Colossians 3

3:1 **<u>Since you professed a resurrected life in Jesus Christ, you should seek the things of heaven</u>**.

1. Here is another appeal to the baptism argument of 2:12, which he also appealed to well in 2:20.
2. If by baptism we died to the world with Christ, we should reject the world's errors (2:20-22).
3. True disciples are buried and resurrected in baptism, or immersion (I Cor 15:29; I Peter 3:21).
4. All these arguments lose their plain force and meaning, if a person thinks sprinkling is baptism.
5. Baptism is active identification with Jesus Christ, where we put Him on by faith (Gal 3:26-27).
6. Our burial and resurrection in water show our identification with His burial and resurrection.
7. How are we risen with Christ? We must understand this perfectly to fully grasp the argument.
8. The perfect tense indicates an action completed in the past and continuing into the present.
9. We are dead to this world and risen to eternal life by faith in Jesus, Who died and rose for us.
10. This is our practical resurrection by our faith, not our eternal, legal, vital, or final resurrection.
11. There is no doubt we are connected eternally, legally, vitally, and finally to His resurrection (Eph 2:6); but we take the practical application here by virtue of the context (2:12,20; 3:3-7).
12. Our answer of a good conscience in baptism is to live a resurrected life (I Pet 3:21; Rom 6:4).
13. When we commit ourselves to Christ, we profess to be a new creature in Him (II Cor 5:17).
14. If this resurrected life in Christ by faith is the case, then we should seek the things where He is.
15. And He is sitting at the right hand of God, so we should be seeking the things of heaven itself.
16. The next verse, our immediate context, indicates this is precisely what the apostle intends (3:2).
17. What things are above? The Lamb, praise, holiness, love, worship, righteousness, peace, unity, truth, glory, spiritual mindedness, joy, Christ, God, the general assembly, Christ's blood, etc.
18. Jesus is at God's right hand, as King-Priest, forever, for us (Mark 16:19; Luke 22:69; Acts 2:33-34; 7:55-56; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20; Heb 1:3,13; 8:1; 10:12; 12:2; I Pet 3:22).
19. We must seek His kingdom and righteousness more than anything else (Mat 6:33; Rom 14:17).
20. We must reject the belly-worshipping addiction to earthly things (Phil 3:18-19; II Tim 3:1-5).
21. The story of the unjust steward is to press us to prepare for a future in heaven (Luke 16:1-16).

3:2 **<u>Seeking heavenly things well depends on affection for them, which is your choice and duty</u>**.

1. The first command is to love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength (Mark 12:30).
2. Paul does not suggest "falling in love" with things above, but rather setting your love there.
3. True love is a choice. It is not a function of fate, chemistry, or circumstances. It is a choice!
4. What things do you value? Where are your treasures? Your heart will follow (Matt 6:19-21).
5. What do you feed? Where do you invest? Your heart will follow (Ps 27:14; Pr 4:18; 5:19).
6. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways (James 1:8). So get single minded (Jas 4:8)!

3:3 **<u>Heavenly ambitions are based on death to self and this world and our hidden life in Christ</u>**.

1. How are we dead? We are dead to self and this world by faith and baptism (Gal 2:20; 6:14).
2. Paul is still appealing to the argument, a basic argument of his, that we have died with Christ.
3. Belly worshippers, pagans, or whatever you call them, have their lives consumed by this world.
4. We have our lives wrapped up in Jesus Christ and the unseen things of heaven yet to come.
5. How is our life in Christ hidden? Eternity is invisible and missed by the world (Luke 17:21).
6. How is our life in Christ hidden? It is an invisible spiritual union with Christ and God (Ep 2:6).

3:4 **<u>There is a substantial reward for neglecting this life for the pursuit of Christ and heaven</u>**.

1. The great day of His appearing will bring with it the wonderful reward for dying to this world.
2. Our "hidden life" is all wrapped up in Jesus Christ, and He will bring eternal life with Him.
3. The world can neither see it nor understand it; and we perceive and live it by faith alone.

4. We will visibly see the Lord Jesus Christ at His appearing, and we will be visible in heaven.
5. When … we see Jesus … it will be worth it all! Asaph figured this out eventually in Psalm 73.
6. And if we do not figure it out or remember it, we are of all men most miserable (I Cor 15:19).
7. How is Jesus our life? He bought our life, gave us life, keeps our life, strengthens our life, guarantees our life, is the object of our life, and will be the object of our life.

3:5 **<u>Since we are dead with Christ, we ought to put to death all the earthly members of our lives</u>**.

1. What does mortify mean? It means to put something to death, or to kill it. It means to so rule and deny yourself that the desires thereof – of lust and sin – are rendered weak and helpless.
2. The word mortify comes from mortal (subject to death), mortality (dying), mortician (one who works with dead bodies), and mortuary (a place where dead bodies are displayed).
3. We mortify lusts and sins by bringing our bodies into subjection by self-denial and temperance.
4. Called "members" here, they are called "things" (3:2,6) and "deeds" (3:9) in the context.
5. They are members, or parts of our natural body here on earth, for sinful lusts still reside in us.
6. Paul knew there was a difference between his renewed mind and sinful body (Rom 7:22-25).
7. Your body is not fit for heaven; it lives on earth; and it will be greatly changed before heaven.
8. Members are your heart, mouth, hands, feet, genitals, and any part of your body capable of sin.
9. We take our bodily parts, appetites, and abilities and change their use (Rom 6:13; 7:5; Jas 4:1).
10. Covetousness is idolatry by virtue of making you discontent with God Himself (Heb 13:5-6).
11. Of course, covetousness is hardly discussed anymore, but it is idolatry to God (Ephesians 5:5).
12. See the sermon outline "Forgotten Sins" for further details of these and other neglected sins.
13. Fornication is sexual intimacy between unmarried parties, very popular and promoted today.
14. Uncleanness is a broad class of sexual sins not necessarily involving fornication or adultery i.e. pornography, transvestism, sinful masturbation, dishonorable acts in marriage, etc., etc.
15. Inordinate affection is sodomy, bestiality, necromania, pedophilia, and other unnatural sexual excesses or extremes (Rom 1:26). It may also include sexual addiction within marriage or relational dependence outside that ordained and approved by God.
16. Evil concupiscence is unrestrained sexual passion and desire not limited to honorable marriage.
17. This word is related to Cupid, the personification of sexual desire and love. See I Thess 4:3-7.
18. The Holy Spirit and apostle Paul know exactly what area of our lives to attack with repetition.
19. This verse and the next two are opened more fully in the epistle to the Ephesians (Eph 5:3-12).

3:6 **<u>Sexual sins and covetousness are reasons God will judge the disobedient men of this world</u>**.

1. These things might not seem so bad to our perverse society, but judgment is coming anyway!
2. God is holy. God has given His law. The souls that sin against His law will be judged severely.
3. He drowned the earth with the Flood for disobedience that could not have exceeded America's.
4. God is angry. No one wants to talk about the wrath of God, but it is fundamental to His nature.
5. When Jesus comes, He will come with the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God (Rev 19:15).
6. Sexual sinners shall not enter into heaven by any means, unless Jesus died for them (Rev 21:8).

3:7 **<u>Such sins may once have been part of our lives, but we are now dead to the former lifestyle</u>**.

1. By nature, we were children of wrath walking according to the course of this world (Ep 2:1-3).
2. Truth teaches that sin in the past should suffice us, by excellent cross-reference (I Pet 4:1-5).
3. We were alive to sins and walked in them; we are dead to sins and should not walk in them.

3:8 **<u>True holiness moves even further into our bodily members to find those less offensive to men</u>**.

1. Our new resurrected life in Christ Jesus also involves the putting off of these additional sins.
2. If the self-righteous gloat that they are innocent of 3:5, then surely they can find guilt here!
3. Anger is the active feeling provoked against a person; passion, rage; wrath, ire, hot displeasure.

4. Wrath is vehement or violent anger; intense exasperation or resentment; deep indignation.
5. Malice is desire to injure another person; active ill-will or hatred; evil intent aggravating sins.
6. Blasphemy is profane speaking of God or sacred things; impious irreverence. Casual religion?
7. Filthy communication is morally corrupt, obscene, lewd, base, disgusting, immodest talking.
8. For filthy communication, see Eph 4:29; 5:3-5; Ezek 24:13; James 1:21; II Peter 2:7; Rev 17:4.

3:9 **Lying is a sinful act of our little member, which is not part of the resurrected life in Christ**.

1. We should particularly avoid any lying one to another, as members of the same body in Christ.
2. The old man is the old way we lived, when we obeyed the lusts of our sinful bodies and minds.
3. The old man is a liar, just like his father (John 8:44). With God as our Father, we love truth!
4. Lying includes all forms of exaggeration, embellishment, misrepresentation, and implication.
5. Our Father is a God of truth; and our Saviour is Truth, and the True and Faithful Witness!

3:10 **We are to put on our new man, which knows the perfect will of God as it is in Jesus Christ**.

1. We put on the new man, when we profess in our baptism to walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4).
2. We have a whole new way of thinking after regeneration, when a new nature is created within.
3. Paul describes this new man as being created in righteousness and true holiness (Eph 4:24).
4. The new birth is more than just a dry theological detail: it gave us a new nature for holiness.
5. Here is the life of the believer – the true disciple of Christ. He is a new creature (II Cor 5:17)!
6. We put on the new man each day, which knows God and holiness we did not know before.
7. Jesus Christ created our new man in regeneration, and our new man is the image of Him.
8. We have the mind of Christ (I Cor 2:16), and we partake of His divine nature (II Pet 1:1-4).

3:11 **Our new creation eliminates all the distinctions made by men in the flesh to promote Christ**.

1. The family difference made by God in the Old Testament is gone in Christ (Eph 4:10-22).
2. The religious difference made by God in the Old Testament is gone in Christ (Galatians 6:15).
3. The national and cultural differences made by God in providence are gone in Christ (Gal 3:8).
4. The class differences made by God in economic Providence are gone in Christ (I Cor 7:20-24).
5. The sexual difference made by God in his providence of roles is gone in Christ (Gal 3:28).
6. Our entire lives are wrapped up in Jesus Christ, with no differences to hinder or distract at all.
7. All spiritual blessings are found in the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph 1:3; I Cor 1:30), who is in us.
8. We have no excuses to justify any sin in our lives. We have professed Christ, and He is all!
9. Ye are complete in Him (2:10)! Know and adore His Person! Know and value His salvation!
10. Your position in Christ is so glorious, that living and walking in Him should be an easy choice!
11. This fact is the mystery Paul taught by dispensation (1:25-27): Christ in you, the hope of glory!

3:12 **<u>There are godly virtues we are to put on as much as there are sinful deeds we are to put off</u>**.

1. "Therefore" connects this verse to those going before – our relationships with other church members are based on our mutual regeneration and unity without distinction in Christ Jesus.
2. If Christ is in us, and we in Him, then we are new creatures, with a whole set of new things.
3. This very different conduct is contrasted with the anger, wrath, malice, and lying of 3:8-9.
4. Relationships indicate far more about a person's character than any other measure (Tit 3:2-3).
5. We have two men – a sinful nature and a holy nature – which we put off and on, respectively.
6. Paul has identified some of the deeds of the old man: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication, and lying (3:8-9), which we are to stop doing by treating him as dead.
7. Now he lists the deeds of the new man that we should put on, which is to exercise those graces we have and know to be pleasing to God. We work out what He worked in (Phil 2:12-13).
8. We have the knowledge and ability for these deeds by the image of Christ in our new man.
9. We are the elect of God, in that only the elect are chosen for creation of the new man in them.
10. We are holy and beloved in five senses – eternal, legal, vital, practical, and final. See them all.
11. Our relationships should reflect our election, and they should confirm election (II Pet 1:5-11)!
12. Bowels of mercies are more than mere mercy: they are compassionate feelings of sympathy and wanting to show mercy to others (I Kgs 3:26; Rom 12:15; I Cor 12:26; Gal 6:2; Eph 4:32).
13. It is opposite of selfishness, stinginess, coolness, aloofness, and reluctance (I John 3:16-19).
14. Kindness is that benevolent, gentle treatment of others by which we extend goodwill and favor, which we see in the fruit of the Spirit under the terms "gentleness, goodness" (Gal 5:22).
15. It is opposite of harshness and hardness, which are marks of wicked men; and it is defined further in Scripture as brotherly kindness (II Pet 1:7; Rom 12:10; I Pet 3:8-9).
16. Humbleness of mind is an attitude coming from within of modesty and service that affects our total lives, not merely the outward show of humility for the observation of others.
17. It is the opposite of pride and vainglory, for we are to esteem others and their things more important than ourselves and our things (Phil 2:3-4; Rom 12:10).
18. Meekness is "Gentle, courteous, kind. Of a superior: Merciful, compassionate, indulgent. Freedom from haughtiness and self-will; piously humble and submissive; patient and unresentful under injury and reproach" (OED).
19. It is the opposite of arrogance, defensiveness, revenge, self-promotion, or self-protection (Gal 6:1; I Cor 4:21; II Tim 2:25; Titus 3:2; I Pet 3:15).
20. It is not weakness, for our great Prince has it perfectly with other virtues (Ps 45:4; II Cor 10:1).
21. Longsuffering is putting up with differences, irritations, and offences of others without resentment or revenge. Consider its component words – suffering and long. There are the keys!
22. Rather than precisely define each of these terms to create unique definitions and meanings, let us see the overlap and thereby the emphasis Paul places on our interpersonal relationships.
23. By far the most difficult part of personal relationships is overlooking the irritations of others.
24. How much does the Lord put up with from us? He is our standard, and anything less fails!
25. The fear of division and need for effort to maintain unity were constant messages from Paul.

3:13 **<u>The standard for forgiveness and mercy toward others is that which Christ had toward us</u>**.

1. Continuing to list relational virtues from the previous verse, Paul lists forbearing and forgiving.
2. Forbearing in this context is to bear, endure, submit to, have patience with, put up with, tolerate. To abstain from injuring, punishing, or giving way to resentment against (a person or thing); to spare, show mercy or indulgence to.
3. Notice the very repetitive emphasis on our personal and individual relations by the references to "one another," "any man," and "against any." These focus our attention on each relationship.
4. Forgiving in this context is to overlook, pass over, and ignore personal offences (Pr 19:11) and quickly grant forgiveness when any other seeks it from us (Matt 18:21-22).

5. Jesus taught the standard of His forgiveness to Peter, which crushed his idea (Matt 18:23-35).
6. The Lord forgave us 10,000 talents; the worst our brother can owe us is one hundred pence! Here is a factor of millions to one! The perversely malicious spirit of this parable is our own!
7. This is the religion of the kingdom of heaven – here are the marks and identity of Christians.
8. If we do not forgive mercifully, our heavenly Father will not forgive us (Matt 7:1-2; Jas 2:13).
9. You, "any man," must look through the whole church in case you have a quarrel "against any."
10. Here is the key to being the greatest church possible – absolutely no relational problems at all.
11. How did Christ forgive you? He forgave you an infinite debt, fully and freely, deserving eternal punishment, contrary to His perfectly holy nature, that you did not deserve at all, while you were still spitefully hating him as your enemy, without conditions of future performance, with nothing desirable in you at all, and the only benefit He would receive was His own glory!
12. The Holy Spirit, Who lists love first and bears it in our lives, must be unquenched in this grace!

3:14 **<u>The crowning and defining grace of our relationships is charity – the bond of perfectness</u>**.

1. Above all these things is charity – the most important grace of all in a Christian's life.
2. How is it above all these things? It is the most comprehensive, including all other relational graces; and it is the positive force of the character of Christ we are all to have (John 13:35).
3. And it must be the heart-based motive and influence behind these other graces (I Cor 13:1-3).
4. All the commandments are properly fulfilled by Christian love (Rom 13:8-9; Galatians 5:14).
5. Paul's point is one of emphasis, just as we might add a strong postscript to a letter of details.
6. Charity is the comprehensive grace defined in I Corinthians 13:4-7, which all should know.
7. There is a more excellent way of serving Christ than any ministerial gift (I Corinthians 12:31).
8. Faith and hope are great graces of a Christian life, but charity excels them both (I Cor 13:13).
9. It would be better to be ignorant of some Bible doctrine than be deficient in Christian charity.
10. But Christian charity is not merely the sentimental sap of emotionally weak people who can cry and hug, for the kisses of an enemy and his fair words are merely hiding hatred in the heart.
11. The New Testament descriptions of charity do not emphasize tears, hugs, or sappy words at all.
12. It is the bond of perfectness: when men are bound together by charity, they are bound perfect.
13. Our Lord called us to believe on Him and love one another (John 15:12; I John 3:23; 4:21).
14. After believing on the Lord Jesus, closely connected is our love of the brethren (I John 5:1).
15. The body of Christ is to be knit together – bound – for the increase of God (Col 1:4; 2:2,19).

3:15 **<u>Godly peace is the Christian goal for every heart, for every church body, with thanksgiving</u>**.

1. Godly peace means purity must come first (James 3:17-18). This is not the peace of the world.
2. This is not the sentimental idea of most, who value peace above doctrinal integrity and truth.
3. God brought peace to wicked sinners, and He has given peace in our souls, which we should allow to guide all our passions, decision, and conduct toward others, to which we are called.
4. We have been placed in body by the will of God and power of the Holy Spirit. Be at peace!
5. There should be no schism in the church of God at all, but mutual care (I Cor 12:12-26).
6. Squabbles in the church of God are of the devil (James 3:14-16; 4:1,5-6; I John 3:10).
7. Squabbles in the church of God are marks of carnality and immaturity (I Cor 1:10-11; 3:1-4).
8. Lack of peace is one of the most debilitating evils for a church and pastor (I Thess 5:11-15).
9. Our dear Lord called us to be peacemakers and to endeavor at the project (Mat 5:9; Eph 4:2-3).
10. Is thankfulness tacked on here as a disconnected afterthought? Or is it profoundly related?
11. Thankfulness is contagiously conducive to peace and harmony; griping and whining is not!

3:16 **<u>The gospel of grace in Christ Jesus and the grace of that gospel should fuel church singing</u>**.

1. In Ephesians 5:19, the twin to this text, we are to be filled with the Spirit, rather than wine.
2. What is the word of Christ? It is the gospel, from the Bible, about Christ and His salvation.
3. We are to let this word of Christ dwell in us richly, which means not to hinder or restrict it.
4. Paul already taught the importance of the riches of the full assurance of understanding (2:2).
5. We do not want to merely know it or memorize it; we want it to be in us with practical riches.
6. Our rich possession of Christ's gospel must be with wisdom, as opposed to form or ignorance.
7. Timothy could sing in a way that was pleasing to God and men more than many (II Tim 3:15).
8. Parts, vibrato, and other noise parts of singing are very unimportant compared to heart melody.
9. What a diaphragm, throat, and lips do is far inferior to what the heart feels and mind believes!
10. Singing together is a very unique thing, if you stop and consider it. Forget any religious habit.
11. See the outline on Musical Instruments, condemning instrumental music in N.T. assemblies.
12. <u>Psalms</u> are those short pieces of Hebrew poetry in the book of Psalms (Acts 1:20; James 5:13).
13. <u>Hymns</u> are songs of praise to God adapted to be sung in religious services, directed to the Lord.
14. <u>Spiritual songs</u> are any other spiritual song about our religion not fitting the above definitions.
15. Our hearts should be full of grace when we assemble with one another as the basis for singing.
16. All singing is to be done to the Lord. We don't sing "Happy Birthday" or other profane songs.
17. And we don't sing rounds, ditties, and other convoluted arrangements that appeal to the flesh.
18. Singing is an intellectual exercise of mutual instruction flowing from a heart filled with grace.
19. We ought not to enjoy singing for the sake of singing or music, but for the riches of Christ!

3:17 **<u>All aspects of our life should be governed by the Lordship of Jesus Christ with thanksgiving</u>**.

1. "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed" includes all activities of speech and conduct as saints.
2. Thoughts are not mentioned here, though they are included by the source of words and deeds.
3. Every activity is to be done in the name, by the authority of and to the glory of, Jesus our Lord.
4. In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord we are to give thanks to God and the Father for all things.
5. Holy brethren, this ought to be the governing principle we use to rule all our activities always!