

Studies in the Epistle to the Colossians
Chapter Fifteen
The Christian's Priority

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” (Colossians 3:10-11).

Verse 10 - Amplified: “And having enveloped yourself with the new life in Christ, the resurrected life, the one that is re-created with a full and maturing knowledge in the likeness of the image of Jesus, Who the knowledge reflects, and Who is the One by whom you were recreated. Verse 11 - In which state, namely the resurrected life, there cannot be any prejudicial or cultural indifferences such as this cultural differences of the Jew and the Greek, the religious differences between the circumcised and the uncircumcised, the intellectual or educational differences that divide the Barbarian from the Scythian or the social differences that divide the slave man from the free man, but Christ is our common denominator, He has obliterated all cultural and religious distinctions, all intellectual elitism, all social classes, and has substituted Himself for all of these, and He alone should occupy the full spectrum of our human existence and fully saturate all that our existence becomes.”

The realization of the Lordship of Christ in our life (Colossians 3:10-11)

If we have been saved (“born again”), we recognize the authority that Jesus has over our lives. We should recognize His right of Lordship. If that has taken place, we have agreed to *envelope* our lives in the Word of God (v 10 “put on”). The instant we are saved, we become a “new creation” (II Cor. 5:17). However, this is only the beginning of a life long process of renewal (Romans 12:2; metamorphosis). This process is one of education and practical sanctification (*spiritual growth and faith building*). The Bible calls this “edification.” It is building the believer up in the areas of spiritual maturity and godliness.

¹² Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. ¹³ Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, ¹⁴ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. ¹⁵ Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. ¹⁶ Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing” (Philippians. 3:12-16).

This process of spiritual growth (edification) involves two requirements of the believer before maturity can be realized (Philippians 3:13).

1. “Forgetting those things which are behind;” putting behind us all beliefs or practices that would hinder us from full maturity or to remove from our life anything that might keep us from growing to spiritual maturity.
2. “Reaching forth unto those things which are before;” - stretching ourselves to achieve goals.

As a watchman, I must keep my eyes fixed upon Jesus, my “mark.” Christ-likeness is my standard of spiritual maturity. I must “press” (or push) myself to that goal. The goal (Christ-likeness) is my “prize” (Philippians 3:14).

If you want Christian maturity, it will have to be something you want more than anything else. Anything that would hinder spiritual maturity must be put away. Anything that would expedite spiritual maturity must become a priority. It is to this latter point that Colossians 3:12 refers.

Colossians 3:12 - The emphatic command for maturity

“Put on” refers to the resurrected life of Christ available to the believer in active co-operation with the indwelling Holy Spirit. When Christ was resurrected from the dead, He provided much more to the believer than victory over death (*as great as that is*). He provides the availability of the resurrected life of Christ to the believer in the Person of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

“⁷ If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. ⁸ Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. ⁹ As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. ¹⁰ If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. ¹¹ These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. ¹² This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:7-13).

1. John 15:7 - **The promise.**
2. John 15: 9-10 - **The proposal.**
3. John 15: 11 - **The purpose.**
4. John 15: 12-13 - **The proclamation**

John 14: 15-21 - The resurrected life of Jesus

“¹⁵ If ye love me, keep my commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; ¹⁷ Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. ¹⁹ Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. ²⁰ At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. ²¹ He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (John 14:15-21).

1. Verse 19 - “Because I (Jesus) live, ye shall live also.”
2. Verse 20 - “At that day (when you begin to live the resurrected life) ye shall know.”

Colossians 3:12 - to “put on” the resurrected life is to become so possessed of the mind of Christ that in thought, feeling, and action you begin to resemble Him and, in doing so, you begin to reproduce His life in you.

“Put on” is in the Aorist tense and Imperative Mood in the Greek. That means it is a command that should be obeyed at once. It should be given first priority. It should supersede all other needs or relationships. There should be nothing more important in your life than allowing Christ to live His life through us.

The word “elect” refers to our position in Christ; our place of service in ministry (the priesthood of the believer). Therefore, the main priority of the “elect” is doing “the work of the ministry,” which involves proclaiming the message of salvation. This is accomplished by the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Colossians 3:12; the characteristics of God’s chosen Priests

“Holy” means separated from the world and unto God; specifically and distinctively chosen to serve God. Holy is a term referring to God’s children.

“¹¹ O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. ¹² Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. ¹³ Now for a recompence in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged. ¹⁴ Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? ¹⁶ And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹⁷ Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, ¹⁸ And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (II Corinthians 6:11-18).

“Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God” (II Corinthians 7:1).

The word “beloved” in II Corinthians 7:1 refers to those who are the divinely loved children of God.

“¹ My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: ² And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. ³ And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴ He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. ⁶ He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (I John 2:1-6).

Colossians 3:12; putting on the resurrected life is putting on Christ (seven qualities of spiritual maturity)

1. The words “bowels of mercies” refer to the heart of Christ (*compassion*).

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15).

2. The word “kindness” refers to a gentle, full of grace disposition.

“Father forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

3. The words “humbleness of mind” refer to a submissive spirit.

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves” (Philippians 2:3).

4. Meekness is not weakness. Meekness is having the power to do what you want to do, while submitting yourself to what is best for others first. There is a desire engrained in every one of us to be on the top of the heap. That kind of attitude is the opposite of meekness.

“²⁷ And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: ²⁸ Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:27-28).

5. “Longsuffering” with others is the willingness to patiently endure, even under ill-treatment.

“¹⁵ This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. ¹⁶ Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting” (I Timothy. 1: 15-16).

6. & 7. In Colossians 3:13a, “forbearing” and “forgiving” mean to endure wrong for right’s sake (*full of grace*). To what degree (Colossians 3:13b)? To the same degree that Christ forgives us; completely.

Colossians 3:14; - all other virtues other than love are only undergarments. They are functional, but love is the outer garment. Love is the garment of esthetic value. It is what gives Christianity its appeal. Love is what makes others want what we have (the resurrected Christ life). Love is the bonding agent for all other virtues. It is the garment that holds all other garments in their right places. “Perfectness” refers to our practical maturity. True Christian love is the central outward manifestation of that spiritual maturity.

We are *positionally* complete in every way in Christ. When we “put on” Christ, we are *practically* complete in every aspect. When that happens, our life manifests that completeness to the world. This is what God wants from every believer. This is His priority for our life. Therefore, this SHOULD be the priority of our lives.

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1. The instant we are saved we become “new creation.” Does that mean every bad habit and all our wrong thinking will also be immediately removed? _____

2. What is the Bible word for education and spiritual growth that is intent on spiritual maturity?

3. According to Philippians 3:13 what two “things” are necessary before spiritual maturity can be realized?

A. _____

B. _____

4. According to Philippians 3:14, what is the “mark” we are to “press toward”? _____

A. What does the word “press” mean in this context? _____

B. What is the goal of all of this? _____

C. What is the “prize” for accomplishing this? _____

5. Read Colossians 3:12. What specifically is the believer to “put on” that is available to all yielded believers? _____

6. What is the **promise** of John 15:7? _____

7. What is the **proposal** of John 15:9-10? _____

8. What is the **purpose** revealed in John 15:11? _____

9. What is the **proclamation** of John 15:12-13? _____

10. Read John 14:20. At what “day” will the believer “know” this? _____

11. Define the following two characteristics of God’s chosen servants.

A. “Holy” _____

B. “Beloved” _____

12. List seven things from Colossians 3:12-14 that will be characteristic of a believer that has “put on” the resurrected Christ life? _____

