



# CONNECT GROUP NOTES

## Sunday 16.07.2023

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### “Dying to Self”

#### **Preacher**

Ps. Nathan Bean

#### **Scripture**

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is your[a] life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5 Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.[b] 7 You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8 But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.”

Colossians 3:1-11

#### **Thought**

Today, we continue our journey through Colossians 3. Over the past few weeks, we have seen how the early Colossian Church was under pressure to either return to their Jewish religious roots, or embrace the trend of seeking



secret knowledge by following Gnostic teaching. This letter from the apostle Paul was intended to remind the hearer of the ultimate supremacy of Christ - above and beyond any mere religious ritual or endeavour to find some hidden spiritual power.

Despite almost 2000 years passing since this letter was written, the apostle Paul's words remain as relevant today as they were then. Our temptation remains to either return to a legalistic, predictable and measurable religion - or to seek something more than Christ, to dabble in uncovering secrets and deriving special knowledge. Paul encourages us to do neither. He then transitions from this topic to speaking towards the behaviours we should have as Christians.

Before we begin to explore the topic of behaviour change, we must first start with Jesus. Any external change must, and can only come from a changed internal world. If we haven't encountered Him, our attempts to change our external behaviour will only result in us becoming moralistic, hypocritical and burnt out. Will power only lasts so long, as does inspiration, peer pressure, or whatever other motivators we may have. True change comes from the inside and works its way out. It's the realisation that Jesus has changed the very nature of our hearts - the very core of our being, and it's from this place that a lifetime of transformation begins. Piece by piece, we hand over parts of our lives to His tender care as He graciously leads us on a path of renewal.

When we hand over our life to Christ, and "die to self", that which is true of Him becomes true of us. His victory becomes ours, His status as Holy becomes ours. It's not about what we've done, it's all about what He's done. It's not about our faithfulness to Him, it's completely about His faithfulness to us. For some, this happens in a moment, but for many, it's a lifetime of transformation. This is not mere behaviour modification, it's death to life. It's not just an update to our current lives, it's a complete reboot and reload. In our death to life experience, our very operating system is changed to give us the capacity to grow. We now have the ability to change from the inside out, only on the other side of new life in Christ.

A new life in Christ looks like putting to death the old disordered desires, and aligning them according to His priorities. These desires lurk within all of



us, desires which may be good, bad or indifferent - but desires which end up becoming the ultimate thing in our lives. They're the things in our lives that if we lost them, we would lose everything. If we never achieved them, we would feel like we're nothing. The bible calls them "overdesires" - anything which takes the place of God.

The apostle Paul implores us to take drastic measures to get rid of them, to forcefully remove them or realign them into their right place. Sometimes taking this kind of action hurts - and we live in a world where we spend most of our time trying to escape any form of hurt.

No one else can do it for us, we have to instigate change. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, we take the first steps on a lifelong journey of transformation, sometimes setting aside things which are important in order to find the most important things in life. Sometimes missing out on the temporal to gain the eternal, all the while knowing that our Father in heaven is a good Father who desires good things for His children.

And so, we are invited to take off the old self. Those rags of old behaviours and disordered desires, to leave them behind like graveclothes in a tomb. To step into the white robes which Christ has given to us, and walk in His radiant glory and grace. Renewed morning by morning, we are ever changing, moving closer to the day where we will find ourselves forever new and glorified in eternity. But for now, in this pre-dawn in-between, we step forward, growing and changing by His grace, and relying on His daily mercies to carry us forward toward the approaching light.

### **Discussion Points**

1. Why do you think just endeavouring to be a better person (without the heart transformation of Jesus) doesn't succeed?
2. How do you think we can put to death our old disordered desires?
3. What does this mean for the way we reach the world around us, and those who are chasing disordered desires without a knowledge of Christ?



## **Personal application + Prayer**

Dear Jesus

Thank you that You are the author and perfecter of my faith. Today, afresh, I commit my life, with all its wants and desires, into your capable hands. Do with it as You please, use my life for Your glory, and take this heart and make it new. May I know what it means to truly die to self and find myself in You.

Amen