



## 2026 1Q Christ in Philippians and Colossians Lesson 11 Living with Christ

by Tim Jennings

### SABBATH

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Read Memory Verse:

- But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. Colossians 3:14 NKJV

What do you think of this idea of perfection? Put on love, for it is the bond of perfection—what does this mean?

Does this mean that if you love your spouse you will never forget anything? That you will never make a mistake, drop a dish, stumble and accidentally knock their cell phone on the floor cracking the screen, that if you love your spouse you will perform every task perfectly?

What does it mean if it isn't about perfect task performance?

Consider what John wrote:

- Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and **sin is lawlessness**. And you know that He was manifested to **take away our sins**, and in Him there is no sin. Whoever **abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him**. Little children, let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous. **He who sins is of the devil**, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that **He might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever has been born of God does not sin**, for His seed remains in him; and **he cannot sin**, because he has been born of God. 1 John 3:4–9 NKJV, emphasis mine.

What does this mean? Isn't John saying that if we accept Jesus we will stop sinning?

What does that mean? Does that mean we never make a mistake, we perform all our tasks and duties with perfect precision, we never make a math error in our checkbook, we never hit a wrong note while playing the piano, we never misunderstand a question and therefore never give a wrong or false answer thinking it was the right answer? Is that what John is saying?

Is lawlessness talking about human law and behavioral task performance? Or design law, the law of love, truth, trust and the motives of the heart?

Consider this text, does it help us with 1John 3 above?

- “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you: **Love** your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, **that you may be sons of your Father in heaven**. He causes his **sun to rise** on the evil and the good, and **sends rain** on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? **Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect**. Matthew 5:43–48 NIV84, emphasis mine.

The memory text is about the perfection of love, Jesus directly connects love with perfection—what are the links in these three passages, love, perfection, and no longer sinning?

What is sin? Lawlessness—what law? God’s design laws of truth and love which operate only in freedom. This is why Paul wrote in Romans 14:23 that whatever is not of faith or trust is sin—sin is the breakdown of the bonds of love and trust in God based on lies; the restoration of truth, love, and trust purges sin and results in perfection.

Is it possible to achieve this here and now? Did Enoch? Did Elijah? Did Job?

What did their lives reveal? Did Job understand everything? Were all of His questions based on understanding correctly what was going on, or were some of them based on ignorance and assumption? How could Job be perfect if he wasn’t correct about everything?

Because it wasn’t about perfect knowledge, it was about Bible perfection, which is maturity of character, which is a mature love and trust in God that cannot be shaken no matter what. And Job had that, no matter what happened, his faith, trust, in God was not shaken. He didn’t understand but to whom did he go? To God and he was open to be corrected, his heart was willing to give up misconceptions when truth was revealed, and he said, even if God were the one to kill him he would still trust God. That is the perfection God is looking for, a mature, perfect love and trust that knows God is so good that no matter what happens in this world it will not cause us to doubt God.

As we mature in Christ we grow in our experience with Him, come to know Him personally and eventually we are sealed, which is being so settled into the truth both intellectually (mind) and spiritually (heart motive of selfless love) that we cannot be moved into distrust and rebellion against God—like Daniel, who would rather be thrown to lions than betray His Lord; the three worthies, who would rather be thrown in a fiery furnace than betray their Lord.

These and others throughout history had come to such a point in their trust in God that nothing could shake them from it. They were perfected, mature in their love and loyalty, as are those ready for translation when Jesus comes—as described in Revelation 12:11:

- They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Revelation 12:11

The blood is symbolic of the life (Leviticus 17:11), symbolizing that these faithful have internalized the life of Christ (John 6:53; Galatians 2:20; 2 Peter 1:4) and are reborn with a new animating spirit of love and trust, and because of that, the word of their testimony is the truth about God. Their lives reveal God's character of love as evidenced by the fact that "they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death." The spirit of fear and selfishness, the survival-of-the-fittest drive, motive, spirit is purged, and they live the life of Christ in perfect trust and surrender to Him:

- "Your life must be controlled by love, just as Christ loved us and gave his life for us" (Ephesians 5:2 GNT).
- "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers" (1 John 3:16 NIV84).
- "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:12, 13 NIV84).

Bible perfection is all about the heart, spirit, attitude of love, and trust, not about how well we can perform tasks. And the mature experience this sealing, perfecting, settling in their trust relationship with God. And this **requires** that we are reborn with a new spirit, the Holy Spirit, who brings us the Spirit or life of Christ so it is no longer our old fear and survival selfishness motivating us, but the life of Jesus. This is Bible perfection.

But Satan tries to divert attention away from the healing of hearts and minds into love and trust of God and onto the behaviors, the symptoms of our sin-sickness to discourage us and get us to fear God and stop trusting Jesus to heal us, but instead seek to claim Jesus' sacrifice to protect us from His Father. The devil tries to get us to focus on our stumbling, struggles, shortcomings, to discourage us, so we become overcome with guilt and shame and either become depressed and despondent, or to defend against the guilt and shame by a false legal theology that tells the person, despite their unconverted heart, despite their ongoing distrust of God, if they claim the legal blood payment of Jesus they will be declared legally perfect even though they are not—and in fact you can never really be perfect so don't try, just have faith in the blood. And that false system traps the poor people in cycles of fear, guilt, and shame.

Consider this analogy: a patient with severe pneumonia who has not yet gotten any treatment. They are on the path of death (analogous to the unconverted who is dead in trespass and sin). The don't they leave the path of death and enter the path of life when they meet with their doctor, nor when they believe their doctor is able to help them, but when they actually choose to trust the doctor by internalizing the antibiotic (truth and love). It is then that they have left the path of death and are now on the road of life (conversion, justification).

But they are not well that very day. In fact, as the antibiotic begins to work, they will begin to cough up more phlegm (more sins coming to light as the Holy Spirit works on us). But the patient who is taking their antibiotics, keeping their appointments, and because they trust their doctor they to the best of their ability follow the doctor's directions, are perfect in their recovery despite having periods of

increased phlegm production. Why? Because it is not about the symptoms it is about whether they love and trust the doctor. These patients, are not in rebellion, they are not off the path of life; they are faithful and trustworthy despite their increased production of phlegm.

Likewise, those who surrender to Jesus, internalizing His Word and the Holy Spirit through trust, are reborn with a new life, the life of Christ, and they will necessarily experience increasing awareness of sinfulness in them. This is often brought to their attention through an action that is an expression of the old self (Romans 7), which is an old habit, reflexive response wired into their brain before fully trusting Jesus and being reborn.

But when such action occurs, the new self (reborn person with a new heart and right spirit) is convicted, repulsed and distraught over it and runs to their doctor (Jesus) for more help in healing. Such a person is not in rebellion; they are being cleansed by the indwelling Holy Spirit as they fall on their knees in disappointment, repentance, and confession, asking for God's grace and power to continue healing, transforming, and changing them. Thus, these shortcomings are not ongoing sin—not ongoing selfishness stemming from distrust and rebellion chosen by the self—but residual symptoms of the sin-sickness that had previously been habituated and is now being purged and overcome.

However, Satan will work to inflame fear, guilt, shame, selfishness, and doubt (run and hide, deny, defend, etc.) in the person who in trust with Jesus is being healed. When these moments of shortcoming occur, they will be tempted to give up, doubt they can be saved, and get discouraged. Therefore, they need those doctor visits with Jesus to confess, repent, and express their disappointment with self—not to persuade, appease, or influence Jesus to help them, but so they can be reassured that He is still for them and they can be freed of the guilt and shame. And **that very action** of going to Jesus in repentance is evidence, lived-out demonstration, that the individual is a reborn individual who trusts their doctor, who recognizes they are sick, who is **not** in rebellion against God but whose heart/spirit/motive has been transformed and who recoils at the old remnants of selfishness still in them from which they long to be totally free.

## SUNDAY

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Read Colossians 3:1-4:

- Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Colossians 3:1-4 NIV84

What does this mean?

What is being described?

What does it mean that you died and your life is hid with Christ?

What does it mean being raised with Christ? How is our life hidden with Christ and what does it mean Christ is our life?

Let's break this down into very simply in bullet points what we have been describing for several months now:

- God created one human being out of dirt and breathed into that one human being one breath of life or animating spirit.
- Every other human being shares the same breath of life
- Adam and Eve corrupted their life, their spirit, with fear and selfishness
- We are all born with this corrupt spirit that naturally distrusts God and seeks to run away from Him, severing our connection and causing death.
- God loved humanity too much to let us go so He sent His Son Jesus to save us from sin—the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world
- Jesus was born of Mary and thereby partook of the same breath of life, spirit, that Adam corrupted, but the Father to Jesus' humanity was the Holy Spirit so in the humanity of Jesus God breathes in a new sinless holy spirit, or life.
- Jesus lives as a human, using only human abilities, and is tempted in all points like we are and never gives in to fear, lies, selfishness, and develops a perfect sinless humanity and at the cross destroys, purges, kills the corrupt life, the spirit of fear and selfishness inherited from Adam and rises on the third day in a humanity that is perfect and sin free and animated only by the spirit He received from the Holy Spirit.
- He becomes the new head of humanity, the second Adam, because He is a real member of this family having partaken of the life passed down by Adam.
- He now offers us the privilege of being saved, healed, renewed, cleansed from sin—how?
- By surrendering in trust to Him the life of fear and selfishness we inherited from Adam and receiving His life. When we trust, we open the heart and the Holy Spirit brings us a new life, the life of Christ and we are reborn with new animating energy and motives.
- As Paul wrote it is no longer his old self living but Christ lives in him.
- As Peter wrote we become partakers of the divine nature.

This is what Paul is describing above and from that moment on we are living to daily grow in godliness by choosing to embrace, apply, and live out ever increasing revelations of God's love and truth. And we accelerate our healing, our transformation by ingesting the Word of God, the truth, as we internalize God's word, not mere memorization, but thoughtful loving appreciation and acceptance of the truth into our hearts, we are transformed and the old is cut away.

- For the **word** of God is **living and active**. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to **dividing soul and spirit**, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12 NIV84, emphasis mine.

God's word, the truth, as we embrace and accept truth it gets encoded into our brain's and that cause a real change in us, we grow ever closer to Jesus, our love, trust grow and our souls, our individualities,

are slowly freed from the control of the spirit of fear and established and connected with ever-increasing vitality to the spirit of love and trust. It is reality, it is how we are built by God, it is how He saves us. We must choose the truth for ourselves, we must choose to trust for ourselves, and when we do we receive divine power that does the transforming and renewing, but God cannot do the studying for us, God cannot do the choosing for us. God can provide the truth, the love, and the power to succeed, but we must choose what we watch, read, listen to, associate with, what we believe, and who we trust.

Okay, this leads us to consider what does the rest of the text mean, once we have been reborn with the life of Christ we must set our minds on things above and stop ingesting the earthly.

Read the first paragraph,

- From a mountaintop, it is possible to survey a vast landscape that is all around you. From time immemorial, mountains have been frequented by those seeking a closer experience with God (see Ps. 121:1, 2). Even human-made mountains, called ziggurats, have been constructed by pagans for a similar purpose—to meet with the gods. Interestingly, the city of Ur, which Abram was called to leave, had a very large ziggurat visible from miles around. But changing one's elevation will never by itself draw anyone closer to heaven in a spiritual sense. Human effort never could. *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philippians and Colossians*, p. 85.

Is there an object lesson in this that applies directly to our salvation and the spiritual battle?

- How you have fallen from heaven, O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." Isaiah 14:12-14 NIV84

Is Lucifer seeking to change his elevation? Yes, but not geographically!

Lucifer wanted sit enthroned on the **mount** of assembly and the sacred **mountain**—but this is talking about physical elevation, no, it is talking about elevating one's status, position, authority, power, over others.

Could this still be a problem in the church? Could people be tempted into seeking positions of power, leadership, authority, in the church organization?

What does this mean?

- Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or

mother or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first. Matthew 19:28-20 NIV84.

Why is it that those who seek to get ahead, advance self, get more power and prestige actually lose but those who surrender self and seek to uplift others get ahead?

Does this connect to focusing on things of heaven rather than things of this world?

What happens inside of us when we focus on things on this world? We are changed by them—in a variety of ways:

- If we focus on worldly power, prestige, wealth and esteem it—this of such things in a positive way, then we long for it, value it and we try to seek it to advance. We become more selfish, jealous of others, we develop feelings of resentment, life not being fair.
- If we focus on worldly power, prestige, wealth, in a negative way, it isn't fair, the rich exploit the weak, evil triumphs over good, we become angry, resentful, bitter, and either become demoralized and nihilistic and fall into escapism, or we become rebellious and seek to take down those we see as powerful and unworthy of having power.

Focusing on heavenly things means we focus on reality as God designed it. We focus on truth, love, liberty, how God built life to work. We are enlightened to realize that earthly might and power, wealth and privilege, does not heal hearts and minds, does not provide life, does not remove guilt, shame, and fear.

We realize that the rich who exploit, abuse, and take advantage of others are searing their consciences, hardening their hearts, warping their characters and we grieve for them, we do not hate them, we are sad for them. And we know that the weapons that win are the divine weapons of truth that demolish the stronghold of lies, and love that demolishes the stronghold of envy, jealousy and hate, and as we trust in God that that trust demolishes the stronghold of fear and the need to protect self and try and make life go the way that we want.

Focusing on heavenly things sets us free from the control of fear, the domination of guilt and shame, the need to try and control others, free to listen to the Holy Spirit and carry out the purposes of God in a world in which we recognize clearly the difference between the methods of God and the methods of Satan.

## MONDAY

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Read Colossians 3:5-6:

- Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.  
Colossians 3:5-6 NIV84

What does this mean?

Let's talk about the putting to death the things that belong to the earthly nature—what does this mean?

Who is to put this to death?

How?

Is this the mortification of the flesh by various physical devices used to cause bodily pain?

Is this done by going through water baptism?

Is it done like Simeon Stylites who in the fifth century moved atop a pillar to get away from earthly influences? The first pillar was 10 feet, but he kept extending it and the final pillar was 50 feet from the ground with a small platform on the top. Records vary, but he spent between 35-42 years atop the pillar to get away from earthliness. And he is venerated as a saint by the Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox Church, and Oriental Orthodox Church.

Is Simeon Stylites showing us the way to put to death the things are earthly, or is he actually demonstrating the opposite? In other words, would actions like Simeons contribute to becoming less like Jesus?

If one accepts the lie that God's law functions like human law, and that sin is doing bad deeds, then Simeon's actions puts him in a place where he cannot do any bad deed and from a *worldly* perspective this looks righteous—and it looks righteous from a *worldly* perspective because it is using worldly methods to try and fix a worldly problem which only makes the person more worldly.

When one returns to the truth that God's law is design law, the laws of truth and love acting upon liberty, then one realizes worldliness is the opposite, it is lies, fear, selfishness, survival drives that manifest in the behaviors we commonly think of as sins, as worldly. However, the behaviors are secondary, the sin is heart, mind attitude and motivation, not deed.

Simeon stylites wasn't living on a pillar because he loved people and wanted to help others. He was living on a pillar because he was afraid of sinning and getting punished by God. His actions did not cause him to become a living conduit of God's love ministering to others, but caused him to cut

himself off from love and to solidify in fear and self-protection, hiding from life on top of a pillar. And how incredibly sad that he is venerated as a saint.

Righteousness is not about the external deeds, but the motives of the heart.

Thus, the Pharisee in Christ's day who brought a big offering to church and publicly loudly proclaimed,

- God, I thank you that I am not like other men—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get. Luke 18:11-12 NIV84.

His deed was a good deed, but he was not godly, he was worldly. His actions were sinful not righteous, why? Because it is not about the act, it is about the motive of the heart and his heart is driven by fear and selfishness and he gives and fasts to show how good he is and how much better he is than others, which is pride driven by fear and selfishness.

Love seeks to help others and not draw attention, recognition, power, control, wealth, to self. Lucifer in heaven sought to exalt himself to a higher station, but Jesus,

- Who, **being in very nature God**, did not consider equality with God something to be **grasped**, but **made himself nothing**, taking the very nature of a **servant**, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he **humbled himself** and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore **God exalted him** to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name Philippians 2:6-9 NIV84

Jesus always seeks to glorify the Father, not self; the Father always seeks to uplift and glorify the Son, not self; the Holy Spirit always seeks to glorify the Father and the Son, not self.

That is what love does—and therefore we put to death the things of the world not by hard work to make ourselves look good in the eyes of others, but by internal work where we battle against the desires and feelings of our own spirit of fear and selfishness. And we battle by daily ingestion into our hearts and minds of the Word of God, and by choosing to say no to the old temptations of fear by doing what we know is right and trusting God with how it turns out rather than trying to control the outcome ourselves. Understand, the putting to death the old goes like this:

- God brings truth and love to your heart and mind to convict you that something is wrong, inspire you for something better, and lead you to specific decision points, one point at a time.
- When you have been persuaded on an issue, where you are convinced of what is right for you and what is not right, then you are left completely free to choose for yourself whether you will choose to embrace and follow the truth or continue to do the old unhealthy patterns. For instance, if you are persuaded that a certain relationship is not right for you and that you need to end it; do you end it, or do you try and fix it because you don't want to grieve the loss? If you are persuaded that a certain programming is not healthy for your mind and heart, do you

stop watching it, or not? Choice by choice God brings us to places where we are persuaded in our minds what is the healthy action and then we are left free to make our choice.

- But here is the real secret to success: we don't win in our power or strength, we only win with God's power—*but we don't get the power until we make the choice!* If we are open to truth and pursuing God's will in our lives, we get insight, enlightenment, conviction, understanding of our choice, but we don't get the power to overcome until we choose to say yes, but when we say yes, not with our minds that agree cognitively that it is right, but with our hearts that commit to the truth and are willing to lose the things we have previously been getting comfort from, then we receive power to succeed. Then, as we advance in this application of truth our neurobiology changes and eventually our feelings, desires, and internal sense of self heals.

Okay, so we put to death the worldly ways we have formed by choosing to apply God's ways in love as we trust with Him. But what does the second portion mean, because of these worldly ways the wrath of God is coming upon the world?

What is the wrath of God? Romans 1:18-32, it is God letting go of His restraining, protective, and redeeming power and setting people free to reap what they have insisted upon, what they have woven into the fabric of their identity—and what happens when God lets people go?

They are overwhelmed with fear, guilt, shame, their internal sense of self fragments, like you see in the demoniacs in the New Testament, and they disintegrate and die, why? Because God is the source of life, truth, love, order, structure, stability, coherence—and breaking away from God is breaking away from reality on all levels and the only result is decay, fragmentation, disintegration, decoherence—death.

Why does God let go like this? Because God is love, love requires freedom, and God has built His universe with freedom encoded into the structure of reality. And what is the only action love can take when someone insists on leaving? To let them go—and in God's case letting go means letting go His sustaining, organizing, protective, and life-providing presence, and thus they die.

This is the wrath that comes from design law—when we understand God's laws are the laws reality is built to exist and operate upon, we understand that every single deviation from His law introduces damage, decay, error, discord, fracture, disease, leading ultimately to death unless fixed by God.

Understanding reality, we understand since sin entered, God has been using His power to restrain and hold at bay the destruction sin brings while keeping open the door for healing, restoration, recreation, unity, wholeness. But in the end when some choose absolute rejection of God, **He stops using power** and sets them free and they reap what they have chosen, disintegration and death. As Scripture teaches, those who sow to the carnal nature, from that nature reap destruction Gal 6:8.

But the wrath that comes from Satan and worldly systems is the opposite, it is the wrath of using physical power to inflict harm, pain, suffering, even death upon one's enemies.

Sadly, much of Christianity, having accepted Satan's lie about God's law, teach the lie that God is like Satan and His wrath is the use of His power to inflict pain, suffering, and death as punishment for sin. In doing this they promote Satan's rebellion, for they undermine trust in God and they actively delay the second coming for they are interfering with the final message of mercy that is to prepare people for Christ's return.

## TUESDAY

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Read second paragraph and think about this in light of what we just discussed,

- Both anger and wrath can describe God's righteous response to sin (touched on yesterday) as it can for Jesus (Mark 3:5, Rev. 6:16). By contrast, we are urged to "be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (James 1:19, 20, NKJV). Malice wishes misfortune on another. Slander is designed to defame. Paul also condemns language that is abusive and obscene. Finally, lying to one another is forbidden (compare Lev. 19:11, 18), "since you have put off the old man with his deeds" (Col. 3:9, NKJV). *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philipians and Colossians*, p. 87.

Does the lesson make it clear that God's anger and wrath are not the use of power to inflict harm or do they leave than unclear?

How do we understand God's anger?

It is very straightforward: God is angry in at least two ways—He has the anger at sin itself in the same way doctors are angry at any disease and God wants to use His power to destroy sin like a doctor wants to use his power to destroy disease. God wants to do this in order to save the sinner not kill the sinner in the same way the doctor wants to destroy the disease to save the patient.

But what about God's anger:

- So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not **harden your hearts** as you did in the **rebellion**, during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for forty years saw what I did. That is why I was **angry** with that generation, and I said, 'Their **hearts are always going astray**, and they have not known my ways.' So I declared on oath in my **anger**, 'They shall never enter my rest.'" Hebrews 3:7-11 NIV84.

How do you understand God's anger? I believe it goes like this: God's anger is the anger of a loving physician father who has a cure for his rebellious son, and if the son would trust the father, the father could cure and save the son, but the son refuses. Not only is the physician father angry at the disease killing his son, he is angry at the son for not letting him save him, not in an anger that wants to harm or inflict punishment, but the anger that says, "It didn't have to be this way!"

This is how I paraphrased it in *The Remedy NT*:

- As the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice offering healing and restoration, do not reject the true Remedy and darken your minds as you did in the rebellion in the desert, during the opportunity to partake of God's cure, where your fathers broke my heart by trying their own remedies and rejecting the truth which I brought and for forty years patiently tried to heal them. That is why I was so angry with what happened to that generation, and said, 'Their minds continually reject the healing truth, and they refuse to practice my ways of health and live.' So I granted them their persistent choice and said, 'Since they refuse the truth—the Remedy I freely offer—they will never be able to enter my rest and get well.'" Hebrews 3:7-11 REM.

Read the last two paragraphs,

- The verbs Paul employs for this transformation from the old to the new allude to clothing, as if one took off old filthy garments and was clothed with new white garments (compare Zech. 3:4). A similar old/new distinction is made in regard to the old and new covenants, which are characterized respectively by the external letter of the law and by the law inscribed by the Spirit in the heart (2 Cor. 3:4–18).

These metaphors describe conversion and its effects, which Paul calls a “new creation” (2 Cor. 5:17, NKJV). We are “renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him [Christ]” (Col. 3:10, NKJV), who is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). Gaining a knowledge of Christ through His Word transforms us “into the same image from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18). This places us above all ethnic, geographical, and social boundaries (Col. 3:11), because we are citizens of a higher kingdom. *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philippians and Colossians*, p. 87.

A lot of good stuff in these paragraphs. I totally agree that reality is healing, renewal, transformation, recreation, that is reality. So, well done lesson!

One sentence I just wanted to clarify so that there is no misunderstanding,

- Gaining a knowledge of Christ through His Word transforms us “into the same image from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18).

This sentence is true if we understand “knowledge” correctly, as Jesus described it in John 17:3:

- Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3 NIV84

This knowledge is experiential knowledge, knowing God and Jesus for who they are, personally, individually; it is not knowing *about* them.

And if people insert knowing about rather than knowing, then they may become world leaders in theology, like Caiaphas, and know all kinds of Bible truths about God and Jesus, but still be unconverted and not know them, and therefore be lost.

Why this is important? Because the carnal nature, the spirit of fear and selfishness, wants to do it ourselves, we want to save self, and when people read something like this they might conclude, okay, I will study to know God. I will memorize large portions of Scripture, I will go to college and get a degree in theology, and I will learn the right Bible doctrines, and I will be a defender of the faith—and they very well may end up like Saul of Tarsus who was using the temple guard to persecute the saints and war against God.

So, while we must study God's Word, it is not to learn simple facts or doctrines, it is to get to know who God is and then come into a personal relationship with Him.

## **WEDNESDAY**

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Read Colossians 3:12-14:

- Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Colossians 3:12-14 NIV84.

What does it mean to be God's chosen people?

What does it mean to be holy?

What does it mean to forgive and why is it important?

What does Jesus mean when He said this:

- For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. Matthew 6:14-15 NIV84

How do you understand this? Is this a legal command—forgive others or you are breaking my rules and I am rule-bound to hold you accountable and since you haven't repented because you haven't followed my rule and forgiven, then I am obliged to not forgive you?

Or is it describing reality—if we refuse to forgive we hold bitterness, resentment, anger, and self-centeredness rather than love in our hearts and God cannot overlook or forgive our selfishness when

we are in fact still selfish. It would be like a doctor not being able to overlook or forget about your cancer while your body is still riddled with cancer.

## THURSDAY

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Read first paragraph,

- Paul's concern for peace and harmony in the church appears clearly in the last verses of Colossians 3. We've already looked at God's peace in some detail (see Lesson 7). Unlike the *pax Romana*, the *pax Christi* is not a peace imposed from the outside but is to "rule" us from within. That can happen only if Christ is in control. *Adult SS Guide 1<sup>st</sup> Q 2026, Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philippians and Colossians*, p. 89.

This is very well said, God cannot win by use of might and power by law and law enforcement, only by truth, love and freedom that wins to trust.

Read Colossians 3:16-17:

- Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Colossians 3:16-17 NIV84

What does it mean to have the word of Christ dwell in us richly?