

THE WILL

“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.” —COLOSSIANS 3:5

God has given us minds, the means by which He directs our will. This involves not only a discipline of the mind, but of the will, whereby our genuine desire is to put to death anything that is not of God, but of our earthly natures.

Paul says, “For you died, and your life is now hidden in Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3). Paul is not talking about attitudes and behaviors, but about our position before God. It is past tense. We have died. When? Over 2,000 years ago, outside the city walls of Jerusalem. “I have been crucified with Christ,” Paul says (Galatians 2:20). In Romans 6:3-4, he explains in more detail. “Don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life” (Romans 6:3-4).

To put it simply, what is true of Jesus, becomes true of us, because as Christians, we are united to Christ. There was also a day when what was true of us became true of Christ. He was made sin so that we may be resurrected to new life; one that displays the righteousness of Christ. Paul tells us, “But now you must also rid

yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips” (Colossians 3:8).

What we need to do, Paul is saying, is to knock these things on the head; get rid of them, because they are contrary to the nature of Jesus Christ who is seeking to express Himself in our lives. Our will has to be involved, because we cannot live the Christian life simply drifting and hoping it is going to work out well. The drift will always be away from Christ to where it is most pleasurable and convenient. We live in a strongly secular world, so discipline of the will is essential to put to death anything inconsistent with God.

The Christian life is lived in relationship with Jesus. In dependence on Him, our lives are intended to display the fruit of the Spirit - not the fruit of the Christian, but of the Spirit, which are only spiritually possible - love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control” (Galatians 5:22-23). In verse 25, Paul adds, “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit,” and that requires discipline of the will.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, I ask for your help in putting to death anything about me that displeases You. Help me day by day to live in the strength of your Spirit. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Do I have the desire to get rid of things in my life that are not of God?