

The Disciple's Relationships

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning again and welcome to faith. We're so glad that you're here today together with us and for our guest. We're excited for you to be here with us. And this is possibly today may take us a little bit longer to get through this message today. But this is our final message in our series, abide in Christ. And as we've been looking week by week, we've had the picture with the concentric circles. When Christ is in us, he affects every area of our life. He permeates every area of our life, beginning within the very core of our being, going out to our mind, our will, our emotions, our bodies, our relationships, and all in order that we may be able to accomplish his mission on planet Earth. And we started off the first two weeks, what it means for us to be in Christ and for Christ in us, and how he transforms us literally from the inside out. We'll be looking how the way Christ affects the way we think, the way Christ affects our emotions, every single area of those lives.

And today we're going to be looking at how Christ affects our relationships. We were last week in the book of Galatians. This week we're going to be a few books over in the book of Colossians.

And we'll be looking at the entire chapter 3 up to chapter 4, verse 1, and be taking a bird's eye view. We're going to be going very quickly through this particular message today, through this chapter. And as we do so, we have a lot of notes to take as we look at what is involved, what does it take to cultivate spiritually transformed relationships, as we look at our social life around us, the people that we interact with. You see at the top of your notes, Christ in me for them.

This is the picture that we're going to see in Colossians chapter 3 as the Apostle Paul is speaking to these Colossian Christians, how Christ in them is to affect their relationships with others. And what we see next, our main point, our foundational truth this morning that we're going to see in Colossians 3 is this, that everything Christ does in me, everything Christ does in us, is intended to affect everyone Christ has put around us. Because God puts people around us for purposes. God puts people in your sphere of influence for a reason. And He desires you, He desires me to influence those people around us.

Everything Christ does is for that. And this text that we're going to read today really just preaches itself. I don't have to spend a lot of time explaining it to you because it's very clear.

[3 : 1 3] It's very forthright. And as I said, we're going to take a bird's eye view of chapter 3. And as we walk through and see these truths unfold, we're going to read the entire chapter.

So it's going to take a little bit of time. But let's begin together in chapter 3, verse number 1. If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, appears, then you will also appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth, fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Because of these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. But now you yourselves are to put off all these anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie one to another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another. If anyone has a complaint against another, even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things, put on love, which is the bond of perfection, and let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body, and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. And then He begins speaking to individual groups within the body. Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

[6 : 21] Husbands, love your wives, and do not be bitter toward them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Bond servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance, for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done.

And there is no partiality. Then chapter 4, verse 1, Masters, give your bond servants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a master in heaven.

And what we see in Colossians 3 is a summary of what we've been talking about. Christ in us, the hope of glory, as Christ in us permeates our lives and affects those around us, and ultimately affects our relationships. And so we ask ourselves the question, first of all, in order to cultivate those spiritually transformed relationships we talked about, what do we need to do? First of all, I believe as we are seeing what Paul is teaching in Colossians, we saw that in Colossians 1, that Christ was in us, the hope of glory. And in chapter 3, he talks about our relationships.

I think we begin cultivating our relationships by, first of all, understanding the wholeness we have in Christ. Understanding the wholeness that we have in Christ. This is Colossians chapter 3, verses 1 through 4. He's talking about, if you were raised with Christ, then seek those things which are above. Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on those things that are above, not on the things of this earth. And he says, for you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

[8 : 45] So the reality is, as we're living today, our relationships are affected by Christ. Now here's the thing. Every relationship we have, whether it's a spousal relationship, a family relationship, a social relationship, they're all affected by our baggage. Think about it. Husband and wives, your relationship together is affected by every other relationship you might have had. Maybe a dating relationship, maybe a previous courting relationship, maybe our relationship between others. Your relationship is going to be affected by the relationship you had with your parents, your father's legacy, your mom's legacy that he or she gave. So our relationships might be affected by the people we lost. I mean, you may have lost relationships based on whatever reason. And so there may be, jealousy, there may be fear of losing this next, this person. And my point is, as human beings, we bring all of our previous baggage into all of our relationships. New friend relationship, guess what?

Your new friend relationship is going to be affected by the friend relationships you've had. Well, maybe a friend turned their back on you. Maybe the friend stabbed you in the back. And so how is your relationship going to be with this new person? It's always going to be colored by your previous relationships. My point being, if we understand the wholeness we have in Christ, if we understand that Christ is in us, transforming us, and every relationship we have, if we allow Christ to dictate the relationship, it's going to be a transformed relationship. And so if we understand the wholeness we have in Christ, we don't need to look to somebody else to provide the wholeness, to provide the, to complete us, or anything of that. You know, we talk about, well, you know, you complete me. No, the only person that completes me is Jesus. And Christ gave me Catherine,

Christ gave me our children, God gave me our friends, God gave me you, so that we can support one another. But guess what? All we need is Jesus, ultimately. Because what happens when we lose, and we will lose family to death, we will lose friendship sometimes to distance, it's not the end of the world.

Because we have Christ. And so if we understand the wholeness we have in Him, that is important. Number one, what we see in verses 3 and 4 is that we died with Christ. Remember last week we talked about being crucified with Christ? That's what he's talking about in verse 3. We were crucified with Christ.

But not only that, we live in Christ. Christ is our life in a couple of different ways. First of all, he is our life now. We don't have to wait for everlasting life. He is our life today. You heard Paul say, your life is hidden with Christ in God. That means you have life right now in Him.

[12:14] The book of Romans talks about that those whom he's called, he's also glorified. You realize that you and I are glorified now. We haven't received our glorified bodies yet. But we are complete in Christ, positionally. And so he is our life now. We don't have to wait for life. There's coming a day when our life in Him will be complete when we come into glory, which is what we're looking for.

But in Christ, as we allow Him to live through us, He makes us whole. And this is good news for everyone. He is our life forever. If we're in Christ, we're secure. We've been sealed by His Holy Spirit, the Bible says, till the day of redemption. And then He will receive us, the Holy Spirit being the down payment. So we have life now. But there's coming a day when Christ will come back for us. And then we're going to live forever. We'll be glorified. We'll be living with this community of believers forever. And that's Christ affecting the relationships around us. There was a guy who lived in Nazi Germany.

His name is Dietrich Bonhoeffer. And he was an author. One of the best books on Christian community was written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. In his book called Life Together, this is what he said.

He says, Christianity means community through Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ. No Christian community is more or less than this. Whether it's a brief single encounter or the daily fellowship of years, Christian community is only this. We belong to one another only through and in Jesus Christ.

Now this is the theological foundation. We have everything that we need in Christ. And Christ, every relationship we have, whether it's a relationship with the body of the brother or sister in Christ that we've known for years, or whether it's a chance meeting with a member of the body of Christ. All of those relationships have Christ in common. And if we understand the wholeness that we have, and if we understand the language of what Paul's talking about, he says, as a follower of Christ, now we're a new person. We need to put off the old clothes, so to speak, and put on these new clothes.

[14 : 53] Put off the old deeds. Put on the new life that we have in Christ. And so basically from this point, from verses 5 and following, the Apostle Paul is going to be talking about, as followers of Christ, we are new people. We have a new nature. We have Christ in us. And it's going to affect the way that we live with others around us. So the first way that we cultivate these relationships, transformed relationships, is to understand the wholeness we have in Christ. Secondly is, Paul says, we leave behind the habits you had before Christ. Leave behind the habits you had before Christ. And that's the list that we see. 3.5 to 3.9. Paul gives two different lists, two different lists of habits, if you will, associated with the old self. Now these lists are by no means exhaustive. You can say, well, you know, these are the only things that I have to worry about. No, there's way more than that. But it's the list Paul chose here. And I want to see how these old habits affect our relationships. So let's look and see what Paul says we are to put to death.

He says we're to put to death the sins that destroy us. The sins that destroy us. Look at verse 5. Therefore, put to death your members which are on the earth, fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. So as Paul goes through this list, the first thing what we see, and we're going to ask ourselves questions this morning. So as we look at this list, as we apply it, I want us to ask ourselves these questions by way of application related to this list. So the first question that I want you to ask yourself is this. Is your body consecrated to God?

Is your body, we talked about the body in one of our previous texts a few weeks ago. Is our body consecrated to God? Remember Paul said the sexual sins are sins committed against our body because they do affect us. So he says in verse 5, fornication. He says, is your body consecrated to God? Next, we're not going to spend a whole lot of time. We talked about many of these when we dealt with our Christ affecting our body. Second, we see uncleanness. The question we ask ourselves, is my mind clean before God? With what are you filling your mind? Uncleanness. Is my mind clean before God?

Remember we talked about Christ affecting, Christ in us affecting our mind. Our mind, Romans 1 and 2, we are transformed by the renewing of our mind. Are you allowing the Holy Scripture to transform your mind uncleanness? Then it goes to the passions and evil desires? Are my desires controlled by God?

Or are you being controlled by your lust? Verse 5, the next few words, passion. Some of your Bibles might say concupiscence. What in the world does that mean? It means evil desires. And so what Paul is saying is, and I think we can ask ourselves, what's controlling our desires? Is our flesh controlling our desires?

[18 : 48] The passions, that which we long for? Or are we allowing Christ in us to control our desires? The next thing that we see is in reference to, verse number 5, covetousness or greed. So the next question would be, is my heart content in God? Or is it always looking to the latest new thing to provide that fulfillment that we want?

And are we greedy? Do we have enough money in our bank account? Or are we always looking for something else? And we ask ourselves the question, is my heart content in God? And what God chooses to provide?

Am I controlled by greed? Or am I controlled by what God chooses to provide, by the Holy Spirit? Then he goes on. Not only sins that destroy us, but then we're going to see a shift in the Apostle Paul's list, and we'll be seeing sins that damage others.

Hence, we're talking about relationships. Paul in Colossians 3 is looking primarily at the relationships that we have with others. And so sins that damage others directly.

I want us to listen to what he says in verses 8 and 9. We'll come back to verses 6 and 7 in a while. Verse 8, But now you yourselves are to put off all of these.

[20 : 25] And everything in this next list is habits or behaviors that affect those that God has put around us. But all of these put off anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language, out of your mouth.

He says, Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds. Literally, he's saying, put them to death.

Remember, we have been crucified with Christ, for you died, verse number 3 of Colossians 3, and we are raised with Christ to live and to walk in newness of life.

We need to kill these things in our lives, is what Paul is telling the Colossians. So again, in keeping with what we've been doing, let's ask ourselves some questions.

The first thing we see in verse number 8 is, he says, to put off anger. So the question is, Do I harbor bitterness?

[21 : 31] Do I harbor bitterness? The first in his list is anger. The word here has the meaning of this deep-seated anger, an attitude of anger.

Not those angry outbursts that we have. That's the next word that we're going to look at. But this word here is more like bitterness, that anger that we have inside of us. And it's that root of bitterness.

So do I harbor bitterness? Is there anyone that I'm continually angry with? Wrath. This is more the idea of this word. Is that just that continual anger?

That every time you see them, or every time you're around them, like, Oh, I don't want to be around them. I can't stand them. And, Oh, they make my skin crawl.

Or, Oh, they just rub me the wrong way. Do we harbor bitterness? The next thing that we see in verse number eight is wrath.

[22 : 31] That's where we come to, Am I quick to anger? That's those angry outbursts. That's the, Somebody says something, and, and, and they, they tick you off, and you just lash out at them, or you get angry.

Rage, literally sudden outbursts of anger, or to have a short temper. Is that where we are? Paul says, Put it to death. Ought not to be.

The next thing is what we see in verse eight. Malice. Malice. And the question is, Do I have hostility toward anyone?

Malice. Literally ill will. Ill will. There, there, there's some people that maybe they've hurt you, and you just, you may not hurt them on your own, but you, you secretly want them not to succeed.

And when bad things happen to them inside somewhere, you go, yes, they're getting what they deserve. That's malice. That's ill will toward someone.

[23 : 47] So the question is, that we ask ourselves, do I, do I harbor hostility toward anyone? Is there anyone in my sphere of relationships that I just don't want good things to happen to?

Then we see blasphemy, and it's not going to be what we think it is. Because normally, when we think blasphemy, we think about what?

We think about God. We think about what we do toward God. Remember, this list is not about God. This list is about others. This list Paul is in is about our relationship with others.

And so, the question is, do I ever speak negatively about anyone? Do I never speak negatively? The word blasphemy simply means to revile or to defame, to slander someone, to say something about someone that is not true, and you kind of tear their, tear them down a little bit.

So, when we blaspheme God, blaspheming God is ascribing something that God does to the devil, or something like that. And so, so what we're doing is, we're defaming God.

[25 : 07] But the same thing can happen with others. We can blaspheme others. It sounds like a, you know, a Bible word, but it literally means to slander. So he says, don't slander anyone.

Don't defame them. Literally, saying something that doesn't build up another person's character, or saying something that tears down another person's character.

And we have to be careful, because sometimes in the church, blasphemy takes place. Pastor, what are you talking about? Well, it can, it's called gossip.

And sometimes, we couch gossip in a prayer request. We need to pray for brother so-and-so, because do you know that, you know, he, whatever.

Or, or do you know that, you know, sister so-and-so, oh, she, you know, this, you know, she's got a gambling problem, and so we need to pray for her. What is that? That's blasphemy.

[26 : 14] That's gossip. You're tearing down another person's character. Now, it may be true, but sometimes, we have to be careful, because it's like, we want to tell somebody else about it, and we couch it in spiritual terms, and we couch it as a prayer request, when really all that we're doing is, we're just telling a nice, juicy tidbit of information that we found out this week.

And so, we have to be careful. Do I ever speak negatively of anyone? Now, this is very convicting, isn't it? Think about it. Do I, just speaking negatively about someone is something Paul says ought to be put to death.

It could be anything negative. Now, there are times that the Bible tells us where, as the leaders, as the elders within the church, we have to perform church discipline.

And so, sometimes, it's because negative things are taking place. It's because sin is involved, and we have to do something. But if it's just talking about someone, what's the old saying?

If you don't have anything bad to say about someone, don't say anything at all. And I think that's kind of what Paul was saying. Don't slander anyone. Don't revile them. Don't put them down. Don't speak negatively.

[27 : 32] As a matter of fact, a famous preacher in the past, G. Campbell Morgan, called this list sins in good standing. Sins in good standing, meaning, you know, you can couch it in religious terms, and, you know, those are like sins in the church in good standing.

Slandering, kind of misrepresenting the truth a little bit, you know, getting angry. You know, it's okay to, you know, like they're saying, oh, you know what? It's okay to raise your voice and get angry in a business meeting because that's just righteous indignation.

No, it's just anger. And so, we need to be careful. Do I ever speak negatively about anyone? Then, he goes on, then talks about, are my words ever offensive to anyone?

Filthy language out of your mouth. Literally, coarse humor. James 3, James talks about the tongue. He says it's a small member, but evil resides within the tongue.

Also, Matthew 12, 36, we're told that we will have to give account one day when we stand before God for every single word we've said on planet Earth.

[28 : 49] Isn't that kind of scary for some of us? We stand before God. We're going to have to give account, according to Matthew 12, 36, for every word that ever came out of our mouth on the day of judgment.

So, are my words offensive to others? We have to be careful about what we say and how it will be to others.

Remember, our relationships, how we are involved in relationship with one another. The next thing, verse 9, he says, do not lie to one another.

And, I ask the question this way for a reason. Do I ever misrepresent the truth? You know, if the question were, and I would ask myself, do I ever lie?

What would be the first knee-jerk reaction? No, I don't lie. Just tell them I'm not home when the phone rings. So, do I ever misrepresent the truth?

[29 : 53] In other words, lie. Even these seemingly, even these seemingly sins in good standing are things that Paul says to put away, to put to death.

So, the question is, why? Why is it important for us to put these off? Well, because they bring God's judgment.

They bring God's judgment. Look at verse 6. He says, because of these things, the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.

Because of these things, the list, the two lists that he gave, he said, God's wrath is upon mankind. That's why Jesus Christ had to die on the cross.

It's because of these sins. God takes these very seriously. Secondly, these lists that Paul goes through, he's saying, they betray your salvation.

[31 : 04] They betray your salvation. This is the crux of what Paul is saying. Listen to verse number 7. Paul says, these things, these things that we're going to be talking about, he says, in which you yourselves, and what's the tense of the verb?

Past tense. He says, you used to walk and you used to live like this. He says, but now that you are in Christ, these types of behaviors betray your salvation.

Meaning, you shouldn't live like this. He says, which you once walked when you lived in them. them. So, if Christ is to make a difference in our relationships, as we quickly go through the next portion, we need to do this.

First, what we did was we are to understand the wholeness we have in Christ. Christ is the one who is the lubricant. Christ is the one who is the one who takes care of those relationships between us, if we allow him to.

Secondly, leave behind, put off, all these sinful habits he's talked about. And then, thirdly, live in the character that we have received from Christ.

[32 : 30] Christ didn't put off the old person. Christ didn't put to death the old nature just to kind of leave us hanging. What he did was he gave us a brand new nature, a brand new character, so to speak, that will allow us to have these proper relationships with others.

So, listen to these words. He says in verse 12, Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, he said, put off these things, put them to death, just like an old, dirty, rotten cloak or coat or jacket, take it off.

Just, and I've used this illustration before. Have you ever gone into and stepped into an ant pile? And before you knew it? And it happens with kids all the time. We don't mind doing this to them.

And you've got ants in your pants. Moms, what are the first thing you do? You strip off those pants like they're nothing, right? And I don't care if they got underwear or not. You know, they go naked in the yard.

Why? Because you don't want them to be bitten by those ants. And so you rip off, you just strip off those clothes. And that's kind of the idea that Paul is using here.

[33 : 41] He says, strip off that coat. Strip off those old clothes of the old nature. But then he says in verse 12, he says, put on.

Because once you strip them off and you strip off the ants, what do you do? You get them dressed again. You might put on something new or you might shake off. But in the analogy Paul is giving us, he says, Christ has given us brand new clothes to put on.

He's given us a brand new nature to live in. He says, put on tender mercies, put on kindness, humility, meekness, and long suffering.

Now Paul starts another list. He says, these are the things you put off. He says, now these are the things you put on that are going to assist you in your new relationships that you have with others around you.

As we live in the character we receive from Christ, first what we do is we extend grace, the grace of Christ to others. We extend the grace of Christ to others.

[34 : 51] The grace that Christ has given to us when we associate with other people, that's the same grace that we are to extend toward others.

We've been forgiven. God says we're to forgive others. God has shown us mercy. We're to show mercy to others. God has and so we see these work together.

The grace of Christ is to flow from Christ through us and others. Notice verse 12. Therefore, as elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long-suffering, bearing with one another, and forgiving one another.

If anyone has a complaint against another, even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. So how do we do this?

First of all, again, we're asking ourselves questions. Do I show great mercy to others? Do I have a heart of compassion? Or do I always jump down their throat the first time they get something wrong or the first time they mess up?

[36 : 01] Do I show mercy or do I extend mercy to others and great compassion? Secondly, in this list that Paul gives us, does my kindness spur others toward Christ?

Or does our harshness push them away from Christ and say, those Christians, I don't have anything to do with them. They're just like an old mule with a long face at a gate. No, they're excited and they're extending grace and mercy to me.

And that's exactly why the crowds were drawn to Jesus. Because he exuded all of these, he exuded grace and mercy and he wanted to provide a new life and he was offering it to those who needed a new life.

So does our kindness spur others toward Christ? It's the picture of extending the grace of Christ toward others and being attracted to them and drawing them to him.

And then he goes on, he talks about forbearing, putting up with each other. In a sense, am I selfless in my relationship with others?

[37 : 15] Am I selfless in my relationship? The word here is humility. Am I humble in my relationship with others?

This is interesting for Paul to bring out because humility was not a virtue in most pagan cultures. Being humble was not something that was seen as a virtue.

Pride and domination were seen as virtues. So when Christ comes on the scene, he changes that and he says we are to live humbly with each other.

We are to care more about others than we care about ourselves. We are to put others' needs before our own. Does that sound familiar? We've heard Paul say that. We've heard Jesus say that.

So are we different today because Christ is in us? Are we selfless in our relationships? Then the next question after humility is meekness.

[38 : 16] Do I relate to others gently? Am I meek in my relationships? Now don't mistake that for weakness. Meekness is strength and power under control.

We can be meek and be totally powerful. You know it's like some of you remember in school. You know the biggest kid on the playground sometimes.

You know they were just a big teddy bear. But they could have mopped the floor with just about anybody else on the playground. They were meek because they knew they could be.

And they could have shown strength when they needed to. But when they didn't need to it was that strength under control. And so meekness. Do I relate to others gently? Next thing is am I patient with others?

The word there is long suffering. The word literally means to be long tempered. It takes a lot to get you upset. It takes a lot to make you angry as opposed to being short tempered like we saw in the previous list.

- [39 : 24] Sudden outburst of anger. And then related to that, the next question that we see bearing with one another in verse 13, the question is, do I endure hardships in relationships with others?

Or the first time someone doesn't live up to my expectation, do I drop them like a hot potato? Do I endure hardship with relationships?

Literally, Paul says, bear with one another. And it's kind of interesting that he says, you know what, guys? You're in the community. Put up with each other.

You know, there are some people you just have to put up with. There's some family you probably have to put up with, right? You know, it's the aunt whatever that comes on Christmas and just pinches your cheeks like crazy.

Remember that as a kid? You know, oh, I hope she won't do that. You know, but sometimes or maybe it's Uncle Ralph that you know, that's the one that's just always telling these stupid stories and he's like, oh, he said, I've heard these stories a million times.

- [40 : 34] You know what, sometimes we love them. We put up with them. And so Paul says, we're in community. Bear with one another. Put up with one another. Endure hardship in relationships because Christ is involved in those relationships.

So when things don't work out in relationships, do we bear with others, show patience, and understanding, or do we jump to conclusions and just dump them? Okay, next question.

Paul gives, he tells us in verse 13, is, do I forgive others completely? He says, forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another.

even so as Christ forgave you, so also you must do. Instead of getting bitter, instead of judging, instead of retaliating, are we quick to forgive completely, just as Christ does?

Is there any root of unforgiveness in any of us today? That's the question I believe we can ask ourselves. This is simple on the surface, but that's where Christ comes in.

- [41 : 47] That's where Christ abiding in us comes in. It's not easy to forgive. That's where we need the power of Christ. That's where we need the new nature. We can let him forgive others through us, which leads us to the last main point, and that is, does genuine love permeate my relationship with others?

Does genuine love permeate my relationship with others? Verse 14, he says, but above all these things, put on what? Love. Remember the list that we're given about the other, about the gifts?

He said, the greatest of these is love, is the glue which holds all of those gifts together and allows them to operate. God says it all revolves around love.

If we try to do, if we try to put on this list that Paul gave us, and it's not held together with love, it's just going to be another legalistic list to take care of relationships.

Well, check off A, check off B, check off C, yep, good relationship, rather than it being foundationally, it revolves around love.

- [43 : 06] Are you and I channels of his grace this morning in these ways? Then he goes on in verse 15. He says, and let the peace of God rule in your hearts to which also you were called in one body and be thankful.

So this is where the next point is we promote Christ in us, abiding in Christ, we promote the peace of Christ among others.

We are to be peacemakers. Jesus said on his sermon on the mount, blessed are the peacemakers. We want to build up others in a way that shows his peace, displays his peace.

This should also rule our relationships and guide the body of Christ. Listen to verses 16 and 17. He says, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

And he says, whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Thankfulness and gratitude to God will influence our relationship with others.

[44 : 23] Then we ask ourselves, and then we see, we saw in that last verse, that we share the word of Christ with others. Verse 16, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in what?

All wisdom and then teaching others. Not just the peace of God, but the word of Christ. We share Jesus' words with others in our relationships. And then, in our relationships, I believe we are to honor the name of Christ before others.

Because verse 17, whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the what? in the name of the Lord. So in all of our relationships, we are to glorify the name of Christ in all that we do.

Whatever you do, word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. And then, very quickly, as we close, Paul changes and shifts just a little bit, and then he names specific people, specific spheres within our relationships.

The first thing we see as we read this list, he says, wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be bitter toward them.

[45 : 47] Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. You see the list of relationships he gives.

Then he talks about bond servants. We don't have bond servants today, but we do have employees. Obey in all things. Your bosses. That's my translation. According to the flesh, not with eye service, as men pleasers.

We have other words for that, but we're not going to go into that today. But in sincerity of heart, fearing God. And he says, whatever you do, whatever you're called to do by your boss.

He says, do it heartily, like to the Lord, not just for the paycheck. And not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of your inheritance, for you serve the Lord Christ.

But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. And then bosses, thinking that you were left out, you were not. So he says, masters, bosses, leaders, owners, give your bond servant, give your employees what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a master in heaven.

[47 : 04] Do you realize, no matter who we are on planet earth, I don't care if you are President Trump, or if you are the Speaker of the House, or whoever you are, or Bill Gates, you know what?

The Bible says we have a master in heaven. We have a boss. We have someone to whom we are accountable. Remember, no matter whether we're saved or not, one day everyone's going to have to give an account before God.

So he says, know that you have a master in heaven. So, again, very quickly, go through this list. Wives, what does he say? Remember, we're talking about relationships.

We're talking about a Christ-transformed relationship. Wives, live submissively. Now, for many women today, they might say, you know what?

I don't know about that. You know, that was cultural. Maybe back when, you know, in the first century when men had their thumb on women and they were to submit, that's cultural.

[48 : 10] Well, let's go to the next one. Husbands love sacrificially. Women, it's a package deal. If you say, you know what?

Submitting to my husband is cultural, that was back then, that's not true today, then it's also got to be true today that your husbands don't have to love you. Right? So it's a package deal.

It's not cultural. It's something that is, it extends throughout all time. So, because a relationship is not men, husbands, lording it over their wives.

Husbands are to lead so that their wives want to submit to them gladly. naturally. And see wives? Submitting to your husband doesn't come naturally.

It's Christ in you that allows it. As a matter of fact, Genesis 3 talks about that. He says, your desire will be to your husband, meaning you're going to want to control your husband. That's part of the fall.

[49 : 10] That's the sin nature. So that doesn't come naturally. And guys, do you realize loving your wife sacrificially doesn't come naturally? Because we are selfish human beings.

Okay, guys, yes, we are. Yes, we are. So it doesn't come naturally. It's Christ in the relationship that allows it. Then the next thing, children obey completely.

Children, guess what? It's not in your nature to obey your parents. It's got to be Christ in you that allows you to obey your parents completely. The next list, parents, encourage continually.

I've got news for you, parents. That's not in your nature. Because what do we do as parents? We nitpick. Go clean your room. You didn't clean your room. You didn't finish your vegetables.

And we always kind of tend to harp on the negatives. What does Paul say? Don't exasperate your kids. Encourage them.

[50 : 07] So we need to be more positive than negative. Now, employees. What does he say? He says to work wholeheartedly. Employees, that does not come naturally.

Because when we allow our flesh to take over, what do we want to do? We just want to phone it in, pick up our paycheck, but not really work as hard as we can. Christ in us will allow us to work wholeheartedly.

Give it everything we've got, and then some. And then employers, lead humbly. employers, that doesn't come naturally.

Because you want to go, go to this, go to that, go to it now, and I want it done right. Not realizing that, you know what, sometimes we get it wrong, you get it wrong too. So lead humbly.

Lead humbly. So, now what? We're done with Colossians 3. Paul has talked about what we are to put off.

[51 : 16] Paul talked about what we are to put on. How Christ is to affect our relationships with others. And if you look in your notes, so what now?

And here's also part of your homework. this week, if you will, if we will identify two to four areas of our life, two to four areas of our life that we need Christ to transform.

It might be your humility. It might be your bitterness. It might be your anger. It might be your bending the truth a little bit.

It might be wives submitting to your husband. Husbands, it might be loving your wives sacrificially. Children, it may be obeying your parents. List these things.

Now, this is a personal exercise. List the things that you know where you lack when you ask yourselves these questions. List them out.

[52 : 22] And this week, you make that a matter of prayer. Lord, transform this area of my life. Lord, take over this area of my life, my humility, my lack of forgiveness, my whatever.

So list those out. Then the next thing is going to be a little more difficult for you. Identify someone you can ask to pray with you this week for your spiritual transformation in these areas.

Now, reality is, we should already have that person to which we are accountable. It could be your spouse. Guys, it could be a friend of yours in whom you trust, a male friend of yours that can ask you the tough questions.

Share this list with them and say, would you pray with me about these? They probably already know you need work on that area. Am I right? They probably already know that. And so, just share it with them.

And then, third thing is, ask God to empower you to leave behind those habits to put on those new habits that he's talked about. Gentleness, humility, kindness, peace towards others, glorifying the name of Christ, regarding what you wrote down here.

[53 : 41] So, as we conclude this series, is our life in Christ, and is Christ abiding in us, affecting every area of those lives?

just like the peeling the onion that we talked about the first week. It's Christ permeating every area of our life. Let's pray. Father, this morning, as we've come together, as we've opened up your word, as we've allowed the Apostle Paul to speak into our lives this morning, as he was led by your Holy Spirit to write, as your Holy Spirit is convicting us of areas in our life that need attention, Lord God, we ask that you would help us, move us, motivate us to allow Christ in us to affect each of these areas, that you might transform our relationships with those around us, that we may allow you to help us understand the wholeness that we have in Christ, that we might leave behind those habits that we had before Christ, and that ultimately to live in the character that we've received from him as well.

Transform us today, we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.