



Paul's letter to the church of Jesus Christ at Oklahoma City
The Admonitions-Colossians 3:1-17

Colossians 2:1

1 For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh. NKJV

When Paul wrote this letter, he was experiencing a great conflict in his soul over these disciples. He was concerned.

His concern was the threats to the faith of these disciples. Paul felt he had something to offer them by way of instruction and his spiritual gift that would help them with the challenges. But he was not able to visit them. The best he could was write a letter.

What were the threats to these disciples?

- Some in the church were tempted to abandon their faith in Jesus and return to their pagan religion. (Colossians 1:21-23)
- Some were being tempted to follow false Jewish teachers and add Jewish regulations to their faith. (Colossians 2:11-19)

Paul builds his case for rejecting these false teachers by sharing...

- They are complete in Jesus
- Keeping Jewish laws would not give them freedom over the indulgences of the flesh.

Colossians 2:20-23

20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations —

21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,"

22 which all concern things which perish with the using — according to the commandments and doctrines of men?

23 These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.

NKJV

Paul frequently used the word flesh to describe that part of our being that desires to fulfill any appetite in a way that God forbids.

The word indulgence means gratification or satisfaction or filled up.

There is within all of us the law of sin that tempts us to seek gratification, satisfaction, and to be filled up with things that God forbids.

Paul argued that regulations like being circumcised, following a strict diet, or keeping the sabbath laws are of no value against the indulgences of the flesh. There is no power in any regulations or rules to empower anyone to overcome fleshly indulgences.

So, what does have value? What works?

When I counsel the members of our church family, people confess their faults to me. Men and women have confessed....

Sexual immorality

Sexual assault

Verbal and physical assault

Addiction

Bitterness

Greed

Selfishness

(I am very grateful that now there is a place for everyone to be transparent about their faults; our small groups.)

If rules and regulations have no value against fleshly indulgences, what works?

Colossians 3:1-4

1 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.

Here is a summary of what Paul said.

1. When you receive Jesus, you become a new man.

Colossians 3:1

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When you were born, you were born dead to God in transgressions and sins.

Ephesians 2:2

2 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins...

NKJV

Being dead in transgression and sins means you were dead to the spiritual life of God. You were dead relationally to God. You were dead to the covenant promises of God. You were dead relationally to the family of God. You were by nature a child of wrath.

When you receive Jesus, you are raised with Christ. You are transformed. You are made alive spiritually to the life of God. You are made alive relationally to God. You are made alive to the covenant promises of God. You are made alive to the family of God. You are by nature a child of God.

Paul called being dead in transgressions and sins the old man. Paul called being raised with Christ the new man.

[Colossians 3:9b-10](#)

[9b ...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,
NKJV](#)

If you have received Jesus, you have put off the old man and you have put on the new. You have been raised with Christ. You are the new man. This is your new identity. (The caterpillar and the butterfly; Tarzan the ape man and John Clayton, the Lord of Greystoke)

[2. Since you are the new man, seek and set your mind on things above.](#)

[Colossians 3:1-4](#)

[1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.](#)

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[4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.](#)

Notice the words “if then,” in verse 1. When these two words are used together they mean the same as the word since, by reason of, in consideration of, or because.

By using if then, Paul was drawing a reasonable conclusion based on an established reality.

The established reality is you are raised with Christ. You are a new man. You are a citizen in God’s eternal kingdom.

The reasonable conclusion is, seek and set your mind on things above.

Because you are raised with Christ, because you are the new man, seek and set your mind on things above; seek and set your mind on what fits you. Seek and set your mind on that which identifies you. Seek and set your mind on that which satisfies you and fills you up.

Caterpillars think about the leaves of their host plants. Butterflies think about nectar from flowers.

Tarzan thought about stems, bamboo shoots and **fruits**, termites and ants. John Clayton thought about meat.

Tarzan thought about playing games and competing with his ape friends. John Clayton thought about how to use his wealth to bless others.

Paul said, since you are the new man, set your mind on things above. To seek and set your mind on things on earth is unreasonable. It does not make any sense. It is contrary to who you are.

3. Since you are the new man, behave like the new man.

Colossians 3:5-9

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....

Colossians 3:12-15

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.

To behave like the old man is to behave like the sons of disobedience that are children of wrath when you are children of the inheritance.

To behave like the old man is to behave like a child when you are a man.

To behave like the old man is to behave like a pauper when you are a prince with a penthouse.

Caterpillars crawl on their host plant. Butterflies fly from flower to flower.

To live like the old man is to live like a caterpillar when you are a butterfly.

Tarzan lived in the jungle. John Clayton lived in a castle called Greystoke manner.

Tarzan did not wear any clothes. John Clayton dressed in fine English suits.

Tarzan traveled by swinging from vines. John Clayton traveled in fine carriages and airplanes.

To behave like the old man is to behave like Tarzan the ape man when you are John Clayton, Lord of Greystoke.

To think and behave like the old man is out of character. It is no longer who you are.

Having faith in God and His Word is the only way to experience God's power.

When I talk to a brother or a sister that is defeated by sin, and they have a genuine desire to change, they normally ask me what they need to do to change. They are normally looking for rules and regulations that will help them change. They are looking for the same kind of answer that you would expect if someone wanted to be a better soldier, athlete, student, employee, etc.

And I am sorry to say that in many churches that is what you are going to get. (Change what you read, change what you watch, change what you listen to, change your friends, read your bible more, pray more, go to church more. Stop dancing, stop drinking, stop chewing, and stop hanging out with the girls that do.)

Rules and regulations are of no value against the indulgences of the flesh. Rules and regulations cannot make you righteous.

What does have value is knowing you are a butterfly. What does have value is knowing you are John Clayton. What does have value is knowing you have been raised with Christ and you are the new man.

[Having faith that you are the new man enables you to act like the new man.](#)

Why are so many people so self-centered even though they say they trust Jesus? Why are so many people living like fornicators and hypocrites that say they trust Jesus? Why are so many people so greedy that say they trust Jesus? Why are so many people that are addicts say they trust Jesus? Why are so many people so angry that say they trust Jesus? Why are so many people unable to control their tongues that say they trust in Jesus? Why are so many people suffering from anxiety and depression that say they trust in Jesus? Why are so many people so lazy that say they trust Jesus? Why are so many people so passive about discipleship that say they believe in Jesus?

Paul said....

[2 Corinthians 5:17](#)

[17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.](#)

[NKJV](#)

There is so much bondage to fleshly indulgences in the church because so many do not believe the truth.

God says you are a butterfly and you say you are still a caterpillar.

God says you are John Clayton and you say you are still Tarzan.

God says you are a new man and you are still living like you are the old man.

Why?

- You are walking by sight and not by faith.

Colossians 3:3-4

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.

Your new identity is impossible to see with your physical eyes because your old man died and your new man is hidden with Christ in God.

Your new man is in the spirit and what is in the spirit you cannot currently see with your physical eyes.

When Jesus appears a second time and transforms our bodies, not only will you see Him, you will see you!

Just as you currently can only see Jesus by faith, you must also see yourself by faith.

You need to decide once and for all that you are going to see yourself by faith.

- You still have affections for your old man

Philippians 3:18-20

18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame — who set their mind on earthly things. 20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

NKJV

There are things about your old man and old life that you have some measure of affection. You don't really want stop being your old man.

John Clayton had a difficult time fully embracing his new life and inheritance because he still had affections for being Tarzan, the Lord of the apes. There were things about his old jungle life that still appealed to him and nurtured his ego.

I can't relate to this. When I received Jesus, it was because I did not want to be Jerry Wells anymore. I did not want his heart. I did not want his attitudes. I did not want his sinful

behavior. I did not want his lifestyle. I did not want his interests. I had to be convinced to keep playing sports. I did not want his family. I did not want his friends. I wanted a whole new life and I saw that Jesus promised me one. So, I can't relate to having affections for your old man or your old life.

Your old man was crucified and buried with Jesus Christ, and you have got to stop digging up his corpse and dragging him around with you like he is some kind of trophy.
Paul said he is corrupt!

[Ephesians 4:22](#)

[22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, NKJV](#)

The word corrupt comes from the Greek word phtheiro (fthi'-ro). It means waste, filthy, spoiled. Morally it means to be depraved and vile. There is absolutely nothing about the old man that is worth salvaging.

Paul said that the old man is not only corrupt but that he is becoming more and more corrupt according to deceitful lusts.

Paul said he considered his old man to be trash that needs to be discarded.

If you are going to fully embrace your new man in Christ, you need to decide to do the same thing, once and for all.

[Until you reach a place that you want to trash your old man, you will not fully embrace your new man!](#)

After we have made the decision to live by faith and to trash the old man, how do we live in this reality?

[How do you live in this reality?](#)

[Colossians 3:16-17](#)

[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. NKJV](#)

- [Live in the Word of God and live with people that believe these truths.](#)
- [Live to honor Jesus.](#)

Invitation

- Trust the Word of God that you are the new man
- Trash the old man