

The Godly Heart Colossians 3:12-15

The Lord calls us to be like Him in our attitudes, our speech, and in our behavior. In the Sermon of the Mount, Jesus taught his disciples, *“You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt. 5:48)*. And Paul in 1 Thess. 4:1 urges Christians, *“Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God, just as you actually do walk, that you excel still more.”* The Scriptures reveal the will of God and urge us to do our best to follow Christ. Though we have done well in the past, we can all excel still more in faith and in love.

1 Peter 2:21 says, *“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.”* Jesus is our perfect example in how to think, how to treat others, how to forgive, how to serve, and how to love. Paul in 1 Cor. 11:1 says, *“Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ.”*

Paul addresses the brothers and sisters in Colossae, describing them with three adjectives. **First**, *he calls them “chosen of God.”* God calls us through the preaching of the gospel. And when we receive and obey the good news of Jesus Christ, we become chosen or elect as God’s children. **Second**, Paul calls them *“holy.”* When a person is washed clean in the blood of Jesus, God sanctifies him or makes him holy. Then, he belongs to God and can no longer have an ungodly heart that ignores God. **Third**, Paul calls them *“beloved.”* Christians realize in their hearts that God’s great love for them is in Christ. And Paul had already revealed the difference that God had made in their lives. Col. 1:13-14 says, *“He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”*

For this reason, we, we can’t live like those who don’t know the love of God or the gospel. *God desires that we take off our worldly hearts and put on hearts that conform to His love and His will.* **First**, He calls us to *“put on a heart of compassion.”* To have compassion means to sympathize with others. We are to *“Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep” (Rom. 12:15)*. Jesus bless those who care. About the Day of Judgment, we read, *“Then the King will say to those on His right, ‘Come, you who are blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave Me something to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink; I was a stranger, and you invited Me in; naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me’” (Mt. 25:34-36).*

Second, *we must put on a heart of kindness.* God has acted in kindness toward us when He sent His Son Jesus to die for us according to Titus 3:4. Kindness considers the needs

of others and often does for them what they cannot do for themselves. God saved us through Christ. And a kind person is warmhearted, considerate, generous, and benevolent. It's one of the characteristics of the fruit of the Spirit. One cannot be like Christ and act cruelly towards others.

Third, *we must put on a heart of humility.* **Phil. 2:3-4** says, ***“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interest of others.”*** We will never be what God desires if we are haughty, proud, or arrogant. Love isn't arrogant; it instead builds others up. Arrogance and pride don't build character. **1 Peter 5:5** says, ***“all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”***

Fourth, *we need a heart of gentleness.* Jesus described Himself as gentle or meek in **Mt. 11:28-30**. He said ***“Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am meek (gentle) and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and My burden is light.”*** Meekness refers to strength under control, the strong person who shows gentleness to others rather than handling them roughly or abusively. The Lord Jesus was meek, not weak. In **Mt. 5:5** He promises, ***“Blessed are the meek (gentle), for they shall inherit the earth.”***

Fifth, *we need a patient heart.* Love is patient. It maintains a peaceful and tranquil heart while waiting for a desire outcome. It continues to be steadfast even when it is provoked. God is patient with us. **2 Peter 3:9** says, ***“The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”*** God is patient with us in the hope we will change our hearts; and we should be patient with others, hoping they too will change their hearts and be like Christ. People can change, when they have a reason to change and truly want to.

Sixth, *we must put on a heart that bears with the weakness of others.* **Phil. 4:5** says, ***“Let your gentle spirit be known to all men. The Lord is near.”*** Some allow their frustrations to boil over into anger and even vengeance. **Eph. 4:26-27** says, ***“Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil opportunity.”*** We must learn to control our tempers and take the experiences of others into account. They may have very difficult lives, which prompts them to act rashly or unkindly. *Let us have reasonable hearts* and remember the words of **James 1:20**, ***“Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires.”***

Seventh, *we must put on a forgiving heart.* **Eph. 4:31-32** says, ***“Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave***

you.” The Lord Jesus asks us to forgive seventy times seven – in **Mt. 6:14-15** Jesus said, **“For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.”**

If we have complaints against one another, let us obey Scripture on this matter and in private, humbly go to them for an explanation as **Mt. 18:15** teaches us to do. It is better to win your brother and reconcile than to live in anger. And if your brother listens to you, you have won your brother back.

Eighth, *we must put on a loving heart.* Love binds everything together in perfect harmony. Love unites and brings people together. Selfishness and pride cause division and conflict. The Lord Jesus said in **Jn. 13:34-35**, **“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”** Jesus wanted us to love each other the way that He loved us. Remember what He said in **Jn. 15:13**? **“Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.”** True love is willing to sacrifice for the good of others. Selfish and hard-hearted people will not sacrifice like Jesus.

The Christians in the church at Corinth in the first century was divided and spiritually immature. Like little children they wanted their way and they boasted about themselves. Paul reminded them what they needed to be boasting about, **“Let him who boasts, boast in the Lord” (1 Cor. 1:31)**. We may have many talents and gifts, but if we lack love, we are nothing in God’s sight. Paul in **1 Cor. 13:1-3** teaches us, **“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.”** Let us put on a heart of love for our brother and for all. We are called to be one body.

Ninth, *we need a heart that lets the peace of Christ rule over our hearts, our words, and our actions.* Brethren, it is better to endure a small, personal wrong and maintain peace than allow strife to grow and to split a congregation. Causing division is a work of the flesh and will cause people to be lost (**Gal.5:19-21**). It was Jesus Himself that said, **“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God” (Mt. 5:9)**. If you wish to be a son of God, then work for peace and harmony among God’s people.

Romans 12:17-18 says, **“Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.”** We can’t control what other people do, but we can control how we respond to what they do. Some people enjoy conflict and they love to fight. We

can't control the events of this wicked world, but we can place our trust in a faithful Creator who will do what is right. **1 Peter 4:19** says, ***“Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.”*** *We must do what God wills, even if the whole world is against us.*

Tenth, we must put on a thankful heart. Thankfulness to God for what Christ has done for us is the foundation of what it means to be a Christian. We must keep focus on the cross of Christ and the price that He paid for our sins. The cross draws us to Christ in love and gives us a reason for hope. In Christ we have an abundant life and every spiritual blessing. How could anyone be a Christian and ignore the blessings that we enjoy in Christ?

Colossians 3:16-17 says, ***“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”*** Let's worship with songs of thankfulness, and let's give thanks every day in all that we do. We serve a great God and have a great promise in Christ of eternal life in heaven. A thankful heart is a joyful and contented heart, full of hope. You will never find true joy, until you get in the habit of thanking God.

There is no higher calling in life than to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength – and to love your neighbor as yourself. Paul in **1 Cor. 14:4-8** puts it this way, ***“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.”***

God is ready to give you a new heart – a loving and obedient heart, the heart of Jesus! If you would have a godly heart, then lovingly, and with an obedient heart, obey the Lord Jesus. How do you do this? Place your trust in Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God. Repent of your sins by turning your heart from evil and pursuing righteousness. Confess the Lord Jesus as the Christ and follow His command to be baptized in His name for the forgiveness of your sins (**Acts 2:38**). Baptism into Christ has from the beginning of the Gospel of Christ, been an immersion under water of a penitent believer; and according to Peter and Paul, it was an immersion in water to wash away our sins – for here in the death and burial of Jesus it met the blood of Jesus.

Won't you be obedient to Christ? Won't you take the step to salvation and to a life with Jesus Christ in all eternity? All is ready – come to the Feast!