

Colossians 3:5-11

⁵ Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. ¹¹ Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

—Colossians 3:5-11 (ESV)

v 5 – “put to death...”

This must be our approach to sin. If we flirt with sin, we will, at best, stay corrupted in our minds and attitudes and, at worst, we will fall into the sin we are flirting with.

Next follow examples that were particularly relevant for Colossae:

sexual immorality – *porneia* – any and all sexual behavior that is displeasing to God
impurity – any personal behavior that degrading, that cannot be counted as Christ-like
passion – any consuming love or desire that could control us, and particular those that are related to sensuality
evil desire – the desire itself, even if it is not acted upon
covetousness – greed, envy, materialism – which is “idolatry”

This is not a “checklist.” These are examples—and broad ones at that—of sinful living, incompatible with a Christian life.

v 6 – “On account of these...”

The wrath of God

But for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.—Romans 2:8

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.—John 3:36

Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.—Ephesians 5:6

And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come.—1 Thessalonians 1:10

The wrath of God is the coming judgment against those who have lived in rebellion against God, refusing the truth, whether rejecting Him or pretending to know Him.

It is more than the natural consequences of sinful living. It is the response of Almighty God against a world of those who have placed themselves against Him, making light of the gift of His Son.

It is a fearful, dreadful, eternal punishment—away from the blessings and presence of God—such is the offense of sin to Him.

v 7 – In these you once walked...

Why not stop the sentence there? But Paul continues

“...when you were living in them.”

The point he is already beginning to make is that you have a former life, but now a new life; an old self, but now a new self.

You walked in those sins, because that’s where your life was—it was the only life you had! And it was a life destined to death and wrath.

You are to be done with that life, with that person—utterly! That life, that person, is to be completely put to death, never to be followed or listened to or acknowledged again.

“I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back...”

v 8 – But now you must put them all away...

More lit. – “Now, however, also put away from you [renounce, lay aside] all these [kinds of] things:

Anger – *orgé* – this is the same word often translated as “wrath.” Do we understand that this is sinful?

Wrath – *thumos* – rage; passion. A different aspect of the same type of behavior. An “uncontrollable temper” is of the devil. The Spirit of God is the giver of peace and self-control.

Slander – *blasphémia*. There is no real English word for this. *Blasphémia* does not mean the same as its English derivative, blasphemy, a direct insult to God. *Blasphémia* is a combination of two Greek words, the first meaning “slow” and the second “to declare” or “to recognize.” So it means, as concerning right and wrong, a person who is “slow to get it!” And so that person will declare that things (and people) that are good are evil and will say that things (or people) who are actually evil are good. They slander the *truth*—and that often means slandering a person —or— praising a person or activity that should be censored.

Obscene talk means exactly what we think it means! Filthy speech, foul talk.

v 9 – Do not lie to one another...

Here, do not think, “while you are at church on Sunday”! That is hardly the context in mind.

Think in matters of business, employer to employee—and vice versa, sales, weights and measures, statistical reporting, accounting...

In social matters, in personal matters...

Do not lie.

“seeing that you have put off the old self...”

This applies to *all* that has been discussed, not just lying

The repeated, repeated, repeated teaching and truth is that a sinful, worldly way of living belongs to a former life that you have now rejected and left forever

Don’t do anything that belongs to that old life—or, the fact is, you have not really left it!

This is also to provide clarity and a terrible warning to anyone who thinks that, as a Christian, he can basically just keep on living the same way and just “add a little religion” or “add a little church” to an un-Christlike, sinful, unchanged life.

v 10 – and have put on the new self...

We have not merely put something off—we did that in order to put something else on!—
The new self in Christ!
Ironically, the “new self”—that we are told to put on—is actually a life that is being
given to us, not one that we create using our own effort
“which is being renewed...”
This is being done by the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives
Forming us into the image of our Creator!
We have our part—to submit, to obey, and to walk in the Spirit—but God’s much
greater work is taking place in and through us

v 11 – Here there is not Greek and Jew...

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor
Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in
Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to
promise.—Galatians 3:27-29

This was radical then—and is radical now.

There should be no enmity between those who belong to Christ—and these were serious
enmities. None today are any stronger nor would be any more justified.

There are no racial or ethnic or national divisions in the body of Christ.

There were no distinctions between slaves and free in the body of Christ.

No exceptions! All who are in Christ are one in Him.

This should be a dominant concept in our understanding of ourselves and all others
everywhere who belong to Christ— whether throughout our local areas or throughout
the world.

The reason this is true is because we are in Christ, that Christ Himself has formed His
Church, that he has broken down any walls of hostility.

Our unity is not a philosophical one, or a political one—it is the unity of Christ.
Christ is all—and in all!