

Colossians

Chapter 3

Put On the New Self

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. 5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming.[c] 7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. 8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. 11 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. 12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

3:1–17 Paul begins the practical section of his Letter, based on the doctrinal section—esp Baptism (chs 1–2). (TLSB)

3:1 *if* – *oun* – Then or therefore and refers back to the whole of the precious part in particular to what the Colossians have themselves experienced in their vital connection with the supreme God-man and his work which is so complete and mighty in every respect. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

then. “Then” (or “therefore”) links the doctrinal section of the letter with the practical section, just as it does in Ro 12:1; Eph 4:1; Php 4:1. (CSB)

you have been raised.† Verses 1–10 set forth what has been described as the indicative and the imperative (standing and state) of the Christian. The indicative statements describe the believer’s position in Christ: He is dead (v. 3); he has been raised with Christ (v. 1); he is with Christ in heaven (“hidden with Christ,” v. 3); he has “taken off the old self” (v. 9); and he has “put on the new self” (v. 10). The imperative statements indicate what the believer is to do as a result: He is to set his heart (or mind) on things above (vv. 1–2); he is to put to death practices that belong to his earthly nature (v. 5); and he is to rid himself of practices that characterized his unregenerate self (v. 8). In summary, he is called upon to become in daily experience what he is through God’s grace in Christ (cf. Ro 6:1–13). (CSB)

Paul uses the same language as in 2:12 to show that Baptism is a means to salvation and to the Christian life. (TLSB)

seek the things that are above – Not spatially but spiritually. Jesus has ascended to His rightful place, from which He governs all things (Jn 8:23). (TLSB)

τὰ ἄνω ζητεῖτε, οὗ ὁ Χριστός ἐστὶν ἐν δεξιᾷ τοῦ θεοῦ καθήμενος—The present tense of the imperative (ζητεῖτε) denotes what the readers are to do regularly (“be seeking”) as an ongoing characteristic of their existence. The word itself denotes diligent seeking and so finding. “Above” is to be construed not spatially but soteriologically. What is “above” has to do with the gracious presence of God (Jn 8:23; Gal 4:26; Phil 3:14). Thus, “the things that are above” are those things that have to do with eternal salvation in God’s loving presence. Whereas “right hand” tends to accent Christ’s presence in power, “above” tends to stress his presence in grace (Jn 8:23; Gal 4:26; Phil 3:14), also in Word and Sacrament (Jn 3:3–7). “Above” is further said to be “where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.” This language, with its origin in Psalm 110, was common Christological vocabulary as far back as the ministry of Jesus himself. The right hand is a symbol of power. The right hand of God, therefore, represents universal power (Eph 1:20–21). That Christ is at the right hand of God means that he fills all things (Eph 1:23; 4:10), that is, the entire universe (see the textual note on τὰ πάντα in Col 1:16), so that he is present everywhere as Lord over all, governing all things. Likewise Paul called Christ the head over all (2:10; cf. 2:19). (CC)

There is not much study of heaven because many people believe Scripture does not deal with that issue. According to Bible scholars, your heavenly Father has arranged that no less than one-sixth of His New Testament is filled with references to the joy of heaven and the reappearance of Christ. (Good News – Heaven p. 3) **Colossians 3:1-2** says it well: “*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.*”² *Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*”

The Greek word translated “set your hearts on” is zeteo, which denotes man’s general philosophical search or quest. The same word is used in the Gospels to describe how “the Son of Man came to see...what was lost” (Luke 19:10. It’s also used for how a shepherd looks for his lost sheep (Matthew 18:12), a woman searches for a lost coin (Luke 15:8), and a merchant searches for a fine pearl (Matthew 13:45). It is the diligent, active, single-minded investigation. So we can understand Paul’s admonition in Colossians 3:1 as follows: “Diligently, actively, single-mindedly pursue the things above” – in a word, Heaven. (Heaven – Alcorn pp. 20-21) The verb zeteo is in the present tense, suggesting an ongoing process. “Keep seeking heaven.” Don’t just have a conversation, read a book, or listen to sermon and feel as if you’ve fulfilled the command. Since you’ll spend the next lifetime living in Heaven, why not spend this this lifetime seeking Heaven, so you can eagerly anticipate and prepare for it? C.S Lewis observed, “If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next. (Heaven – Alcorn p. 21)

right hand of God – Symbol of power. (TLSB)

The right hand is a symbol of power. The right hand of God, therefore, represents universal power (Eph 1:20–21). That Christ is at the right hand of God means that he fills all things (Eph 1:23; 4:10), that is, the entire universe, so that he is present everywhere as Lord over all, governing all things. Likewise Paul called Christ the head over all (2:10; cf. 2:19). (CC p. 135)

3:2 set your minds – Poneiye – To be very intent.

Things above – τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε – This entails all thoughts, words, and actions that seek to glorify the risen and exalted Savior, all things that are in keeping with his will. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

things that are on earth – Paul does not despise the things of the earth (1Tm 4:4). However, he realizes that this fallen world should not be our focus. (TLSB)

μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς— This includes things that belong to our sinful nature (the old Adam), which once totally characterized our lives before we were regenerated through our Baptism. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

3:3 *you have died* – Col 3:3 also contains several references to the significance of the believer’s Baptism. “You died” (ἀπεθάνετε) is identical in form to the initial verb of 2:20. As there, so also here this verb in the aorist tense recalls the description of Baptism as a participation with Christ in his death as implied in 2:12, a description that is made explicit in the apostle’s letter to the Romans (6:3). (CC p. 137)

now hidden – ἡ ζωὴ ὑμῶν κέκρυπται σὺν τῷ Χριστῷ ἐν τῷ θεῷ— This reminds us that the glory we will share with Christ may be hidden now, hidden especially to those outside the faith. Believers, however, know that something is different in their lives because Christ lives in them. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 9, Part 2)

3:4 *appears*. Refers to Christ’s second coming. (CSB)

with him in glory – Our eternal life, which we possess now through Baptism, will be fully experienced in heaven. Through Christ, we are participants in God’s glory (Jn 1:14; Php 3:21). (TLSB)

3:5 *put to death* – To get rid of, (items that are mentioned in verse 8). (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

Paul calls Christians to act on the basis of their gift of faith (Rm 6:11). (TLSB)

sexual immorality – πορνείαν—πορνεία, “fornication,” can refer to any form of wrongful sexual intercourse. In Pauline lists of vices, it (Gal 5:19–21; 1 Thess 4:3–6) or the related noun πόρνος, “fornicator” (1 Cor 6:9–10; Eph 5:5), is typically mentioned first, as lax sexual mores were almost universal in the Hellenistic world of the first century. In 1 Cor 6:18, Paul explains why sexual sins are particularly harmful. (CC p. 142)

impurity – ἀκαθαρσίαν—ἀκαθαρσία, “uncleanness,” often refers to sins of a sexual nature. Note its grouping with πορνεία here and in 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Eph 5:3. Note its grouping with πορνεία here and in 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Eph 5:3. (CC p. 142)

passion – πάθος—πάθος, “passion,” when used with an unfavorable connotation, denotes lusts of a sexual nature (also in Rom 1:26; 1 Thess 4:5). (CC p. 142)

evil desire – ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν—ἐπιθυμία, “desire,” is a more general term than the preceding three. It can be used in a favorable sense (Phil 1:23). Even when used in a negative sense, required here by its modification with “wicked,” the term need not be limited to desires of a sexual nature. (John 8:44; 1 Tim. 6:9; 2 Tim. 4:3; 1 Pet. 1:14) (CC p. 142)

covetousness – πλεονεξία, “covetousness,” is a still more general term than any of the others. Its meaning is “the state of desiring to have more than one’s due.” Hence it often refers to greed (Lk 12:15; 1 Thess 2:5). Paul here styles covetousness as “idolatry,” because covetousness makes what is desired into a god. It is impossible to serve both God and mammon (Mt 6:24). (CC p. 142)

covetousness, which is idolatry. “Whatever you set your heart on and put your trust in is truly your god” (LC I 3; cf Mt 6:24). (TLSB)

3:6 *wrath of God.* God is unalterably opposed to sin and will invariably make sure that it is justly punished. (CSB)

God’s attitude toward sin (Rm 1:18) and unbelief (Jn 3:36) will be fully revealed in the final judgment. (TLSB)

3:7 *once walked* – The verb “walk” (περιπατέω) often refers to how one conducts his way of life. Hence it is sometimes translated “live.” A different verb (ἐζήητε, from ζάω) is rendered “were living” in the latter part of this verse. This brief verse says much about the makeup of the Colossian congregation. Because Judaism, especially in the diaspora, was characterized by its high ethical standards, what is said here probably applies to those who had been Gentile pagans before their conversion to Christianity. Hence, these words indicate the presence of a sizeable number of former Gentiles among the Christians at Colossae. (CC p. 143)

3:8 *but now* – The opening word in the Greek, “now” (νυνί), draws a contrast with the readers’ former conduct in paganism “at one time” (ποτέ, 3:7). (CC p. 143)

put them all away. Lit, “put off,” as a person might “put off” dirty clothing. For Baptism, people wore special garments. The same imagery is found in Is 52:1; 61:10; Zec 3:1–5. (TLSB)

anger, wrath – ὀργή, “anger,” and θυμός, “wrath,” are virtual synonyms, often combined as here to strengthen the thought. Violent activity and not merely emotion seems to be indicated here. (CC p. 143)

If there is any significance at all to the order of vices in Col 3:8, it would seem to be that the hurtful, violent actions implied in the first two terms, “anger” and “wrath” (see the textual note on those words), may well follow a malicious attitude and hurtful speech. Hurtful speech in turn arises from allowing any wrong talk to proceed from one’s mouth (see the textual note on βλασφημίαν, αἰσχρολογίαν in 3:8), for such wrongful speech itself is a primary indication of the speaker’s hostility toward the Lord and his ways (compare James 3:1–2). (CC p. 149)

malice – κακίαν—κακία is a general term for “wickedness.” But in this context, it seems to point to “malice, ill-will,” which may precede and express itself in the violence implicit in anger and wrath. (CC p. 143)

slander...obscene talk – λασφημίαν, αἰσχρολογίαν—βλασφημία, “slander,” a term that in other contexts may mean “blasphemy,” is speech hurtful to another, while αἰσχρολογία, “shameful speech,” is any wrongful speech, even if not directly harmful to another person. The term is used of obscene language. (CC p. 143)

3:9–10 *put off ... put on.* As one takes off dirty clothes and puts on clean ones, so the Christian is called upon to renounce his evil ways and live in accordance with the rules of Christ's kingdom (see vv. 12–14; cf. Gal 3:27). (CSB)

3:9 *old self.* contrast between the “old man” and “new man” is common in Christian writings. The old self is the sinful corruption of our nature inherited from Adam. (TLSB)

3:10 *put on new self* – *endusamanoi* – This is the antonym of what is said in verse nine. It is putting on new clothes like the righteous robe of Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources – Volume 2, Part 3)

In Baptism, we put on Christ (Gal 3:27) and enter into a saving relationship with Christ. (TLSB)

renewed. See 2 Co 5:17. (CSB)

knowledge. See 1:10; 2:2–3. (CSB)

image of its Creator. Our new relationship of faith restores the image of God that was lost because of sin. The image consists in knowledge of God and holiness. “The image of God is the knowledge of God, righteousness, and truth. Lombard is not afraid to say that original righteousness ‘is the very likeness to God which God implanted in man’ ” (Ap II 20–21). (TLSB)

3:11 *not Greek and Jew...circumcised and uncircumcised* – In Christ, distinctions are removed, whether national (Greek and Jew), social (barbarian and Scythian), or economic (slave and free). (TLSB)

barbarian. Someone who did not speak Greek and was thought to be uncivilized. (CSB)

From present-day southern Russia, they were thought to be the most barbaric of the barbarians. (TLSB)

Christ is all, and is in all. Christ transcends all barriers and unifies people from all cultures, races and nations. Such distinctions are no longer significant. Christ alone matters. (CSB)

3:12 *God's chosen people.* † Israel was called this name (Dt 4:37), and so is the Christian community (1Pe 2:9). Divine election is a constant theme in Paul's letters, but the Bible never teaches that it dulls human response. On the contrary, as this verse shows, it is precisely because the Christian has been elected to eternal salvation that he must put forth every effort to live the godly life. For Paul, divine grace and human response go hand in hand. (CSB)

Israel was so designated (Dt 4:37). Cf 1Pt 2:9. (TLSB)

put on – Virtues are not ours to accomplish but are gifts provided by God. They are Christ's virtues. (TLSB)

A Christian's life ought to break with the old vices and be filled with Christian virtues. In this section of Colossians Paul shows what virtues ought to result in Christian's lives from putting on of the new nature that is daily renewed in the image of God, and he urges Christians to live and grow in these virtues. These virtues are to become permanent, distinguishing marks of each Christian's life. (PBC)

compassionate – (splaighna oiktirmou – bowels of compassion) – A literal translation might be “feelings of compassion” or even “entrails of compassion,” for the visera were thought of as the seat of such tender emotions. In English this might become “a heart of compassion.” (CC p. 144)

The apostle calls for a deep dealing of affection rooted in the love of Christ which fills believers’ hearts. Believers extend compassion especially to those who are suffering or in distress. (PBC)

kindness – Goodness, kindness, generosity is used to describe how one stands in relation to others. Paul includes kindness in his list of “fruit of the Spirit” in Gal 5:22. (CC p. 144)

Kindness is somewhat broader than compassion. The very opposite of malice, it is a cordial, loving disposition which knows no harshness. The early Christians were well known for their kindness, both to one another and to all their fellow human beings. (PBC)

humility – As a virtue of the Christian life, humility involves displaying the mind of Christ, which is ours in Christ (see “In Christ” at Col 1:1-2), so that one puts the other person ahead of himself (Phil 2:3-4 in light of 2:5-11). In the Greek world, the term was used disparagingly with respect to the spiritual and moral state of man. Humility was considered a disposition for only for slaves. The higher the regard in which our culture holds those who are humble is evidence of the wholesome leaven that Christianity has been in society. (CC pp. 144-145)

The believer who, with a loving heart, is kind to others does not have too high an estimate of himself. He is clothed with humility, the virtue that leads Christians to strive to place themselves below others and to put the welfare of others before their own. Paul is not speaking here of a pretended humility, like that of the false teachers (see chapter 2:18), but of a genuine humility that marks the believer who recognizes his own sin and unworthiness and truly appreciates what God has done for him and for all sinners in Christ. (PBC)

meekness – This is the strength to deal gently so as to be of help instead of offending another (Gal 6:1; 2 Tim 2:25), as a strong man has the physical strength to set down a heavy weight so gentle on a fragile surface that is not damaged. (CC p. 145)

This virtue has also been ennobled by Jesus through His perfect example. Christian gentleness is not a spinelessness that bows before every breeze or refuses to take a stand on any principle. The Christian who follows Jesus will always stand firm in Him. At the same time, that Christian will exhibit gentleness in his dealings with others, including his enemies. He will not be easily provoked to fits of rage or anger by the carelessness of others, and he will overlook insults in the spirit of forgiveness. A gentle Christian would rather suffer injury than inflict it. (PBC)

PATIENCE – longsuffering – means bearing with others despite their defects. (CC p. 145)

This is a “holding out” despite provocation and injustice. The patient Christian does not bear a grudge and refuses to harbor thoughts of revenge when he is wronged. (PBC)

3:13 *bearing with one another forgiving each other* – As we each struggle with our own temptations, so we understand the struggles of others. (TLSB)

As they live together with one another and with their unbelieving neighbors in the world, believers must always remember that they are sinners living with sinners. In spite of all their efforts, there will be lapses in their Christian living. Blemishes and faults will show. There will

be occasions when even Christians will hurt each other and complaints against one another will arise. But day after day believers work to understand. They will bear with each other and help each other, lovingly overlook slights and injuries. They will try to help each other grow, and they will strengthen each other rather than cruelly tearing each other down. (PBC)

as the Lord has forgiven you – Forgave is an aorist indicative, pointing to a completed past action – Christ’s death on the cross – as the time of our forgiveness. Since the one-time event of baptism is an incorporation into Christ’s death. (CC p. 145)

Echoes the Fifth Petition of the Lord’s Prayer (Mt 6:12). Forgiving others shows that we truly believe God has forgiven us. (TLSB)

When Paul encourages mutual forgiveness, he is not speaking of a forgiveness with conditions. It is easy to agree to forgive when pardon is asked or amends are offered to soothe our wounded pride, but Jesus’ forgiveness to us is not based on any conditions we must fulfill in order to be forgiven. The forgiveness we give to one another should be either. (PBC)

3:14 *above all these put on love* – Lit, “the bond of perfection.” Like a belt, it holds all things together. (TLSB)

3:15 *peace of Christ*. The attitude of peace that Christ alone gives—in place of the attitude of bitterness and quarrelsomeness. This attitude is to “rule” (lit. “function like an umpire”) in all human relationships. (CSB)

rule – Act as an umpire. (TLSB)

you were called – To call is regularly used for the effective activity of God by which He brings the unbelieving into a saving relationship with Him through faith in Jesus Christ. (CC p. 146)

and be thankful – At first blush, the exhortation to be “thankful” seems to be an unrelated afterthought, yet it too is a relational virtue. The apostle very often speaks of thanksgiving as that which is to be offered to God not so much for benefits received by oneself but for those blessings received by others. Thus, we cannot fully practice thanksgiving unless we are in association with others, that we may know of those blessings they have received for which thanksgiving to God is appropriate. Public worship affords a good opportunity to practice thanksgiving as a relational virtue, for in its prayers the assembly of believers will regularly offer thanksgiving for blessings, eternal and temporal, that others have received. (CC p. 157)

3:16 *word of Christ*. Refers especially to Christ’s teaching, which in the time of the Colossians was transmitted orally. But by implication it includes the OT as well as the NT. (CSB)

dwell – He is the center and chief content of the Word, which is to be preached and taught. The present tense of the imperative “let dwell” points to a continual presence of the Word. It is not merely to be read, commented on, and the like, but it is to be internalized so that it is continually present. Believers are to live, think, and exist in relation to the Word of Christ. It is to empower and norm everything about their existence. (CC p. 146)

richly – This is a term used by Paul almost exclusively to describe the splendor of the way of salvation. Richly here not only means a great deal but also a great benefit, for the riches of salvation will come through the employment of Christ’s Word. (CC p. 146)

Corresponds perfectly with Paul’s goal in 1:28. (TLSB)

psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Some of the most important doctrines were expressed in Christian hymns preserved for us now only in Paul’s letters (1:15–20; Eph 5:14; Php 2:6–11; 1Ti 3:16). “Psalms” refers to the OT psalms (see Lk 20:42; 24:44; Ac 1:20; 13:33), some of which may have been set to music by the church. “Psalm” could also describe a song newly composed for Christian worship (cf. 1Co 14:26, where “hymn” is lit. “psalm” in the Greek text). A “hymn” was a song of praise, especially used in a celebration (see Mk 14:26; Heb 2:12; see also Ac 16:25), much like the OT psalms that praised God for all that he is. A “song” recounted the acts of God and praised him for them (see Rev 5:9; 14:3; 15:3), much like the OT psalms that thanked God for all that he had done. (CSB)

Includes OT psalms as well as NT hymns (1:15–20; Eph 5:14; Php 2:6–11; 1Tm 3:16). Songs conveyed some of the Bible’s greatest teachings. Great expressions of joy and thankfulness naturally flow from the rich doctrine of Christ. “Certainly you will not release a stronger incense or other repellant against the devil than to be engaged by God’s commandments and words, and speak, sing, or think them” (LC Longer Preface 10). (TLSB)

3:17 *whatever you do* – There is no division between the sacred and the secular concerning what a Christian says and does. Christ should accompany us in all facets of life. (TLSB)

in the name of the Lord Jesus – This denotes that His saving work enables all that we do (Mt 29:19; John 14:13-14) as well as that all is to be done to His glory (Phil 2:10). In this verse, the name of Jesus holds the same status as the divine name of Yahweh in the OT. (CC p. 148)

giving thanks – Christians whose hearts are filled with Christ’s love and ruled by His peace will naturally be thankful. Five times in this relatively brief epistle Paul encourages Christians to be thankful. As believers’ knowledge of Christ and the spiritual blessings they have in Him grow and mature, so will their gratitude, and that gratitude will become evident in their whole manner of living. Love and peace always result in gratitude, and gratitude, in turn, promotes love and peace. (PBC)

Paul has mentioned thankfulness three times in three verses. (TLSB)

3:1–17 What is the good life? Prosperity, popularity, pleasure? No, it is the life we receive from Jesus, including gifts that we cannot make or purchase: forgiveness, love, peace, and thankfulness. Jesus’ life fills us with virtues rather than vices and enables us to be a blessing rather than a bane to others. • “Before the dawning day Let sin’s dark deeds be gone, The sinful self be put away, The new self now put on.” Amen. (LSB 331:5). (TLSB)

Rules for Christian Households

18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. 20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. 22 Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the

Lord. 23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

3:18–4:1 In this section, Paul applies to our specific vocations the general principles of Christ-centered living discussed above. (TLSB)

3:18 *submit*. As a boy, Jesus submitted to His parents (Lk 2:51). Working together in harmony necessitates that one leads and another follows, much like members of an athletic team do to achieve a united success. (TLSB)

ὑποτάσσεσθε—“Go on being subject” renders a present tense imperative as directing ongoing action. “Be subject” is used as the most common translation of this verb. See further “Marriage: Wives and Husbands” below. Active forms of ὑποτάσσω mean “to cause to be in a submissive relationship, *to subject, to subordinate*” (BDAG, 1). The passive, as here, means “subject oneself, be subjected or subordinated, obey,” and this involves “recognition of an ordered structure, w[ith] dat[ive] of the entity to whom/which appropriate respect is shown” (BDAG, 1 b β). In passages such as Eph 5:21, the connotation is “submission in the sense of voluntary yielding in love” (BDAG, 1 b β). (TLSB)

3:19 *love*. Husbands must lead the way in love, just as Jesus leads the way in His love for us (cf Eph 5:25). (TLSB)

3:20 *Children*. This Letter was to be read in public worship. By speaking directly to children, Paul points out that children were considered members of the Church and part of worship. (TLSB)

in everything. In everything not sinful (see Ac 5:29). (CSB)

Children are to obey unless directed to do something sinful (Ac 5:29). (TLSB)

3:21 *Fathers* – πατέρες—This plural Greek term for “fathers” can mean “parents” (Heb 11:23). However, in view of the use of the more usual term for “parents” in the preceding verse (γονεῦσιν, the dative plural of γονεύς), πατέρες here likely singles out fathers for special mention. This does not mean that the injunction is inapplicable to mothers, but it emphasizes that fathers are to take the lead in the nurture of their children. (CC)

provoke. Lit, “embitter.” Discipline and encouragement, Law and Gospel, are necessary when raising children. (TLSB)

3:22–4:1 Paul neither condones slavery nor sanctions revolt against masters. Rather, he calls on both slaves and masters to show Christian principles in their relationship and thus to attempt to change the institution from within. The reason Paul writes more about slaves and masters than about wives, husbands, children and fathers may be that the slave Onesimus (4:9) is going along with Tychicus to deliver this Colossian letter and the letter to Philemon, Onesimus’s master, who also lived in Colosse. (CSB)

3:22 *bondservants*. Paul does not condone slavery or advocate revolt. Onesimus, a slave, assisted in delivering this Letter (4:9). He and Tychicus also delivered a Letter to Onesimus’s master, Philemon, who lived in Colossae. (TLSB)

earthly masters - τοῖς κατὰ σάρκα κυρίοις—A more literal translation of κατὰ σάρκα would be “according to the flesh,” but σάρξ here carries none of the usual Pauline connotation of that which is hostile toward God. Rather, the term here denotes earthly κύριοι in distinction from the Christian’s heavenly κύριος, Christ. (CC)

eye-service. Service rendered merely for those who are looking. (TLSB)

sincerity of heart – ἀλλ’ ἐν ἀπλότητι καρδίας—In certain contexts, ἀπλότης, “sincerity,” can mean “simplicity.” What is sincere is unfeigned and unadorned with hypocrisy or “eye service” (as earlier in the verse). On the “heart” as the whole of one’s true, inner being, (CC)

3:23 *heartily*. Lit, “from the soul.” (TLSB)

3:24 *inheritance*. See p 1903. Whatever unfairness we may experience on earth is nothing compared to our inheritance in Christ (1:12). (TLSB)

3:25 *no partiality*. That God judges justly and shows no favoritism is a warning to all (Jn 5:30). (TLSB)

Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

3:18–4:1 People have to work together. But the heart of the old nature is to seek personal advantage, which causes frustration, resentment, and violence. Paul urges us to resist this temptation, no matter what our calling in life may be. Resistance becomes a reality when we live by faith “in the Son of God, who loved [us] and gave Himself for [us]” (Gal 2:20). In Christ, we know that we will not miss out on anything. • Lord, lead us to spend our lives in loving service for You and others, for You have so dearly loved us. Amen. (TLSB)