

Making Changes Colossians 3:12-17

Objective: Inspire @ to behave in a manner appropriate to the status of being chosen and special people.

Reading: Colossians 3:9-17.

Memory: Colossians 3:9, "...p_o_t_n_s_, w_i_b_r_i_k_i_t_i_o_i-C_."

Introduction:

1. Often see youths change behavior when they are placed in charge. How would you behave differently if you were a prince? A General? A foreign ambassador?
2. Maybe you don't feel special, but in Christ, you are very special. You are very important.
3. Not by your own merit or your own doing, but by God's grace, if you are a Christian, you have become a very, very special person; one of God's children, and as such, a representative of God to the world wherever you go, publicly or privately.

We need to behave like the special people we are. (HOW?)

In Colossians 3, the Apostle, speaking with the same authority as God, urges Christians to make those changes in themselves, in their character and in their behavior, that are necessary and appropriate for people with the status that they now hold. We need to read these instructions as if they are directed at us, and feel the conviction in our hearts, and proceed to make changes that are necessary and appropriate for people with the status we now hold as children of God.

You know, we used to respond to people in worldly ways; vengeance, wrath, malice, jealousy and that sort of thing. But now that we have died to self and live because we are in Christ, in the spirit of Christ, we need make changes in order to imitate Christ and represent God in;

I. The way we interact with other people. (Read verses 12-14)

A. Exhibit Christ-like qualities. (things like)

1. **compassion** ~ in dealing with others when the world would let them suffer or leave them out because of their former life style, race, wealth, status. This is not "natural" the world does not teach us this. It is "spiritual". It is "god-like".
2. **kindness** ~ Are you always kind? To enemies? To those who are rude or inconsiderate?
3. **humility** ~ World says "me first". Christ says, "Let me help you."
4. Philippians 2:3, "**Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself...**"
5. **gentleness** ~ "But I need to holler and get tough to get anybody to listen to me." No, just speak truth in love.
6. **patience** ~ Christ endured and taught endurance. Give others time to think things through, to change their minds, to repent, to consider, to learn ...
7. **bear with each other** ~ you can put up with a lot from people you really love.
 8. Learn to love them and value them as Christ Himself!
 9. Even personalities you find irritating. God may be growing patience in you. Do it for love of God!
 10. God has placed each one in the church just as He desired.
 11. A "perfect" church is filled with flawed people – folks that may test your patience – because you are NOT supposed to be like you were, you are supposed to be renewed in the image of God.
12. **forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**
 13. Hard to do when someone hurts you or one you love, leaves emotionally scars.
 14. It's not them personally; it's SIN. Fight sin with truth and love. Help the one caught in sin.

These things may be tough for us to do. Harder for some than others, as some are more calloused than others, more stubborn than others. But if we really value who we are "in Christ" we can and must put off the old and in the image of our Creator,

B. Put on "love".

1. God is love. Christ is love. If you are in Christ, you need to be love also.
2. Love is all of these things. Remember; "**Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it**

keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.” (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

3. Verse 14 says, **“And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”**
4. NAS translates more literally; **“Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.”** The text is telling us that love is the bond of **“perfect unity”**. (Literally the bond of τελειότητος. **“perfectness”**?)
5. Love holds us together to grow to Christian maturity. Corporately, individually. Martially? Family-wise. Christians are to persevere and be recognized for such love in all sorts of different ways.

Folks, we need to also make important changes in the way we relate to circumstances; to troubles and conflicts.. Christians are supposed to demonstrate trust and devotion to God in

II. The way we view the situations we encounter in life. (Read verse 15)

A. Peace in face of disagreements and personal conflicts.

1. People who have put on the new self, being renewed in the image of the Creator, don't allow disputes to separate them from the congregation.
2. This “Peace principle” serves to promote unity. **“...as members of one body you were called to peace.”** All in the body are called. Called to belong to Christ. Called to belong the body of Christ.. Called to imitate Christ and represent Him.
3. What tragedy or turmoil can keep you away? Should be next to none. In CCU?
4. Such peace displays confidence that God is working and can handle anything. If the other is wrong; God can handle it. If their spirit is wrong; God can handle it. You love and abide in Christ. You do what is right in Christ and let God handle it!
5. You are God's child! Romans 8:28, **“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”**

B. Genuine faith can thank God for everything!

1. For the good things.
2. James 1:17, **“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights,”**
3. This is relatively easy. Even non-Christians can be good at this.
4. For struggles and hardships and conflicts even.
5. For the privilege of serving God's purpose. Such faith that knows God is in control.
6. So James says, **“Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.**
7. Acts 5:41, **“The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.”**
8. Who will we send to suffer for us at Olympics? That would be a joyful privilege! To walk on the moon? To represent Truth, Faith in God? That is a joyful privilege too.

We serve an awesome God. His word brought the world into existence. His Word became flesh and dwelt among us. His Word teaches and guides and directs. Our new life should reflect ...

III. The way we reverence and honor the word of God. (Read verse 16)

A. Does the Word dwell in you richly?

1. Do we really hunger for the word? Seek it out? Meditate on it? “Ruminate” over it?
2. Would you call it “richly”? Or is it meager? If you fed on physical food the way you feed on God's word, would you starve? Be “malnourished”?
3. Does it “dwell” in you or do you tend to ignore it and do things your own way?
4. Do you use the wisdom it contains for teaching and admonishing? Yourself and loved ones?

B. Does it show joyfully in your heart?

1. **“as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.”** Sounds like its bubbling over. Do you strive to contain it or do you let it?

2. Do you honor and thank God in song or are you embarrassed by singing?
3. Are you so full that you can't help but hum hymns?

C. Does your confidence in the Word show through?

1. What kind of ambassadors are we when we roam and ramble and worry about other things as the word is being read, taught, discussed? I know of two congregations that routinely stand for the reading of God's Word. We stand when a Judge comes in a room. When the flag passes. Perhaps we should make it a practice to stand for the reading of the Word.
2. Jesus approved the priority Mary put on the Word in Luke 10:38-42, ³⁸ **As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. ⁴⁰ But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" ⁴¹ "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, ⁴² but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."**
3. How dare we be frivolous with God's word or irreverent towards it if we have put on the image of our Creator!

Once you have accepted salvation by putting on Christ in the waters of baptism, you are no longer who you used to be. Your role has changed, your responsibilities have changed, your goals in life have changed, the very purpose of your existence has changed. Christians, we need to live in such a way that demonstrates...

IV. The way our very existence belongs to Christ as Lord. (Read verse 17)

A. Every word we speak is to be an honor to what Jesus stands for.

1. Do you still tell crude jokes? Can you imagine Jesus telling them?
2. Do you cuss, use coarse, vulgar demeaning language? Is it Christ-like language?
3. Watch your words this week. Identify every little thing that came out that did not honor to Christ and the concept of Christ, and if you are really Christian, get it out of your life!

B. Every deed we do is to be an honor to what Jesus stands for.

1. It is a privilege and honor to be made in the image of God. A constant responsibility.
2. Everything from voting, to grocery shopping, to confronting neighbor, to the books we read and TV shows we watch. How I drive my car and how I talk to my and kids is to be an honor to Christ. Even how I disagree with someone or argue with my spouse.

C. Our total life is to be a giving of thanks to God.

1. We demonstrate our thanks to God for life, for freedom from sin by living the very image of Christ.

So What?

Question; are you real in your Christianity, or are you just playing games? It is time, as in verse 10, to put on the new self! In Christ you have become valuable. You have become important and special. You have become a child of almighty God! 1 John 3:1-3, **"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure."**

It is time to seriously honor God in Christ, to seriously purify ourselves, to take our status as God's people and God's children seriously, and seriously start behaving like children of God.