

Week of September 24 - 30

Do's and Don'ts of Christian Living (Colossians 3:1 – 4:6)

Paul lists several instructions for living the Christian life. Below is a list of the items:

- Set your sights on the treasures of Heaven
- Let Heaven fill your thoughts
- Don't spend time worrying about things down here on earth
- Put to death earthly things in you, such as fornication, impurity, passion, evil desires, covetousness, anger, wrath, malice, slander, foul talk, and lying
- Practice tenderhearted mercy and kindness toward others
- Don't worry about making a good impression, but be ready to suffer quietly and patiently
- Be gentle and willing to forgive
- Never hold grudges
- Forgive others
- Let love guide your life
- Let the peace of God be present in your hearts and lives.
- Remember what Jesus taught and let His words enrich your lives
- Teach them to each other and sing them in psalms, hymns, and Spiritual songs
- Let what you do or say be representative of the Lord
- Give thanks to Jesus in the presence of God the Father
- Wives, submit to your husbands
- Husbands, be loving and kind to your wives and not bitter against them, nor harsh
- Children, obey your fathers and mothers
- Fathers, don't scold your children so much they become discouraged and quit trying
- Slaves, willingly obey your earthly masters to please the Lord and work hard and cheerfully at all you do
- Slave owners, be just and fair to your slaves
- Don't weary in prayer; watch for God's answers and be thankful for them
- Make the most of your chances to tell others the Gospel.
- Let your conversation be gracious as well as sensible, so you will always have the right answer

And so, Paul's letter to the Christians is largely a letter urging them to repent of sinful behavior and disregard the teachings and love of the world.

Final greetings (Colossians 4:7-18)

He urges them to follow the teachings of Christ instead and to replace any sinful behavior with righteousness. As Paul ends his letter to the church at Colossae, he continues his instructions, informing them that he is in prison and asks them for prayer. He tells them, "Remember my chains. Grace be with you."

The main subjects that Paul covered in Colossians were:

- Lead lives worthy of the Lord
- Be mature in Christ
- Disregard worldly wisdom

- Put to death sinful behavior
- Replace bad behavior with righteous behavior

Introduction to Ephesians

Ten years after he wrote his letter to the church in Galatia, Paul is in prison in Rome. The church at Ephesus was very sound and ready for meat and potatoes. It was established on his third missionary journey and was, for many years, the most quoted book of the New Testament. It is one of the prison letters and is a general letter to several churches (a round-robin letter). He offers no personal information about himself.

Ephesians answers the question, “What is the church to Christ and to the modern world where we live, and what is God’s purpose for this world and Christ’s church in it?”

So, if you want to know that God thinks of you and me, about what we mean to Him, then this letter has the answer.

Spiritual Blessing through Christ (Ephesians 1:1-23)

Ephesians 1 is a beautiful introduction to how we have received every Spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus. They are found in the first 14 verses of the chapter:

- He *chose us* in Him before creating the world to be holy and blameless in His sight.
- He *predestined* us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ
- In Him, we *have redemption* through his blood
- We *have forgiveness* of our sins
- He *has lavished* us with God’s grace, with all wisdom and understanding
- He *revealed* to us the mystery of His will
- We *are marked* in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession.

Then Paul prays that we will have the revelation of Christ so we can know the hope and power we have been called to as His body, the church of which He is the head.

We Are Made Alive in Christ (Ephesians 2:1-22)

Paul reminds us of God’s great love, that even when we were dead, Christ made us alive in Him. We are raised and seated with Christ in Heaven by His grace, which we receive through faith. Paul reminds us Christ has made one church out of those who had the covenant (the Jews) and those who were hopeless and without God (the Gentiles) and reconciled both to God through the work of the cross. Now we have access to the same Father, and His Holy Spirit lives in us.

Paul Is the Preacher to the Gentiles (Ephesians 3:1-21)

Paul says the mystery of Christ has been made known through revelation by the Spirit of God. The mystery is that through the Gospel, Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members of one body, and partakers in the promise of Christ Jesus. Paul says his mission as an apostle to the Gentiles is to preach the administration of this mystery that has now been revealed. He ends the chapter with a prayer for believers to know and experience the love of God and to be filled to the full measure of God according to the power that now lives in us. He says, “When I think of the wisdom and scope of His plan, I fall on my knees and pray to the Father of the great family of

God, some of them already in Heaven and some here on earth, that out of his glorious, unlimited resources, He will give you the mighty inner strengthening of his Holy Spirit. And I pray that Christ will be more and more at home in your hearts, living within you as you trust in him. May your roots go deep into the soil of God's love, and may you be able to feel and understand, as all God's children should, how long, how wide, how deep, and how high his love is, and to experience this love for yourselves, though it is so great that you will never see the end of it or fully know or understand it. And so, at last, you will be filled up with God himself.”