic language to talk about removing whatever causes us to sin.

Matthew 5:29-30 ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

The apostle Peter later writes:

1 Peter 2:11 Dear friends, I urge you as strangers and exiles to **abstain from sinful desires that wage war against the soul.**

Our **sinful desires** DO WHAT? **Wage war against the soul!** *We can't grow spiritually if we are giving in to sin.*

You must...**CHOOSE: Live in Jesus OR Live in Sin.** You can't do both. You either **Live in Jesus and die to sin** OR you will.... **live in sin and die to Jesus.**

Focus on Forever: LIVE in Jesus & DIE to Sin.

God doesn't wink at sin

Colossians 3:6-10 ⁶ Because of these, **God's wrath is coming upon the disobedient,** ⁷ and you once walked in these things when you were living in them. ⁸ But now, **put away** all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have **put off the old self with its practices** ¹⁰ and have **put on the new self.** You are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your Creator.

Put away and **put on** - the terms Paul uses to describe taking off dirty clothes and putting on clean ones. The believer is to discard a life of disobedience and wear obedience instead. We are to **put away** or take off the old way of **anger, wrath** (NET = **rage**), **malice, slander, filthy language** and **lying** to one another.

In place of those old nasty 'clothes', we **put on a new self**, being renewed in the **knowledge** of WHO God is and what GOD says, following His example, and becoming light in a dark culture; beggars with a full belly, telling other beggars where to find the bread.

🌟 **Stephanie Wedel** "You've got to be tired of living like this...and there's a better way!" **Stephanie will here at Celebrate Recovery @ 6:30pm on Tuesday night. Join us!**

Paul had seen many different people turn from their sin and turn to Jesus - different ethnicities, different languages, different backgrounds, yet they had this one thing in common - they had been forgiven much and had chosen to **focus on forever, to live in Jesus and die to sin.**

Distinctions without Divisions

Colossians 3:11 ¹¹ **In Christ there is not** Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave and free; but **Christ is all and in all.**

Just like us, the Colossians had a tendency to distance themselves from different ethnicities.

- Many Jews didn't like **Greeks** and other Gentiles, considering them 'unclean' - refusing to visit their homes, nor eat their food (Acts 10:28). While Jews viewed Greeks as unclean, many Greeks viewed Jews as uncultured.
- Greeks called non-Greeks **Barbarians**, seeing them as uncivilized and intellectually inferior. **Barbarian** is a term used to mock the crude way these people spoke.
- The **Scythians** were considered the most savage barbarians of all,³ known for scalping fallen enemies⁴, drinking their blood, and much more (*Herodotus*, the Greek historian - 4.64, 65, 75). **Josephus**, the Jewish historian, says "*The Scythians delight in murdering people and are little better than wild beasts*" (Against Apion 2.269).
- The Colossian church had both **slave** (*Onesimus*) and **free** (*Philemon*) among its members.
- 🕒 The *cultural barrier between different races* kept many people at arms length. So too, the social differences between **slave & free** kept these people distanced from one another. Yet Paul declares that while the racial & social distinctions are still recognized, they are no longer to be barriers between those who claim the same King and kingdom. **Christ is all, and in all** and they are now all related through Christ!

³ Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon, The Pillar New Testament Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2008), 271.

⁴ Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 448.

Here's what God says HIS CHILDREN should live & look like.

Colossians 3:12-16 ¹² Therefore, as **God's chosen ones, holy and dearly loved**, put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a grievance against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you are also to forgive. ¹⁴ **Above all, put on love**, which is the perfect bond of unity. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ, to which you were also called in one body, rule your hearts. And be thankful. ¹⁶ **Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you**, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

Can you imagine seeing this strange mix of different people all unified around the teachings and commands of the SAME KING!!! These are characteristics of a Church that has a focus on forever!

Colossians 3:17 ¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or in deed, **do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

We are to **do everything** - words & actions - **in the name of the Lord Jesus** = by His authority and for His glory!

🕒 When's the last time you said or did something with this prayer on your lips or in your heart, "*Lord Jesus, help me to please You with my lips and my life.*"?

FEET2FAITH

1) **View your daily decisions as opportunities to honor Jesus.**

- YOUR NOTES:

2) **Put your sin habit to death.** Tell a brother/sister about your sin and have them pray for you daily.

- YOUR NOTES:

3) **Prioritize time with your Faith Family.** Join us tonight Covered Dish, Communion, & Conference. Join a Growth Group!

heretoseveyou

Have questions and need some help?...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- * Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Justin** (704-618-6144), **Christy** (673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- * Or call our **deacons & wives**: Steve & Debbie Bass (673-7952), Freddy & Joyce Howard (973-0047), Jere & Darlene Burnette (673-1888), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (464-6717), Jim & Derita Pinkard (229-834-4307), & Fain & Linda Poppell (464-1282).

discussionquestions

These open-ended questions are designed to help you LIVE what you LEARN with your Family, Friends, or Small Group.

1. Share what most challenged or surprised you from today's teaching.
2. **Read Col 3:1-4.** Based on this passage, why should followers of Jesus **seek the things above** rather than on **earthly things**? Does this mean we shouldn't make purchases and enjoy leisure activities (sports, shopping, fishing, hunting, etc.)? What is Paul's point and what are the promises in this passage?
3. Why does a **Focus on Forever** versus a focus on "earthly things" help us the Christian to live in purity & good relationships with other believers?
4. **Read Col 3:5 Matt 5:29-30, & 1 Pet 2:11.** Does God normally take away our sinful desires? If not, why not? What actions can the believer take to get these sins out of his/her life? Take some time to discuss each sin mentioned and the damage it can cause (or you have seen it cause).
5. **Read Col 3:6-10.** What would you say to the person who says either, "I'm not concerned about God's judgment, because He's forgiving, isn't He?" and "Jesus died to pay for sins so Christians don't need to be concerned about sin in their lives, because it's already paid for"?
6. **After reading Col 3:11,** what do must God think about Christians who are unwilling to spend time with Christians of other ethnicities, ages, & backgrounds? What can we do to help see our local church and the Body of Christ across our county act as if we are ONE?

7. **Read Col 3:12-16.** What characteristics in this passage impact you the deepest? Explain your answer. Which one of these can/should WE be more focused on this year?
8. **Read Col 3:17.** Share some moments from the past week (or foresee upcoming) where it is difficult to practice the command in this passage? Share about a time when God helped you or another honor Jesus with one's actions/words.
9. Share prayer needs & lift them up together!