

THE PRISON EPISTLES: NURTURE FOR OPPRESSED BELIEVERS

II. Colossians: Nurture In Living Focused On The Supremacy And All-Sufficiency Of Christ

J. Nurture In Applying Christ's Supremacy And All-Sufficiency To Our Walk

2. Nurture In Living Righteously In View Of Our Positional Certainties In Christ

(Colossians 3:5-15)

I. Introduction

- A. If the believer must focus on his positional certainties in Christ in the heavens to offset the trials he faces from evil pressures on the earth, what Paul teaches in Colossians 3:1-4, he is **also obligated to live** a life **marked** by such **heavenly realities**, living a life of **righteousness** as **opposed** to the **sin of this world**.
- B. Accordingly, Colossians 3:5-17 provides practical instructions on this subject for our insight and application:

II. Nurture In Living Righteously In View Of Our Positional Certainties In Christ, Colossians 3:5-15.

- A. The particle, *oun* ("therefore") that introduces Colossians 3:5 indicates Paul's instruction starting in that verse is based on the revelation of the believer's positional certainties in Christ detailed back in Colossians 3:1-4.
- B. Accordingly, the Christian's **LIFE** should **reflect** the **righteousness** of **God VERSUS earthly sin** (as follows):
1. First, the believer is to put off the sinful nature, refusing to live like the lost world, Colossians 3:5-11:
 - a. The believer should (literally) "put to death the members [of your body] that are on the earth" (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 699). Paul clarified this expression in Romans 6:10-14 to mean that the believer is to consider his sin nature dead and the members of his body dead to doing acts of sin but alive to doing righteousness, which activity is achieved by relying on the Holy Spirit's power for living, Galatians 5:16.
 - b. This reckoning results in abstaining from "sexual immorality (*porneia*, "general sexual immorality," Ibid.; Moulton & Milligan, The Vocab. of the Grk. N. T., 1972, p. 529), impurity (*akatharsia*, "all kinds of [including aberrant forms of] immorality," Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 28), passion (*pathos*, "lustful passion," Ibid., p. 607-608), evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry," for "(o)n account of these things the wrath of God is coming" on the lost world around us, Col. 3:5b-7 ESV.
 - c. Believers once committed such sins in unbelief, but now they must "put them all away," Col. 3:8 ESV.
 - d. Paul continued with the list of vices to abandon, including "anger" (*orge*, U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 699; a sinful "deliberative, vengeful anger," Theol. Dict. of the N. T., v. V, p. 419), "wrathful outbursts" (*thumos*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Richard C. Trench, Synonyms of the N. T., 1973, p. 130-132), "malice, slander and obscene talk" (*aischrologia*, "foul-mouthed talk," Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 24), Col. 3:8.
 - e. Also, believers must "stop lying" (*me pseudesthe*, subj. neg. adverb with the pres. impv. of *pseudo*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T., p. 700) to one another since they have put off the old sin nature with its practices and put on the new nature [in relying on the Holy Spirit, Galatians 5:16], which nature is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator, Colossians 3:9-10 ESV. The new nature is not limited to earthly distinctions of Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and in all believers, Colossians 3:11.
 2. Then, the believer is to put on the new nature, living in accord with his position in Christ, Col. 3:12-15:
 - a. Paul directed his readers to put on as God's chosen, holy and beloved, "compassion (*splagchnon oiktirmos*, "[lit.] bowels of mercy, i. e., heartfelt compassion," Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 564), kindness, humility, meekness and patience, bearing (*anecho*, "forbearing, putting up with," Ibid., p. 65) with one another and, if one has a complaint (*momphe*, "blame, cause for complaint," Ibid., p. 528) against another, forgiving each other" so that "as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive," Col. 3:12-13 ESV.
 - b. Above all, believers must don "love (*agape*, objective love versus *philema*, subjective attraction, Ibid., T. D. N. T., v. IX, p. 115; v. I, p. 21-55), which binds everything together in perfect harmony," and to "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body," Colossians 3:14-15b.
 - c. Last, but not least, Paul directed his readers to be thankful, and those who were saved from eternal condemnation unto participation in God's fellowship in Christ in the heavenlies have every reason to be grateful, and to express this appreciation in thanksgiving to God, Colossians 3:15c.

Lesson: *If we believers have positionally died with Christ to sin, if we are positionally co-risen with and co-seated with Him in the heavens, awaiting the Lord's return and our glorification with Him in righteousness, our focus on Christ in heaven should affect our lives on the earth, making us live righteously opposite the world's sin.*

Application: *May our walk as believers not reflect this lost world's sin, but our righteous standing in Jesus Christ!*