

# The MYSTERY

Hidden for Ages

## Is Now REVEALED

*A Study of the Book of Colossians*

LESSON 16

This Week's Passage:  
**Colossians 3:5-8**  
New International Version (NIV)

<sup>5</sup> Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup> Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. <sup>7</sup> You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. <sup>8</sup> But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

### **Memory Verse: Colossians 2:14**

<sup>13</sup> When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, <sup>14</sup> having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.

### **Day One: Read Colossians 3.**

1. Paul has worked hard to present a full description of the new identity that believers have in Christ—an identity that transforms the way they think, speak, and act. Since you have received Christ by faith, what has already taken place in your life, and what will take place in the future?

3:3a I \_\_\_\_\_

3:1a I \_\_\_\_\_

3:3b My \_\_\_\_\_


3:4b I will \_\_\_\_\_

2. The answers to question 1 provide believers with the motivation to “set [their minds] on things above” (3:2). Paul now addresses the “earthly things” (3:2) which have no place in believers’ lives. Reread Colossians 3:5; then write down the sins listed and a simple definition of each one.

In Colossians 3:2, Paul makes a distinction between things above and things on earth. “**Earthly things**” might be thought to refer to the normal activities of human life – marriage, childrearing, relationships, vocation, etc. - but that is not what Paul means since those are the very areas where our hidden life with Christ in God is lived out. The “earthly things” are rather the sinful motivations and practices, which are not in keeping with the believer’s new identity.

Prayerfully reflect on whether or how these sins might manifest themselves in your life.

## Day Two: Read Colossians 3:5–8.

3. Paul understands the devastation and slavery sin can bring into a person's life. In this passage, Paul exhorts believers to live in a manner consistent with their new identity and to be merciless in dealing with sin in their lives.
  - a. What strong language does Paul use to exhort believers concerning sin? (vv. 5, 8)
  - b. Why do you think Paul uses such strong language? (Consider what Hebrews 12:1 says about the nature of sin.)
  - c. What does Paul's use of the word "whatever" in verse 5 communicate?
4. Review what Colossians 3:1–4 says about our new identity in Christ. How does this new identity provide the foundation for Paul's exhortation to put to death what belongs to our earthly nature? (You may wish to consider Col. 3:7;  Eph. 5:8.)

## Day Three: Read Colossians 3:5–7.

5. Why are the sins Paul lists in these verses incompatible with our new identity?
  - a. Sexual sins (1 Cor. 6:13b–20)
  - b. Greed (Eph. 5:3–5)
  - c. Idolatry (Mt. 22:37–38; 1 Cor. 6:9–11)

### Idolatry

"Idolatry is any tendency in the human heart to dethrone God for the sake of something else, whether that be money, sex, ambition, power, pride, or something as seemingly innocuous as respectability. To the extent that we give our affections to anything other than God on the assumption that it can do for our souls what he can't, we are guilty of idolatry."<sup>1</sup>

6. The second reason Paul gives for putting these sinful practices to death is that because of them “the wrath of God is coming” (v. 6). What does this tell you about how God feels about sin?
7. While all sin deserves God’s wrath, believers do not need to fear his wrath because they will not experience it. How do we know this is true? (Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:9–10)

### Divine Wrath

“[Divine wrath] is not the loss of self-control or the irrational and capricious outburst of anger. Neither should it be conceived as a celestial bad temper or God lashing out at those who rub him the wrong way. Divine wrath is righteous antagonism toward all that is unholy. It is the revulsion of God’s character to that which is a violation of God’s will. Indeed, one may speak of divine wrath as a function of divine love. For God’s wrath is his love for holiness and truth and justice. It is because God passionately loves purity and peace and perfection that he reacts angrily toward anything and anyone who defiles them.”<sup>2</sup>

Given that this is true, why do you think Paul comments here on God’s coming wrath?

### Day Four: Read Colossians 3:8.

8. Write down the sins listed in verse 8 and a simple definition of each one.

Prayerfully reflect on whether or how these might manifest themselves in your life.

9. How does Ephesians 4:29—5:2 show that the sins listed in verse 8 are also incompatible with our identity in Christ?

## Day Five: Read Colossians 3:5-8.

There are only two options when it comes to dealing with sin.... Either we are ruthless in our commitment and efforts to kill sin (lest it be killing us) or we are reckless by default. One doesn't have to make deliberate choices to commit specific sins to be reckless. All one need do is fail to take calculated and precise steps to avoid temptation, flee sin at first sight, and treat it as one's mortal enemy.<sup>3</sup>

10. Each of the sins in this passage undermines the love and unity God has designed for our relationships with him and with other believers. Life lived in the power of the Spirit is completely different from life lived apart from him. For each of the sins listed below, write the opposite, and ask God to develop these qualities in your life.

The Sin	Its Opposite
Sexual Immorality	
Impurity	
Lust	
Evil Desires	
Greed	
Idolatry	
Anger	
Malice	
Slander	
Filthy Language	

11. If there are any sins on this list that you find troubling in your life, ask the Lord how to put them to death and put on their opposites. Share them with a trusted friend.
12. What picture does the list on the right paint of the kind of women God has designed and destined us to be?

\*📖 Indicates verses for further study

<sup>1</sup> Sam Storms, *The Hope of Glory: 100 Daily Meditations on Colossians* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 235.

<sup>2</sup> Storms, 239.

<sup>3</sup> Storms, 227.