



The last couple of weeks in Colossians, Paul has been telling us about the gifts God has given us and our potential for hurting ourselves with those good gifts. He will specifically talk about gifts dealing with our flesh (impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness) and gifts dealing with our speech (anger, wrath, malice, slander). Paul now says, *Col 3:14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.* N.T. Wright uses the metaphor of two towns to compare Col 3:5-9 and Col 3:12-17. If everyone behaved according to what's described in each of those passages, which town would we rather live in? It's a good question to reveal where our desires land.

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**What would a world centered in Jesus actually look like if we reflected the Scriptures—not someone's unbalanced view of the Bible?**

Our culture thinks a more free society is one where everyone does their own thing. Our entertainment industry often tells us that societies where people are "religious" are either boring or stifling. When we see those views, we need to understand that is a misunderstanding of what a society founded on Christianity would look like.

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**Why is it important to focus on what Jesus calls us to—not just what He calls us to resist?**

**The Balance** – When we look at Colossians, there is a different type of balance Paul is pushing us toward. We should be concerned about "sin," while also putting kindness, humility, and love in its place. Just as important as what we abstain from is what we cultivate. A church where everyone is very caring and supportive but immorality flourishes is unbalanced. A church where there is neither immorality nor love is also unbalanced.

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**How should we talk about righteousness and sin without condoning or condemning?**

**Our Righteousness**—Paul says if we ever want to get rid of our own SELF-righteousness, we have to recognize God has provided a righteousness for us in Jesus. A healthy balance takes our sin and His righteousness into account. Righteousness does not come when we acquire enough; it is a product of God working in us.

**Our Surrender**—Surrendering ourselves to Jesus leads to a contentment that will allow us to do all we do in His name and not ours. Paul has previously spoken about how being content is an acquired skill; it is a practice because we continually struggle to trust all God has promised. It's easy to revert to focusing on our "good works," but that always falls apart.

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**What about God's character allows us to be content in who He is?**

One of the things that is important to understand around the Gospel message is Christ's *active* obedience and His *passive* obedience.

1. **Passive obedience** – means that Jesus took our sin on Himself.
2. **Active obedience** – means that Jesus also earned our reward for us.

It is not just that He took our penalty, but He also earned our blessing; that's the ACTIVE obedience of Jesus. He took our curse and earned our blessing; He took our punishment and earned our reward. That's the true balance we can never earn; it is received.

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