

In the Name of the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:17)

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Introduction

1. The *hortative* (urging and encouraging someone to a course of action) section from v. 12 to v. 17 is general in nature; whereas the following section (3:18-4:6) contains specific admonitions.
 - a. Both sections are based on the truth stated in v. 11 that the church is a body composed of different people from diverse backgrounds—cultural, educational, economic, political, and religious.
 - b. Diversity is dangerous because the things that make each individual unique can be points of pride and divisiveness. The prejudice of the Israelites is a clear example of this.
 - c. However, Jesus is the Redeemer of the world. He saves all sorts of people and He saves them to be one with Him in both union and unity (John 10:16; 17:11, 21, 22).
 - d. The safeguard against the dangers of diversity is the place of Christ in the life of the church and of all who compose the church. Thus Paul writes, “But Christ is all, and in all.”
2. By virtue of this truth, each believer is to mimic Christ in every aspect of life.
 - a. First, Paul reminds the church of their unique privilege as His elect (“chosen of God”), set apart unto God (“holy”), and loved by God (“beloved”).
 - b. Thus, they are to behave towards each other with the virtues of Christ: compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering, forbearing and forgiving one another (vv. 12, 13).
 - c. They are to operate in the sphere of divine love, which binds everything together in covenant harmony or perfection—the peace of Christ to which we were called into that one body (vv. 14, 15).
 - d. The means of maintaining this covenantal unity and harmony is the Word of Christ living and abiding in each heart, informing and transforming the people of God through teaching, admonishing, and singing—the regulative principle of worship (v. 16).
3. Paul concludes this section, in a sense, by summing it up, exhorting the saints that “whatever [they] do, in word or deed, [they are to do it] in the name of the Lord Jesus” (v. 17).

Here is *the* governing principle by which every believer can and must live to the glory of God.

I. Whatever

1. Jesus is Lord over all things (1:15-18). Paul is specifically addressing the pre-Gnostic error, diminishing the man, Jesus.
 - a. His is our life; we are to live in and by Him.

- b. He is our hope; we are to rest in and reflect Him.
 - c. He is our judge; we are to walk in and fear Him.
 - d. This includes every aspect of our lives, public and private.
2. Our tendency is to compartmentalize our lives into the secular and sacred, a thing that we cannot and must not do.
 3. “Whatever,” then, is all-encompassing and inclusive of every aspect of life without exception.

II. In the “Name”

1. Three uses of the “name” of Deity in Scripture
 - a. Name as *revelation* of His person and nature (Psa. 8:9; 76:1; 94:14; Isa. 48:9, 11)
 - b. Name as the *comprehensive expression* of His being (Ex. 20: 7; Isa. 42:8; 52:6)
 - c. Name as expressing divine *authority* (1 Cor. 1:10; John 15:6)
2. To do everything in His name is to *reveal* and *reflect* His Person *and* authority—to glorify Him.
3. We are to honor the *Lord Jesus*.
 - a. He is *Lord*; we are to submit to His authority in all matters of life
 - b. He is *Jesus* (Savior); purchased and redeemed by Him, we are to recognize His rightful claim to us.
4. The believer, by His Spirit, can be fully persuaded that Jesus approves of whatever He says and does.

III. With Thankfulness

1. Thanksgiving acknowledges one’s complete dependence on God’s grace and goodness.
 - a. The term, *thanksgiving*, is based on the word for grace (*charis*).
 - b. Ingratitude is self-reliance, either by ignoring or rejecting Jesus’ right and claim.
2. Thanksgiving is one’s response of understanding and one’s active sense of dependence.
3. Thus, thanksgiving (or lack thereof) is a proven means of determining our true relationship to Jesus.

We need to ask:

1. Am I evidencing His grace in my life through my gratitude, felt and expressed?
2. Do I live under continual awareness that He sees and weighs all that I am and do in the scales of His will for me?
3. Do I have a tendency to segregate life into secular and sacred compartments?
4. Do I live as if everything is under His sanction and with the conviction of His approval?

“This is the highest Christian morality”—John Eadie