

Colossians 3 starts with a proposition based on everything Paul has said so far. The first two chapters of Colossians are essentially: “This is who Jesus is and this is what He has done. Your only hope at being made right before the God of the universe is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.” In chapter 3, he narrows the scope by saying, “For those of you who have been raised with Christ ...” literally means, “for those of you who believe that to be true.” He then gets into the moral/behavioral transformation of the believer.

In your life, what typically motivates you to change your behavior(s)?

Paul reminds us that it is the NEW HEART that creates change, and the new heart comes as a result of the Spirit’s work in us through the Gospel. Paul will use some strong words to say “put to death” the parts of us that lead, draw, and pull us away from Jesus. *Col 3:5-11 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you...* N.T. Wright translates this: “So, then, you must kill off the parts of you that belong on the earth.”

What parts of yourself do you need to kill off?

1. *Col 3:5-11 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality...* Paul lists sexual immortality and then what comes out of it; he will include both actions and thoughts. Sexual immorality is not a prudish term; it means “Illicit sexual behavior” and includes everything we could possibly imagine.

- *impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry*

These are not intended to denote things that are completely different from each other; they are overlapping ways of referring to sexual lust and its gratification outside the God-given context of marriage.

How have you seen sexual immorality works its way into our lives?

2. *Col 3:8-9 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices.*

Paul is just as concerned with our speech as he is with sexual sin. Words inflict serious damage on the one who says them, those who are immediately affected by them, and the wider community. The list in verse 8 consists of overlapping words for angry and hurtful speech, and in verse 9, he highlights one danger in particular—the telling of lies.

- ♦ **The passive wrath of God** – God allows us to do what we want.
- ♦ **The active wrath of God** – This grabs our attention and is actually greater grace.

How angry is your speech? (Think about how you talk about politics, people, places, etc.) What does your speech reveal about your heart?

3. Be one in Christ! *Col 3:11... but Christ is all, and in all.* It is the blood of Christ alone—His grace alone through faith alone—that sets us free and restores us. If we take off the things that Paul mentions, what do we then put on in its place? Jesus’ righteousness GIVEN to us.

How do we put on Christ’s righteousness?

We do not fight with our own effort; we fight with the weapons given to us by God to combat these things. Our ongoing battle begins with a new heart when we surrender to, and trust in, Jesus.