We will all face difficult times in life, and when we do, it's easy to have anxious thoughts and forebodings. But we need to get to the point where we learn to agree with God and His Word when trouble comes.
Joyce Meyer

Prayer Study #475
COLOSSIANS 3
First Love Ministries, Inc., of Perry, GA

Colossians 3 New King James Version (NKJV)

Not Carnality but Christ

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.

Paul starts with the focus on Christ. He had written to the Romans in Romans 6:3-5: "*Know you not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into His Death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life for if we have been planted together in the likeness of His Death, we should be also in likeness of His Resurrection.*" Paul is repeating this important theme in the beginning of this chapter of Colossians. He tells the Colossians that they should seek the things, which come from the Lord and not seek those things which come from man.

Why is Christ seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty? He sits because the work of the cross was a finished work. Nothing more needed to be done. Jesus paid the full price for our sins. His blood was enough.

The Lord also sits at the right hand of God the Father because He is an obedient Son, and His Father told Him to sit at His (the Father's) right hand, until He (the Father) made His (Jesus') enemies His (Jesus') footstool (Psalm 110:1; Matthew 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:43; Acts 2:35; Hebrews 1:13; Hebrews 10:13). I firmly believe that one of the purposes we are on the earth is to be used by the Father to make the enemies of Jesus His footstool. Why is this footstool so important that the Holy Spirit repeated this verse 7 times, the number of completion in scripture, in the Word. Psalm 99:5 (*Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at His*

footstool; for He is Holy) and Psalm 132:7 (*We will go into His Tabernacles: we will worship at His footstool)* give us an important clue. It is a place where we will worship Him. Isaiah 66:1 says, "*Thus says the LORD, The heaven is My throne, and the Earth is My footstool…"* I believe that when the enemies of God are made His footstool, all creation will in a spine tingling service will worship the Holy One of Israel!

Verse 2 repeats the theme of verse 1 by repeating that we should direct our minds to things above in heaven or paradise, and not on the temporal things of earth. Because many gain power, money and position on earth, their minds stay focused on worldly things, which is very sad since our time on earth is so brief but our eternal life is forever and ever. I think that that is why Jesus warns us how difficult it is for a rich man to enter heaven. Riches most often make people worldly and in no need of God.

Verse 3 reminds us that we are dead in trespasses and sin. Our old fleshly nature had to died with Christ, who became our substitute, taking all of our sin and shame on Himself, so that we could become a new creature (2nd Corinthians 5:17: Therefore is any man be in Christ [saved by the blood], he is a new creature [creation]: old things have passed away; behold, all things are become new). The old is no longer useable because Jesus made us brand new! And we will no longer live as if the world was all that mattered. Barclay says that those who have come to the born again experience will "set giving above getting, serving above ruling, forgiving above avenging. The standard of values for Christians will

be God's, not the world's.

When a person died and was buried, the Greeks spoke of that person as being hidden in the earth. They also talked of certain wise men who found secret wisdom in books as being hidden in their books. Paul is saying that Christians are not hidden in the earth or hidden in the wisdom of books but hidden in Christ.

Often we speak of people who have found a certain area of life that becomes their life (ex. Sports is his life, or music is her life). For Christians, Jesus is our life. In verse 4 Paul uses another one of his beautiful titles for Jesus, when he says, "Christ, who is our life." He will appear at the Rapture of the Church, if there is a Rapture or at His Second Coming. Whether one or both events occur, we will, at this time, be given a glorified body (1st Corinthians 15:51: *Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed* [put on a glorified body!]) (1st John 3:2: *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we will see Him as He is.*)

One reason that I favor the latter chapters of Paul's letters is that usually he starts off with good theology, but he ends up with practical advice, and I prefer the practical advice over theological arguments, although both are extremely important. Verse 5 of Chapter 3 tell us that we should put to death anything in us that separates us in any way from God. Paul goes so far as to give a list of things

we should put off:

a. Fornication and uncleanness: Chastity was the one new virtue that Christianity brought into the world. In Paul's world sexual relationships, of any kind, before marriage and outside marriage, heterosexual or homosexual, were acceptable. Lust was something that was expected to be satisfied, not controlled.
b. Passion and evil desire: Think of all the crimes committed because of passion and evil desire. Our passion should be for the things of God, and our desires really should be focused on what we could do for the Kingdom of God while we are on the earth.
c. Covetousness, which Paul equates to idolatry: People today covet material things, power, position, recognition, etc. All of these things are self-focused, not Christ-focused. And America today is a country full of idols. We covet and idolize such things as the human body, money, sports and entertainment figures, success, and materialism, etc.

All of these are sins of the flesh. God cannot tolerate sin, even in His children, and His wrath will come to those who are disobedient. He chastens those He loves and scourges every son whom He receives. (Hebrews 12:6: *For whom the Lord loves He chastens and scourges every son whom He receives.*) Truly only the blood of the Lamb allows us entrance into the very presence of God. Nevertheless, even though the blood cleanses us from all unrighteousness, (John 1:7: *But if we walk in the Light, as He is in the Light, we have fellowship one with another and the Blood of Jesus Christ His*

Son cleanses us from all sin), we are commanded by scripture to put to death these sins of our flesh nature.

Paul was talking to people like you and me, who before Christ had walked in disobedience. There is an old saying that we would do well to remember: *Every saint has a past and every sinner has a future.*

Next, in verse 10, Paul uses the analogy of taking off dirty clothes and putting on new clothes. He lists some of the sins that are part of the old man or old nature: Anger, wrath (which Webster defines as *strong, vengeful anger or indignation, retributory punishment for an offense*), malice (*spite, desire to see another suffer; wishing pain, injury, or distress on another*), blasphemy (which is *the act of insulting or showing contempt or lack of reverence of God*), filthy language or cursing, and lying. We in our culture treat lying lightly because we have been lied to so much by our government and society. We have watered down absolute truth to situational ethics. Yet lying is a really big deal to God because it is the opposite of Who He is, i.e. the Truth, and we know that we shall know the TRUTH and the TRUTH shall set us free (John 8:32). One of the highest forms of TRUTH is worship. In fact, we can worship God only in Spirit and in Truth. And the Father of Lies is our eternal enemy, the Lord of Dung! (John 8:44). In fact, John, the Revelator, wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, this verse: Revelation 21:8: *But the fearful and unbelieving and the abominable and murderers and whoremongers and sorcerers and idolaters and ALL LIARS, shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*

Before we leave these deeds of the old man or the flesh nature, I want to point out that there is nothing wrong with righteous anger. The Lord Himself is reported to have been angry at times (ex. when He cleared the temple), and Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “Be ye angry and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” Those who never express anger often become ill with psychosomatic illnesses. The Lord designed us to get out negative emotions. One of those emotions is anger, but it must be a righteous anger, and we must display it in an appropriate way without sinning and release it before the end of the day.

We put on the new man after the image of Jesus. In other words, He is the pattern Son that we follow and model our lives after. The knowledge that makes us new is the knowledge of Christ, and in Christ there is neither Greek (Gentile) nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, Barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free. Thus, there is no distinction for God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34) and whosoever will, may come to Jesus (Acts 2:21). Christ occupies all spheres of human life and is everything to the Christian.

Character of the New Man

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.* ***16*** *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.* ***17*** *And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

We have taken off our dirty clothes. Now it is time to put on clean clothes. By accepting Christ, we become the elect of God, holy by the cleansing power of His Blood and the infilling of His Spirit and beloved of God. He really does love you, every individual one. But we have a part to play. We change our behavior and attitudes and become merciful, kind, humble, meek, patient, and forgiving. If we have a difficult time forgiving someone, we should think of how much Jesus has forgiven us, and we should remember that His Word says that if we don't forgive others, He will not forgive us (Matthew 6:12-15).

Then Paul gives us the greatest of the fruit of the Spirit, and that is love. Love is the only thing that holds the whole body of Christ together in a binding fellowship. With that love comes the peace of God. Here Paul uses an athletic term which, in our modern vernacular, means *umpire.* He is telling us that, when there is a conflict, we pray and ask the Lord to settle the matter. The right choice brings peace, and that choice will keep us in one body, the Church.

Thankfulness is one of the least exhibited characteristics of our entitlement society. We are

called over and over in the Word of God to be thankful. First Thessalonians 5:18 tells us, *"In everything give thanks for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."*

We teach at First Love that the Word of God has precedence over all other aspects of worship. Verse 16 show us that even our praise and worship music should be Word-oriented, in order to teach and to warn us in a gentle manner *to get with it!* Our music does not have to be limited but can take many different forms including the singing of the Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. The goal of each is to bring blessing and praise and worship to the Lord.

Everything is to be done in the name of the Lord, no matter what it is. If we follow this commandment, it sure would change our priorities!

The Christian Home

18 *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*
19 *Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.*
20 *Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.*
21 *Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*
22 *Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.* ***23*** *And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,* ***24*** *knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.* ***25*** *But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no*

partiality.

Paul ends this section with practical advice concerning the family. The wives are to submit to their husbands. This does not mean that women are to submit to men! We have looked at the "woman question" several times through the eyes of scripture, and we have found that the woman can be in any of the five fold ministry offices as well as men can.

Husbands have an even more difficult command. They are to love their wives as Christ loves the Church. If he does that, there will be no bitterness. Ephesians 5:25 tells husbands, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for it...." If the husband does this, she will have no trouble submitting to him. That is the scriptural order of the home.

Children are to obey their parents in all things. This really is referring to that which pertains to scripture. By following this command, children learn to obey the Lord. Sometimes they have to be disciplined when they disobey, just like the Lord disciples His older children when they are disobedient.

A good father learns quickly that he can motivate obedience by loving and praising his children, even when it is a tough love that disciplines, than he can through needlessly provoking anger and fear.

Even slaves are exhorted to obey masters, even when they are pagan masters. They are not to work hard just when the master is there supervising them, and they are to work in singleness of heart, meaning that their heart should be to please God, whether

their earthly masters are watching or not. In other words, everything we do should be done with the idea that it is being done ultimately for the Lord and the Lord alone. In the end, God will reward the servant for what he did or did not do. This is the Law of Retribution (Matthew 7:2) or the Law of Sowing and Reaping (Hosea 8:7).

Paul's final point in this chapter is that God looks at all alike, playing favorites with no one. We are all on an equal playing field. The ground at the foot of the Cross is level.

JOY IS THE FLAG

Joy is the flag flown from the castle of my heart,
From the castle of my heart, from the castle of my heart
Joy is the flag flown from the castle of my heart,
Since the King is in residence there.

So lift high in the sky, let the whole world know,
Let the whole world know, let the whole world know,
So lift it high in the sky, let the whole world know
That the King is in residence there.

IT'S NO LONGER I THAT LIVETH

It's no longer I that liveth,
But Christ that liveth in me;
It's no longer I that liveth,
But Christ that liveth in me;
He lives, He lives, Jesus is alive in me
It's no longer I that liveth,
But Christ that liveth in me.