

Further Bible Study Questions

- A) When Paul goes through the list of eleven different characteristics of the “old self” (read Colossians 3:5-9), did you (like me) notice that a lot of those “old self” characteristics are still a struggle for your “new self?” Sometimes, the struggle can be so acute and seem to lack any sense of victory, that we can begin to question our relationship with Jesus Christ. How can a section of Scripture like Colossians 3:1-11 be an encouragement to us in the midst of our struggle?
- B) Clearly, there is a process involved in being “renovated” from the “old self” to the “new self.” Yet, when I am around “church people” (especially those who have been Christians for a long time), it seems like there is no real struggle at all. It’s almost like there are a certain group of Christians to have “most of it” all together. Sure, they struggle with sin, but their struggles are stuff like, “Should I tithe 20% of my income to the church, or give more to Missions?” It’s almost as though, from looking at them, like they have forgotten what it is like to really struggle with persistent sin. Is it true, though? Whichever side of the coin you feel you are on (perhaps both), what instructive elements do you find in Colossians 3:11?
- C) Paul seems to single out three specific sins which get a little more attention than the others. Greed, which amounts to idolatry (3:5), abusive speech from your mouth (3:8), and lying to one another (3:9) -- these three receive special attention from Paul as being particularly destructive and difficult areas of the “old self” (3:9-10). What are the virtues of the Christian (the “new self”) which combat these anti-virtues of our old selves? Take a preview look at Colossians 3:12-17 as you are preparing for worship for next Sunday. Meditate on these “renovating” virtues and how God is transforming you from your “old addicted-to-sin self” into the “new addicted-to-Jesus self.”

Detoxification

Long Beach Alliance Church • September 16th, 2007 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**...PUT ON THE NEW SELF WHO IS BEING RENEWED TO A TRUE KNOWLEDGE ACCORDING TO THE IMAGE OF THE ONE WHO CREATED HIM – A RENEWAL IN WHICH THERE IS NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN GREEK AND JEW, CIRCUMCISED AND UNCIRCUMCISED, BARBARIAN, SCYTHIAN, SLAVE AND FREEMAN, BUT CHRIST IS ALL, AND IN ALL.
~COLOSSIANS 2:16-17 (NASB)**

1) Heavenly Minded & Earthly Good

- A) After giving careful warning against falling into the attractive trap of legalism (Colossians 2:13-23), Paul implores Christ’s followers to “set their minds” on heavenly things (3:1-2).
- B) Set against the earthly focus of legalism, Paul calls on Christians to experience dissatisfaction with human rules and regulations (the earthly), and rather find satisfaction in following Christ (the heavenly), who is our life and future hope (3:2-4).

- C) Paul's instructions are not meant to result in a heavenly minded person who doesn't engage the real world... In fact, Paul has much to say about our "earthly bodies..." (3:5ff).

2) From Legalism To Licentiousness

- A) After rejecting legalism, Paul then addresses the other "earthly" distraction which plagues the church -- that of licentiousness, "the absence of legal or moral restraints."
- B) In the same specific fashion in which legalism was addressed (2:16-18, 21, 23), Paul hammers away at eleven different (but related) areas which are associated with the "old self" (3:6-7, 9).
- C) Paul calls on followers of Christ to "put to death" those things which engage our earthly bodies in sin (3:5). This is an echo of Paul's "circumcision in Christ" argument (2:11). We are to be "severed," "cut off," "separated," or "cleaved" from the body of sin which Paul details:
- 1) **Immorality** ~ the word is "porneia" from which we derive pornography. This included any sexually immoral behavior, especially sexual relationships outside of marriage and prostitution.
 - 2) **Impurity** ~ actions which are driven by lust, especially lust for sexual relationships outside of marriage. Includes anything which precludes us from holy living.
 - 3) **Passion** ~ actions which are dominated by emotion. When used by Paul it always meant shameful passions which led to sexual excess.

- 4) **Evil Desire** ~ the desire which controls the natural man (as opposed to the Spirit-controlled man) and leads to fixation on objects (woman/man, money, a heart against God, etc.) rather than the creator.
- 5) **Greed** ~ the insatiable need for more. Placing the object (from evil desire) in a place of actual worship (that thing which receives your passion and desire), which is condemned as idolatry (3:5).
- 6) **Anger** ~ outbursts of temper which destroy relationships.
- 7) **Wrath** ~ related to anger, but more of a final derivative which settles on a resolved hatred and steady ill-will.
- 8) **Malice** ~ wickedness of heart, the evil which people commit against one another. Malice creates chaos (purposely) in human relationships.
- 9) **Slander** ~ verbal defamation, gossip, speech which tears down another person despite motivation.
- 10) **Abusive Speech** ~ obscene speech, filthiness in conversation or jest, abusive language toward others, swearing at others.
- 11) **Lies** ~ Avoiding the truth when inconvenient, flippant promises, not keeping a pledge or promise (even unintentionally), lacking the whole truth (half-truths).

- D) We are called to remove the "old man" (self, 3:9) like a garment and "put on the new self" (man, 3:10) as God "renews" (lit. "continually renovates") His followers into the image of Jesus Christ (cf. Romans 8:29).

3) God Is Renewing ALL PEOPLE (even YOU) in Christ!

- A) The renovation of "old self" to "new self" is not just for some, it is for EVERYONE! There is no favoritism toward man for Jesus Christ, He is renovating everyone! From the oldest and dearest saint to the most raw new believer, God is renovating us all. We are all together in our total dependence on Jesus!