

CHANGING UNIFORMS

I. Colossians 3:1-17

A. For those in Christ, those He's apprehended, awakened to life, adopted as His own, we live in the tension between what some theologians call *the already and not yet*. It's the indicative vs the imperative; our position in Christ vs our actions in Christ; our identity vs our activity. We'll see some of this in today's text.

B. When we claim our *position* is in Christ but our *actions* betray that profession, we rightfully get labeled as hypocrites. If it's not hypocrisy, then it could be apostasy, the abandonment of our faith. The call for Christians is to really be Christians, not *so-called* Christians. As we've often said, '*Jesus loves us just the way He found us but He doesn't want to leave us that way!*' As believers we've been new-birthed into a life where we are deliberately and progressively putting off, discarding, and eliminating the sinful lifestyles of our past; forsaking those actions that put Jesus on the cross in the first place. If we're genuine, this is happening. The Holy Spirit is making it happen! "*He who began a good work in us will bring it to full completion in Christ Jesus.*" (Phil 1:6)

C. Colossians 3:1-17 (ESV) is about changing uniforms...

1) **V1-2: 1** *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. (OV: set your hearts on... set your affections on...)*

2) **V3: 3** *For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. (There's an old saying, "A person can be so heavenly minded they're of no earthly good." Better said is this: "If a person is not heavenly minded they'll be of little earthly good." When we set our minds on things above--His will, Word, and ways; set them on the eternal things to come vs what's temporal, fleeting, carnal and worldly, we aren't blinding ourselves to the realities of what's *here & now*; instead we're seeing *the here & now* through God's clear and heavenly perspective. Jesus did that! God is holy, sovereign, and good. The more we see things as He sees them, the better off we'll be and the more useful we'll be in *the here & now*.)*

3) **V4-7: 4** *When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. 5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, (lust) evil desire, and covetousness (greed), which is idolatry. 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming. 7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. (Sadly, we all have our BC days...)*

4) **V8-10: 8** *But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath (rage), malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator. (We're called to change attire, switch uniforms. New McDonalds employees don't wear their old Wendy's uniforms to work. The new linebacker coach for OSU used to coach for Michigan. So it's off with the maize & blue and on with the scarlet & gray. No defector from an enemy nation keeps wearing his old uniform or flying his former nation's flag. When the most notorious traitor in our history,*

Benedict Arnold, switched sides during the Revolutionary War, he put on a red coat, forsaking his blue coat. But in Arnold's case he chose the wrong colored coat.)

5) V11-12: 11 *Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. (Due to our new positions in Christ here's our new uniform): 12* *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, (Even a non-believer who acts like that may be mistaken for being a Christian! 'Keep acting like that and we're going to put a fish emblem on your car!' John Piper makes a good distinction: "Salvation is owned by faith. Salvation is shown by deeds.")*

6) V13: (Paul continues...) **13** *bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint (**grievance**) against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. (Forgiveness doesn't sound optional. Doesn't sound like a suggestion. People with bitter dispositions were likely wronged very badly at some point in their past. But because they never could reach the point of forgiveness, the unforgiveness festered, decayed into resentment, and gradually rotted into bitterness, and this became their disposition. Even one's countenance comes to reflect this! Smiles become fake. Unresolved hurt and rage bleeds through their eyes. They even scoff at good things. Every molehill for them is mountainous. They turn conspiratorial. They trust few to none. They're so hateful that even their niceties seem artificial. Forgiveness is a matter of life and death!)*

7) V14-17: (Here's more on that new-identity uniform): **14** *And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15* *And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. 16* *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17* *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

II. Communion

A. Those last verses will seat us at the Lord's Table: *"And be thankful... Singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God... And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."* **Some believers refer to Communion or the Lord's Supper as the Eucharist. Eucharist comes from the Greek words, *eucharistia* which means 'thanksgiving' and *eucharistos* which means 'grateful.'** **1 Corinthians 11:23-25 (ESV)** **unites Communion with thanksgiving:** **23** *For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, 24* *and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is (**broken**) for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."* **25** *In the same way also He took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."*

B. Preaching presents the Gospel to our ears while Communion (*and Baptism*) present the Gospel to our eyes. All of these are intended to present the Gospel to our hearts. When we consider the gospel realities, what He's saved us from, what He's redeemed us for, the Family He's adopted us into; the Table He's seated us at, how can

we not respond with deep heartfelt gratitude, sold-out allegiance, and love-filled devotion?! The only appropriate response is this: "Jesus, Thank You!" The Bread & Cup remind us.

*** Pray & Serve Communion...**

*** Benediction: Reread Colossians 3:14-17: *And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.***

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Colossians 3:1-17 (ESV)

1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2** Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. **3** For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **4** When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. **5** Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. **6** On account of these the wrath of God is coming. **7** In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. **8** But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. **9** Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices **10** and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator. **11** Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. **12** Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, **13** bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. **14** And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. **15** And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. **16** Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. **17** And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

1 Corinthians 11:23-25 (ESV)

23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, **24** and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." **25** In the same way also He took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Bonus Stuff

"Jesus, Thank You" (Brook Hills Music) - SovereignGraceMusic
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tHp8eThI2qk>

Finding God is Really God Finding You - Bethel Church
<https://vimeo.com/356323934>

Alistair Begg on Colossians 3
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1y8dYbkdzlo>

"Here's My Heart" - I Am They
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOlzv7kko_4

Romans 6:1-23 (NLT)

6 Well then, should we keep on sinning so that God can show us more and more of His wonderful grace? **2** Of course not! Since we have died to sin, how can we continue to live in it? **3** Or have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined Him in His death? **4** For we died and were buried with Christ by baptism. And just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glorious power of the Father, now we also may live new lives. **5** Since we have been united with Him in His death, we will also be raised to life as He was. **6** We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. **7** For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. **8** And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with Him. **9** We are sure of this because Christ was raised from the dead, and He will never die again. Death no longer has any power over Him. **10** When He died, He died once to break the power of sin. But now that He lives, He lives for the glory of God. **11** So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus. **12** Do not let sin control the way you live; do not give in to sinful desires. **13** Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God. **14** Sin is no longer your master, for you no longer live under the requirements of the law. Instead, you live under the freedom of God's grace. **15** Well then, since God's grace has set us free from the law, does that mean we can go on sinning? Of course not! **16** Don't you realize that you become the slave of whatever you choose to obey? You can be a slave to sin, which leads to death, or you can choose to obey God, which leads to righteous living. **17** Thank God! Once you were slaves of sin, but now you wholeheartedly obey this teaching we have given you. **18** Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living. **19** Because of the weakness of your human nature, I am using the illustration of slavery to help you understand all this. Previously, you let yourselves be slaves to impurity and lawlessness, which led ever deeper into sin. Now you must give yourselves to be slaves to righteous living so that you will become holy. **20** When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the obligation to do

right. **21** And what was the result? You are now ashamed of the things you used to do, things that end in eternal doom. **22** But now you are free from the power of sin and have become slaves of God. Now you do those things that lead to holiness and result in eternal life. **23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Quote by Charles Spurgeon

"It is not for me to rise up and go in rebellion against His wishes. If He be a Father, let me note His commands, and let me reverentially obey. If He has said "*Do this,*" let me do it, not because I dread Him, but because I love Him. And if He forbids me to do anything, let me avoid it."

Quote from A.W. Tozer

"Our Lord told His disciples that love and obedience were organically united. The final test of love is obedience."

Quote by A.W. Tozer

"It is altogether doubtful whether any man can be saved who comes to Christ for His help with no intention to obey Him."

Quote by Martin Lloyd-Jones

"Love is not just a sentiment. Love is a great controlling passion and it always expresses itself in terms of obedience."

Quote by Ed Cole

A passion for God isn't necessarily the same as abiding in God; it must be coupled with obedience to be true love for God."

Quote by John MacArthur

"Fruit-bearing is not a matter of being strong or weak, good or bad, brave or cowardly, clever or foolish, experienced or inexperienced. Whatever your gifts, accomplishments, or virtues, they cannot produce fruit if you are detached from Jesus Christ. Christians who think they are bearing fruit apart from the Vine are only tying on artificial fruit. They run around grunting and groaning to produce fruit but accomplish nothing. Fruit is borne not by trying, but by abiding."

- John MacArthur, "*Abiding in Christ,*" Grace to You.

Theological Note on Colossians 3:1

"Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God." - Colossians 3:1 (NIV)

3:1 then. "Then" (or therefore) links the doctrinal section of the letter with the practical section, just as it does in Ro. 12:1; Eph 4:1; Php. 4:1. ***you have been raised***. Verses

1-10 set forth what has been described as the indicative and the imperative (standing and state) of the Christian. The indicative statements describe believers in Christ: They are dead (v. 3); they have been raised with Christ (v. 1); they are with Christ in heaven ("hidden with Christ" v. 3); they have "taken off the old self" (v. 9); and they have "put on the new self" (v. 10). The imperative statements indicate what believers are to do as a result: set their hearts (or minds) on things above (v.v. 1-2); put to death practices that belong to their earthly nature (v. 5); and rid themselves of practices that characterized the unregenerate self (v. 8). In summary, they are called upon to become in daily experience what they are in Christ (cf. Ro. 6:1-13).

- Theological Note on Colossians 3:1, *The NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, p. 1856.

Obedient Love

By Derek Cazel

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/obedient-love/>

Perhaps no subject in history has been discussed more than love. Yet love remains one of the most misunderstood concepts in our culture. On a daily basis, through music, movies, and television, society discusses love as virtue, love as vice, love as physical intimacy, but mainly society speaks of love as an emotion. The Bible, however, describes love as something greater than just a feeling. The apostle Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 13 that without love, his accomplishments and talents mean nothing. Through Paul's teaching we learn that our actions, if unaccompanied by godly love, have no value.

Why are the biblical view and the world's view of love so different? Primarily, the biblical view of love involves sacrifice. If we love God, we are to be His obedient children. Though we may fail in our efforts from time to time, through our obedience, we demonstrate our love for God. The love the world knows is a love that is self-gratifying and does not require obedience to anyone or anything.

The war between flesh and spirit is a war of allegiance. If we would give in to the flesh, our definition of love would follow the world's definition, namely, that nothing is greater than our desires and ourselves. It would allow us to sin with impunity. However, Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends" ([John 15:13](#)). Jesus' life was a model of perfect, obedient love. One of the greatest examples of obedient love the world has ever witnessed occurred in the garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus, face to face with humiliation and death, prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will" ([Matt. 26:39](#)). The love Jesus has for the Father defines His allegiance.

Out of love, Jesus acted in accordance to His Father's will. Similarly, our Lord commands that we follow His example. In John 15, Jesus describes Himself as the true vine and those who obey His commands as the branches. We must realize that our life's efforts are ultimately fruitless and amount to nothing when we do not possess the love of God.

The ungodly love of the world is like noisy gongs and clanging cymbals. Let us love one another, then, in obedience to our Lord, whose example of true love we are to manifest as His representatives to a disobedient world.

- Article by Derek Cazel, *Tabletalk Magazine*, Ligonier Ministries, November 2005.