

Living With Jesus



SABBATH—MARCH 7

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Colossians 3:1–14; Romans 6:1–7; Ephesians 4:22–24; Romans 3:28.

MEMORY VERSE: “And you must also love each other. That is the most important thing that you should do. Love holds all these good things completely together” (Colossians 3:14, EASY).

DO YOU KNOW the saying, “Don’t wish too much for things that belong to heaven. If you do, you won’t be useful to anyone on this earth”? There’s some truth to this saying. But Paul teaches us an idea in Colossians 3 that’s important: if we only want the things from this life, we won’t be of any good use to the Lord.

Paul teaches us important rules for everyday real life. These rules come from heaven. Only people who wake up from the dead with Jesus can understand these rules (Colossians 3:1). Paul’s advice will help make all our relationships better, and not just in the church.

Jesus said, “ ‘But I tell you, love your enemies. Pray for those people who hurt you. If you do this [love and pray], then you will be true sons of your Father in heaven. Your Father causes the sun to rise on good people and on bad people. Your Father sends rain to those [people] who do good and to those who do wrong’ ” (Matthew 5:44, 45, ICB).

Love our enemies? Is that too hard to do? Yes, for us humans. We must die to self before we can really live for God. So, we must think about heaven more than we do. Then our Father in heaven can use us to do good on this earth.

This week, we’ll learn how living with Jesus can make things better, now and in the future.



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**WANTING THE THINGS THAT BELONG TO HEAVEN
(Colossians 3:1–4)**

What does Paul say we need to have as Christians? How will doing these things help us more and more to want the things that belong to heaven? Why do you think Paul says what he does? Read Colossians 3:1–4 for the answers.

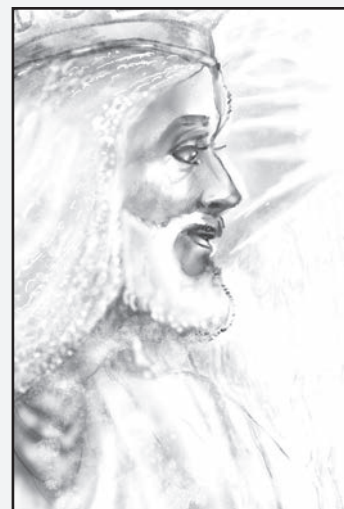
In Colossians 3, Paul talks about the things that are in heaven: “God has raised you [woke you up from spiritual death] with Christ [Jesus] to a new life. So you should want more and more the things that belong to heaven. That is where Christ is now. He sits there at God's right side. So think about the good things that are there in heaven above. Do not think only about things that are on the earth. Remember that your old nature [self] has died. God is keeping your new life safe with Christ. You have that new life because you belong to Christ. One day, Christ will show himself clearly to everyone. Then everyone will see that you are with him. They will see that you also are great [filled with God's shining beauty], like [the same as] he is” (Colossians 3:1–4, EASY).

We cannot explain many things in the Christian life. How do Christians really “die” and “wake up” to a new life in Jesus? How can this change happen when they look the same as before and they didn't have a real life-and-death experience? Without the Holy Spirit's help, we will have a hard time understanding many Bible truths or spiritual experiences. But if we accept God's promise of a new heart, we understand what it means to wake up with Jesus. As the hymn says, “You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart.”

Paul gives Christians the commands in Colossians 3:1–4 for an important reason. He knows that our spiritual lives must be made new every day (read 2 Corinthians 4:16). We can sin again and be lost! We are never safe from sin in this life.

So, we must choose every day to “live for what is in heaven” (Colossians 3:1, ERV). “God is keeping your new life safe with Christ” (Colossians 3:3, EASY). But people will know we are Christians because we show that God's love lives in our hearts.

What do you think about the most: heaven or life on this earth? If you said this life, how can you change that?



You should want more and more the things that belong to heaven. That is where Christ is now. He sits there at God's right side.

REMOVE EVERYTHING EVIL FROM YOUR LIFE (Colossians 3:5, 6)

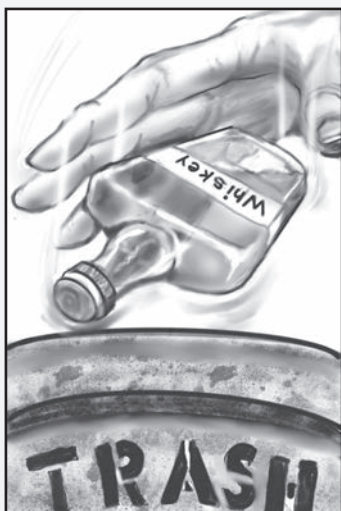
Read Colossians 3:5, 6 (also read Romans 6:1–7). How do we die to self and sin? How do we stop wanting the evil things in this life? Also, how do we “live for what is in heaven” (Colossians 3:1, ERV)?

First, we must die a spiritual death with Jesus. Then we must stop wanting the evil things in this life. Our bodies and minds may want many things that aren't good for us. So, we need to die to those sins, too. We need to remove all evil things from our lives.

But we must understand two things in connection with this command. First, as we see in Colossians 3:1, we must be alive in Jesus. We must be living a new life in Him. Second, the command in Colossians 3:5 happens because we are alive in the Lord. We can remove evil things from our lives because we have Jesus' spiritual life. He gives us the power to remove sin and evil from our minds and lives. “God's anger is going to come because of these things” (Colossians 3:6, NlrV).

The Bible also uses these same words, “God's anger,” in Romans 1:18: “God's anger is shown from heaven against all the evil and wrong things that people do” (ICB). “So God let those people do all the bad things that they wanted to do” (Romans 1:24, EASY). Because of these sins, “the special day of Their [the Father's and the Son's] anger has [will] come!” (Revelation 6:17, NLV). Then “God will certainly punish people who do those kinds [types] of bad things” (Colossians 3:6, EASY). In Romans 1:18, Paul talks about “the evil and wrong things that people do” (Romans 1:18, ERV). “So God let those people do all the bad things that they wanted to do. God let those disgusting [awful] things rule [control] their lives. As a result [because of this choice], they [these people] did bad things with each other's bodies. They did things that people should be ashamed to do” (Romans 1:24, EASY).

What bad things do these people do with their bodies? “The women stopped having sex in a way which is proper [lawful]. Instead [then], they began to have sex with other women, which is not proper. Also, the men stopped having sex with women. Instead, they strongly wanted to have sex with other men. Men did bad things with other men that they should be ashamed about” (Romans 1:26, 27, EASY). They do these things because they rejected the God who made them.



We can remove evil things from our lives because we have Jesus' spiritual life.

THE TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS (Colossians 3:6–11)

Read Colossians 3:6–11. What is Paul’s message in these verses?

The words of Colossians 3:8 talk about a big change from death to life. “So put everything evil out of your life” (Colossians 3:5, ERV). “Refuse to do all kinds [types] of things like [the same as] that. Do not become angry with people or shout at them. Do not do anything or say anything that will hurt other people. Do not speak any bad or disgusting [evil] words” (Colossians 3:8, EASY).

Not all anger is bad. God gets angry at sin. So does Jesus (Mark 3:5; Revelation 6:16). God’s anger is holy. Because we are human, the Bible warns us, “When you are angry, don’t let that anger make you sin” (Ephesians 4:26, ERV). That’s why James says, “Always be more willing to listen than to speak. Keep control of your anger. Anger does not help you live the way God wants” (James 1:19, 20, ERV). We have left our old life of sin (Colossians 3:9). So, we must not lie to each other (compare Leviticus 19:11, 18).

Paul talks about the old self or old life. What does that mean? How does that compare with the new life? Read Romans 6:6 and Ephesians 4:22–24 for the answers.

When we die to self, God gives us a new life. He “writes” His law on our hearts. That is the same as saying that God puts love for His law in our hearts (2 Corinthians 3:4–18). He gives us the strength to obey Him.

These symbols help us to understand that when we belong to Jesus, He makes our lives new (2 Corinthians 5:17). “You have begun to live the new life. In your new life you are being made new. You are becoming like [the same as] the One [Jesus] who made you. This new life brings you the true knowledge of God” (Colossians 3:10, ICB). “Jesus Christ shows us completely who God is” (Colossians 1:15, EASY). The Bible teaches us about Jesus. When we know Jesus, He will change “us so that we become more and more like [much the same as] him” (2 Corinthians 3:18, EASY). Then we will show His perfect beauty and love more and more (2 Corinthians 3:18). When we belong to Jesus, it doesn’t matter if we are rich or poor, Jews or non-Jews. We all become members of the kingdom of God (Colossians 3:11).



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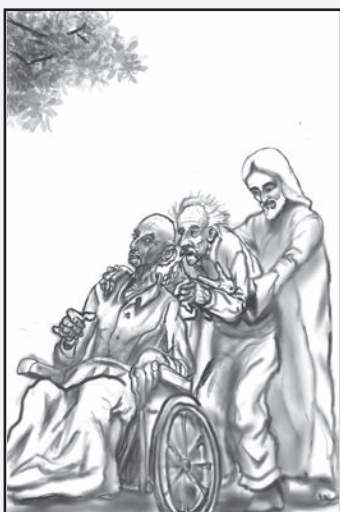
A NEW LIFE IN JESUS (Colossians 3:12–14)

How should God's people live? Read Colossians 3:12–14 for the answer.

In Old Testament times, God chose Israel to be His special people. God wanted Israel to show people who He was. In the same way, Jesus chose Christians “to be his own special people” (Colossians 3:12, EASY). He invites them to live a new life. But not every Christian accepts this invitation. As Jesus says, “ ‘God asks many people to come to him. But he only chooses a few people to be there with him’ ” (Matthew 22:14, EASY; compare with Matthew 24:22, 24, 31). Paul also talks about God's chosen people in much the same way that Jesus does (Romans 8:33; 2 Timothy 2:10). God loves His people. He makes them holy (Deuteronomy 7:6–8). God gives His people special work to do for Him. Peter says, “God chose you to tell about the wonderful things he has done” (1 Peter 2:9, ICB). We do that with how we live now.

Paul makes a list of what we should do: “So this is how you should live: be kind to other people and help them. Do not think that you are better than other people. Instead [but], respect them and be patient with them. Do not become angry with each other. If you think that someone has done something wrong against you, forgive them. Remember that the Lord has forgiven you. So you should also forgive other people. And you must also love each other” (Colossians 3:12–14, EASY). We can do these things only if our hearts are connected to Jesus. The things Paul asks us to do are the things Jesus does for us. So, we must love and forgive each other. God's love for us gives us the strength to really love other people (1 John 4:11, 12).

When we live the way Paul says, we will bring blessings to other people. We will be happy. Most people will show us love and respect when we are loving to them. God will continue to fill us with His love and forgiveness (Matthew 5:7; Matthew 6:14). When we show God's love to other people, we give God praise and honor. Other people may choose to follow Jesus when they see our example. “A life that is not selfish is very powerful. More than anything, a loving Christian who shows God's love to other people shows that the Good News about Jesus is real.”—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, page 470, adapted.



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gives us the strength
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LIVING THE NEW LIFE (Colossians 3:16, 17).

Paul wants church members to work together for peace in the church (Colossians 3). We already looked at God's peace (read Lesson 7). The peace of Jesus is meant to control our hearts. That can happen only if Jesus is in control of our lives.

What allows Jesus to be in control of our lives? What part does music have in our new life in Jesus? Read Colossians 3:16, 17 for the answers.

Paul says, "Let the teaching of Christ and His words keep on living in you" (Colossians 3:16, NLV). Jesus wants to live in our hearts. That happens when we read the Bible to learn God's wisdom. Music has an important part in helping us learn about God (Colossians 3:16).

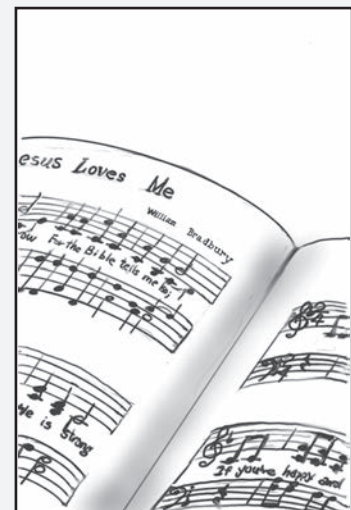
But not just any music. Paul uses very careful language here and in Ephesians 5:19 to talk about music. We should "sing psalms [songs and poems], hymns, and spiritual songs" (Colossians 3:16, ICB; also read Ephesians 5:19). These songs are the music that God accepts.

A psalm is a song or poem. The book of Psalms is the name of the collection of songs and poems in the Old Testament. Hymns may mean the collection of New Testament songs that Christians sang. Spiritual songs may be any song of praise about spiritual life or the life of the church. The words of the songs teach Bible truth. The songs teach people how to live as Christians. Many beautiful hymns were written in the past few hundred years. These hymns have powerful messages of hope. They lift up our hearts.

For sure, music is powerful. When David played his harp, King Saul felt better (1 Samuel 16:23). Studies show that some types of music can be very healing. Music can help us feel peaceful. Music also can help the brain to think more clearly. Music can help us relax, too, and get rid of pain. Music can help our relationships with people.

Music can be good or bad. But we all can agree that it can change our thoughts and feelings. Music, the right music, can bring us close to God.

"Always thank God the Father in the way that you serve Jesus" (Colossians 3:17, EASY). How do you do that in your life now? If you don't, how can you change? What must you stop doing now if you can't do it in the name of the Lord?



Music, the right music, can bring us close to God.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: “When God’s Spirit controls the mind and heart, we will sing a new song. We understand that God keeps His promise to us. God forgives our sins. He removes them from us. We feel sorry that we sinned in the past. We are sorry that we broke God’s law. We have faith in Jesus. He died so that we may be clean. ‘But God’s gift makes people right [accepted] with him.’ Romans 5:21 [EASY]. We have peace with God because of Jesus. . . .

“We need power to live a holy life. We think too much about life on this earth. We don’t think enough about the kingdom of heaven. . . .

“Christians must try hard to become what God wants them to be. But they must not feel sad if they make mistakes. God promises to make us clean and holy. He gives us His love and forgiveness. He promises to give us Jesus’ strength to help us. Jesus gives us all the power we need to be clean and holy. All life starts with Jesus. . . . Jesus will help us. He sends us help from heaven. In all our efforts to come to God, we touch His living power.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 476–478, adapted.



**“Jesus will help us.
He sends us help
from heaven.”**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① Paul says, “A person becomes right [accepted] with God if they trust in Christ [Jesus]” (Romans 3:28, EASY). What is your experience with this promise? How did this wonderful promise change your life? How does this promise help you understand the idea of what it means to live a new life in Jesus?
- ② What does it mean to you to want more and more the things that belong to heaven? Is wanting the things of heaven more important than doing good things on this earth? Explain your answer.
- ③ Think about how your life changes the lives of other people, for good or bad. What about our life as a church? How does our local church change the community around us for the better?
- ④ Read Colossians 3:11. What does this verse tell us about church members working together for peace in the church with Jesus?

FORCED TO CHOOSE

Rene chose to go to church and not to the office on the Sabbath. After sundown, he came back to the building where he lived and worked. A fellow worker handed Rene a letter from the boss. The letter said that the boss fired him.

Rene was surprised. He didn't know what would happen next. Rene was a foreigner working in a country that didn't allow people to worship Jesus. Rene wondered if he would be sent to prison. Would he stay strong if he must die for his faith? Rene prayed, "Lord, do You want me to go home to the Philippines? If You want me to die here, that's fine with me. Many people know I'm fighting for my faith."

Early the next morning, he went to the office and emailed his boss. He wrote, "I respect you. You are my friend and big brother. I know we need to talk when you come into the office."

That night, his boss came to work. He was upset. Rene prayed, "Lord, please help. Help my boss not to feel angry. But if it's Your will that I die, I accept."

Then the boss told Rene to come to his office. Rene tried to stand up. But he couldn't. His knees wouldn't support him. Rene felt as if he were dying. With all his strength, he lifted himself out of his chair and walked to his boss' office. Just before he knocked on the door, he heard a voice inside his heart. The voice said, "Don't be afraid. I am the true God. I keep My promises."

Rene opened the door. His boss looked angry. As Rene walked in, the voice whispered again, "I am the true God. I keep my promises." The voice said these words in Rene's heart again.

The boss held out two pieces of paper to Rene. The boss said, "Choose one." When Rene looked confused, the boss said, "One paper is a work contract. The other is a plane ticket."

Rene felt thankful that he wasn't going to be arrested. He prayed a silent pray in his heart: "Thank You, Lord, I'm not going to prison." Rene chose the plane ticket.

But the boss said, "Read the contract first."

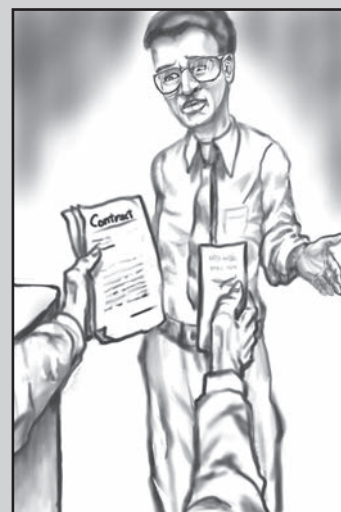
Rene saw that he would get double pay if he worked for only one hour on Saturdays. Rene chose the ticket again. Rene wondered how he would pay for the ticket. He heard the voice say in his heart again, "I am the true God. I keep my promises."

Rene went home to the Philippines. On the plane, he prayed, "You say, 'I am the true God. I keep My promises.' What is Your promise to me?"

The voice whispered, "You won't use up all your money before you get a new job."

Rene Tucaldo is the accounting manager for the 1000 Missionary Movement. The headquarters were built with the help of a 13th Sabbath Offering, in 1996. Read more next week.

INSIDE *Story*



"Choose one."



Rene Tucaldo