

Practicing Justice

August 26 • Bible Study Guide 13

Bible Background • EPHESIANS 4:25–5:2; COLOSSIANS 3:1–17
Printed Text • COLOSSIANS 3:5–17 | Devotional Reading • ROMANS 8:1–11

Aim for Change

By the end of this lesson we will: EXPLORE the symbolic significance of being clothed in Christ for living justly in the world; APPRECIATE ways others have demonstrated being clothed in Christ; and COMMIT to living justly.

In Focus

Jason couldn't believe it. He had just run into his old friend Brandon at the local grocery store. He hadn't seen him for three years. They had both gone their separate ways after college and failed to keep in touch. While in college, Jason and Brandon had both accepted Christ and were baptized at the same church.

As they stood there in the aisle catching up on old times, something about Brandon rubbed Jason the wrong way. Now Jason could see why they hadn't kept in touch. Brandon was a different person. He talked badly about immigrants and called women out of their names. He also ran schemes that cheated his customers out of money. Jason silently prayed for Brandon as he listened to him recap the last few years. "You know," Jason said, "one of the best things I remember about college was when we both began following Christ together." Brandon looked at him like a deer caught in headlights. "When we chose to follow Jesus, we chose to treat people as human beings made in the image of God. What happened?"

Brandon looked down. "I really can't tell you, life happens. Everything isn't always black and white, and it's hard when the world is against you."

Jason nodded and said, "It's true. But if something is wrong, making it right starts with you."

Justice is never absent of personal character. How has your relationship with Christ caused you to live justly?

Keep in Mind

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering" ([Colossians 3:12](#)).

Words You Should Know

A. Anger ([Colossians 3:8](#)) *orge* (Gk.)—Feeling of discontent, displeasure, or indignation.

B. Malice (v. 8) *kakia* (Gk.)—General feeling of badness, a vicious disposition, prompting one to injure one's neighbor.

Say It Correctly

Concupiscence. con-**KYOO**-pi-sens.

Scythian. si-**THEE**-en.

KJV

Colossians 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye 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 whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

NLT

Colossians 3:5 So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.

6 Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming.

7 You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world.

8 But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language.

9 Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds.

10 Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him.

11 In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

12 Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

13 Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony.

15 And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

16 Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.

17 And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

The People, Places, and Times

Barbarians. The Greeks used this as a term for those they deemed uneducated, that is, those who did not speak Greek or follow a Greek pattern of living. These people were also despised by the educated citizens and those living in areas eventually conquered by Greece and Rome.

Scythian. A native of Scythia, an area on the edge of the world known to the Romans, north and east of the Black Sea, controlling areas that are now Ukraine, Russia, and Kazakhstan. Scythians were considered savages, and the ultimate of barbarism. The Greeks despised the Jews; a barbarian scorned a Scythian. They were the lowest of the low.

How can labels and hatred create problems within the church and world?

Background

In the final two chapters of the book of Colossians, Paul challenged the Colossians to practically apply the doctrines he had been preaching. Paul believed Christians should not just know the truth and be able to defend it, but live out that truth in their daily lives as well.

The pagan religions of Paul's day said little or nothing about personal morality. Worshipers gave offerings to idols to pay them back for or to bribe them for favors. It was called "do ut des," Latin for "I give so that you might give." A worshiper could bow before an idol and put his offering on the altar, and it had no impact on how they lived. What a person believed had no direct relationship with how he behaved.

The Christian faith brought a whole new concept into the pagan society. Faith in Christ meant being united with Him. If Christians share His life, they must follow His example. If Christ lives in the believer, he or she cannot continue in sin. Thus, Paul concluded his letter to the Colossians with some specific instructions about Christian conduct.

How do we arrange to let Christ live within us and guide our lives?

At-A-Glance

1. New Life in Christ (**Colossians 3:5–9**)
2. Renewal Procedures (vv. 10–11)
3. Walking New (vv. 12–17)

In Depth

1. New Life in Christ (**Colossians 3:5–9**)

Paul speaks forthrightly about the demands of the new life and our urgent need to curb all of our old nature's degrading tendencies. The believer has to let the old life die. We are not simply to suppress or control evil acts and attitudes; we must wipe them out completely—exterminate the old way of life. The action is to be undertaken decisively and urgently. The request suggests a vigorous, painful act of personal determination. Paul is calling for a slaying of evil passions, desires, and practices that root themselves in our bodies.

Paul goes on to list sins. He warned that God's judgment would fall on the disobedient. He reminded the Colossians that this is the way they used to live. He said this ungodly life belongs to the past, and that the Christian should be done with it.

The phrase "but now" marks a new beginning. Paul firmly encourages them to "put off" this past life (v. 8). The Christian is to take off the filth of the past as one would a dirty shirt. Paul specifically names anger, wrath (a sudden and passionate outburst of displeasure), malice, and blasphemy (insulting talk against one's fellows). Filthy communication is "bad or abusive speech, foul-mouthed abuse." The sin of falsehood is particularly singled out; lying is given separate treatment and given a strong exhortation: "lie not one to another" (v. 9). The Christian must have a totally new life change in which he or she has put off the old self with its practices,

habits, or characteristics, and put on the new. This is like the resurrection of Christ, who pulled off the grave clothes and then left them behind in the tomb. Christians now have a new life in Christ; the old deeds and desires must be put off.

Why does fear of the wrath of God convince some to make changes while others do not?

2. Renewal Procedures (vv. 10–11)

Paul talked about becoming a new creature in Christ and taking off the old self, but how can that be done? Bad habits and ungodly conduct are not simply going to fall away like dirty clothes.

Paul used the word “knowledge” to explain how a person changes (v. 10)—not through knowledge of more rules and laws, but the knowledge of Christ. Our minds must be renewed. As believers grow in knowledge of the Word of God, when we learn, read, and study His Word, God’s Spirit changes us. God transforms Christians by washing old thoughts, desires, and intentions out of our minds and replacing them with new ones.

Paul gives an example of this kind of mind change when he speaks about human distinctions and differences. In Christ, there are no nationalities (neither Greek nor Jew), religious differences (circumcised or non-circumcised), nor cultural differences (barbarian or Scythian).

The Greeks considered all non-Greeks to be barbarians and the Scythians to be the lowest savages of all. Yet, in Jesus Christ, a person’s cultural status has no advantage or disadvantage. Nor is economic or political status helpful (bond or free). Slaves should try to get their freedom, but if they do not, that does not make them any less in Christ’s sight. All of these kinds of distinctions belong to the old self and the old way of thinking.

How has the Word of God caused you to modify your behavior?

3. Walking New (vv. 12–17)

Christians are chosen, set apart, and loved by God. These are privileges God gave to His people in the Old Testament that are made available to Christians as well. Because God gave these blessings to His people, Paul encourages them to walk in compassion, kindness, goodness, graciousness, in humility, in gentleness, and in patience. Being chosen also means bearing with and forgiving one another (putting up with things we don’t like). The final word is “charity,” or divine love (v. 14). Love is unconditional giving and caring that goes beyond the call of duty. Peace is another characteristic that Paul exhorts the believer to put on—not just peace with each other, but peace of mind, unruffled by difficulties and confusion. As usual, Paul weaves an attitude of thanksgiving in this section of the letter. Thankfulness to God and to our brothers and sisters promotes inward and outward peace.

The Colossians are told to allow the Word of God, the Gospel, and the messages about Christ to be a rich treasure for them that becomes so deeply implanted that it controls their thinking, attitudes, and actions. When God’s Word is deep down in our hearts, Christ’s presence causes us to conduct ourselves wisely, influenced by His insight and instruction. Paul writes that God’s Word dwelling in our hearts will also cause us to sing psalms from the Old Testament, and hymns and spirituals draw on that tradition today.

Paul concludes by saying to “Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” We are to always act as Christ’s representatives. Christ is to live through God’s children, those who have trusted in Him for their salvation and are eternally thankful.

Do people conclude when they see you that Christ at work in your life? Explain.

Search the Scriptures

1. Why are forgiveness and love two key elements in a life that pleases God (**Colossians 3:13–14**)?
2. How can an attitude of thanksgiving help us in our relationship with God and with other people (v. 15)?

Discuss the Meaning

1. How do we continue to “put off our old selves” when it is so easy to forget that we are in constant need of renewal?
2. How can our personal moral actions help to advocate for justice?

Lesson in Our Society

For many today, justice has become a public thing, about the public display of protecting rights or enacting policies. Justice has been the focus of many marches and protests. This is good, but the New Testament

espouses a view of justice that begins within and expresses itself outwardly in public places. The passage today exhorts the Christian to not only work for justice, but also live it. It is not enough for us to organize and fight for civil rights if our personal lives are not organized around righteousness. Real advocacy for justice starts in our hearts and our lifestyle. It starts with the way we treat those around us, and boils down to Jesus' command to love our neighbor as ourselves.

For many people today, lying is common. Far too many people believe that if the truth is going to hurt, make you uncomfortable, ruin your reputation, get you in trouble, or cause you to pay money, then lying is acceptable. We justify lying or find creative ways to do it by calling it something else. In popular culture, how does it manifest itself, and how do we ourselves participate? In the midst of this, the Christian is exhorted to tell the truth. Lying in any form is considered part of our old life and needs to be discarded.

How can truth promote peace and harmony in our relationships with others?

Make It Happen

- Make a list of the virtues mentioned in this week's lesson. Check off the ones you believe you need to improve on.
- Write in your journal how you plan to improve on these things.
- Discuss your plan with a friend or spiritual leader.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

More Light on the Text

Colossians 3:5–17

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: 6 For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

In view of the previous paragraph of his epistle (about being united with Christ and the hope of appearing with Him in glory when He comes), Paul calls the Colossians to action against evil and toward good. The word "mortify," used here as a command, is the verb nekrosate in the Greek, from *nekroo* (**neh-KRO-oh**), which means "put to death, to slay, or to kill." "Mortify" is used here metaphorically, suggesting that the reader should actively deal a deadly blow to sinful habits. Verse 3, "Ye are dead," and verse 5, "mortify therefore," contains a paradox: on one hand, Paul is saying that the Colossians are already dead, and on the other hand, he is asking them to put their body parts to death. Scholars have never easily understood and reconciled the two seemingly contradictory statements.

We can best explain this by understanding the concepts of grace and working faith. The moment we acknowledge that we are yielded to the Lord, He solicits our cooperation. As He works in us by making us uncomfortable in the midst of sinful practices, we start to obey Him and begin to unload our baggage of sin. We begin to live Christ-like lives, and all the worldly rudiments begin to dissipate. Our attitudes change, and new lifestyles and behaviors begin. A change in character becomes noticeable; our desires, passions, and aspirations change. This process is called sanctification, the work of the Holy Spirit. However, conscious and deliberate

self-involvement is needed—and this is working faith (**Philippians 2:12**).

What parts of our bodies, or literally sinful characteristics, need to be slaughtered? “Fornication”

(Gk. *porneia*, **por-NAY-ah**) includes all manner of illicit sexual relationships and intercourse outside of marriage, including adultery (**Matthew 5:32, 19:9; 1 Corinthians 7:2, 10:8**) and incest (**1 Corinthians 5:1**).

Fornication does not apply only to single people, but to all sorts of sexual perversion. “Uncleanness”

(Gk. *akatharsia*, **ah-ka-thar-SEE-ah**) is used to describe whatever is the opposite of purity, including thoughts and motives. The emphasis seems to lie on sexual immorality, which likely includes all forms of sexual seduction, homosexuality, and sodomy (**Romans 1:26–27, 6:19; 2 Corinthians 12:21; Ephesians 5:3**).

In **Colossians 3:5**, the phrase “inordinate affection” (Gk. *pathos*, **PA-thoce**) describes out-of-control passion and lust (**1 Thessalonians 4:5**). The same Greek word is translated “vile affections” in **Romans 1:26** where Paul refers to homosexuality. “Evil concupiscence” (Gk. *kakos epithumia*, **ka-KOCE eh-pee-thoo-MEE-ah**) is any strong or vehement desire associated mainly with evil and depraved lusts (**John 8:44; Ephesians 2:3**). Here again, it connotes illicit sexual immorality. “Covetousness” (Gk. *pleonexia*, **pleh-oh-nek-SEE-ah**) is a greedy desire to have more or take what belongs to someone else.

The first four sins mentioned in **Colossians 3:5** (also listed in **Romans 1:24–29** and **1 Thessalonians 4:3–7**) can be related to sex outside of marriage. The fifth one seems to be the underlying evil that summarizes the rest of the vices—idolatry, essentially the worship of self rather than God, eventually replacing the Lordship of Christ. “Member” is a translation of the Greek word *melos* (**MEL-oce**), meaning “limb or a member of the human body.” The term is used figuratively here to describe the sins that have become attached to us, as limbs are attached. They have become such a part of our bodily experiences that we have become used to them as inherent parts of our being. Paul calls on the Colossians to not only mutilate these vices, but to kill them outrightly.

Having listed the evils, Paul reminds and warns the Colossians of the consequences of indulgence. These sins attract or invoke the wrath of God against those who indulge themselves in them, i.e., the children of disobedience. God’s “wrath” (Gk. *orge*, **or-GAY**) or extreme displeasure refers to the coming judgment day (see **Romans 2:5–11; Ephesians 2:2–3; 2 Thessalonians 1:8–10**).

7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. 8 But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. 9 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;

Paul compares the Colossians’ former lifestyle with their present disposition as those who have been raised with Christ. In their previous state, they indulged in those vices, but now they have been reborn through Christ’s death and sacrifice, so those vices should be abandoned. Paul now uses a different metaphor; instead of putting the sins to death, he urges them to put them off like worn-out garments or clothes that no longer fit. “Put off” translates from the Greek word *apotithemi* (**ah-po-TEE-thay-me**), which means “to put away, to cast off.” The idea here is more serious than the language seems to convey—to discard, never to be worn again.

The phrase in verse 8, “but now ye also put off all these,” means that in addition to the listed vices that need to be mortified (v. 5), the believers need to also discard anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, and filthy communication—another list of five vices related to attitudes toward others.

“Anger” is sometimes translated “wrath,” and the words are used interchangeably. Anger indicates an instant, sudden feeling, whereas wrath is more of a state of mind. Paul also includes “malice” (Gk. *kakia*, **ka-KEE-ah**, evilness or wickedness) in his list of vices. These sins are related: extended anger develops into wrath, and wrath can grow into malice.

The first three vices deal with people’s attitude toward others, and the next two relate to use of the tongue: blasphemy and filthy communication. The first three start from the heart, and manifest themselves vocally in blasphemy (slander) and foul or abusive language. The word “blasphemy” is a direct derivation of the Greek *blasphemia* (**blas-fay-ME-ah**), which means evil speaking. Although typically used to refer to evil words against God (**Matthew 12:31**), it also refers to speaking evil or slander against people (**Ephesians 4:31**). By “filthy communication,” Paul refers to bad or foul language or vile conversation, the same idea he expressed in **Ephesians 4:29** and **5:4**.

Lying must also be discarded. With a third imperative, Paul says: “Lie not one to another” (v. 9). It carries the same idea as in the preceding verse and is included in the things to be discarded.

10 And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:

Continuing the clothing motif, Paul instructs the Colossians to “put on the new man” (v. 10), meaning to clothe oneself with the new nature, which results from our spiritual union with Christ through His death and resurrection (2 Corinthians 5:17). Putting on our new nature as Christ-followers renews us. The word “renewed” implies growth and changing from former corruption into new life.

When Christians receive Christ, we begin a new relationship. As it deepens, our lives and thought processes change, and we make new choices patterned according to Christ’s example. Therefore, the standard of the renewal, or the new man, is God’s image.

God’s original plan in creating man and woman in His image was for them to fully know how to live according to His moral and spiritual likeness. Humanity severely damaged this understanding at the Garden of Eden through sin. Now God renews us and gives us the true knowledge through the new Adam—Christ Jesus (2 Peter 1:3–13).

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

This progressive transformation into the image of God does not distinguish between racial, religious, cultural, and social boundaries. The introduction of this theme indicates that Paul is aware of the scandals in his time. The partition between the Greek and Jew was practically unbreakable, especially from the Jewish end. The Jews who were circumcised would look down on and refuse to acknowledge the uncircumcised Greeks or Gentiles. The word “barbarian” refers to all non-Greeks, those ignorant of the Greek language; the Greeks regarded them as the lower class in society. Barbarians were also regarded as uncultured, crude, and rough, hence our term “barbaric.” A Scythian was thought to be part of the lowest class of barbarians, rude and rough. They lived in Scythia, which included parts of modern-day Ukraine, Russia, and Kazakhstan.

Baseless social barriers continue today, including class discrimination, racial bigotry, and misogyny. Paul condemns all of these mindsets, and the same is true today. Paul sums it up by saying, “but Christ is all, and in all”—meaning Christ is all that matters. He lives in all believers, whether Greek or Jew, Barbarian or Scythian, slave or free. His Spirit works in every heart yielded to Him.

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

Paul returns to the theme of “putting on” from verse 10. The idea is because you have shed the old person and put on the new, then you should practice it as well. Paul uses a series of phrases to describe whom believers become when they receive Christ. First, they are “the elect of God,” which means “the chosen ones of God.” Secondly, they are “holy” (Gk. *hagios*, **HA-gee-occe**), meaning “set apart, special, or sacred.” All true believers are holy in God’s sight. Paul affirms the Colossians’ position before God, a special place that all Christians now share with the ancient covenant people of Israel (see Isaiah 4:3; 1 Peter 2:9; Romans 9:25).

After affirming whom they are because of their relationship with God through Christ, Paul now enumerates the qualities expected of the Colossians. While the list in v. 8 consists of selfish sins, the list here indicates care for others’ well-being.

These qualities are paired with some overlap. The first pair is “bowels of mercies” and “kindness.” “Bowels of mercies” figuratively describes the spirit of compassion residing in the heart of God’s elect. The word “bowel” (Gk. *splagchnon*, **SPLANKH-known**) refers to the intestines, stomach, or abdomen; here, it means pity, sympathy, or inward affection. For the Hebrews, bowels were the seat of kindness, compassion, and benevolence, which we now associate with the heart. Bowels and “mercies” (Gk. *oiktirmos*, **oik-tear-MOCE**), which mean “compassion” or “pity,” go together. The phrase can be translated as “bowels in which compassion resides.” The next word, “kindness” (Gk. *chrestotes*, **kh-ray-STO-tace**), is synonymous with bowels of mercies and expresses moral goodness and compassion.

The next qualities the Colossians are asked to adopt are “humility of mind” (Gk. *tapeinophrosune*, **tah-pay-no-fro-SOO-nay**), meaning lowliness, and “meekness” (Gk. *praotes*, **prah-OH-tace**). Both of these convey the spirit of gentleness and modesty. Humility was not always seen positively in the heathen world and is in opposition to pride, but to the Christian, it is an honorable quality to strive for and one Christ exhibited

throughout His earthly ministry (**Philippians 2:3**).

Another quality that Paul mentions is “longsuffering” (Gk. *makrothumia*, **ma-kro-thoo-MEE-ah**), which is patience or “slowness in avenging wrongs.” It characterizes self-control, refusing to yield to passion and rage when wronged. Patience is almost exclusively associated with relationships with others. However, one also needs patience to succeed in life in general.

13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Closely associated with the five virtues is a pair of activities required of all believers. The first virtue, “forbearing” (Gk. *anecho*, **an-EKH-oh**), means “to hold oneself up against, to bear with, or to endure,” suggesting tolerance or putting up with something negative. Paul adds the second activity, “forgiving one another,” so as to follow in Christ’s supreme example. Christ taught His disciples to pray, “And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors” (**Matthew 6:12**), and sets no limit on how many times to forgive one another (**Matthew 18:22**). All the virtues Paul listed are apparent in Christ’s life—a heart of compassion, humility, meekness, long-suffering, endurance or forbearance, and forgiveness. When believers manifest these virtues, they have put on Christ.

14 And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.

The word here for “love” is *agape* (Gk. **ah-GAH-pay**), which the KJV often translates as charity. It refers to unconditional love, not just almsgiving. Love ties together all the other virtues. “Perfectness” (Gk. *teleiotes*, **teh-lay-OH-tace**) means completeness, and “bond” (Gk. *sundesmos*, **SOON-des-moce**) is like a joint tie or ligament binding things together, particularly body .

Paul continues with his theme of unity; God’s peace not only brings harmony to individual hearts, but also harmony and oneness within the larger body of Christ. Letting peace “rule” (Gk. *brabeuo*, **bra-BEW-oh**) suggests peace being an umpire, judge, or arbitrator that directs or controls. The “peace of God” means either “the peace that God gives” or “the peace that belongs to God.” Paul adds that believers should be “thankful,” an expression used frequently throughout the epistle. A grateful heart produces a peaceful mind; conversely, an ungrateful heart produces disharmony inside that overflows to others, breeding discord within the body of Christ.

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.

The Word of Christ should “dwell” (Gk. *enoikeo*, **en-oy-KEH-oh**), or inhabit, our hearts as well. The word “dwell” is used figuratively to suggest influencing one’s life and activities. While the peace of Christ should control our lives, His Word should influence our activities, and both should dwell in our hearts. The Word of Christ dwelling within our hearts will produce all the wisdom we need in life. It will influence and govern our thoughts, deeds, and motivations, as well as help us make good, rational decisions in life. When we are abundantly equipped through the Word of Christ, we will be teaching and “admonishing” (Gk. *noutheteo*, **noo-theh-TEH-oh**, warning, cautioning or gently reproving) each other through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

In order to “do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,” we must act according to His revealed will; we should be mindful of our relationship with Him; we will need to live subject to His authority and power; and we will do everything for His glory, not ours.

Paul adds, “giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” We appreciate what God has accomplished for us through Christ’s redemptive and atoning sacrifice, whereby we sinners receive forgiveness and are accepted by God as sons and daughters. Our lives should be motivated by the love of Christ in us to honor and glorify His name. Our lives and activities must be governed by the peace of God in our hearts (v. 15), influenced by the Word of Christ dwelling richly in wisdom (v. 16), and motivated by our relationship with Christ—with eternity in view.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Buried in Baptism; Raised with Christ
(Colossians 2:6–12)

TUESDAY

God's Example in All Relationships
(Matthew 5:43–48)

WEDNESDAY

Life with Christ in the World
(John 17:14–19)

THURSDAY

Life in the Spirit
(Romans 8:1–11)

FRIDAY

Speak Truthfully Always
(Ephesians 4:25–30)

SATURDAY

Replace Anger with Forgiveness
(Ephesians 4:31–5:2)

SUNDAY

Live the New Life in Christ
(Colossians 3:1–17)