

Biblical Discernment in a Time of Racial Divide The Real Solution to Racism

Colossians 3:1-15

Colossians 3:1–15 (NKJV)

3 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. **2** Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. **3** For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ *who is our life* appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, **7** in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. **9** Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, **10** and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, **11** where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised

nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

¹² Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*. ¹⁴ But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Samuel Sey, is a Ghanaian-Canadian who lives in Brampton, a city just outside of Toronto.

He is a member of Grace Fellowship Church. And a community liaison at the Canadian Centre for Bio-Ethical Reform.

He is committed to addressing racial, cultural, and political issues with biblical theology and an attempt to be quick to listen and slow to speak.

His writings have been featured on StatementOnSocialJustice.com, Breitbart.com, Challies.com, Aomin.org, EzraInstitute.ca,

Wretched.org, Desiring God's Nightly Brief, and more.

Samuel recently wrote in an article titled *Our Fathers, Our Failures*

When my father abandoned mom while she was pregnant with me, he set off a chain of events that are all too common with children raised without a father in the home.

Children raised in single-parent households are 20 times more likely to develop behavioural problems, 9 times more likely to not graduate from high school, and 2 times more likely to engage in early sexual activity than children raised in two-parent households.

Children raised in single-mother households generally receive less attention and discipline than children raised in two-parent households. That inevitably creates behavioural, educational, and economic disparities between people raised in two-parent households and people raised in single-parent households. And this explains the disparities between Black Americans and White Americans, Black Canadians and White Canadians.

America and Canada do not share the same history, particularly concerning Black people. In fact, they share strikingly different histories.

But its Black citizens share same challenges. Social justice groups in these nations maintain that these challenges are produced by systemic racism. But that's an extraordinary claim without extraordinary evidence.

At one time and in varying degrees, America and Canada had objectively racist laws and policies against Black citizens within their political system. But these nations do not have identifiably racist policies or laws today.

All indications suggest that these nations are not oppressing Black people, Black fathers are. The virtually identical disparities between Black citizens and White citizens can be traced to disparities between single-parent households and two-parent households within Black families and White families in these nations.

In America, 73% of Black children are born to unmarried Black women, compared to only 29% of White children born to White women. Considering that children raised in single-parent households are much more likely to develop

behavioural, sexual, and educational challenges that harm their futures, it's unsurprising that given the 44% gap between the number of Black children and White children born to unmarried women—there exists similar gaps between Black Americans and White Americans economically and within the criminal justice system.

Despite all evidence and logic, social justice groups suggest otherwise. They claim that all disparities, including even disparities between the number of Black children raised by single parent-households and the number of White children raised by single-parent households are the ramifications of past and present systemic racism in America today.

If that, however, is true, how then do we explain the nearly identical disparities between Black Americans and White Americans to Black Canadians and White Canadians?

Canada has its own history with systemic racism against Black Canadians. Before Britain abolished the slave trade across the British Empire, including Upper Canada in 1833, there were over a 1000 Black slaves in Canada.

And as author Edward Osei Kwadwo Prempeh describes in his book, *The Politics of Race*, in 1849 an 1865, Ontario and Nova Scotia, respectively

passed Acts to segregate Black students to their own schools. And in 1911 the city of Edmonton passed a law that banned Black people from moving into the city.

Nevertheless, Canada's systemic racism against Black people was not nearly as severe or as wide as America's systemic racism against Black people. Canada, after all, was the land of refuge and liberty to runaway slaves through the underground railroad.

In fact in 1963, during the climax of segregation and the civil rights movement in America, Martin Luther King Jr. visited Canada and said:

“Deep in our history of struggle for freedom, Canada was the North Star – the star followed by the Underground Railroad. We sang of ‘heaven’ that awaited us and the slave masters listened in innocence, not realizing that we were not speaking of the hereafter, Heaven was the word for Canada.” And though only a rare population of Black Canadians are descendent of Black Canadian or Black American slaves, socioeconomic disparities between Black Canadians and Black Americans are nearly identical.

In America, Black men earn 30% less than White men. In Canada, second-generation Black men earn 28% less than White men.

In America, though Black students are only 24% of the students in southern states, they represent 50% of expelled students. In Canada, though Black students are only 12% of students in Toronto, they represent 48% of expelled students. In America, though Black people are only 13% of the population, they represent 23% of the people killed by police officers, and they represent 33% of prison inmates. In Canada, though Black people make up only 9% of the population of Toronto, they make up 70% of the people killed by police officers in the city—and though Black Canadians are only 3% of the Canadian population, they represent 9% of the the nation's prison inmates.

In other words, disparities between Black Canadians and White Canadians are identical—and in some specific cases—worse than disparities between Black Americans and White Americans.

Our Fathers, Our Failures

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<https://slowtowrite.com/our-fathers-our-failures/>

I have heard over and over in that last few weeks,... do not quote stats. We are told that we need to be compassionate and listen.

And I am the first to agree with showing compassion to the abused, the genuinely oppressed people and children of all ethnic groups . I'm all for showing love and listening to those have no voice and are run over by the mean spirited, heartless people of our day.

And I am fully aware that racism is alive and well in the United States of America

But more and more we are told to respond to the emotion of the moment and not the facts.

More often the we are hearing Just listen to me and don't confuse it with the facts.

But the facts tells us a much different story that what the media and politics and sadly some churches are pumping out.

There has been in the last few years, a tsunami of misleading information that has done more damage than to help the current racial divide in this country.

The current promotion of and response to Racism that we are seeing is only the tip of the iceberg of an ungodly, hate filled agenda of radical

Marxist feminist Lesbians who are bent on the destruction of the family and this country.

The Group, known as Black lives matter is currently enjoying a 68% approval rate in US and as a result, large companies and corporations are jumping on board to show their support, Many of the companies that you purchase from are supporting the destruction of the family, the church and this nation.

We are just beginning to see the fruit fo a post Christian Pro pagan Era. The full manifestation of the sin and self centered prejudice and racism of man is blossoming into full pagan garden.

In Paul's day, the Gentile nations, the pagan nations, the pagan idolatrous peoples where sectarian, tribal, hateful and hating of other peoples. There were divisions and separations everywhere.

The racism and prejudice of Jew and Gentile was just some of what was really a deeper and more widespread problem. . What Paul was use too, we are beginning to witness.

At the beginning of slavery in America and all the way up to the civil rights movement and the removal of Segregation. The predominant world view in

America was theocentric. Evolutionary thinking was gaining ground, but for the most part, families believed the Bible to be true. There was a Judeo-Christian ethic. It may not have been live out the way it should but it was there.

That is not the case anymore.

We are Post Christian, and Pro Pagan. Racism and all other expressions of sin and hate will now take on a totally different dynamic.

The heart of the American mind had been set free from the restraints of a Biblical world view.

The Law of God has be banished and the law of man has been approved.

Evil is now seen as Good and Good is seen as evil. Our politicians and preachers are compromised and gutless. They are adrift on a sea of unrighteousness with no compass.

The plumb line has been cut down and the people build on a foundation of sand with the material produced by immorality and self-centered deification.

We have lost our way and have forgotten what really matters

James White was correct when he ask the question concerning the phrase “Black lives matter”... What does matter mean?

Under the current believe of the theory of Evolution no life matters. You are only a puddle of plasma with no purpose that happens to be for the moment.

Under this theory evolution the black man is more advanced than the cockroach and gorilla but less advanced than some white man.

One of the most racist men ever to walk this planet was Charles Darwin and yet, I am hearing of no one in the black lives matter movement call for his removal from the museum. Or the removal of his racist ideology from the classrooms and the universities.

Why not just be honest and admit it , that his theory supports your sinful lifestyle and even though he is one of the worst racist humanity has ever produced, you love to have him around to give us permission to immoral, ungodly perverted lives.

The real racism that occurs in our country has been hijacked by men and women with a greater cause than the banishment of racism. That is only a means to an end.

Their real goal is to completely banish every referenced and institution that promotes God and His Word.

But this should not be a shock to any us who read the Bible. The Bible says that sinners are God haters and do not want God to rule over them. Racism is just one of the many expressions of a sinner and His rebellion against God. Frankly, Racism is natural for the sinner. It is normal. It is to be expected. So what is the real issue? What the real Problem. Is it the institutions? Is it the need to change political leaders? Is it the need to incorporate Critical Race Theory as an analytical tool? Is it the removal of statues and the defacing of buildings? Is it the removal of History for our schools? These are not the problem. These are only the symptom. We are not addressing the real problem with these things. What we are currently doing is akin to adding a bandaid on the skin for heart disease... It may make you feel like your doing something but it is only surface and never addresses the real issue. The Real issue is the Desperately Depraved and deceived heart that you have.

It is evil and is bent on evil and desires only what is evil.

It needs to be changed from stone to flesh.

What has got lost in all of this talk on racism is and the murder of George Floyd is the reality that all of us go to hell if we are Racist or not.

The moment all of this started and the words started to circulate, Racism, Racist, murder, injustice, and the cry for justice. Statements were being made, like

George did nothing wrong,

He didn't deserve this.

This was unjust.

The police officer is evil

He deserves to Die.

My thoughts went to Luke 13.

Luke 13:1–3 (NKJV)

¹There were present at that season some who told Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

²And Jesus answered and said to them, “Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things?”

³I tell you, no; but unless you repent you will all likewise perish.

. Pilate was proud, arrogant, and cynical (cf. John 18:38), and at the same time weak and vacillating. The incident referred to on this occasion was typical of Pilate's rule as governor, which was marked by insensitivity and brutality. Reversing the policy of earlier Roman governors, Pilate had made a grand entrance by marching his troops into Jerusalem carrying standards bearing images that the Jews viewed as idolatrous. The populace protested vehemently against what they viewed as a sacrilege. Pilate ignored their protests and ordered them, on pain of death, to stop the protest. But they called his bluff, and dared him to carry out his threat of execution. Sane enough to be unwilling to massacre many people, Pilate was forced to remove the offending standards. The story is indicative of his poor judgment, stubbornness, arrogance, and vacillation. Pilate again enraged the Jews by taking money from their temple treasury to build an aqueduct to bring water to Jerusalem. In the ensuing protest riots, his soldiers beat and slaughtered many of the protesters.

The specific incident mentioned here involving **the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices** is consistent with what is known of Pilate's character. Such incidents were all too common at that time in Israel (cf. Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996], 1205).

MacArthur, J. (2013). *Luke 11–17* (p. 185). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

Listen,

The most important issue you face is not the injustice around you or the injustice you experience
The most important issue you face is the Justice of God.

Being judged here for Racism is not the big issue.

Experiencing Racism is not worst thing that can happen to you.

But standing before God unprepared having his full justice for all of your sin hammer down on you will make all of injustice and racism of this world look like a walk in the park.

We have lost our way and have forgotten what really matters

Matthew 10:28 (NKJV)

²⁸And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

The exhortation of Jim Elliot, missionary and martyr, is fitting: “When it comes time to die, make sure that all you have to do is die” (cited in Elisabeth Elliot, *Through Gates of Splendor* [Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1981], 253).

MacArthur, J. (2013). *Luke 11–17* (p. 187). Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers.

So with that said, we know that the real need is a new heart, a new man.

Only Salvation can accomplish this, Only the power of the Gospel

We see this in our text.

It is the solution to Racism

Our Salvation demands a different

1. Communion
2. Conversation
3. Creation
4. Consecration

Our Salvation demands a different

1. Communion

3 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

3 If then you were raised with Christ,

If denotes reality,... and is better translated “since.” Believers having been **raised up with Christ** is not in doubt. The verb actually means “to be co-

resurrected.” It is an accomplished fact. Believers spiritually are entered into Christ’s death and resurrection at the moment of their salvation.

Galatians 2:20 says,

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.”

Romans 6:3–4

“Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.”

The “baptism” here is not into water, but an immersing into the Savior’s death and resurrection. Through their union with Christ, believers have died, have been buried, and have risen with Him. By saving faith they have entered into a new dimension. They possess divine and eternal life, which is not merely endless existence, but a heavenly quality of life brought to them by the indwelling Lord. They are thus alive in Christ to the realities of the divine realm.

Consequently, Christians have an obligation to live consistently with those realities. Paul delineates the specifics of that obligation in

Romans 6:11–19:

Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? May it never be! Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I am speaking in human terms

because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.

This new life is real and powerful, but so is remaining sin. Though it no longer is our master, it can still overpower us if we are not presenting ourselves to God as servants of righteousness. (For a

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (pp. 126–128). Chicago: Moody Press.

This reality of our Communion with Christ sets the context for a number of Imperatives. (Commands)

3 Since then you were raised with Christ,

1. v1 seek those things which are above,
2. v2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.
3. v5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth:
4. v8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these:
5. v9 Do not lie to one another

6. v12 Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness,
7. v14 But above all these things put on love,
- 8 v15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts,
9. v15 be thankful.

1. v1 **seek** those things which are above,
zéteó: to seek

Pres act Imperative

Original Word: ζητέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: zéteó

Phonetic Spelling: (dzay-teh'-o)

Definition: to seek

Usage: I seek, search for, desire, require, demand.

2212 zētēō – properly, to seek by inquiring; to investigate to reach a binding (terminal) resolution; to search, "getting to the bottom of a matter."

The present tense of *zēteō* (**keep seeking**) indicates continuous action. Preoccupation with the eternal realities that are ours in Christ is to be the pattern of the believer's life. Jesus put it this way: "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these

things shall be added to you” (Matt. 6:33). Paul is not advocating a form of mysticism. Rather, he desires that the Colossians’ preoccupation with heaven govern their earthly responses. To be preoccupied with heaven is to be preoccupied with the One who reigns there and His purposes, plans, provisions, and power. It is also to view the things, people, and events of this world through His eyes and with an eternal perspective.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (p. 128). Chicago: Moody Press.

2. v2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

phroneó: to have understanding, to think

φρονέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: phroneó

Phonetic Spelling: (fron-eh'-o)

Definition: to have understanding, to think

Usage: (a) I think, (b) I think, judge, (c) I direct the mind to, seek for, (d) I observe, (e) I care for.

5426 phroneō (from 5424 /phrén, "the midriff or diaphragm; the parts around the heart," J. Thayer) – properly, regulate (moderate) from within, as inner-

perspective (insight) shows itself in corresponding, outward behavior. 5426 (phronéō) essentially equates to personal opinion fleshing itself out in action (see J. Thayer). This idea is difficult to translate into English because it combines the visceral and cognitive aspects of thinking.

Set your mind is from *phroneō* and could simply be translated, “think,” or more thoroughly, “have this inner disposition.” Once again, the present tense indicates continuous action. Lightfoot paraphrases Paul’s thought: “You must not only *seek* heaven, you must also *think* heaven” (*St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* [1879; reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959], p. 209; italics in the original)

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (p. 129). Chicago: Moody Press.

³ For you died (aorist) , and your life is hidden (perfect passive) with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Our Salvation demands a different

1. Communion

2. Conversation

⁵ Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷ in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. ⁸ But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, ¹⁰ and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge

3. v5 Therefore **put to death** your members which
are on the earth:

Aorist Imperative

nekroó: to put to death

Original Word: νεκρόω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: nekroó

Phonetic Spelling: (nek-ro'-o)

Definition: to put to death

Usage: lit. and met: I put to death, make as dead; I render weak, impotent.

Cognate: 3499 nekroō (from 3498 /nekrós, corpse-like, lifeless") – to view as a corpse, i.e. without life; to regard (but not "make") as dead, inoperative; to mortify, deprive of life or energizing power; (figuratively) to cut off (sever) everything that energizes (especially sin in Col 3:5).

⁵ Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

⁶ Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷ in which you yourselves once walked (Aorist) when you lived (Imperfect) in them.

4. v8 But now you yourselves are to **put off** all these:

Aorist Middle Imperative

apotithémi: to put off, lay aside

Original Word: ἀποτίθημι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: apotithēmi

Phonetic Spelling: (ap-ot-eeth'-ay-mee)

Definition: to put off, lay aside

Usage: I lay off or aside, renounce, stow away, put.

The sins in this second list are not so much personal as social; they are committed directly against other people. Reversing the pattern of the first list, Paul begins with the motive and progresses to the evil act. **Put ... aside** is from *apotithēmi*, a word that is used for taking off clothes (cf. Acts 7:58; 1 Pet. 2:1). As a person takes off his dirty clothes at the end of the day, so should believers discard the filthy, tattered rags of their old life

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (p. 143). Chicago: Moody Press.

All these (τα πάντα [*ta panta*]). The whole bunch of filthy rags

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Col 3:8). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

1. Anger

orgĕ (from orgáō, "to teem, swelling up to constitutionally oppose") – properly, settled anger (opposition), i.e. rising up from an ongoing (fixed) opposition.

3709 /orgĕ ("settled anger") proceeds from an internal disposition which steadfastly opposes someone or something based on extended personal exposure, i.e. solidifying what the beholder considers wrong (unjust, evil).

Orgē (**anger**) is a deep, smoldering, resentful bitterness. It is the settled heart attitude of the angry person. Provocations do not create his anger, but merely reveal that he is an angry person and give him a target for his fury. That has no place in a Christian's life

Ephesians 4:31–32 (NKJV)

³¹Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.

³²And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Rather, believers are to be “slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God”

James 1:19–20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; ²⁰ for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (p. 143). Chicago: Moody Press.

2. wrath,

thymós (from thyō, "rush along, getting heated up, breathing violently," cf. J. Thayer) – properly, passion-driven behavior, i.e. actions emerging out of strong impulses (intense emotion).

When 2372 /thymós ("expressed passion") is used of people it indicates rage (personal venting of anger, wrath).

In contrast to *orgē*, *thumos* (**wrath**) refers to a sudden outburst of anger. The Greeks likened it to a fire in straw, which flares up briefly and is gone. It is used to speak of those in the synagogue of

Nazareth who exploded in anger upon hearing Jesus' teachings (Luke 4:28). It is used similarly of the Ephesian craftsmen's anger over Paul's preaching (Acts 19:28). It is one of the deeds of the flesh (Gal. 5:20), and it is not acceptable behavior for Christians (Eph. 4:31).

Anger and **wrath** are closely related. The churning, boiling anger that often lies just below the surface gives rise to eruptions of wrath. And many unbelievers live with a deep-seated resentment that feeds their anger. They do not understand why they are alive and enduring the pains of life. They did not ask for their circumstances, and they do not know how to handle them. All of that stokes the fires of their anger and makes them even more prone to explosions of wrath when exacerbated

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (pp. 143–144). Chicago: Moody Press.

3. Malice

kakía (from 2554 /kakopoiéō, "a wicked disposition") – properly, the underlying principle of evil (inherent evil) which is present, even if not outwardly expressed.

[2549 /kakía ("malice") shares the same essential meaning as 2556 /kakós ("wretched evil," its adjectival cognate).]

translates *kakia*, a general term for moral evil. J. B. Lightfoot defines it as “the vicious nature which is bent on doing harm to others” (*St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* [1879; reprint, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959], p. 214). In this context, it probably

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (p. 144). Chicago: Moody Press.

4. blasphemy

blasphémia: slander

Original Word: βλασφημία, ας, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: blasphémia

Phonetic Spelling: (blas-fay-me'-ah)

Definition: slander

Usage: abusive or scurrilous language, blasphemy.

Cognate: 988 blasphemía (from blax, "sluggish/slow," and 5345 /phémē, "reputation, fame") – blasphemy – literally, slow (sluggish) to call

something good (that really is good) – and slow to identify what is truly bad (that really is evil).

Blasphemy (988 /blasphēmía) "switches" right for wrong (wrong for right), i.e. calls what God disapproves, "right" which "exchanges the truth of God for a lie" (Ro 1:25). See 987 (blasphēmeō).

Anger, wrath, and malice often result in **slander**. The Greek word translated "slander" is *blasphēmia*, from which our English word *blasphemy* derives. When used in relation to God, it is translated "blasphemy." When used in relation to people, as here, it is translated "slander." To slander people, however, is to blaspheme God, inasmuch as He created men and women (cf. James 3:9). Such foolish talk is not to be indulged in lightly. Our Lord solemnly warned in Matthew 5:22 that "whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell." People are to be treated with dignity because they are made in the image of God. The believer's speech must not be marred by insults or disparaging remarks directed at others. James laments that "from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way" (James 3:10).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (p. 144).
Chicago: Moody Press.

5. filthy language out of your mouth

aischrologia: abusive language

Original Word: αἰσχρολογία, ας, ἡ

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: aischrologia

Phonetic Spelling: (ahee-skhol-og-ee'-ah)

Definition: abusive language

Usage: filthy speech, foul language.

from

ischros: shameful

Original Word: αἰσχρός, ά, όν

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: aischros

Phonetic Spelling: (ahee-skhos')

Definition: shameful

Usage: base, disgraceful

The result of anger, wrath, and malice is **abusive speech**. That term refers to obscene and derogatory speech intended to hurt and wound someone. It could be translated “foul-mouthed abuse” (Lightfoot, p. 214). Such talk is expressly forbidden in Scripture.

“There must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks” (Eph. 5:4). Jesus said, “The good man out of his good treasure brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil” (Matt. 12:35). Our Lord further stressed the seriousness of watching what we say when He warned that “every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the
 MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (p. 144). Chicago: Moody Press.

6. Do not lie to one another
pseudomai: to lie

Original Word: ψεύδομαι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: pseudomai

Phonetic Spelling: (psyoo'-dom-ahee)

Definition: to lie

Usage: I deceive, lie, speak falsely.

5574 pseúdomai (from pseudō, "to falsify, lie") – properly, lie (falsify), willfully misrepresent (mislead).

Paul warns against a final sin by exhorting believers not to **lie to one another**. It would be a helpful (and time-consuming) study to begin in Genesis and find every lie in the Bible. Satan lied in deceiving Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:4–5). Cain lied to God after murdering Abel (Gen. 4:9). Abraham lied, claiming Sarah was his sister instead of his wife (Gen. 12:11–19; 20:2). Sarah lied to the three angelic visitors (Gen. 18:15), and to the king of Gerar (Gen. 20:5). Isaac lied by denying that Rebecca was his wife (Gen. 26:7–10). Rebecca and Issac lied in their conspiracy to defraud Esau of his birthright (Gen. 27:6–24). That list does not even get us out of Genesis.

Lying characterizes Satan (John 8:44), not God (Titus 1:2). When believers lie, they are imitating Satan, not their heavenly Father. They, of all people, should tell the truth.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (p. 145). Chicago: Moody Press.

Our Salvation demands a different

1. Communion
2. Conversation
3. Creation

Colossians 3:9–10 (NKJV)

⁹Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,

¹⁰ and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

¹⁰ and have **put on** (Aorist Middle Part. having put on) the new *man*

put on

Aorist Middle Participle

Original Word: ἐνδύω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: enduo

Phonetic Spelling: (en-doo'-o)

Definition: to clothe or be clothed with (in the sense of sinking into a garment)

Usage: I put on, clothe (another).

¹⁰ and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge

according to the image of Him who created him

anakainoó: to make new
Present Pass Participle

Original Word: ἀνακαινόω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: anakainoó

Phonetic Spelling: (an-ak-ahee-no'-o)

Definition: to make new

Usage: I renew, make new again.

Cognate: 341 anakainóō (from 303 /aná, "up, completing a process" and kainoō, "renew," which is derived from 2537 /kainós) – to renew by moving from one stage to a higher (more developed) one; make qualitatively new. See 342 (anakainōsis).

341 /anakainóō ("to renew") only occurs in 2 Cor 4:16 and Col 3:10, both times referring to God ever-transforming the believer – by renewing "the new man" (anthrōpos) in Christ.

The new self **is being renewed to a true knowledge. Being renewed** refers to being new in quality. The preposition on the front of the verb (*ana*) makes the verb (*kainoō*) have the sense of contrast to

what was already there. This is a new quality of life that never before existed. Unlike the ever-decaying depraved nature, the new self is continually being renewed by God. *Epignōsis* (**true knowledge**) refers to a deep, thorough knowledge (cf. 1:9). The process of renewal brings increased knowledge.

William Hendriksen writes, “When a man is led through the waters of salvation, these are ankle-deep at first, but as he progresses, they become knee-deep, then reach to the loins, and are finally impassable except by swimming (cf. Ezek. 47:3–6)” (*Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981], p. 150

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (p. 150). Chicago: Moody Press.

¹⁰ and have put on the new *man*
 who is renewed in knowledge

according to the image of Him who

created him

The goal of knowledge is to conform the believer to the image of the One who created him. The new self becomes progressively more and more like the Lord Jesus Christ who created him. First Corinthians 15:49 tells us,

“Just as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.”

It is God’s plan to make believers like Jesus Christ.

“For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29).

The new self will continue to progress toward Christlikeness until the Lord returns or the believer dies. The apostle John wrote,

“Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is” (1 John 3:2

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (pp. 150–151). Chicago: Moody Press.

¹¹ where there is

neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

ΟΠΟΥ ΟΥΚ ΕΝΙ Ελλην και Ιουδαιος περιτομη και ακροβυστια βαρβαρος Σκυθης δουλος ελευθερος αλλα τα παντα και εν πασιν Χριστος

ΟΠΟΥ

hopou: where

Original Word: ὅπου

Part of Speech: Adverb

Transliteration: hopou

Phonetic Spelling: (hop'-oo)

Definition: where

Usage: where, whither, in what place.

Where (ὅπου [*hopou*]). In this “new man” in Christ. Cf. Gal. 3:28. **There cannot be** (οὐκ ἐνι [*ouk eni*]). Ἐνι [*Eni*] is the long (original) form of ἐν [*en*] and ἐστιν [*estin*] is to be understood. “There does not exist.” This is the ideal which is still a long way ahead of modern Christians as the

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Col 3:11). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

Galatians 3:26–28 (NKJV)

²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.

²⁷For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

²⁸**There is** neither Jew nor Greek, **there is** neither slave nor free, **there is** neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

2 Corinthians 5:14–17 (NKJV)

¹⁴For the love of Christ compels us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;

¹⁵and He died for all, that those who live should live no longer for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again.

¹⁶Therefore, from now on, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer.

¹⁷Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

The risen life also has implications for the church. Just as individual believers put off the habits of the old self, so also the church puts off the old barriers that separated people. There is no place for racial barriers or cultural snobbery. God has united all

believers in Christ Jesus (cf. Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:15). This was a startling, unbelievable revelation for the first-century world. The racial, religious, cultural, and social barriers separating people were as deep-seated and formidable as any in our day.

The **Greek and Jew**, one **circumcised** and the other **uncircumcised**, were separated by seemingly insurmountable racial and religious barriers. They had nothing to do with each other. Jewish people refused to enter a Gentile house. They would not eat a meal cooked by Gentiles, nor buy meat prepared by Gentile butchers. When they returned to Israel, they showed their disdain for Gentiles by shaking off the Gentile dust from their clothes and sandals. Even the apostles were reluctant to accept Gentiles as equal partners in the church (cf. Acts 10–11). Needless to say, the Gentiles returned those sentiments.

But the gospel broke down those barriers, and Jew and Gentile became one in Christ. Paul described that phenomenon in Ephesians 2:13–16:

But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off [Gentiles] have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one, and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the

enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity.

Race distinctions (Greek ἕλλην [Hellen] and Jew Ἰουδαίος [Ioudaios]) disappear in Christ and in the new man in Christ. The Jews looked on all others as Greeks (Gentiles). Circumcision (περιτομή [peritomē]) and uncircumcision (ἀκροβυστία [akrobustia]) put the Jewish picture with the cleavage made plainer (cf. Eph. 2). The Greeks and Romans regarded all others as barbarians (βάρβαροι [barbaroi], Rom. 1:14), users of outlandish jargon or gibberish, onomatopoeitic repetition (βάρ-βάρ [bar-bar]). **A Scythian** (Σκυθῆς [Skuthēs]) was simply the climax of barbarity, *barbaris barbariores* (Bengel), used for any rough person like our “Goths and Vandals

Robertson, A. T. (1933). Word Pictures in the New Testament (Col 3:11). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

Strong cultural barriers also pervaded the ancient world. The cultured, educated Greek or Jew looked with contempt on the **barbarian** or **Scythian**. Barbarian was an onomatopoeic word used to describe people who spoke an inarticulate and stammering speech. The Greeks intended it as a term of derision on those who were not among the elite (i.e., themselves). The Scythians, above all barbarians, were hated and feared. They were a nomadic, warlike people who invaded the Fertile Crescent in the seventh century before Christ. The Scythians were notorious for their savagery. William Hendriksen notes several historical references that help to describe these people (*Colossians*, p. 154). Herodotus, the Greek historian, wrote of them,

They invaded Asia, after they had driven the Cimmerians out of Europe ... and made themselves masters of all Asia. From there they marched against Egypt; and when they were in that part of Syria which is called Palestine, Psammethichus, king of Egypt, met them and with gifts and prayer persuaded them to come no farther.... They ruled Asia for twenty-eight years; and all the land was wasted by reason of their violence and their arrogance.... The greater number of them were entertained and made drunk

and were slain by Cyaxares and the Medes. They drank the blood of the first enemy killed in battle, and made napkins of the scalps, and drinking bowls of the skulls of the slain. They had the most filthy habits and never washed with water. (4.64, 65, 75)

The Jewish historian Josephus added, “The Scythians delight in murdering people and are little better than wild beasts” (*Against Apion* 2.269). The early church Father Tertullian could think of no greater insult to the heretic Marcion than to describe him as “more filthy than any Scythian” (*Against Marcion* 1.1).

A fellowship including Greeks, Jews, and Scythians was unthinkable in the ancient world. Yet that is precisely what happened in the church. Christ demolished the cultural barriers separating men.

A social barrier existed between the slave and the freeman. The slave was viewed, in the words of Aristotle, as “a living tool.” However, both slaves and freemen were saved and became brothers in Christ because they “were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free” (1 Cor. 12:13). Paul reminded the Galatians that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you

are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). He told Philemon to view Onesimus, his runaway slave, “no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother” (Philem. 16).

That unity of slave and freeman was dramatically demonstrated in the arena of Carthage in a.d. 202. Perpetua, a young woman from a noble family and Felicitas, a slave-girl, faced martyrdom for Christ. As they faced the wild beasts, they joined hands. Slave and freewoman died together for the love of the same Lord (M. A. Smith, *From Christ to Constantine* [Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity, 1973], p. 107).

There is no place for man-made barriers in the church since **Christ is all, and in all**. Because Christ indwells all believers, all are equal. He breaks down all racial, religious, cultural, and social barriers, and makes believers into one new man (Eph. 2:15).

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (pp. 151–153). Chicago: Moody Press.

Our Salvation demands a different

1. Communion
2. Conversation
3. Creation

4. Consecration

¹² Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*. ¹⁴ But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. ¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

¹² Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, Because of God's election, believers are **holy and beloved**. *Hagios (holy)* means "set apart," or "separate." God chose believers out of the mainstream of mankind and drew them to Himself. They are different from the world. When believers fail to act differently from the world, they violate the very purpose of their calling.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (p. 154). Chicago: Moody Press.

The doctrine of election crushes human pride, exalts God, produces joy and gratitude to the Lord,

grants eternal privileges and assurance, promotes holiness, and makes one bold and courageous, for one who has been chosen by God for eternal life has no need to fear anything or anyone.

¹² Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

Put on is from *enduō*, which means “to put on clothes,” or “envelope in.” The qualities that follow are to cover the new man.

put on **tender mercies**

A heart of compassion is the first character trait that is to mark the new man. **Heart** translates *splanchna*, a Hebraism that literally refers to the inward parts of the human body (heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, etc.).

As already noted in the discussion of 2:2, however, it is often used in the New Testament to speak figuratively of the seat of the emotions. That is its use here.

put on tender **mercies**, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

Oiktirmos (**compassion**) means “pity,” “mercy,” “sympathy,” or “compassion.” Taken together, the phrase could be translated, “put on heartfelt compassion,” or “have a deep, gut-level feeling of compassion.” That divine quality (Luke 6:36; James 5:11), so perfectly exhibited by Jesus (Matt. 9:36), was sorely needed in the ancient world. For example, sick, injured, or elderly people were often left to fend for themselves. As a result, many died. Believers must not be indifferent to suffering, but should be concerned to meet people’s needs.

put on tender mercies, **kindness**, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

rēstótēs (a noun, derived from 5543 /xrēstós, "useful, profitable") – properly, useable, i.e. well-fit for use (for what is really needed); kindness that is also serviceable.

5544 /xrēstótēs ("useful kindness") refers to meeting real needs, in God's way, in His timing (fashion). Hence 5544 (xrēstótēs) is listed as a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22). With the believer, 5544 /xrēstótēs ("divine kindness") is the Spirit-produced goodness which meets the need and avoids human harshness (cruelty). "We have no term that quite carries this notion of kind and good" (WP, 1, 92).

Kindness is closely related to compassion. The Greek term refers to the grace that pervades the whole person, mellowing all that might be harsh. Jesus used the word when he said, “My yoke is easy” (Matt. 11:30), not harsh or hard to bear. The kind person is as concerned about his neighbor’s good as he is about his own. God is kind, even to ungrateful and evil people (Luke 6:35). In fact, it was His kindness that led us to repentance (Rom. 2:4; cf. Titus 3:4). Jesus’ kindness was expressed in His invitation to “take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light” (Matt. 11:29–30). Kindness was epitomized by the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37), whose example we should follow.

¹² Therefore, as *the* elect of God,
holy and beloved, put on tender
mercies, kindness, **humility**,
meekness, longsuffering;

¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.

Tapeinophrosunē (humility) and its related words always have a negative connotation in classical Greek (cf. H. H. Esser, “*tapeinos*,” in Colin Brown, ed., *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1977], 2:259).

It took Christianity to elevate humility to a virtue. It is the antidote for the self-love that poisons relationships. Paul advocates genuine humility, in contrast to the false humility of the false teachers (cf. 2:18, 23). Humility characterized Jesus (Matt. 11:29), and it is the most cherished Christian virtue (Eph. 4:2; Phil. 2:3ff.; 1 Pet. 5:5).

¹² Therefore, as *the* elect of God,
 holy and beloved, put on tender
 mercies, kindness, humility,
meekness, longsuffering;

Prautēs (**gentleness**) is closely related to humility. It is not weakness or spinelessness, but rather the willingness to suffer injury instead of inflicting it. The gentle person knows he is a sinner among sinners and is willing to suffer the burdens others’ sin may impose on him. This gentleness can only be produced by the Holy Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:22–23) and

should mark the Christian's behavior at all times, even when restoring a sinning brother (Gal. 6:1), or defending the faith against attacks from unbelievers (2 Tim. 2:25; 1 Pet. 3:15).

¹² Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, **longsuffering**;

Patience translates *makrothumia*. The patient person does not get angry at others. William Barclay writes, "This is the spirit which never loses its patience with its fellow-men. Their foolishness and their unteachability never drive it to cynicism or despair; their insults and their ill-treatment never drive it to bitterness or wrath" (*The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* [Louisville: Westminster, 1975], p. 158).

Patience is the opposite of resentment and revenge. It was a characteristic of Jesus Christ. Paul wrote to Timothy, "For this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life" (1 Tim. 1:16). Were it not for God's patience, no one would ever be saved (2 Pet. 3:15).

¹³ **bearing with one another**, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.

anechó: to hold up, bear with

Original Word: ἀνέχομαι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: anechó

Phonetic Spelling: (an-ekh'-om-ahee)

Definition: to hold up, bear with

Usage: I endure, bear with, have patience with, suffer, admit, persist.

Bearing with one another means “to endure, to hold out in spite of persecution, threats, injury, indifference, or complaints and not retaliate.” It characterized Paul, who told the Corinthians, “when we are reviled, we bless; when we are persecuted, we endure” (1 Cor. 4:12). It did not characterize the Corinthians, who were actually taking each other to court.

Paul exclaims, “Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?” (1 Cor. 6:7). Believers are to exhibit forbearance (Eph. 4:2). Such were the

Thessalonians, of whom Paul wrote, “We ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure [*anexomai*, the same term used here in 3:13]” (2 Thess. 1:4).

¹³ bearing with one another, and **forgiving one another**, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.

charizomai: to show favor, give freely

Original Word: χαρίζομαι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: charizomai

Phonetic Spelling: (khar-id'-zom-ahee)

Definition: to show favor, give freely

Usage: (a) I show favor to, (b) I pardon, forgive, (c) I show kindness.

Cognate: 5483 xarízomai (from 5485 /xáris, "grace, extending favor") – properly, to extend favor ("grace"), freely give favor to grant forgiveness (pardon).

Believers are to be marked not only by endurance, but also by **forgiving each other**. The Greek

charizomenoi literally means “to be gracious” and the text uses a reflexive pronoun, so it literally reads, “forgiving yourselves.” The church as a whole is to be a gracious, mutually forgiving fellowship. By including the phrase **just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you** Paul makes Christ the model of forgiveness. Because He has forgiven us, so also must we forgive others (Eph. 4:32; cf. Matt. 18:21–35). The phrase **whoever has a complaint against anyone** refers to times when someone is at fault because of sin, error, or debt.

from the root

memphomai: to blame, find fault

Original Word: μέμφομαι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: memphomai

Phonetic Spelling: (mem'-fom-ahee)

Definition: to blame, find fault

Usage: I blame, censure, find fault.

3201 μέμφομαι (from mempteos, "rejected because condemned") – find fault, see as fully blameworthy (disgraceful, condemnable); hence, rejected because deep wrongs by omission or commission.

The Lord Jesus is our pattern for forgiveness, because He forgave all our sins, errors, and debts. He is also the model for the rest of the virtues discussed in this section.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (pp. 155–157). Chicago: Moody Press.

One of the things that I have noticed that has been missing in all of this conversion in churches is forgiveness.

There is a lot of talk about the sin of racism and the need for reparations. The fact that because you are white, you have done be wrong and you owe me. But what Im not hearing in church is the offering of forgiveness to the one who was a racist. Or the willingness to forgive the one who committed injustice against me.

Matthew 6:12 (NKJV)

¹² And forgive us our debts,
As we forgive our debtors.

Matthew 6:14–16 (NKJV)

¹⁴ “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Matthew 18:21–22 (NKJV)

²¹ Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

²² Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

Matthew 18:32–35 (NKJV)

³² Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. ³³ Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ ³⁴ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him.

³⁵ “So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”

Romans 12:17–20 (NKJV)

¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men.

¹⁸ If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

¹⁹Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.

²⁰Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.”

Romans 12:21 (NKJV)

²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

1 Peter 2:21–23 (NKJV)

²¹ For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

²² *“Who committed no sin,
Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;*

²³ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously;

14 But above all these things put
on love, which is the bond of perfection.

¹⁵ And let the peace of
your hearts, to which
God rule in
also you

were called in one body;
thankful.

and be

In keeping with the motif of putting on clothes, **love** is the belt or sash that pulls **all these things** just mentioned together (cf. Phil. 2:1–5). Love is the most important moral quality in the believer’s life, for it is the very glue that produces unity in the church. Believers will never enjoy mutual fellowship through compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, or patience; they will not bear with each other or forgive each other unless they love one another. In fact, the way to sum up the commands of 3:12–13 is to say, “Love one another.”

Paul said in Romans 13:10 that “love does no wrong to a neighbor; love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.” To try to practice the virtues of 3:12–13 apart from love is legalism. They must flow from love, which in turn is a fruit of the Spirit-filled life (Gal. 5:22). Nothing is acceptable to God if not motivated by love (1 Cor. 13:1–3), including knowledge (Phil. 1:9), faith (Gal. 5:6), and obedience (John 14:15). Love is the beauty of the believer, dispelling the ugly sins of the flesh that destroy unity. MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (p. 157). Chicago: Moody Press.

15 And let the peace of
 God rule in your hearts, to which
 also you were called in one body;
 and be thankful.

Eirēnē (**peace**) includes both the concept of an agreement, pact, treaty, or bond, and that of an attitude of rest or security. Both aspects are in view here. Objectively, believers are at peace with God: “Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). The war between the believer and God is over, and the treaty was paid for by the blood of Christ. Because of that, believers are at rest, and secure. Paul told the Philippians that the “peace of God ... shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7). Here he calls it the peace of Christ because it is the peace He brings (cf. John 14:27; Eph. 2:14).

15 And let the peace of
 God **rule in your hearts**, to which
 also you were called in one body;
 and be thankful.

brabeuó: to act as umpire

Original Word: βραβεύω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: brabeuó

Phonetic Spelling: (brab-yoo'-o)

Definition: to act as umpire

Usage: (lit: to act as arbiter in the games), I rule, arbitrate.

Cognate: 1018 brabeúō – properly, "act as an umpire" (this is also the meaning of this term in classical Greek, as with Isocrates and Demosthenes, etc.); (figuratively) the peace (wholeness) from Christ that He uses to assure (confirm) a believer they are living in His preferred-will (cf. 2307 /thélēma). See 1017 (brabeion).

1018 /brabeúō ("decide as an umpire") means to arbitrate, i.e. "making the call" in "a conflict between contending forces" (Souter), used only in Col 3:15.

Rule is from *brabeuō*, a word used only here in the New Testament (although a compound form appears in Col. 2:18). It was used to describe the activity of an umpire in deciding the outcome of an athletic contest. The peace of Christ guides believers in making decisions. When faced with a choice, the believer should consider two factors. First, is it consistent with the fact that he and Christ are now at peace and thus on the same side? Does it perpetuate that oneness with the Lord that is the

believer's possession? First Corinthians 6:17–18 provides an excellent illustration of this point: “The one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee immorality.” It is our union with the Lord that compels us to purity. Second, will it leave him with a deep and abiding peace in his heart? These two factors are also the two greatest deterrents to sin in the believer's life. Sin offends Christ, with whom he is at peace, and thereby shatters the rest and security in his heart.

Peace is not only objective and subjective, but also relational. Believers **were called** to live in peace **in one body**. Individuals who have peace with Christ and in their own hearts will live in unity and harmony with each other.

To maintain a peaceful heart one has to **be thankful**. Thankfulness is a constant theme in Colossians (cf. 1:3, 12; 2:7; 3:15, 16, 17; 4:2). Gratitude comes naturally to believers in response to all God has done (Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:18; Heb. 13:15), whereas ingratitude marks unbelievers (Rom. 1:21). A spirit of humble gratitude toward God will inevitably affect our relations with others. Peace and gratitude are thus closely linked.

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1992). *Colossians* (pp. 158–159). Chicago: Moody Press.

John Newton was born in 1725 and the only son of a captain of a ship. He feared his father and hated to see him come home. His mother was a Christian and devoted herself to training him in the scriptures. She, however, died when he was 7 and his devotional life dwindled. He was placed in a boarding school and by age 10 was indifferent to religion. He was 11 when he was allowed to first go on the ship with his father and experience time at sea.

At times due to the blasphemies and cursing of the sailors aboard, he tried to recall his mother's teaching of the scripture to escape the horrors of his experiences but to no avail.

He admitted that he could see the need of religion to escape Hell but he loved sin and was unwilling to forsake it. He learned through his reading that it was ok to doubt one's religion, and later grew to love cursing and blaspheming.

One very dark night on March 21, 1748
A savage ocean storm awoke the crew of the Greyhound, a cargo ship crammed with merchandise collected from the west coast of Africa. From port to port, the ship had been slowly filled with African gold, ivory, bees-wax, and camwood

(lumber). But now, a twenty-two-year-old sailor named John was awakened by gale-force winds battering the ship. Waves slammed into her and ripped away the upper timbers on one side, sending water through a gaping hole into John's room.

Awakened by the chaos, he jumped half naked from his bed to furiously hand pump water back into the swaying ocean.¹ With the cold saltwater pouring into the aging and broken vessel, crewmates grabbed buckets and began tossing the water back into the dark sea. Newton cranked for his life while waves broke over his head. Desperation overwhelmed the doomed crew, and John's heart pounded furiously with adrenaline-charged fears of being dumped overboard in the middle of a dark sea, weeks away from the nearest coastline. Like many sailors of his time, he couldn't swim.

As John Newton later reflected, he was unfit to live and unfit to die. The fear of death strained his energies at the water pump, but it was a battle he could not win. Saltwater waves continued crashing against the ship, and the endless ocean of water rushed over the deck faster than the men could spit it back out. The ship creaked and groaned under the assault as the crew frantically battled the angry forces of the sea.

Newton's moral life had already sunk. He was a wicked and insubordinate young man with a profane tongue, flesh-driven appetites, and stone-cold heart. He had gambled his way into debt and dabbled in witchcraft. And as a young man in foreign lands, he had become sexually promiscuous. Later, as a young captain of a slave-trading ship, he may have indulged his lusts further by raping captive African women in the "sexual free-for-alls on board ship that most captains in the trade regarded as theirs by right."² He didn't particularly enjoy alcohol, but he drank to prompt drunkenness in others and to entertain himself by the follies the liquor encouraged in them. What is clear: Newton was immune from no sin. He delighted to lead others into temptation, later calling himself "a ringleader in blasphemy and wickedness."³

Not content with running the broad way myself, I was indefatigable in enticing others; and, had my influence been equal to my wishes, I would have carried all the human race with me. I had the ambition of a Caesar or an Alexander, and wanted to rank in wickedness among the foremost of the human race.⁴ Life on the sea only amplified Newton's wretched tendencies.⁵ He sailed for months in a bubble of unchecked sin, estranged from godly examples, cut off from the

gospel, hardened by the dangers of sea life, and entrenched among a group of men who incited one another to sin. Life on an eighteenth-century merchant ship was the spiritually deadening climate his soul least needed.

If any man was unworthy of deliverance from the raging sea, it was the twenty-two-year-old sailor John Newton. In this moment Newton was focused on

survival and frightened by the nearness of death that knocked on the door with each crashing wave.

Desperate and fully expecting to die, Newton finally blurted aloud, “If this will not do, the Lord have mercy on us.” The Lord’s name from his mouth—that word he only spouted in vain—now struck his heart like an arrow, humbling and breaking him. “I was instantly struck by my own words. This was the first desire I had breathed for mercy for many years.”⁶

During that frantic night in 1748, one sailor was swept overboard and died, but Newton and his other crewmates miraculously survived the storm. They endured intense starvation for weeks as the ship limped to shore, staying afloat thanks to the buoyant cargo of beeswax and lumber. For the remainder of his life, Newton would celebrate March 21 as the annual reminder of God’s gracious deliverance of

his fragile life. The smashed and sinking ship provided a fitting metaphor for his spiritual state; the churning abyss clawing at him was a fitting metaphor for the flames of hell. He had been to the edge of human existence. In desperation, Newton had turned to the God he despised, grasped the hope of the gospel, and never let go.

As with the thief on the cross facing death, the Lord ignited a marvelous work in John Newton's heart here in this "great day of turning." Although the precise time of his conversion is unknown,⁷ his plea for mercy on the sea was immediately answered. And Newton's heart, which once spewed wickedness and blasphemy, would soon become a heart gushing beloved hymns of praise to God. The same tongue that spit curses at the name of God and made sailors blush would become the tongue that steered the corporate worship of God's people in honoring God's holy name. This drowning wretch of a sailor would pen a hymn that endures in the minds and hearts of people to this day, a hymn so popular that its lyrics are as recognizable throughout the English-speaking world as any national anthem. On top of this, the lucrative African slave trade that he participated in would be ended, in part because of his abolitionist work. Newton would be-

come a pastor, no longer leading sinners into sin but now enticing sinners away from it. In time, hundreds of souls would gather weekly on Sundays to listen to his sermons. Only God himself could have imagined what was in store for John Newton. Like Jonah running away from God, Newton was delivered from death at sea in order to preach the good news.

NEWTON

on the Christian Life

TO LIVE IS CHRIST

TONY REINKE

FOREWORD BY JOHN PIPER