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SERMON TITLE

A New Life, A New Way

SERIES

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KEY SCRIPTURE

Colossians 3:1-17

SYNOPSIS

You don't become new by behaving better. You behave differently because you already are new.

HIGHLIGHTS





☞ A New Life, A New Way

Colossians 3:1–17

Have you ever watched someone who suddenly comes into a lot of money—maybe they win the lottery or receive a large inheritance—but they keep living like nothing has changed? They're still anxious about every dollar. Still afraid to spend anything. Still acting like they're barely getting by. And you want to grab them and say, "You're rich now. You don't have to live like this anymore."

That's exactly what Paul is doing in Colossians 3. He's looking at Christians and saying, "Do you understand what happened to you when you came to Christ? Do you know who you are now? You're new. You're alive. You're secure. So stop living like the old you."

Most of us naturally think, "If I change enough, then God will accept me." But the gospel says ☞ the opposite: "*Because* God has accepted you, *now* you can change." **You don't become new by behaving better. You behave differently because you are already new.** That's the heartbeat of this passage. Your new identity in Christ calls for a new way of living.

☞ Set Your Mind Higher (Colossians 3:1–4)

Paul begins by saying, "**Since, then, you have been raised with Christ.**" Not "if." Not "someday." Since. It has already happened. When you trusted Jesus, your old life died, your new life began, and you were raised with Him. You might remember how Paul says it in **Romans 6:4–5**, that we were buried with Christ in baptism and raised to walk in newness of life. And in **Ephesians 2:4–6**, he says God made us alive with Christ and seated us with Him in the heavenly realms. Your life is now hidden with Christ in God.

Your real identity is not found in your performance, your failures, your job, your reputation, or even your struggles. It is found in Christ. You belong to Him. You are safe in Him. Paul says in **2 Corinthians 5:17**, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation." You are new!

But here's the problem: even though your identity has changed, your instincts haven't caught up yet. Spiritually, many of us are living out of old habits. It's like growing up in Alaska and then moving to Hawaii. Your whole life, you've worn heavy coats and snow boots. Then suddenly



you're living in paradise, but every morning you still reach for your parka. Not because you need it, but because it's what you're used to.

That's what happens when we come to Christ. Our situation changes. Our identity changes. But our thinking needs to be renewed. So Paul says, **"Set your hearts and minds on things above."** He's not telling us to escape reality or ignore life. He's telling us to see life through Christ. He's calling us to **live with an eternal perspective**, to let Jesus shape the way we think about success, money, relationships, suffering, and purpose.

☞ **Where you set your mind determines how you live.** Think about how GPS works. When you put a destination into Google Maps, it starts directing every turn you take. It tells you when to turn, when to slow down, and when you've gone the wrong way. But if you put the wrong destination in, it doesn't matter how good the directions are—you're still going to end up in the wrong place. Where you set the destination determines where you end up. And Paul is saying the same thing about your mind. Where you set your focus determines the direction of your life.

If your mind is set on money, comfort, approval, or pleasure, your life will drift that way. If you focus on your performance, you will live anxious and exhausted. If you focus on other people's opinions, you will live insecure and unstable. But if you focus on Christ—on who He is and what He has done—you will live free. If your mind is set on Christ, your life will start moving toward Him. You've been raised with Him, so learn to think like it. Set your mind higher.

☞ **Put Sin to Death** (*Colossians 3:5–9*)

After establishing our identity, Paul gets very direct. He says, **"Put to death whatever belongs to your earthly nature."** Not manage or filter it. Not tolerate it. Not excuse it. Put it to death.

Sometimes you hear stories about a pet that started out gentle and safe, but over time something changed. Maybe it became aggressive. Maybe it became unpredictable. And the family tried everything—training, help, patience—but eventually it became clear: this isn't safe anymore. Someone is going to get hurt. And making that decision is tough. No one wants to do it. But sometimes love means you don't ignore the danger. You deal with it.

Paul is saying sin works like that. It often starts small. It seems harmless. It feels manageable. But if you let it grow, it will hurt you and the people around you. So God, in His love, says, "Don't play with it. Don't keep it around. Put it to death." Then, he lists sins like **sexual immorality, lust,**



greed, anger, rage, slander, and lying. Some of these are private sins. Some are relational sins. Some happen in secret. Some hurt other people. Paul is saying that all of it matters. None of it belongs in the new life.

Why is Paul so strong here? Because sin always promises freedom but delivers slavery. It always says, “This will satisfy you,” and it never does. But notice something important. Paul says, **“You have taken off the old self.”** That’s past tense. It’s already happened. When you came to Christ, the old you was put to death. You are not that person anymore.

☞ So this isn’t about earning God’s love. It’s about **living in line with who you already are.** It’s like coming home from work and taking off your uniform. You don’t argue with it. You don’t negotiate with it. You’re done. You’re home. You take it off because it no longer fits your situation. Paul is saying the same thing. Those old patterns don’t fit you anymore. That’s not who you are now. You’re not a caterpillar anymore. You’re a butterfly. Stop crawling. You have wings. Learn to fly.

☞ Now, this is **daily** work. Every morning you have to **choose whether you will live out of your new identity or fall back into old habits.** But here’s the grace: the power of sin has been broken. Even if the pattern remains, the grip is gone. You’re not stuck. You’re not doomed. You’ve been set free. So live like it. Put those old habits, that sin to death.

☞ **Put On the New** (*Colossians 3:10–14*)

Paul doesn’t just tell us what to take off. He tells us what to put on. He begins this section by reminding us who we are: **“As God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved.”** Before he gives ☞ any commands, he anchors us in identity. **You are chosen. You are holy. You are dearly loved.** Not someday. Not when you improve. Right now. That is the foundation of Christian living. That’s who you are.

Because that’s true, Paul says, clothe yourselves with **compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.** You can think of it like a uniform. When you get a job, you dress for the role. You don’t show up in pajamas. You’ve been given a new identity as a child of God, so ☞ dress like it. **Let your character reflect who you belong to.**

In almost every superhero story, there’s a moment when they realize who they really are. Peter Parker realizes he’s Spider-Man. And once he knows that, he can’t live the same way anymore.



He takes responsibility. He lives differently. In Christ, you've been given a new identity. You belong to Him now. So you don't just ask, "What do I want to do?" You ask, "What fits who I am in Christ?"

Then Paul gets very practical. He says, "**Bear with each other.**" In other words, put up with each other. People are difficult. Even Christians. We are all in process. We all have rough edges. So we extend grace. And we **forgive**. Not because people always deserve it, but because we have been forgiven. And then, over all of this, Paul says, put on **love**. Love is what holds everything together. Without love, this becomes religious performance. With love, it becomes genuine transformation.

And remember, you cannot manufacture this on your own. This is fruit, not effort. Paul calls this the fruit of the Spirit in **Galatians 5**—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. And Jesus says in **John 15**, "Apart from me you can do nothing." **Growth happens when you stay connected to Christ.** As you abide in Him, His life begins to show up in you. So, remember who you are and dress like it. Put on the new.

☞ **Let Christ Rule Everything** (*Colossians 3:15–17*)

Paul finishes by saying, "**Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.**" The word "rule" means to act like an umpire. It means to make the call. When you're making decisions, when you're responding emotionally, when you're in conflict, **let Jesus be the one who decides what's right.** Ask yourself, "Does this reflect His character?" If not, pause and surrender it to Him.

Paul also says, "**Let the Word of Christ dwell richly among you.**" The psalmist says in **Psalms 119:11**, "I have hidden your word in my heart." And Joshua was told to **meditate on God's Word day and night.** Not just visit occasionally. Day and night. Dwell. Take up residence. Soak it in. Shape you. Rewire your thinking. This happens as we read Scripture, talk about it together, worship together, and encourage one another. Christianity was never meant to be lived alone.

And then Paul gives the summary statement: "**Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus.**" Whatever. Your job. Your parenting. Your friendships. Your finances. Your conversations. Your private life. Your public life. All of it. There is no sacred and secular divide. Making breakfast can be worship. Changing diapers can be worship. Answering emails can be worship. Dealing with difficult people can be worship—when it is done for Christ.



When Jesus rules your life, your whole life becomes an offering. Paul says in **Romans 12:1** that we are to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. And in **1 Corinthians 10:31**, **“Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”**

So let’s bring this home. If you are in Christ, you have been raised. You are new. You are secure. You are loved. That is not something you are working toward. That is *already* true. So **the question is not, “How do I become better?” The question is, “How do I live like who I already am?”**

Start by asking yourself: **What old pattern am I still wearing that doesn’t fit anymore?** Maybe it’s anger. Maybe it’s lust. Maybe it’s fear, bitterness, or control. Name it. Confess it. Ask God for help. Put it to death in His strength.

Then ask: **What fruit is God inviting me to put on right now?** Maybe it’s patience. Maybe it’s kindness, or forgiveness or humility. Pick one. Pray over it. Practice it. Let the Spirit grow it.

Finally, ask: **Where does Christ need to rule more fully in my life?** Is there a decision, a relationship, or a habit that I’ve been managing without Him? Invite Him in. Let His peace be the umpire.

Grace for the Journey

Here is the good news. God is not finished with you. **Philippians 1:6** promises that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion. And **1 Thessalonians 5:24** says, “The One who calls you is faithful, and He will do it.” **You are in process, and God is patient. He is faithful. He is not giving up on you.**

So don’t give up on yourself. You are chosen. You are holy. You are dearly loved. Not because you are perfect, but because Christ is. You have been raised with Him. Your life is hidden with Him. You are secure in Him. So now, live like it. Not in fear. Not in striving. Not in guilt. But in freedom. Because this is who you already are in Christ. You have New Life, so live a New Way.

God You are My God