

COLOSSIANS

Lesson 6

“ROOTED IN THE NEW MAN”

Ice Breaker: What is wrong with acting like your single when you are married?

INTRO: Married people that don't act married probably won't be married for long. Why? Being married requires you to take on a new identity. The bible says the two “become one.” That means married people can't see themselves as independent individuals anymore; they have to consider their spouse as part of their new identity. Their attitudes, actions and ambitions have to change. Acting single when your married damages the oneness relationship of marriage.

In this passage, Paul makes the same argument about being in Christ. Because we are in Christ we need to act like it. His point is not that you need to act like Christ **SO** you can be in Him, but rather you need to act like Christ **BECAUSE** you're in Him. In Jesus, you have to lose your individual identity and become part of Him, taking on His attitudes, actions and ambitions.

Col. 3:1-11

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

Q: In verse 1 Paul says we should set our hearts on things above. In verse 2 he says we should set our minds on things above. Why should we set our hearts and minds on things above and what does that mean?

- Paul says we should act different ***because we have been raised with Christ.***
 - Whatever we were when we were dead is a thing of the past.
 - Paul appeals to what are hearts are set on to tell us we should desire things above.
 - He appeals to what are minds are set on to tell us what we should be devoting our mental energies toward pursuing.
- While we are here on earth, we are to value and pursue the things that are valued in heaven.
 - Jesus said in Luke 16:15, “*What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight.*”

- God's values are flip-flopped from man's values.
 - In Matt. 16:23 Jesus said to Peter, "*Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.*" (NKJV)
 - Peter was an **offense** to Jesus because Peter valued the things men value rather than what God values.
 - How many Christians today are offenses to God for the same reason?
- A Christian is called to sacrifice those things we value on earth, if need be, to pursue those things which are valued in heaven.

Q: In verse 5, Paul says we are to put to death, "***whatever belongs to your earthly nature.***" More literal translations render this as, "*your members which are on the earth.*" What is the significance of identifying the sins he lists as "*members which are on earth?*"

- Sin, as a way of life, is pictured here as a body... and the members of that body sometimes are still hanging on.
 - Holding on to these behaviors is like packing around the dead limbs of a dead body!

Q: In verses 9-10 Paul says the reason for putting to death the things he lists in verses 5-8 is because we have put off the "old self" and put on the "new self." What does this mean?

- The Greek word translated "self" by the NIV is ***anthropos*** and means *a human being* or *an individual*. More literal translations use the word "man" instead of "self." This is an important difference.
 - Using the word "self" sounds like an old nature and a new nature inside the same person.
 - Paul never says the "old man" or the "new man" is something inside of you. It is always the case that you are inside of it.
- Only Paul uses the metaphor of the "old man" and the "new man", and only 4 times in scripture: Ro. 6:6; Eph. 2:15; Eph. 4:22-24, and here in Col. 3:9-10.
- Paul says we are to "put on" the new man and "take off" the old man.
 - The imagery is that of putting on or taking off clothing.
- The "old man" and the "new man" **are not synonymous** with the sinful nature and the divine nature.
 - It seems likely that there is one nature in every human that has two sides that pull us in opposite directions.
 - Unsaved people still do righteous things and saved people still sin.
 - The difference between the two is the more natural direction or "nature" that normally wins... how you think, feel and act.
 - Before we became Christians our nature tended toward self-serving, sinful behavior. When we were born again, we received a new nature that tends toward righteousness.
 - Although we have a new nature, there remain the habits and drives of the old one.
 - We still have urges toward selfishness and sin that come from hormones and habit.

- Our bodies have “built in, factory installed” lusts, but now we have a “divine nature” by which we can escape that corruption.
 - **2Pet. 1:4** *“Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them **you may participate in the divine nature** and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”*
 - Probably, that divine nature is the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which is God.
 - By receiving Him and His influence on our spirit and our nature... His working in our hearts... we have another force at work within us besides the force of our glands and habits.
 - And this force is more than enough to over come the pull towards lust, sin and selfishness.

Q: Who are the “old man” and the “new man” Paul is talking about?

- The old man is Adam.
 - In Ro. 6:6 Paul says the “old man” was crucified with Christ.
 - Paul is referring to something he established in Ro. 5:15-19 where he repeatedly talks about “the one man”.
 - The one who appeared first was Adam, which makes him the old man.
 - Adam was the head of the human family... we all came physically from his body and claimed him as our representative when we chose to sin... that is how we were in a body of death.
- The new man is the corporate entity of Jesus. He is the head and the church is the body... one new man.
 - In Eph. 2:14-15 Paul says Jewish believers and Gentile believers are one new man... the body of Christ.
 - In Eph. 4:11-13 Paul says “we all” become a (singular) “perfect man”.
 - We are already of part of that new man, the body of Christ, but that man must become a mature man.
- In all these verses where the old and new man are mentioned, the Greek word for man is “anthropos” which is also the generic name for the human race.
 - In Adam there was an old humanity, an old “anthropos”.
 - In Christ, God has created a new humanity, a new “anthropos”.
 - The nature of one is different than the nature of the other.
 - A new species of life was created by the resurrection of Christ, so we are no longer identified as being in Adam any more.
 - We have died to that identity and have been raised to a new identity.
 - We are in a new humanity, another race... a new creation!
 - **2Cor. 5:17** *“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, **he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!**”*
- Paul’s argument in Col. 3:5-10 is: you are in the new man so act like it!
 - He is not saying there are two sides of you fighting it out inside of you; he is saying you are in the new man now so stop acting like you are a part of the old man.
- In John 11:43-44 Lazarus was brought from death to life. He was dressed in strips of linen, which was appropriate dress for a dead man.

- The first thing Jesus said to him after he came back to life was “*take off the grave clothes and let him go*”.
 - The grave clothes were not appropriate for a living man... he was bound by them and need to be set free.
- The same is true in Paul’s command to put off the old man and put on the new.
 - **We are to be dressed in the actions and attitudes of Christ, the new man, rather than tied up by the clothing of the old man of death, Adam (the body of sin).**
- In Paul’s writings he refers to this putting off the old man and putting on the new man as something we have already done and something we still need to do.
 - In Gal. 3:27 Paul says if you were baptized, you **have** put on Christ.
 - But in Ro. 13:14 he says we **need to** put on Christ.
 - In Col. 3:10 Paul says you “**have**” put on the new man...past tense.
 - But in Eph. 4:24 Paul commands us **to** put on new man.
 - So putting off the old man and putting on the new man is something I have both done and still need to do!
 - It may be similar to getting married. Once you “put on” marriage at the wedding you still need to act like a married person.
 - It takes time and intentional effort to learn how to act like a married person and to think of yourself as a spouse.
 - God brought me out of the old man and put me into the new man when I was baptized... now I need to act like I’m in the new man, alive not dead... putting off the behaviors of Adam and putting on the behaviors of Christ.
 - This is an ongoing thing.

Q: In vs. 5, Paul seems to list the “members” of the old man (sinful behaviors that have no place in the new man), from the more specific actions backwards to the root of the problem. What is the root of the problem that causes these behaviors?

- Greed (or covetousness). Not being content with you have.
 - **Heb. 13:5** “*Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have.*” (NKJV)
- All these other sins begin with covetousness... not being content with the state God put you in.
 - This can progress to evil desires (wanting what God says no to) to actually having passion (lust) for that evil desire.
 - Impurity and sexual immorality are simply the outward manifestations of those inward attitudes and sins of the heart.
 - It starts with desiring what you cannot have and not being content.
- These are all things that Paul says we have to put off... they are not part of the new man we are now in.

Q: In verse 8, Paul gives another list of behaviors that are part of being in the “old man”. Do you notice another progression in this list? If so, what is it?

- It is interesting that the first 3 behaviors come out of the heart and last two come out of your mouth.
 - The Greek words for anger, rage and malice are words that describe an attitude or disposition.

- Paul urges us to deal with the root if we want to change the fruit!
 - If a person holds an angry attitude, then rage and malice are sure to follow.
- In Col. 4:6 Paul says we are talk to people with grace... like a seasoned disciple of Jesus. Quite a contrast to the kind of talk we see here.
 - Eph. 4:29 says it this way, *“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”*
 - When we speak, we should be imparting grace to others... they should be getting a dose of Jesus from what we are saying.
- One difference between this list and the one found in Col. 3:5 is sexual sins are easy to spot and usually get taken seriously and confronted by the church. Sinful language habits are often dismissed or minimized in the church.
 - How often do Christians confront one another and allow an edge that isn't loving or full of grace?
 - How often do Christians allow themselves to speak with anger when they feel morally justified?
 - Jesus said what comes out your mouth tells what is in your heart (Luke 6:45), and it's what's in your heart you will be judged by (Matt. 15:17-20).
 - What a person says is the easiest way to judge what is in their heart... so listen and a person will often tell you what they really are!

Hanging on to these behaviors that don't belong in the New Man is like a married person acting like they are single. It just doesn't fit.

APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT: *Answer the following questions as best you can, then get with your discipler/discipleship group and discuss your answers.*

1. Do you tend to value the things that are valued you on earth or the things that are valued in heaven?
 - a. What can you do to set your heart and mind on things above?
2. What “dead limbs” are still carrying around?
 - a. Do you need help cutting them off?
 - b. If so, who will you let help you get rid of them?
3. How do you think being rooted in the “New Man” should affect you?