

VILLAGE

CHURCH

Bible Study Notes

Intro Question: What habit or practice has transformed you the most?

Pray: That we would increasingly put off the old self and put on the new.

Read: Colossians 3:1-11

Questions about the passage:

- What's Paul's basis for Christians living rightly?
- How does Paul contrast the old humanity with new humanity?
- Paul gives a second vice list in v.8. What are these sins, and what does he say about how we deal with them?
- What does Paul mean by 'taking off', 'putting on' and 'renewed' v.9-10?
- What does the new humanity in v.11 reveal about Christian identity?

Questions for us:

- Paul says the new self is 'being renewed in knowledge.' Is your knowledge of God growing at the moment? What's feeding it, or what's getting in the way?
- How does knowing you are already raised with Christ change the way you approach the parts of your life you're least proud of?
- The new life is worked out in community. Who is currently shaping you toward the new self, and are you doing the same for anyone else?
- Paul mentions a bunch of sins of the earthly nature. Is there one that you know is an issue for you? How could you put it to death?

Pray: that Village would continue to grow into full Christian maturity

Homework: Read v.1-11 daily this week. Meditate on something you want to put down (old self) and something you want to pick up (new self)

Remind: MTS Celebration dinner this Sunday

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Overview:

Paul's letter to the Christians of Colosse in Asia Minor is one of his shortest letters. Paul is writing to a young church that's just starting to figure out what it means to believe in Jesus and follow him. He urges them to dig into the riches of the gospel and let it shape the way they live.

This week, Paul turns from theology to practicality. Believers have died and risen with Christ, they are to live accordingly by putting to death the old self and putting on the new self being renewed in God's image.

Paul's aim:

Paul writes to a church he's never visited to establish his apostolic authority and relationship with them. His core aim is to ground them deeply in the gospel so they grow to maturity in Christ. Urgently underlying everything is a warning - don't drift toward the alternative teachings circulating in Colosse.

Asia Minor Map:



Asia Minor in the time of Paul

Source: N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 12, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986), 18.

Praying to see 10% of the northern suburbs in gospel-centred churches & 250 by 2030 at Village Church who grow, gather, give & go, in love & joy to the glory of God

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Questions about the passage:

What's Paul's basis for Christian's living rightly?

Paul's foundation is that believers have already died and risen with Jesus. V.1-4 establish this reality before any practical command is given. The word 'therefore' in v.5 is crucial, the commands flow from the identity, not the other way around. Genuine holiness isn't the path to becoming someone new, it's what it looks like to live as who you already are in Christ.

How does Paul contrast the old humanity with new humanity?

The old humanity (v.5-7) is marked by disordered desire and insecurity, with people attempting to overcome anxiety by dominating others, only deepening a cycle of fear and pride. The new humanity belongs to God as chosen, holy, and dearly loved, an identity grounded entirely in his grace and love, not their own goodness or lovableness. Where the old life fragments and destroys, the new life is worked out in community, as believers uphold one another toward genuine human flourishing.

Paul gives a second vice list in v.8. What are these sins, and what does he say about how we deal with them?

Anger (a smouldering, seething hatred), wrath (when that state breaks out in words and deeds), malice (evil intended to cause hurt), slander (speech that dishonours God by reviling someone made in his image), and obscene talk. You cannot always stop angry thoughts from arising, but they are to be dealt with before they find expression. Words are powerful, they change situations and relationships, often permanently, and plant seeds of further anger wherever they land.

What does Paul mean by 'taking off', 'putting on' and 'renewed' v.9-10?

The image likely alludes to baptism, where old clothes are swapped for new, a visible sign of moving from one humanity to another. The 'taking off' and 'putting on' in Greek indicate decisive, completed actions rather than ongoing resolutions. The renewal is present tense, the new self 'is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator,' echoing Genesis 1:26 and signalling that what God intended at creation is now being restored in Christ.

What does the new humanity in v.11 reveal about Christian identity?

The church is the new humanity, representing a redemption as significant as a new creation. Race, religion, culture, social standing, are no longer categories because they were the breeding ground for the anger of v.8. The foundation for all of it is the closing phrase: 'Christ is all, and in all.' He underlies all human nature regardless of category and is personally present in every member, which means contempt shown to any person is contempt shown to him.

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Questions for us:

Paul says the new self is 'being renewed in knowledge.' Is your knowledge of God growing at the moment? What's feeding it, or what's getting in the way?

Take an honest assessment. If you're feeling good about where you are. Well done, praise God. If you're not, don't fall into shame. Notice the rhythms that do encourage you to be drawn towards reading the bible and notice what else fills that space. Remember, the point of your bible is not to read the bible, it is a means to hear God speaking to us and to be shaped by his voice.

Paul grounds how we are to live in resurrection truths. How does knowing you are already raised with Christ change the way you approach the parts of your life you're least proud of?

We are already free. From this freedom we have been gifted, we can operate from different motives in dealing with sin in our lives. We don't have to clean ourselves up to be accepted, we first are accepted and then our lives can be transformed from that place. The parts of life we're least proud of look different when we're working from security rather than shame.

The new life is worked out in community. Who is currently shaping you toward the new self, and are you doing the same for anyone else?

Easy to drift into a Christianity that feels private. Paul assumes believers are being formed by and for each other, through friendship, honesty, and the ordinary friction of shared life. How do you feel you're shaping others around you?

Paul mentions a bunch of sins of the earthly nature. Is there one that you know is an issue for you? How could you put it to death?

Encourage the group to reflect and search their hearts. Let's vulnerably confess our sins and consider what repentance looks like.