

THE LIFESTYLE OF WORSHIP

Leader pages on pp. 154-157

THE POINT:
EVERYTHING WE DO IN LIFE IS TO BE AN ACT OF WORSHIP.

COLOSSIANS 3:1-5,12-17

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¹ So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.

² Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.

³ For you 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 Therefore, put to death what belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry.

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¹² Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and dearly loved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience,

¹³ bearing with one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a grievance against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you are also to forgive.

MEMORY VERSE

¹⁴ **Above all, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.** ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ, to which you were also called in one body, rule your hearts. And be thankful.

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¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

KEYWORDS

Hidden with Christ (v. 3)—This is the present status of believers. An implication of this relates to security (Ps. 31:20; Isa. 49:2).

Put to death (v. 5)—A tense of the verb indicating a decisive action—all that was not in keeping with their Christian faith.

Forgiving one another (v. 13)—Forgiving comes from the word for "grace." To forgive is an act of grace, something undeserved.

Rule in your hearts (v. 15)—To preside or control, and thus by extension be the deciding factor.

HOW CAN YOU HAVE A LIFESTYLE OF WORSHIP?

“The proof is in the pudding.”

This phrase and others very much like it have been around since the 14th century in one form or another. Most people understand it to mean that the way something looks doesn't prove anything. The genuineness of something is proven by how it tastes or how it's experienced.

Centuries before this saying occurred, James, the half-brother of Jesus, said a similar thing in a different way as he was discussing true faith: “In the same way faith, if it does not have works, is dead by itself” (Jas. 2:17).

When it comes to worship, there's evidence that validates our praise. It's one thing to praise God with our lips, it's quite another to worship Him with our lives. The writer of Hebrews said it best: “Therefore, through him let us continually offer up to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. Don't neglect to do what is good and to share, for God is pleased with such sacrifices” (Heb. 13:15-16). The proof of worship is in the living.

Focus Your Thoughts //

Colossians 3:1-5

The church at Colossae was in a crisis. Shortly after the apostle Paul founded the church and left to start other churches, false teachers moved in and began to disrupt the new believers with heretical teaching. When Paul heard of the crisis, he penned this letter to address the main issues. Two main points were stressed: The nature and character of Christ and the essential truth that worshipping Jesus meant serving Him with our whole lives.

As we've already seen in the earlier sessions of our study, worship begins with a clear understanding of who Jesus is and what He has done for us. It was at this point the Colossian church had struggled. The false teaching that plagued this church, known as the “Colossian Heresy,” had brought into

question Paul's assertions about Christ, and so he wrote this letter to address those questions. The apostle included a song in Colossians 1:15-20, that remains one of most comprehensive descriptions of the character and person of Christ in the entire New Testament.

Paul said it clearly: Jesus, the Creator of everything, is a person who lived, died, and rose again, and He is God. Because the Colossian church was becoming confused about who Jesus is, they were also confused about how they should live as followers of Jesus. In the first two



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chapters of Colossians, Paul addressed the first concern. In the next chapter, he addressed the second concern: How do we live as followers of Jesus?

The first word, “So” (3:1), shows us that Paul has moved to application. We might say it this way: “Because everything that has been said about Jesus in the letter is true, you should live this way.”

The second word has even more weight: “if” (v. 1). Another rendering of this word could be “since.” Paul is writing to believers to say that faith in Christ and His resurrection will directly affect your mindset and priorities. Knowing Christ means you have crucified your old self and now have new life in Christ. As he told the church in Corinth, “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!” (2 Cor. 5:17).

A genuine worshiper of Christ will set his or her mind on Christ and live in a way that reflects Christ’s life within. This continues until the day Jesus returns and then they will be with Him forever. The idea that a believer could worship Jesus yet live a life of selfish indulgence and immorality was counter to the gospel Paul had preached.

In case anyone was still confused, Paul added specifics: Sexual sin and impure attitudes, which amount to idolatry (the worship of any other god), won’t be the thought pattern of the true worshiper of Jesus. Instead, the true worshiper—whose mind is set on Jesus—will consistently and willfully put wrong thinking out of his or her mind, day after day in simple acts of worship through obedience.

HOW CAN WE PRACTICALLY SET OUR MINDS ON THINGS ABOVE?

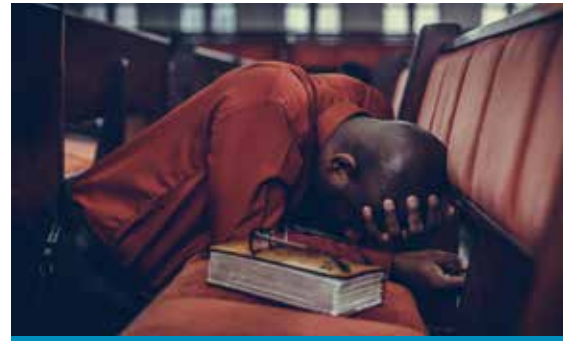
Fortify Your Attitude //

Colossians 3:12-15

Living a life of worship could be wrongly characterized as merely a long list of “don’ts”. And to some degree, another section of Colossians 3 gives us at least a partial list of things the true believer should not do. A point of clarification is needed here: The “don’ts” of the Christian life aren’t there to carve a path to earn our salvation.

Their inclusion in no way suggests that the determining factor of getting into heaven is whether your good deeds outpace your bad ones. We are saved through faith by grace alone. Period.

The don’ts of Colossians 3:5-11 are balanced by the do’s of verses 12-16. The lifestyle of worship for the believer is much more than what you don’t do. The Christ-life within causes us to resist willful sin (the don’ts) and pursue simple acts of obedience that reflect



DIGGING DEEPER SACRIFICIAL WORSHIP

In the Book of Romans the Apostle Paul had written to believers who were saved and operating in their gifts but not experiencing transformation in their lifestyles. So they were missing out on the life God desired for them. In chapters 1-11 in Romans, Paul lays out a systematic statement of the gospel, why we believe what we believe.

In chapter 12 Paul makes a shift and teaches us how to live what we believe. Paul said in verse 1, “Therefore brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship.” Because of all that we have received in Christ; the totality of a Christian’s life should be a life of worship. Such lives are holy and pleasing to God.

How does the possibility of pleasing God motivate you to live sacrificially for Him?

the character of Christ.

Because we are chosen, set apart, and loved, we will do things that reflect Christ:

- We put on compassion because Jesus is compassionate.
- We are kind because Jesus is kind.
- We have humility because Jesus humbled Himself.
- We reflect gentleness because Jesus is gentle with us.
- We are patient because Jesus is patient.
- We forgive because He has forgiven us.
- And we love because He is love and He first loved us.

WHICH OF THESE VIRTUES DO YOU FIND MOST CHALLENGING TO PUT ON? WHY?

All will stand before God and give an account for our lives. But the beautiful truth of the gospel is that One has already fulfilled those requirements on our behalf. He is prophesied about in Psalm 24: "The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not appealed to what is false, and who has not sworn deceitfully. He will receive blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation" (vv. 4-5).

And the best news of all comes next: "Such is the generation of those who inquire of him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob" (v. 6).

That means Jesus was measured and found worthy, and anyone who trusts Him will receive His credentials for salvation. The don'ts can't condemn us, and the dos can't save us. But if Jesus is our life and our eyes remain fixed on Him, His life is within us. Our lives will prove His presence by the things we choose not to do, and we worship through a lifestyle with the things we do through His strength.

Now that's something for which we can truly be thankful.



Be Faithful in Your Actions //

Colossians 3:16-17

Today's worship leaders talk a great deal about "flow." The idea is that a worship service shouldn't feel like a series of disconnected moments following each other. There is a starting place and connective elements move the service along from one song or component to the next. As a worship planner for many years, I think about "flow" all the time.

In these verses, Paul was addressing a different type of flow that's far more important to the worship health of a disciple. For the entire letter to the church at Colossae, Paul was outlining a sequence of how worship flows in the life of a believer. Consider:

This lifestyle of worship begins with a clear view of who Jesus is and what He has done. (Col. 1-2). It continues with the practical application of the life choices a disciple will make that will include things to "put off" and other things to "put on," specifically, love. It produces peace in the heart of the disciple as he or she understands the life Jesus has given—a life that can't be earned, but one that is offered.

It fosters an attitude of thankfulness that finds expression. It inspires the praise and instruction of a song, born in the heart of the believer and offered for the benefit and edification of other believers. It culminates in a life full of the purpose of bringing

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honor and glory to the name of Christ in everything we do. Again, from a heart full of gratitude. Worship has a flow.

HOW DO THESE VERSES ADD TO YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF WORSHIP?

When we sing, we learn valuable doctrine and truth about the gospel, we pray important prayers of supplication and intercession, and we teach and encourage one another along the path of serving Jesus. When we sing with others, we're giving visible and audible testimony of God's goodness and faithfulness in our lives. When we don't sing, we call into question our beliefs and confidence in God. So, what do we sing? "Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" (v. 16). If we zoom out further on the phrase, I believe Paul was doing more than giving us three types of songs to use. He was also saying in essence, "From the overflow of your lives of worship, use many types of expression to teach and admonish one another in worship." Thinking of it that way, we should be cautious about critiquing other believers who use songs or worship styles differently than we do.

The attention should never be on the songs themselves. They're only tools to point the way to the One who deserves a lifestyle of worship, flowing from the life He has placed within us.

DID YOU KNOW?

Regeneration or being "born again" is a sovereign act of God where He imparts spiritual life to us (Ezek. 36: 26-27). The results of being born again are numerous. One that stands out is found in John's first epistle. John says, "Everyone who has been born of God does not sin, because his seed remains in him; he is not able to sin, because he has been born of God." (1 John 3:9). John explained that a person who is born again has that spiritual seed — the imparted essence of God's righteous character — within him. This keeps the believer from living a life of continual sin. This is not a perfect life but the pattern of life will not be characterized by continual indulgence in sin. It is a blessing to the believer to know we are not ruled by sin!

Biblical Truth: Christ was born to die, so that believers could have eternal life.

How would you share the blessing of being born again in light of not being ruled by sin with an unbeliever?

LIVE IT

How does your calendar reflect where your attention is focused?

Do you have an app on your devices (phone, computer, tablet) that measures your screen time? If not, then how about your daily schedule? As believers who desire to flourish in a lifestyle of worship, how much of your attention is on the Lord? Choose one of the following applications:

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- **The Starting Place.** Looking back over your life as a believer, make a list of some things you have "put off" as you matured in your faith? Evaluate further: What hurtful habits still hinder the flow of worship in your life? Decide today to eliminate those habits with God's help.
- **The Growing Place.** Using Colossians 3:12-14 as a guide, make a list identifying those attributes of the Christ-life within you that challenge you the most. Commit those verses to memory.
- **The Sowing Place.** Reflect on your involvement in corporate worship. Invite someone from your neighborhood or community to attend your church's worship service with you. Afterward, share some of the ways worship has made an impact in your life.

DAILY READINGS

1. MEDITATING ON CHRIST // COLOSSIANS 3:1-5

The way we think has a direct effect on how we behave. Our minds can become consumed by the things of this world that may cause us to be or look like we are upset, sad, and even respond to others in an irritating tone. This requires some resetting to think about what we are thinking about and change our focus. Our mindset should reflect our worship of Christ. Paul instructs in Colossians 3:1-2, "So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things."

When we focus our thoughts on Jesus, it's reflected in how we react to others.

2. ATTITUDE OF SERVICE // COLOSSIANS 3:12-13

Paul is clear in our lesson on how we should behave as a Christian as stated in Colossians 3:12-13, to put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another. When you put on an outfit you feel good in, your attitude not only changes but it radiates to others, maybe even receiving a compliment or two. Paul instructed us to "put on" the characteristics of Christ because like our clothes, it is a choice, it can come off, and shifts our attitude and presence on how we affect others. Philippians 2:1-8, Paul talks about adopting the same of attitude of Christ who emptied himself, humbled himself and assumed the form of a servant.

May we strengthen our attitude of Christ in service to others.

3. STEADFAST FAITHFULNESS // COLOSSIANS 3:16-17;

When we practice faithfulness to God, we are placing our trust in Him and worship Him through our love, actions, and praise through all circumstances. Even when we want to choose a different path, our faithfulness causes us to maintain His commandments. Colossians 3:16-17 encourages us to honor God in our actions as we dwell in his wisdom, singing praises, and carrying gratitude in our hearts

to God. And do everything unto God. We are faithful to those we love even when it's difficult and loyal to others who treat us poorly. We have learned in our lesson that God promises goodness for us.

"Above all, fear the Lord and worship Him faithfully with all your heart; consider the great things He has done for you" (1 Sam. 12:24).

4. HOLY AND ACCEPTABLE // ROMANS 12:1-2

We can choose many lifestyles to decide how we want to live. Even with many choices, there is only one lifestyle that is pleasing to God as we put Him first. Romans 12:1-2 tells us therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God. That whatever we do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Choosing to follow God with the entirety of lives is our true worship, a whole heart following.

5. MOST OF ALL, LOVE // COLOSSIANS 3:1-14; 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

In the Colossians scripture of our lesson, Paul talks about being raised by Christ that our lives are now hidden with Christ in God. That our new life in Christ is beyond cultural and social boundaries putting to death evil desire, sexual immorality, filthy language, malice, slander, anger, and not to lie to one another. 2 Corinthians 5:17 reminds us, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, and look, new things have come." When we are raised by Christ we put off old things and put on the virtues of Christ. A person does put on clean clothes over dirty ones. Likewise, we cannot put on a new life in Christ over our old self and ways of thinking. Colossians 3:14 says, "Above all, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity."

When we live a lifestyle of worship we live in love and unity with others.