

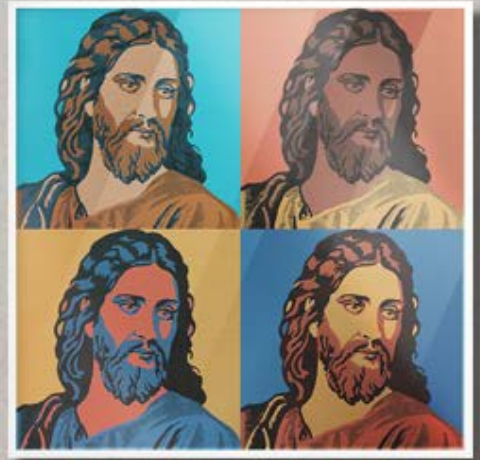
BAND OF BROTHERS

# No Other Jesus

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS

Rediscovering the Sufficiency and Superiority of Christ

SUMMER 2025



## Summer Series Teaching Schedule

May 6, 7, 8 – WEEK 1: **Colossians 1:1-23**

The supremacy of Christ

Devotionary™ Reading: Pages 5-24

May 13, 14, 15 – WEEK 2: **Colossians 1:24-2:7**

The mysterious ministry of spiritual maturity

Devotionary™ Reading: Pages 25-32

May 20, 21, 22 – WEEK 3: **Colossians 2:8-23**

The sufficiency of the gospel and the allure of self-made religion

Devotionary™ Reading: Pages 33-40

May 27, 28, 29 – WEEK 4: **Colossians 3:1-17**

Live like who you are

Devotionary™ Reading: Pages 41-52

June 3, 4, 5 – WEEK 5: **Colossians 3:18-4:6**

Let's get practical

Devotionary™ Reading: Pages 53-62

June 10, 11, 12 – WEEK 6: **Colossians 4:7-18**

A prisoner of Christ

Devotionary™ Reading: Pages 63-66



## Put On the New Self

**3** If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. <sup>3</sup> For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ who is your<sup>[a]</sup> life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

<sup>5</sup> Put to death therefore what is earthly in you:<sup>[b]</sup> sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup> On account of these the wrath of God is coming.<sup>[c]</sup> <sup>7</sup> In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. <sup>8</sup> But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self<sup>[d]</sup> with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. <sup>11</sup> Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave,<sup>[e]</sup> free; but Christ is all, and in all.

<sup>12</sup> Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup> 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. <sup>14</sup> And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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.



## A Future-Focused Faith

*<sup>1</sup> If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. <sup>3</sup> For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. – Colossians 3:1-4 ESV*

Paul's opening statement in chapter three is meant to convey an assumption that Paul has made regarding the members of the Colossian church. He is not questioning their salvation, but instead, he is stating that because they are believers, they must have a completely different perspective about life. The opening verse might be better translated, "Since you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above..."

Their new relationship with God the Father, made possible by the atoning work of Jesus Christ, should give them an eternal, rather than temporal, outlook on life. Their hearts and minds should be focused on all that the death and resurrection of Jesus accomplished on their behalf. They were no longer of this world. In fact, what Paul wrote to the believers in Philippi was true for them as well: "...we are citizens of heaven, where the Lord Jesus Christ lives. And we are eagerly waiting for him to return as our Savior" (Philippians 3:20 NLT).

Paul was constantly encouraging Gentile believers to embrace their new identity as citizens of God's eternal kingdom.

*So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. – Ephesians 2:19 NLT*

No matter what their ethnic identity may have been, they were now members of God's family and shared in the glorious inheritance reserved for all His children.

*So you have not received a spirit that makes you fearful slaves. Instead, you received God's Spirit when he adopted you as his own children. Now we call him, "Abba, Father." For his Spirit joins with our spirit to affirm that we are God's children. And since we are his children, we are his heirs. In fact, together with Christ we are heirs of God's glory. – Romans 8:15-17 NLT*

But Paul knew that the Colossian believers were struggling to accept and adapt to their new identities in Christ. Because of their earth-bound existence, they were prone to view life through the lens of the here-and-now. They were stuck on an earthly plane and having a difficult time visualizing the spiritual benefits of their relationship with Christ. But Paul reminded them that their Lord and Savior was no longer on earth but was "seated at the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1 ESV).

Paul's mention of Jesus' presence at His Father's side was intended to remind them that this present world was not their final destination. Peter would have told them that they were

nothing more than “temporary residents and foreigners” (1 Peter 2:11 NLT) in this world. According to what Jesus told His disciples; God had a far better destiny in store for His children.

*“In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.” – John 14:2-3 ESV*

Peter described this place as “an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading” (1 Peter 1:4 ESV). And the apostle John recorded in the book of Revelation the vision he received of this future residence for God’s people.

*And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” – Revelation 22:2-4 ESV*

So, when Paul writes, “Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth” (Colossians 3:2 ESV), he is attempting to focus their attention on the glorious future God has in store for them. They were not to confuse this present world and their current lives with the coming Kingdom of God. And like the apostle John, Paul wanted his readers to reject the temptation to live as if this world was their home.

*Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions. These are not from the Father, but are from this world. And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever. – 1 John 2:15-17 NLT*

Paul knew how difficult it was to live in this world while maintaining a healthy distance from all its temptations and allures. That’s why he emphasized having a “heavenly” perspective that focused on the reality of things to come. In a sense, Paul is describing the life of faith. As the author of Hebrews describes it, “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1 ESV). Faith is living with a future-focused perspective that believes in and waits on the final fulfillment of all the promises that God has made.

*And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don’t need to hope for it. But if*

*we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently).* – Romans 8:23-25 NLT

Paul constantly repeated this refrain to the various flocks to whom God had made him a shepherd. He told the Corinthians Christians:

*So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.* – 2 Corinthians 4:18 NLT

*So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight.* – 2 Corinthians 5:6-7 NLT

And Paul reminded the Colossians believers: “your life is hidden with Christ in God” (Colossians 3:3 ESV). This rather enigmatic statement carries a profound truth that Paul thoroughly embraced and constantly taught. And in his letter to the church in Rome, he expounded upon the profound nature of our union with Christ.

*...have you forgotten that when we were joined with Christ Jesus in baptism, we joined him in his death? 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.*

*Since we have been united with him in his death, we will also be raised to life as he was. 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. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin. And since we died with Christ, we know we will also live with him.* – Romans 6:3-8 NLT

Christ didn't save the Colossian believers and then abandon them to fend for themselves. They were united with Him in His death and His resurrection. His death broke the chains of sin that had once held them captive and trapped in a life of slavery. They had died with Christ and were now united to Him in His resurrected state. That is why Paul could so boldly and joyfully state, “My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. So I live in this earthly body by trusting in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:20 NLT).

Paul states that the Christian's life is “hidden with Christ in God.” The Greek word is κρύπτω (*kryptō*), and it conveys the idea of concealment. He is trying to let the Colossian believers know that their lives are being preserved by Christ in heaven. They were to live their lives as if they were already seated by His side in heaven. Their destiny was assured. And while they were temporarily stuck on earth, they could live as if they were already citizens of God's eternal kingdom. From a faith-based perspective, they were as good as there. Their sins were forgiven,

their future resurrection was assured, and their eternal state was fully secure. All because of the matchless love of God in Christ.

*...God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!) For he raised us from the dead along with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ Jesus. – Ephesians 2:4-6 NLT*



## Live Like Who You Are

<sup>5</sup> Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup> On account of these the wrath of God is coming. <sup>7</sup> In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. <sup>8</sup> But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. <sup>11</sup> Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. – Colossians 3:5-11 ESV

How were the believers in Colossae supposed to set their minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth? Was Paul suggesting that they be so heavenly-minded that they were no earthly good? Paul has just challenged them to adopt a Christ-focused perspective that highlights the eternal aspect of their relationship with Him. Christ is seated at the right hand of His Father in heaven, and one day He will return. His presence at His Father's side demonstrates that He successfully completed His initial earthly mission. The apostle Peter spoke of Jesus' exaltation when he addressed the crowds at Pentecost.

*“God raised Jesus from the dead, and we are all witnesses of this. Now he is exalted to the place of highest honor in heaven, at God’s right hand. And the Father, as he had promised, gave him the Holy Spirit to pour out upon us...”* – Acts 2:32-33 NLT

Jesus' death was efficacious or effective. It accomplished the will of His heavenly Father and requires no supplemental aids or add-ons to increase its efficacy. And Paul assured the believers in Rome that, because Jesus died and rose again, they would enjoy eternal life with Him.

*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. When he died, he died once to break the power of sin. But now that he lives, he lives for the glory of God. So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.* – Romans 6:9-11 NLT

Paul picks up the same theme with the believers in Colossae. He wants them to live according to their new status as spiritually transformed and adopted children of God. Jesus didn't die so that they might have their best life now but so that they might enjoy glorified life forever. But Paul knew that this future-focused mindset was difficult to maintain while living in the present. That's why he provides them with some practical guidance for navigating life in a fallen world. He is expanding the theme he began back in chapter two.

*Therefore, as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith...* – Colossians 2:6-7 ESV

For Paul, it was always about faith. He firmly believed and persistently taught that faith was the means by which we are saved and sanctified. And Jesus Christ is to be the sole focus of that faith. It is through Christ that we have access to the Father. It is because of Christ that we have the assurance of eternal life. It is thanks to Christ that we have the indwelling presence of the Spirit of God. And look closely at what Paul told the Roman believers: “consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God **through Christ Jesus**” (Romans 6:11 NLT).

Their union with Christ equipped them with unprecedented power to live godly lives – even in the ungodly environment of Rome. And the same thing was true for the Colossian Christians. Paul has already told them, “You have died with Christ, and he has set you free from the spiritual powers of this world. So why do you keep on following the rules of the world...” (Colossians 2:20 NLT).

Paul was constantly admonishing believers for their tendency to regress in their faith. They seemed to have no problem believing that Jesus could save them but they had difficulty trusting that He could keep them saved. So, they kept reverting to their old lifestyles based on human effort and self-righteousness.

*So now that you know God (or should I say, now that God knows you), why do you want to go back again and become slaves once more to the weak and useless spiritual principles of this world? – Galatians 4:9 NLT*

Paul was calling for complete separation from and dependence upon the things of this world. If Jesus was to be the believer’s sole source of salvation and sustenance, why were they continually turning to the world for satisfaction, fulfillment, significance, and hope? Their actions were in direct conflict with their calling and expressed commitment to Jesus Christ. Their behavior was not accurately reflecting their belief in a transformed life. That is why Paul demands that they do an about-face, turning their backs on their former way of life and seeking things above.

*So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don’t be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. – Colossians 3:5 NLT*

Paul was well aware of the fact that his flock in Colossae was struggling with the ongoing presence of their sinful natures. And Paul was not exempt from this internal battle between godliness and wickedness. In his letter to the Romans, he divulged his own struggle with indwelling sin.

*I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God’s law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? – Romans 7:21-24 NLT*

But Paul answered his own pleading question, joyfully declaring, “Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord” (Romans 7:25 NLT). The solution to the problem of indwelling sin is Jesus. Because of Jesus, we have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to say no to sin and yes to God. His divine presence provides us with all we need to put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within us. That is why Paul told the Galatian church, “So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won’t be doing what your sinful nature craves” (Galatians 5:16 NLT). Then he went on to say, “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there” (Galatians 5:24 NLT).

Because of their relationship with Christ, their former sinful habits had been nailed to the cross with Him. But every believer knows how easy it is to breathe life into those old, dead habits and “resurrect” them once again. So, Paul demands that they “put to death” those things. But how? Is he suggesting that this is an ongoing, daily action? Is it the fate of every Christian to live their entire earthly life in a daily struggle to put to death sin? The answer is found in the grammar of Paul’s statement. When he states, “put to death,” he uses the Aorist Active Imperative (AAM) tense. The action described by the verb indicates that it is a past event. It has already taken place. Paul is stating that our old sinful habits have already been put to death – on the cross. So, we must constantly return them to their rightful place – on the cross. Our present action is based on a past reality.

The action Paul is commanding is to be the natural result of belief. If we truly believe that Jesus “canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross” (Colossians 2:14 NLT), then we should confidently return those sinful habits right where they belong: to the cross. They are dead to us. They no longer possess power over us. but Paul has to remind the Colossians that their new life in Christ was meant to reflect a new way of living.

*You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. –*  
Colossians 3:7-8 NLT

They had been cleansed by the blood of Jesus Christ. They had clothed in His righteousness. But metaphorically, they were constantly going back to the closet of sin and picking out old, soiled garments to wear. That’s why Paul had to remind them that they had “put off the old self with its practices” (Colossians 3:9 ESV) and had “put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator” (Colossians 3:10 ESV). But that past action required constant repeating in the present. They were guilty of reaching back into the closet and selecting one of their old, comfortably fitting sins to wear out in public.

Paul is describing the ongoing nature of sanctification or spiritual growth. The Christian life is not meant to be static or stagnant. Once saved, always saved doesn’t mean that there is no ongoing transformation that takes place in the believer’s life. Peter indicates that believers are to “grow into a full experience of salvation” (1 Peter 2:2 NLT). Paul told the Ephesians that they were to be “growing in every way more and more like Christ” (Ephesians 4:15 NLT).

Growth in Christlikeness is non-optional for the believer. One of the primary roles of the Holy Spirit is to assist Christians in their knowledge of Christ and their ongoing transformation into His likeness. And this transformation is for all believers, regardless of their ethnic or cultural background. Each is to individually experience the Spirit's transformative power so that, together, we might reflect that nature of Christ and bring glory to God the Father.

*...you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. – 1 Peter 2:5 ESV*

## Addition by Subtraction

<sup>12</sup> Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, <sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. – Colossians 3:12-17 ESV

In verse 5, Paul tells the Colossians to **put to death** (*nekroō*) five things: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness. Now, in verse 12, he tells them to **put on** (*endyō*) five things: compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. The first list represented the traits that characterized their old natures before salvation. It was not intended to be an exhaustive list, and Paul did not suggest that each Colossian believer had been guilty of committing all these vices. He was simply pointing out the kinds of immoral behaviors that characterized their lives before coming to faith in Christ.

The first list seems to stress sins that are self-centered and focused on satisfying sexual passions or ungodly desires.

**Sexual immorality** (*porneia*) is a rather broad term that can refer to illicit sexual intercourse but was also used to cover such things as adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, and intercourse with animals

**Impurity** (*akatharsia*) refers to uncleanness in any form but in a moral sense: the impurity of lustful, luxurious, and profligate living.

**Passion** (*pathos*) was a word the Greeks used that had both positive and negative characteristics. But its presence on this list suggests that Paul refers to depraved or vile passions.

**Evil desire** (*epithymian kaken*) is a craving for something forbidden. It is a legitimate longing that chooses an illegitimate object as its focus.

**Greed** (*pleonexian*) is the desire to acquire more by fraudulent means. It is a form of dissatisfaction that constantly craves more, even at the expense of others.

Not only are these traits earthly and immoral, but they are also self-centered and completely devoid of concern for others. They represent a blatant disregard for God and a disdain for other people, which puts them at odds with the commands of God that Jesus labeled as the greatest.

*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” – Matthew 22:37-39 ESV*

Paul’s first list describes the me-focused state of fallen humanity. All those who have failed to experience a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ are incapable of loving God and others because their sinful natures are driven by an uncontrollable and insatiable love of self. Even followers of Christ must recognize that the sinful characteristics that marked their pre-salvation state have not all been eradicated. The old sin nature remains and must be dealt with decisively and repeatedly.

“The Christian must kill self-centeredness; he must regard as dead all private desires and ambitions. There must be in his life a radical transformation of the will, and a radical shift of the centre. Everything which would keep him from fully obeying God and fully surrendering to Christ must be surgically excised.” – William Barclay, *The Letter to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians*. Daily Study Bible series

But there is more to the process than simply eliminating past bad habits. In a sense, Paul is telling the Colossians, “out with the old, in with the new.” They must replace the traits that characterized their former lives with godly alternatives, and Paul provides them with a list of five non-optional qualities that should mark their lives as God’s chosen people.

**Compassionate hearts** (*splagchnon oiktirmos*) can be literally translated as “bowels of mercy.” In the ancient world, compassion was associated with the bowels, but in our modern context, we associate that characteristic with the heart. It expresses a deep concern and care for those who are suffering.

**Kindness** (*chrēstotēs*) is a form of moral goodness that expresses itself in acts of selfless sacrifice for others.

**Humility** (*tapeinophrosynē*) refers to the humbleness of mind or holding a humble opinion of oneself. Paul expressed it this way: “In humility count others more significant than yourselves” (Philippians 2:3 ESV).

**Meekness** (*praotēs*) is another relational word that conveys the idea of gentleness toward others. It is the opposite of arrogance or self-assertiveness.

**Patience** (*makrothymia*) is “slowness in avenging wrongs.” It refers to one who willingly endures injustice and ill-treatment for the sake of others.

All of these traits are other-focused. They are relational in nature and intend to put the needs of others first. Paul also provided concrete examples of what these godly characteristics should look like in everyday life.

*Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. – Colossians 3:13 NLT*

Notice his emphasis on others. The Christian life is not intended to be a solo sport but a team activity where brothers and sisters in Christ are expected to operate in a spirit of unity and cooperation so that, together, they reflect His goodness and glory. Paul was writing to a diverse congregation made up of Gentiles and Jews, the rich and the poor, slaves and freemen. But they were all one in Christ, and, as Paul told the congregation in Ephesus, their ability to achieve unity in the face of diversity was a reflection of God's work among them.

*So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. **Together**, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself. We are carefully joined **together** in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord. – Ephesians 2:19-21 NLT*

For Paul, the most convincing proof of the Colossians' Spirit-empowered transformation would be their love for one another. Rather than reverting back to their former self-centered and selfish behavior, they were to love as they had been loved (1 John 4:19). God had sent His Son as a tangible expression of His love for them, and He ordained that His Son would sacrifice His life on a cross in their place. That selfless act of love was to be emulated and passed on from one believer to another.

*Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. – Colossians 3:14 NLT*

Love was to be the glue that binds the body of Christ together. But it must be a selfless, lay-it-all-on-the-line kind of love that expects nothing in return. Jesus had clarified to His disciples the kind of love He expected them to have for one another.

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." – John 13:34-35 ESV*

Paul is passing on that command to his flock on Colossae. He wanted them to know that their lives were to be marked by love. Not only that, but they were also to be a people characterized by peace.

*...let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. – Colossians 3:15 NLT*

The Colossian believers were surrounded by a constant state of turmoil that produced a sense of anxiety in them. False teachers caused them to question their faith. Daily battles with old habits tempted them to doubt their salvation. Infighting and disunity plagued their fellowship.

But Paul called them to live in peace—a particular kind of peace that comes from Christ Himself. Paul seems to be recalling the words that Jesus spoke to His disciples not long before His death.

*“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.” – John 14:27 ESV*

Jesus spoke these words in conjunction with His promise to send the Holy Spirit. One of the primary functions of the Spirit of God would be to bring peace to the hearts of Christ’s followers after His departure. The Spirit’s presence within them would provide a sense of continuity and calm assurance that they had not been abandoned. Christ was still with them in the form of the Holy Spirit.

Paul wants the Colossians to know that the Spirit is an ever-present reality in their lives, intended to be the source of peace and tranquility, even amid turmoil and distress. They are to be constantly thankful for the peace-producing presence of the Spirit of God. They are also to keep their hearts and minds focused on the truth regarding Jesus Christ.

*Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. – Colossians 3:16 NLT*

That message needed no additions or addendums. The good news regarding Jesus required no “new” editions or updates. They were to teach it, sing about it, rest confidently on it, and constantly express their thanks to God for it.

Every aspect of their lives was to reflect their new relationship with Jesus Christ and their Spirit-empowered capacity to live godly lives in an ungodly world. There was to be no compartmentalization or secular/sacred split. No area of life was off limits to the transformative work of the Spirit. That is why Paul closed out this section of his letter with a powerful call for them to allow the Spirit to radically transform all they said and did.

*...whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. – Colossians 1:17 ESV*