

COLOSSIANS 3:5-11 | OUR RESPONSE (PART 5)

VERSE 5 – BLUE

Since Colossians 2:16 Paul has given the response to the reality of being **complete in Christ** (Col. 2:10). In Colossians 3:2 the believer was instructed to **set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth**. Now, elaborating, the believer is commanded to **Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth**.

The word **mortify** is the instruction to *put to death*. It cannot, therefore, be taken literally, but is easily understood as metaphor.

The word **members** can mean parts of the physical body (Matt 5:29), parts of the spiritual body (Eph 4:25), or just a collection of items having some "membership" with one another. In this case, Paul includes a list of the members of "the club of sin," and we are instructed to kill the members of this club.

The list includes **fornication** (sexual sins), **uncleanness** (likely a general term for "filth" and almost certainly used metaphorically). The phrase **inordinate affection** is from the Greek πάθος [pathos] is a feeling-based word, perhaps best described as "sour feelings." The English *pathos* is a "quality that evokes pity or sorrow." English words built using the "path" root are all negative, such as *pathology*, *psychopath*, *pathogenic*, *sympathy*, etc. Modern versions such as NASB and ESV use "passion," which fails to convey the negative meaning of the word.

Paul continues with **evil concupiscence**. The Greek ἐπιθυμία [epithumia] is not inherently evil, but designated in this text as evil by the word κακός [kakos]. At times, *epithuia* is translated "desire" (Luke 22:15, Phil. 1:23, 1 Thes 2:17). Many times the KJV translates the word as *lust*, but the word itself does not insist upon lust, only the context. The Catholic and reformed doctrine of concupiscence is related to total depravity and the pull toward sin. Catholics teach that concupiscence is the inclination that leads to sin, while reformed theology teaches that concupiscence is itself a sin. Dispensational theology does not give power to any theological reality of concupiscence of any kind, but simply understands that those with free will sometimes have evil desire.

The final prohibition in verse 5 is **covetousness**. The Greek πλεονεξία [pleonexia] is a compound word of πληρω [pleroo] (full) and εχω [echo] (to have), thus to "fully have." It is used 39 times in the Greek New Testament and is always translated *covet* or *covetousness*. Paul says that this is **idolatry**, using the Greek ειδωλολατρία [eidolatria]. This word implies a religious service to an idol, in this case the idol being that which is coveted. We should not that is is not a simple desire that is **covetousness**, but "to be filled full with this desire."

VERSE 6 – BLUE

Both here and Ephesians 5:6 we see that **the wrath of God** comes on **the children of disobedience** because of their behavior. The Greek term literally means "a failure to be persuaded." In Greek

mythology, the goddess Peitho is the goddess of persuasion (she is the wife of the god Hermes, who is the messenger of the gods). In Christian terms one who has *failed to be persuaded* is disobedient to the message. We get the English word *apathy* from the Greek word used here, ἀπειθεια [apeitheia].

It is true that in our dispensation of grace, God is **not imputing their trespasses unto them** (2 Cor. 5:19). However, it would be equally true that **the wrath of God** is not coming on *anyone* today. This verse, then, speaks of a future event as an illustration of the severity with which we should personally **Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth** (v. 5).

#### VERSE 7 – BLUE

The things listed are things **in the which** [we] **also walked**. Because of this, we should be gracious and loving of those who continue to walk in them. The need is not to condemn them, but to persuade them.

#### VERSE 8 – BLUE

Notice the contrast between the things in which **ye also walked sometime** (v. 7) and **but now** (v.8). The things Paul is about to mention are daily challenges for many believers, while the things of v. 5 are more likely not practiced by those who are walking faithfully within a body of believers. They are the "**some time**" (v. 7) kind of activity, whereas these are the "everyday" kind of sin.

These **members** (v. 5) of the "sin club" include **anger** and **wrath**. Wrath is an outburst of anger.

Also included is **malice**, a tangible expression of evil thinking. **Blasphemy** and **filthy communication** would both be examples of **malice**.

#### VERSE 9 – BLUE

Continuing with the theme of "sins of the mouth," Paul gives the basic instruction to **lie not**. The foundational reason is that **ye have put off the old man with his deeds**. Indeed, a recipient of grace *should* display both gratitude and "clean living" because of the transformation that has been gifted them.

#### VERSE 10 – BLUE

How have we **put on the new man**? If this **new man** is being **renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him** then it would seem that the way to **put off the old man** (v. 9) and **put on the new man** is to **study to shew thyself approved unto God**...(2 Tim. 2:15). It is in this study that we gain the **mind of Christ** (1 Cor. 2:16) and thus our new knowledge is **after the image of him that created him**.

#### VERSE 11 – BLUE

From Abraham through Paul, it was not true that **there is neither Greek nor Jew**. However, in the dispensation of grace, a dispensation which is one of **knowledge** (v. 10) which we seek to know, we find a new worldview all together.

For the new man, **Christ is all, and in all**. Christ "is all things and is in all things." This does not speak materially, but rather of our priority. What besides Christ fills us and gives us meaning?