

WHICH MAN IS MANAGING YOUR MOUTH? (COLOSSIANS 3:8-10)

Please take your Bibles and turn to Colossians, chapter 3. Hard to believe it's been two months since I've said that! And because it's been that long, I want to remind us of some things that we looked at before to help us keep in mind the unity of the letter as a whole.

--The book/letter of Colossians has 4 chapters where the **first** two focus on **teaching truth**—things we need **to know**—and the **last** two chapters teach us how we are **to live** in light of the truth we have been taught.

--Chapter 3, then, serves as the **transition** between **instruction** and **application**. It starts off **instructional**, though, and we looked at the wonderful truths taught in verses 1-4 way back in November. What are those truths?

First—as seen in verse 1—we have been **risen with Christ!** That means, God counts as being **united** to Christ and **being one** with Him! Our union with Christ is also mentioned in vs 3 “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

Second—as seen in verse 4—Christ is going **to return**. Notice what it says. It doesn't say **if** Christ returns—it says **when** Christ returns! And when Jesus returns, **we** will “appear with Him **in glory!**” What does **it mean** to appear with Christ **in glory?**

--It certainly means that believers will be with Him in the **place** of glory—which is in heaven!

--And it also refers to the **perfection** of glory—meaning God's children will **be given a body** fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body as stated in Philippians 3:21.

--But it may also refer to **positions of glory!** Without giving us a lot of details, God's Word says that His children will someday be “kings and priests!” That sure sounds like a position of glory to me!

And in light of these truths, we are to **do certain** things. **What** is it that we are supposed to do?

--**First**—according to verse 1—we are to **seek Christ!**

--**Second**—according to verse 2—we are to **set our affection** on things above. That doesn't mean we are to just have “warm, fuzzy feelings” about heaven! What it means is that we are to **set our minds on**—to be intentionally **focusing on and thinking about**—Christ and heavenly things.

--And let's not forget that both of these are **commands**—not suggestions—that we are to be **continually doing**—not just doing once in a while!

--In vs 5-7—verses we looked at back in December—we have **another command**: “Mortify therefore your members which are upon earth...” What does **mortify** mean? It means to “put to death; to slay; to render inoperative.”

--**What** are we to put to death? The lustful passions that lead to the immoral behavior listed in vs 5!

--**Why** are we to do that? Because—according to verse 6—those sins characterize the children of disobedience—meaning the unsaved!

--And we know from vs 7 that those sins **can be put to death** because they **had been** “indulged in” by some of the Colossian believers **in the past**—but they didn't participate in them anymore!

And that brings us to verses 8-11. Please follow along as I read these four verses. Here we see another command—“Put off all these”—followed by a list of sins that primarily have to do with the way **we talk**. We also see Paul's reference to **two** men—“the **old** man” and “the **new** man”—which leads us to this question and the title of the message “Which Man is Managing Your Mouth”?

1. What we are to put off

The Greek word that the verb “put off” comes from is “ah-po-TEE-thay-mee” which appears 9 times in the Greek NT. Some of the more familiar verses are Acts 7:58 where we see the witnesses “laid down” their garments at the feet of Saul when Stephen was being stoned to death.

Another familiar verse is Hebrews 12:1 where we are told to “lay aside every weight...” It is also found in Ephesians 4:22-24 where we see some of the same wording as we have here in Colossians 3:8-10.

Ephesians 4:22-24 “That ye **put off** concerning the former conversation **the old man**, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; ²³ And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; ²⁴ And that ye **put on the new man**, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

So it means to **cast off**...to **lay aside**...to **put away from**—like what you would do with a **piece of clothing** you no longer want or need. And once again—like the word mortify in vs 5—“put off” is in the **imperative**; meaning it is a **command**—not a mere suggestion.

There are **six sins** listed here that we are going to look at in sets of three.

A. Internalized sins that **may not** be verbalized

Notice again vs 8 “But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice...”

These **three** words—anger, wrath, and malice—certainly **can come out** in the way we talk—but they can also be there **without us saying a word!**

1) Anger. Is it a **sin** to be angry? **Not always!** How do we know? Because the Bible says Jesus was **angry**—and it also says that Jesus never sinned! **Mark 3:5** “And when He had looked round about on them **with anger**, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts...”

We are also told in **Ephesians 4:26** “Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath.” So there is a kind of anger that is **not sinful**—although most of the time **our anger** is sinful! **George Matheson**, a Scottish hymn writer, conveys this thought well: “There are times when I do well to be angry, but I have mistaken the times.” (*Dealing With Your Anger*, Steven Cole, Biblehub.org)

Jonah was certainly mistaken about **the time** to be angry—and **who** he was directing his anger toward! Jonah’s anger was directed **toward God** because God **was merciful** to people who had repented!

--**Why** did God’s mercy make Jonah angry? Probably because in Jonah’s mind, it made Jonah **look bad!** He had **preached** a message of **judgment**—and judgment didn’t come—so he looked like he didn’t know **what he was talking about!** What a foolish way to view things!

--And yet, I think **foolish** thinking—in reality, **pride**—is behind most anger. **We think** things should “go a certain way” because **we know** how things **should go** (detect any pride there?) And when **they don’t go the way** we think they should go—which is always the **best way, according to us**—we get angry!

Put off anger! Lay it aside! Stop thinking **you** have the inside track on **how to run the universe** and let God be God! I believe Job’s attitude can help a lot when it comes to dealing with anger. **Job 2:10** “What? Shall we receive **good** at the hand of God, and shall we not **receive evil**? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.”

The second thing we are to put off is... **2) Wrath.** How is wrath **different** from anger? That’s not an easy question to answer because sometimes they seem to **be used interchangeably!** For example, the word “anger” here in vs 8 is translated from the same Greek word that “wrath” is in vs 6 (wrath of God)! The flip side, though, is they must be somewhat different, or Paul would have listed only **one** of them—not both!

Thayer’s Greek Lexicon (Biblehub.com) makes the following distinction: **Wrath** carries the idea of “intense, heated emotion that **issues in action**—ranging from sudden human outbursts to the measured, settled indignation of God.” **Anger**, on the other hand, “denotes indignation which has **arisen gradually** and become more settled.”

Here’s maybe another way to look at it. **Anger** is like a crockpot with the lid on and the food simmering—while **wrath** is like a pressure cooker where the top blows off!

It is noteworthy that of the **eighteen times** this Greek word for wrath is used, **ten** of them are found in the book of **Revelation** and deal with God’s **hatred** for—and **judgment upon**—sin. In essence, then, **if we** exercise “wrath”—that **explodes into action**—we are trying to take the place of the Divine Judge by “dishing out” punishment!

Not only that, **James 1:20** reminds us, “For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.”

3) Malice. What is malice? Malice is an attitude of ill-will; a desire to injure. Sadly, malice is a prevalent attitude in society today—especially in the *political* arena! **Having conversations** and discussions **are out**; one side **shouting down** the other side—and often times with threats of violence—**are in!** “Ill-will” and “a desire to injure” is rampant on Facebook posts.

God’s Word to His children is plain: “Put off malice! Don’t desire to injure those **who disagree** with you—regardless of what they say **to** you and **about** you!”

Next, let’s consider... B. Internalized sins that **are** verbalized

Notice again vs 8. As just mentioned, “anger, wrath, and malice” are sins on the inside that **may—or may not**—come out in **our speech**. The next three, however, “blasphemy, filthy communication, and lying”—**are verbalized**; meaning **they do come out** of our mouth!

1) Blasphemy. “Blasphemy” comes from the Greek word—are you ready for this—“blas-fay-MEE-ah.” So, you **now know** a Greek word that you **didn’t know you knew!** It means “evil speaking, defamation, and speech injurious to another’s good name”—which can be directed toward **God or people**. In Ephesians 4:31, the same Greek word is translated **evil speaking**.

So how is Paul using it here: speech that **defames God** and His good name—or speech that tears down the **reputation of other believers**? We can’t be dogmatic because the Bible doesn’t say, but it could be **both!**

--We obviously **defame God**—we injure His good name—when we take **His name in vain!**

--But...we are also told in James 4:11 to “Speak not evil one of another, brethren.”

So God doesn’t want us to do either one! Not only that, notice what else God tells us through James in **James 3:8-10** “But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹Therewith **bless we God**, even the Father; and therewith **curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God**. ¹⁰Out of the **same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing**. My brethren, these things **ought not so to be.**”

So when you **curse men**—when you say things that **defame them and tear them down**—you are speaking against the One **in whose image** they are made!

2) Filthy communication. What is “filthy communication?” It is disgraceful, foul, obscene, and vile speaking! The **Topical Lexicon** in Biblehub.com states the following: “Formed from terms for ‘shameful’ and ‘word,’ the noun designates speech that is **morally disgraceful**. It is more than coarse humor; it carries the idea of language that **dishonors both speaker and hearer** by violating God-given **standards of purity.**”

Ephesians 4:29 “Let **no corrupt** [rotten; unwholesome] **communication** proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.”

--**How much** corrupt communication is to proceed out of our mouth? None!

--**What are we** to do with “filthy communication”? Put it away; lay it aside. Stop!

--The Facebook posters—and administrators—obviously didn’t “get the memo.”

--What about you? Young people, what do you **talk about** with your friends when no adults are around? What kind of communication comes out of **your mouth?**

3) Lie not one to another. We see that in the beginning of verse 9, don’t we? We know what lying is, so I’m not going to take the time to define it. We also know there are different kinds of lies—“white lies,” half-truths, and exaggerations to name a few.

What about you? Are you known as a truth teller—or an exaggerator? Do you justify telling a “white lie” because it won’t—in your mind—“hurt” anyone? Do you **avoid lying** because you don’t want to be **called a liar**—or because you want a **clear conscience** with God?

Before we move on, I do want to touch on a rather **new kind of lying** that is becoming quite common and acceptable in our current day and age. **It is the lie** that Joe can become Josephine—and that Jeannie can become Jerry! And not only are **parents lying to their children**, but everyone around them is also expected to **deny the truth**—and **lie** right along with them!

And sadly, our **young people in public schools** face this kind of lying nearly every day—a pressure that current parents and grandparents didn’t have to face! Young people, can I encourage you to be a truth-teller?

You are **not helping** classmates—and you are not **loving them** in the Biblical sense of the word—if you **agree with the lie** they are trying to **talk themselves into believing!** Don't hate them—they are made in the image of God, just like you! But it is loving—**not hateful**—to tell them the truth! Don't let them think that God “got it wrong” when He made them—and that they have to “fix” God's mistake! “As for God, His ways are perfect”—and our ways are not!

Next, let's consider... **2. Why we are to put off these sins**

In vs 9-11, Paul gives us **three reasons** we should put off the sins listed in verse 8 and the first part of vs 9. We'll only be looking at **two**, today, though.

A. Because we have put off the old man

We see that in the middle of verse 9: “...seeing that **ye have put off** the old man with his deeds;”

What is the old man? The **old man** is our old **way of life** that is controlled and influenced by our sinful, selfish, nature. What does Paul say **had happened** to their old way of life that was characterized by sinful deeds? **They** had “put it off,” right? Except it was not something **they** had **actively done**—it was something that **had happened to them!** **Who** did it for them? We have the answer in **Romans 6:6** “Knowing this, that **our old man** is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

The “Him,” of course, is Christ! So when Christ died, our **old man**—the person we used to be—was crucified with Christ! Look again at vs 3 “For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” God counts us as being **in Christ**; meaning we **died with Him**—and are now **risen with Him!**

In **position**, then, our **old man**—our old way of life—was counted dead when we received Christ as our Savior and became a child of God. And God commands us to “put off” these sins because we need to **put into practice** what we are in position! And because your old man **is dead**, it should not be “managing your mouth!” Your speech should not reflect what you **once were**—it should reflect who you **are now**—a new man!

B. Because we have put on the new man

Look at vs 10 “And have put on the new man...” What is the **new** man? The **opposite** of the old man, right? It is your **new** way of life, controlled by a **new** nature, that is being **made new**—renewed—by the Holy Spirit that is in you!

Once again, the verb “have put on the new” is not something **they did**—it was something God did **for** them and **in** them. **II Corinthians 5:17** “Therefore if any man be **in Christ**, he is a **new creature**: old things are passed away; behold, all things are **become new.**”

When did we become a **new** creature—a new creation—in Christ? When we repented of our sins...and received Christ...and were born again. We had a **new birth**; a spiritual birth! And that's why when we sing “Happy Birthday” to someone here at church, we sing the words: “Born again means salvation, **how many** have you?”

But the verse doesn't end with “have put on the new man,” does it? It continues with “...which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him.”

--We have “put off”—**past tense**—the old man when we received Christ—but we have to put into practice the putting off.

--And we have “put on”—**past tense**—the new man when we received Christ—and are to live our lives in a new way because of our new nature.

--How do we do that? Our new man—our new way of life—“is renewed in knowledge...” At first glance, “is renewed” sounds like **past** tense—something **done once** in the past and not needing to be done anymore.

Except, that's not the case! It is in the **present** tense—meaning it is something that is supposed to be **continually** happening. A more accurate translation would be “is being renewed” instead of “is renewed.”

What does **renewal** of the new man look like? It is “after the image of Him that created him.”

That means our **new way of life**—which should be controlled more and more by our **new nature**—will look more and more like the One who created us!

And this new man—this new way of life—is the one that should be “managing our mouth!” And if our **new** man—who is supposed to **reflect Christ**—is “managing our mouth”—blasphemy, filthy communication, and lying will not be coming out of our mouths!

How does renewal take place? In and through **knowledge!** In the way of a reminder, our English word “knowledge” comes from a couple of different Greek words. Without getting too technical, one Greek word emphasizes the **gathering of information** about someone or something; the other emphasizes “knowledge gained **through first-hand relationship.**”

Not surprisingly, the one used here has to do with **relationship** knowledge—not just “head” knowledge. It is us getting to **personally know** God by having heart-to-heart communion with Him through His word and prayer.

It is—as outlined in II Corinthians 3:18—us beholding God’s glory in His Word—and God transforming us by His Spirit working in us. It is God changing our “tempto-wanto-meter”—a rather corny, made-up-by-me phrase that describes how God changes our hearts.

As we spend time with Him—wanting to **know Him** better and **obey** Him more—He changes our “want-to.” And as our “want-to”—our desires—change, our “tempto-meter”—the temptation to sin with our mouths—no longer has the strong pull that it once did.

James 3:8 reminds us that “the tongue can **no man** tame.” But **God** can tame it, can’t He? And God wants to tame it! God wants our new man to manage our mouth—not our old man! And our new man **is renewed**—and we become **more Christlike** in all areas of our lives (not just our speech)—as we spend more “heart-to-heart time” with Him!

So what would God have us do in light of what we’ve heard this morning?

1. First, this message was primarily for **believers**—those who have recognized their need for **forgiveness and mercy** from God the judge! Salvation is not “cleaning up your life” and trying to do better!

Our **old nature** is corrupt to the core and beyond cleaning up—we need a **new** nature! And God gives us a new nature when He makes us His child. But we can only become God’s child when we come to God through Christ! In John 14:6, Jesus says “I am the way....”

So if you are not saved, that is what God desires for you! Don’t put off trusting Christ because you think you have a lot of time! We are praying for 5 or 6 families right now who have lost loved ones in the last couple of weeks!

2. But what about those of us who are saved? Who is managing your mouth? Do you still talk like you did before you were saved? Is your old nature and old way of life “managing your mouth”—or is the new man?

We cannot tame our own tongue—but God can tame it! And that taming comes from us spending heart-to-heart time with Him—and Him renewing and strengthening our new man!

--Are you doing that?

--If not, start today!