
Book of Colossians

Lesson 7 - Right Ways to
Master the Flesh (1)

Colossians 3:1-10

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Why must believers deal with the fleshly nature?

- Believers have a new spiritual nature that's capable of pleasing God, but they do not yet have their glorified body.
- Christians have two capacities ~ the capacity for divine things through the new mind, and the capacity for carnal, fleshly, sinful things through the old mind.
- The fleshly nature exerts a powerful pull toward old habit patterns developed through years of living apart from God.
- Old habits and behaviors can only be overruled through the work of the new nature as it submits to the Holy Spirit and obeys the Word of God.



Therefore ...

- Paul used the pictures of ***circumcision*** and ***baptism*** (Col 2:11-13) then applied those pictures to how believers can master the flesh.
- “When you were ***dead*** in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you ***alive*** together with Him.”
- “You ***died*** with Christ to the elementary principles of the world” (Col 2:20-21) and must no longer give in to fleshly desires.
- Through the power of God which raised us to new life, we now have the ability to overrule fleshly desires.
- **Col 3:1** ~ “You have been ***raised up*** with Christ” and now have new capabilities to deal with the flesh.



Colossians 3:1-2

- **“Keep seeking”** (*zēteō*) ~ command to continually seek things above.
- As Christ now lives in heaven, believers should live for heaven. They must view life through the lens of heavenly values and priorities.
- **“Set your mind”** (*phroneō*) ~ command to continually master our thoughts.
- “You must not only *seek* heaven, you must *think* heaven.”
- Resist and replace fleshly thoughts by refocusing attention on things above. Believers now have the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit bringing the priorities of heaven to our earthly lives.
- Jesus is seated at the right hand of God after defeating the forces of evil that prompt us to indulge our fleshly desires (Col 2:15).



Colossians 3:3-4

- Believers are **dead** ... and yet **alive**.
- The reason for refusing to respond to fleshly desires is that we are *dead*, and a dead person is no longer able to give in to sin.
- Believers are no longer obligated to submit to worldly thoughts and passions, but their true life is **hidden** (*kruptō*) securely with Christ.
- **Christ is our life** and He provides the desire and power to master fleshly indulgence.
- Our life is now *hidden* but one day will be **revealed** when believers receive glorified bodies at the Rapture of the Church (John 14:3; 1 Cor 15:35-58; 1 Thess 4:13-18).
- This is “the hope laid up for you in heaven” (Col 1:5).



Colossians 3:5

- “**Kill** (*nekroō*) **therefore your earthly members**” ~ death means separation, never extinction, so putting to death the deeds of the body cannot mean eradicating them, but separating from them.
- In principle the sin nature has been crucified with Christ, but believers must act on that fact by refusing to give it mastery.
- Examples of Sensual Sins: ***immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.***
- Believers must “consider the members of the earthly body” to be *dead* to sensual sins and attitudes, and to fully separate from them through a radical shift in mental focus.



Colossians 3:6-7

The *reason* believers must “put to death” the sensual sins:

1. To participate in these sins invites the **wrath** (*orgē*) of God.
 - a. *Sin always has consequences*. God disciplines those He loves (Heb 12:5-11).
 - b. God may “give them over” to their self-destructive ways and allow them to destroy themselves (Rom 1:24-32).
 - c. God’s ultimate judgment will fall on all the sons of disobedience.
2. Believers were once enslaved to those sins before salvation, but God rescued them out of that pitiful condition. It makes no sense to return to that empty and destructive way of life.



Colossians 3:8-9

- **“But now”** ~ You once lived in those sins, **but now** you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God (Col 3:3), so you now have the ability to **put aside** (*apotithēmi*) all of those things.
- Examples of Relational Sins: **anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive speech from your mouth**, and **the habit of lying to one another**.
- **“You laid aside** (*apekduomai*) **the old self”** ~ emphasizes how completely believers should strip their old nature of its power.
- **“Old self”** (*palaios*) ~ ancient, worn by use and the worse for wear.
- This is only the first half of the process ...



Colossians 3:10

- **“Put on (*enduō*) the new self”** ~ “to go under, be plunged into, or to sink into” something. It was commonly used for the act of putting on clothing.
- **“New self” (*neos*)** ~ new in time, fresh, or recent. The new nature was *recently* received at the moment of salvation.
- The ***new self*** is in the process of being **continually renewed** (*anakainoō*) ~ new in quality or character.
- Continuous renewal and spiritual growth involves increasing in **true knowledge** (*epignosis*) through the ministry of the Word of God. This results in gradually being conformed to the **image of the One who created him** (Christ-likeness and holiness).



Summary

- Believers must deal with the sin nature by setting our minds on things above, so believers are responsible before God for managing their thought life as well as their outward behavior.
- We must separate from fleshly passions, since we are *dead* and no longer obligated to give in to them. Sensual sins invite God's wrath.
- Believers now have the power through the indwelling Holy Spirit to separate from sins which are deeply ingrained in our fleshly nature.
- Continuous renewal and spiritual growth involves increasing our knowledge of who God is and how we can be conformed to His image by putting off old ways and putting on new ways which please God.

