

#8 Colossians chapter 3

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Verse 9: 'Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new *man* who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,'

Look at what is so important to God that He has Paul specifically write here, to the Colossians and to us, today, 'Do not lie to each other!'

By the way... some try to teach us that in order to fully understand Scripture we need to know all about the time and place and to whom it was written and even that to really understand it, we need to know Greek. The truth is, what we most need to understand is simply... ourselves; God's Word is written to us. He is writing to us, ***'Do not lie to each other, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,'***

He doesn't say, 'Do not murder each other!' Most Christians aren't out murdering each other... after all, there is a law against that sort of thing but there is not a law forbidding lying to each other; in fact, Christians lie to one another constantly... 'How are you?' 'I'm fine.' Liar! 'How are you doing with that sin habit you were battling?' 'Great, good, super! God is faithful!' 'Liar!' We lie because we want to look better than we think we do... or, we lie because we believe that others would not love us if we told the truth about ourselves.

Telling the truth would mean that we'd have to humble ourselves before God and before others but our pride is what restrains us from honesty instead of allowing the Holy Spirit to restrain us from lying. We will always be restrained by one or the other: our pride restrains us or the Holy Spirit restrains us.

We might not realize how important lying is, how serious it is to God. Why do you suppose God commands us to not lie to each other? Lying is an offence against God's character. He describes Himself as being The Truth, not just a truth; He is The Truth. The World increasingly claims that we each have our own truth... what is your truth? There aren't many different truths; there is only true while everything else is untrue; there is no gray; anything that is not the truth is a lie and when we lie we deny God's character.

'This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: ' 1 John 1:5

'I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.' 1 John 2:21

'Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.' John 17:17

'In hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,' Titus 1:1

'The Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.' 1 John 5:20

'For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever.' Rom 1:25

'So that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie' Heb 6:18 Impossible!

'God is not a man, that He should lie,' Num 23:19

We've been trained to believe that there's a gradation of lying; some lies are really serious while other lies are 'sort of' ok; they're not that big a deal. Any lie is a deliberate deviation from the truth; it's a falsehood communicated with the intention to mislead or deceive.

The Bible calls Satan 'the father of lies.'

Lying is considered by most child development specialists to be a natural developmental occurrence in childhood. Though there is no empirical data about how children learn to lie, parental honesty is recognized as a primary influence on the development of truthfulness in children.

'Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.' Prov 22:15

'The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding.' Prov 9:10

We are commanded to not lie. God does not tell us that there are any exceptions to His rule. Of course, as soon as we say that, someone will suggest that it was a good thing for Corrie Ten Boom's family to lie to the Nazis to protect the Jews they were hiding. I agree that I would have done the same thing but the truth is,

God does not say certain kinds of lies are acceptable. The truth is: even though they chose to lie to the Nazis, just like those who were hiding Anne Frank's family, they all were caught and sent to concentration camps. Of course, there are some lies you can't help but tell. For example, 'Does this dress make me look fat?' or, 'Do you feel like I nag you?'

Paul tells us to not lie to one another because we have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new man with his deeds.

Remember, we spoke about our having been created in the Image of God; just like God is Triune, 3 in 1, so, too, are we: we are a living soul within a fleshly body within a spiritual body. Before we were born again, we were just a living soul within a fleshly, earthly body; our spirits were dead until God made us alive, in the Spirit, giving us a new, eternal spirit which is the new man which we 'put on,' as if putting on an overcoat. God has put on us, as an overcoat and within us, the Righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our soul was crucified with Him and also made eternal. We can, in a sense, pick back up our 'old man' in that we can allow our still unredeemed fleshly body to control our thoughts and actions. When we put off the old man, and put on the new man, we are allowing our new, eternal spiritual self, which is one with the Lord Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit, to control our thoughts and actions.

He crucified our souls, with the Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross; He made our Spirits alive and holy in Him but we are the ones who must, daily, crucify our own flesh: 'And those *who are* Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.' Gal 5:24 and, ' "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.' Luke 9:23

Our still unredeemed fleshly self is always at war with our fully redeemed soul and spirit. Our flesh, our Earthly bodies, are always at war with our spirits while our souls must vigilantly watch and decide 'who' we will listen to and follow: our spirits, which are one with God or our flesh which longs for the World.

Verse 11: 'where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave *nor* free, but Christ *is* all and in all.'

Paul is listing all the divisions within society. When he writes, 'slave nor free,' God is not promoting or condoning slavery; it was simply a fact of life and it is still a fact of life in many parts of the World. These are the divisions in the World system; in the Church, it should not be so. In Christ, there are no divisions. That said, many churches are made up exclusively, or nearly so, of people mostly of the same ancestry: European, African, Asian or Hispanic. There's nothing wrong with people naturally congregating with others like themselves. Some churches work hard to try to fill their pews with a mixture of all kinds as if there is virtue in having some kind of fully integrated church body. There is not. A Pastor should simply fill out his flock with those who are hungry for the correctly expounded Word of God which is exactly what he should strive, at all times, to present. On the other hand, there are those who are searching for false teachers who will tickle their itching ears with some false gospel or other.

Christ is all of the body of all true believers and He is in each and every one.

Verse 12: 'Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;'

We are the Elect; we are the ones whom God elected and chose for Himself, before the foundation of the World, as the precious love gift for His Son, a bride for Him to have and to hold, to love forevermore. He chose and called us; He revealed Himself to us and He saved us, giving us eternal life. He clothed us in the holiness and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. What He did for us is beyond imagination and He will spend eternity glorifying us and pouring out His love and His eternal gifts on us as we praise and glorify Him.

What could we ever do to, in any way, repay His unfathomable love for us. He tells us; 'For my sake in view of all I've done for you, love one another, be tenderly merciful toward each other; be kind, humble, meek, patient and longsuffering with each other. That is the repayment I require of you.'

We've been hurt by other Christians; some of us have left other churches because of how we were mistreated. Unless a pastor is teaching contrary to God's Word, God's plan for us is to remain where we've been hurt and

that we'd respond with tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness and longsuffering; His plan is to use those kinds of trials to day by day, more and more form us into the Image of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the One Who is always behind every trial and His goal is to produce in us, patience. James wrote:

'My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have *its* perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.' Instead of leaving a church because of hurts from others, He wants us to see Him in the trial and to joyfully bear up under it to gain one of life's most precious commodities: patience.' James 1:2

Paul wrote, 'I... beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ² with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³ endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.' Eph 4:1

One of the most important lessons we can learn, as we remain in our Earthly bodies, is that it's God's will to constantly put us through trials in order to bring us to patience. God gave us the Righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ and He will never remove it from us but it is our job and responsibility to 'put on' tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness and longsuffering. He will not do that job for us; we must do it ourselves and it will never be accomplished if we run away from hurts, and trials. Our gaining of these qualities, qualities that are reflections of the Lord Jesus Christ, is far more valuable than the temporary respite we might gain from removing ourselves from difficult circumstances. If we do that, even though we might feel temporary relief from the difficulty, we will still be left with our hardened, unmerciful, unkind, proud and impatient self. And that is what we will take to the next church we attend until it, too, wounds us and we start all over again.

Verse 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*.'

So you also MUST do. We are commanded to forgive and to love each other, especially those who are most difficult to forgive and love; and in forgiving, loving and bearing with one another, there is no room, whatever, for running away from the hurts and the pain.

Forgiving does not mean walking on the other side of the street when we see that person or in any other way ignoring or despising that person. To despise means to consider something as nothing or worthless; how many times have we considered someone to be worthless or at least not worth our time and attention?

Verse 14: 'But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.'

Same thing again; we are the ones who must **put on love**, to slip ourselves into love, like an overcoat. We are commanded to love every other believer, not just like or simply put up with but to love and we are the ones who must do the loving; it's not 'God loving through us; He will not love through us, we must love through Him; He is the One Who enables us to love, because of our new heart, but we are the ones who must do the work of loving and sometimes it really is work to love: 'Love is patient, love is kind *and* is not jealous; love does not brag *and* is not arrogant, ⁵ does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a *wrong suffered*; *love* does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; love bears all things, it believes all things, it hopes all things, love endures all things; love never fails.' 1 Cor 13

That is a lot of work but we are commanded to do all of it toward all of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

He says, 'above all these things;' the most important thing, above all else, is to love and that is the bond of perfection, the glue that holds a church together just as it is what holds a marriage and family together.

Verse 15: 'And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.'

Let's read this in the Amplified Version: '**And let the peace (soul harmony which comes) from Christ rule (act as umpire continually) in your hearts [deciding and settling with finality all questions that arise in your minds,**'

What wouldn't we be willing to pay for such a gift, some kind of futuristic machine that can give you answers from God about anything: or a little umpire who sits on our shoulder and cries out, 'Yes! No! Wait!

'All questions that arise in your minds:' every question, everything we pray about or ask God about. Somehow His peace is able to answer every question. How could that be? How does one go about utilizing such a valuable, secret ability to recognize His peace and to be able to discern if He is saying yes, no or wait?

How does a baseball player get to the point of being successful with an umpire always standing right behind him? Practice, practice, practice: only through years and years of practice... but to learn to be successful in navigating our way through the wilds of our Earthly existence doesn't take years of practice but it does take faithfulness in execution.

Here's how it works: the first step is in getting yourself into a position of quiet relaxed prayer with no noise or distractions. Then, feel yourself inside, in your core thoracic area. Get it into a state of quietness.

Now, begin by asking a question of God to which you already know the answer is 'yes.' For example: ask God, 'Do you love me?' You know His answer is 'Yes.' Now sense how that feels inside; you'll sense it as a peaceful, restful and quiet sensation. Do it again with the same question and other questions to which you know the answer is 'yes.' You can ask Him anything in His Word such as, 'Are we expected to believe all that Paul wrote?' You know the answer is 'yes.' Then, sense how that feels inside: peaceful, quite and relaxed.

Practice, practice, practice.

Next, ask Him a question to which you know the answer is a definite 'no' such as, 'Is it ok for me not to love sister so and so? Or, would it be ok if I went over to Safeway to steal? You know, from His Word, that the answer will be 'no!' Sense how that feels inside as opposed to what it felt like with questions, to which, you knew the answer was 'yes.' Ask different questions with answers of 'no,' such as, 'Is it true that Daniel was a false prophet?' God will say, 'No' and you will begin to recognize the difference in what you feel inside.

One way there is a feeling of turmoil, a kind of a churning or just a flat feeling of nothing; that is God saying, 'No.' The other way will produce a peaceful, calming restfulness; that is God's 'Yes.' Practice!

Certainly, we are not to be led by our feelings but, rather, by God's Word and this is according to His Word. This is being led by the peace that comes from God or the lack of that peace from God. That's it: peace or lack of peace but it takes practice to learn it and to recognize it.

Pretty soon, we can become adept at letting the peace which comes from Christ rule and act as umpire continually in our hearts, ***deciding and settling with finality*** all questions that arise in our minds.

Try it; practice it and perfect it. It may take some time or it may be something you can recognize and utilize very quickly. Imagine having such a gift as to be able to get answers from God concerning any and every question that arises in our minds.

The rest of that verse, in the Amplified, reads: 'in that peaceful state to which as [members of Christ's] one body you were also called [to live]. And be thankful (appreciative), [giving praise to God always].'

We are called and equipped to live in that peaceful state and we are called to be thankful and praising God always, in every trial, knowing that He is producing patience in us so that we will more and more, day by day, reflect the Lord Jesus Christ in all that we think, say or do.

Verse 16a: 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom,' Again, in the Amplified: 'Let the word [spoken by] Christ (the Messiah) have its home [in your hearts and minds] *and* dwell in you in [all its] richness,' God's Word should be able to be right at home within us at all times. The problem is we don't always make our hearts a comfortable home for the Word of God, Who is, in reality, the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself. He will never leave or forsake us but we don't always make that easy for Him.

And Paul doesn't just mean the words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ while He was on Earth; he means every word in God's revealed and preserved Word, the entire Bible; every word spoken through Paul and every other writer of God's Word. We should believe it and treasure it in our hearts and in our minds as we go about all our lives while earnestly watching and waiting for His soon return for us in the Rapture.