

## Message #14

## Colossians 3:5-9a

The conjunction “therefore” (v. 5) immediately connects us with the preceding verses that describe the wonderful position that we have in Jesus Christ.

**IN VIEW OF YOUR EXALTED STATUS IN JESUS CHRIST, YOU HAVE BEEN COMMANDED BY GOD TO LIVE LIKE EXALTED SAINTS IN JESUS CHRIST.**

Christianity is not some fuzzy feeling. Christianity is not some dizzy-headedness. It is very concrete and very real. We are to make conscious decisions and choices in life that reflect who we are. These are not things we pray about, these are things we do.

In this series of verses, there are three imperatives given by God to the believer. An imperative is a command. In any command God gives, the assumption of God is that He has given necessary power to carry out the command. In other words, God will not command us to do something that is impossible for us to obey. If He gives the command, the ability to obey it is always present.

**COMMAND #1** – The command to kill our own sensual evil. **3:5**

The text literally reads: “You put to death or make dead the members upon the earth.” The Authorized Version reads: “Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth.” In other words, we have been ordered to kill certain things in our lives which are related to this earth.

1) The verb “consider dead” is an imperative, meaning it is a command.

This is not a suggestion; this is a direct order from God. We have been ordered to kill certain things, to see that they have no life in regard to us.

2) The verb “consider dead” is aorist tense, meaning this is to be a one point in time decision.

The certain members named here are to be killed once and for all and are to never be alive in our Christian character.

Now the word “members” grammatically sits appositionally to the things listed in **verse 5**. In other words, the list of things in **verse 5** are interrelated members which are all connected to each other and which are all to be killed. These members described here are “upon the earth,” which means they are not in heaven and they are not in hell. These are things that are on earth here and now and they need to be killed and put to death if they are anywhere near our lives:

**Member #1** - We are to kill immorality . **3:5a**

The word “immorality” is the Greek word “porneia,” which specifically has to do with immoral sexual activity outside of marriage. Any sexual activity outside of marriage is classified by God as immorality.

The Jerusalem council commanded the early Gentile church to abstain from sexual immorality (Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25), and time and time again Paul, who was the apostle to the Gentiles, commanded the same thing (I Cor. 6:18). It is the will of God to abstain from sexual immorality (I Thess. 4:3).

Sexual immorality is never to live in the life of the believer. If you are a believer and you are presently in immorality, you are commanded by God to make a one time decision to kill it.

**Member #2** - We are to kill impurity . **3:5b**

The word “impurity” refers to things and thoughts which are unclean and impure. Impurity has to do with all kinds of sensual things which God deems as morally corrupt (Eph. 4:19).

We are not to develop in things impure, we are to destroy things impure. We are to search out impure things in our own lives and destroy them, once and for all.

**Member #3** - We are to kill passion . **3:5c**

The word “passion” means we are to exterminate all ungoverned, emotional and evil desires (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 332). We could define this as godless passion.

Even the world says “if it feels good, do it,” God’s Word commands “if it isn’t good, kill it.” Thoughts are to be controlled, evil passions are to be destroyed. As Dr. Johnson said, “Undisciplined self expression has no place in the Christian life” (Bib. Sac., p. 24).

**Member #4** - We are to kill evil desire . **3:5d**

The difference between “passion” and “evil desire” seems to be passion is more emotional and evil desire is more mental. In other words, evil desire has to do with setting and focusing one’s mind on something evil, which becomes a passionate longing and desire for things forbidden.

**Member #5** - We are to kill greed . **3:5e**

The word “greed” comes from two Greek words, one meaning much more and the other meaning to have. A good understanding of what greed is would be “the desire to have much more.”

Greed, by the classification of God, is idolatry. One who is greedy is one who longs for gain and not God. Ultimately it is the choice to be content that becomes the cure for greed.

Greed is closely related to the other things on this list, because really all the other lustful things begin with greed. People who are lustful and immoral are greedy. They are not content with what God has given them and they want more and more.

(Reason #1) - Because of God's future wrath. **3:6**

We need to kill these things in our own lives, for these are the very things that will eventually bring the wrath of God to the world. God is going to pour out His wrath on the world for these very sins of immorality, impurity, passion, evil desires and greed. These are the sins that will send people to hell.

God is not going to pour out His wrath on the world because this world is such a wonderful environment. He is going to pour out His wrath on the world for the kinds of sins named in **verse 5**. Therefore, because of the wrath of God against these things, we certainly want to rid ourselves of these things.

(Reason #2) - Because of our former walk. **3:7**

The second reason why we need to kill immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire and greed is because prior to coming to faith in Christ, we were caught up in these kinds of things and we certainly were not happy. In fact, we sensed something was truly lacking in our lives when we were living our lives doing these kinds of things. This is partially what caused us to cry out to Christ for salvation.

I would like to cite Spurgeon, for he really captures the essence of the point:

“Christian, what has thou to do with sin? Hath it not cost thee enough already? Burnt child, wilt thou play with the fire? What! when thou hast already been between the jaws of the lion, wilt thou step a second time into his den? Hast thou not had enough of the old serpent? Did he not poison all thy veins once, and wilt thou play upon the hole of the asp, and put thy hand upon the cockatrice’s den a second time? Oh, be not so mad! so foolish! Did sin ever yield thee real pleasure? Didst thou find solid satisfaction in it? If so, go back to thine old drudgery, and wear the chain again, if it delight thee. But in as much as sin did never give thee what it promised to bestow, but deluded thee with lies, be not a second time snared by the old fowler—be free and let the remembrance of thy ancient bondage forbid thee to enter the net again!”

(Cited from John MacArthur, *Colossians & Philemon*, pp. 142-143.)

**COMMAND #2** – The command to put away all hateful evil. **3:8**

The verb “put aside” means to put away. Again the verb is aorist, which speaks of a one point in time decision. We are to decisively determine, once and for all, to get rid of these hateful qualities:

**Hateful Quality #1** - We are to put off anger . **3:8a**

The particular word used for anger here speaks of an impulsive and explosive anger.

**Hateful Quality #2** - We are to put off wrath . **3:8b**

The word “wrath” speaks of a passionate and hot anger. It speaks of impulsive anger that goes to the next level and is very intense.

**Hateful Quality #3** - We are to put off malice . **3:8c**

The word “malice” refers to a wicked, bad and depraved type of evil. It is a vicious type of depravity.

**Hateful Quality #4** - We are to put off slander . **3:8d**

The word “slander” is the word blasphemy, which means we are to put off impious speech against God and against others. We are to be very careful with our words.

**Hateful Quality #5** - We are to put off abusive speech . **3:8e**

Notice the emphasis we must put off abusive speech which comes out of our mouth. We cannot control what others say, but we can control what we say.

**COMMAND #3** – The command not to lie . **3:9a**

The word “another” in Greek means another of the same kind, not another of a different kind. In other words, one believer should never lie to another believer. We have been commanded by God not to lie to each other. Lying is of the character of Satan (John 8:44) and not of the character of God (Titus 1:2).

Do you want to be a spiritual Christian? Take specific action right now—destroy any immoral thing, put away any hateful thing and don't lie.