

Key:

Purple – Introduction, Conclusion, Main Points, and Sermon Thread

Blue – Explanation/Exposition

Red – Application

Green – Illustration

Brown – Quotation

Yellow – Sermon Notes

The Selfless Life of the New Self

Colossians 3:12–17

Let's take our Bibles together and turn to the book of Colossians, as we continue our verse-by-verse series through this book. In last week's passage, we observed the vices of Colossians 3:5–11. Paul tells us to put those off. And Paul gave us two separate vice lists. Today, in Colossians 3:12–17, we observe *virtues*, not *vices*: compassion, kindness, patience, love, forgiveness, etc. These are the virtues of a Christian following Christ in the Christian life.

Now the word “virtue” has fallen on hard times lately. People roll their eyes when celebrities or politicians do something called “virtue signaling.” And the irony of a lot of virtue signaling in our day is that many of the “virtues” being signaled are not, biblically speaking, virtuous. I could rant about that right now, but I'm not going to. I'd rather focus on Colossians 3:12–17.

What is virtuous, biblically speaking? What is a Christian supposed to put on? Well, look at the language of this passage: kindness, humility, patience, forgiveness, love, peace, even Christ-centered worship in verses 16 and 17. To use Paul's words elsewhere with a similar list of virtues, “Against such things there is no law” (Gal 5:23).

In many ways, we can observe these virtues as the antithesis of the vices in the previous passage.¹ But the real comparison that Paul is making here is not between virtues and vices. Instead, he's contrasting the old self with the new self. He's contrasting the old you with what should be characteristic of the new you... the redeemed you... the born-again you.

And this new you, in Christ, is putting off the sinful manifestations of the old you. The new you is hacking off the zombie body parts of the old you that emerge in the new you. That's what you put off.

But just as important as what you put off is what you put on. This is not just a defensive game; it's offensive. What do you put on? What should be characteristic of this new self, the new you in Christ?

I'll give you seven things. Let's look at these. Write these down in your notes.

Seven Virtues of the New Self:

Here's the first. Let me summarize verse 12 in one word.

1) **Tenderheartedness** (3:12)

The new you, in Christ, should be characterized with this word—tenderhearted.

Paul writes in verse 12,

¹² Put on² then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,

There are five virtues here in **verse 12** that contrast with the five vices in **verse 8**. Christians shouldn't be characterized by anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk. No! They should be characterized by compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

And notice a couple things here in this verse. First of all “put on” is an imperative. This is expected of us as Christians. Paul is commanding this. And this language links back to the statements in **verse 9** above. Paul said there,

¹ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 230: “This, it should be recalled, is the other side of the killing off and putting off of 3:5 and 8. Perhaps they in fact represent the two alternatives: a community which fails at 3:12 falls at 3:5 and 8.”

² Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 227: “Now we come to the particulars, the clothes, as it were, which the new person should wear. The verb (ἐνδύ-σασθε) is the same as in 3:10, though now clearly in the imperative. It is as a result of that decisive step and engagement with Christ (οὖν) that a whole set of particular consequences must follow.”

⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self,

The reason I'm pointing that out is because this is not just a general list of virtues for all of humanity to follow (although, that'd be a good thing). Paul has a narrow aperture here for the Christian community. If you've been saved, if you've been born again, then you have put off the old you, and you have put on the new you. And the new you is producing "compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience."

This focus on the Christian community is reinforced with Paul's identifying markers in **verse 12**. First he says, "God's chosen ones" (i.e. the elect). Who are God's chosen ones? Christians.

Then he says, "holy and beloved." The word "holy" there could and probably should be translated "saints." Who are the saints? And who are the "beloved of God"? This is quintessentially Pauline language for born-again believers. These are those who have been filled with the Spirit, and the Spirit of God is producing these things inside of you. It's the fruit of the Spirit, if you will.

So this is not a generic call for humanity to be better versions of themselves. This is a call for Christians to be more like Christ, producing more spiritual fruit in light of the Holy Spirit that Christ deposited inside of us. Everyone with me? **If you don't have the Holy Spirit, you can't produce the fruit of the Holy Spirit. You can't put these things on in the way that Paul is expecting Christians to put these on!**

"How do I get the Holy Spirit, Pastor Tony?" You need to get saved. You need to be born again. You need to repent of your sins and put your faith in Jesus Christ. You need to get Spirit-baptized, and then you can be water baptized.

And once you have that... once you put off the old self and put on the new self, now you can "put on" these attributes as an aspect of that new self.

Let's take a deeper look at these in **verse 12**. First of all, Paul references "compassionate hearts."³ The word "hearts" here is actually the Greek word for "innards."⁴ It's the Greek σπλάγχνον (*splagchnon*). In Greek thought, you didn't show emotions with your heart; you showed them with your guts. **So this is Paul's way of saying to the church family, love each other with all of your guts. Be compassionate and caring toward one another.**

And the other terms in **verse 12** flow from that. You love each other with "kindness." Kindness is not common or natural in the world. And **Kent Hughes** is right when he says, **"Kindness does not happen naturally in human relationships."**⁵ This requires a supernatural work in imitation of deity.

Christians should love each other with a supernatural, Christ-imitating selflessness. We love each other with a "you before me" kind of kindness... the way that Christ has loved us and been kind to us.

The playwright George Bernard Shaw once sent two tickets for his play to Winston Churchill, whom he was critical of, and he said, "Enclosed are two tickets to the opening night of my first play ... bring a friend (if you have one)." Churchill replied: "Dear Mr. Shaw, unfortunately I'll be unable to attend the opening night of your play due to a prior engagement. Please send me tickets for a second night (if you have one)."⁶

Now, that's not exactly kind banter back and forth between those two men... these two rivals. And for the record, I think Christians can be playful and sarcastic with one another. I'm not interested in regulating that or policing that in the church community. But kindness should be the order of the day in the Christian community, especially when we are communicating to a brother or sister who is hurting.

And just like I said that the vices of **verse 8** are expressed with the mouth and we need to prevent them from coming out of our mouths, the virtues of **verse 12** are expressed with the mouth and we should work hard at making sure they come out of our mouths.

3 The KJV translates "bowels of mercies."

4 Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 228: "The σπλάγχνα are literally the 'inward parts, entrails' (Acts 1:18), where the seat of the emotions was thought to be located."

5 Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 102.

6 Taken from Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 102.

Look at the third virtue in **verse 12**. Paul also advocates for “humility.” Interestingly, that’s the same word that Paul used earlier to describe the hypocritical and self-inflating asceticism of the false teachers (ταπεινοφροσύνη [*tapeinophrosynē*]). What’s the difference between true humility and false humility? I think they can look very similar on the surface. But ultimately it’s the difference between selfishness and selflessness.⁷ It’s the difference between building others up versus trying to make yourself look better than others. Same word. Same concept. Different heart posture.

Paul also tells us to put on “meekness.” Jesus said, “Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth” (**Matt 5:5**). Despite the way meekness is commonly presented in our world, meekness isn’t weakness.⁸ Meekness is not a sniveling, groveling servility! Meekness is strength under control. Meekness in the community of faith is the humbling of self for the benefit of others and the benefit of the community at large.

And meekness is imitation of Jesus, who “did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (**Phil 2:6–8**).

The last item in this list that Paul tells us to put on is “patience.” Full disclosure as your pastor—patience is not my best thing. And none of these things may be your best thing as a follower of Christ. Thankfully we are not saved by our ability to produce these things. We are saved by Christ and Christ empowers us to produce these things. And part of being a Christian... part of living out our faith is evidencing these things in increasing measure as we grow spiritually. A Christian who is saved by faith is called to be tenderhearted toward one another.

Write this down as a second virtue of the new self. There’s tenderheartedness, but there’s also

2) **Forgiveness** (3:13)

Paul writes in **verse 13**,

¹³ bearing with⁹ one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Being a Christian in the Christian community involves forbearance and forgiveness in equal measure.¹⁰ **A Christian who hasn’t learned how to forgive is like a fish that doesn’t know how to swim. It’s like a cat that doesn’t know how to clean itself.**

One of the ways that you can describe a Christian is with the word “forgiven.” A Christian is a “forgiven one.” So imagine how silly it is to have a “forgiven one” who doesn’t know how to forgive. If that describes you, Christian... if you are an unforgiving forgiven one... that is nonsensical.¹¹

⁷ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, 229: “The presence of ταπεινοφροσύνη is surprising since it was used in reference to the somewhat disparaged practices of 2:18 and 23. This probably confirms that these earlier references were by no means out-and-out polemical in character, and the fact that the same thing is commended here must mean that a certain degree of similarity between the codes of religious practice in the Colossian groups in view was inevitable (both essentially Jewish in character). Here presumably it simply means ‘humility, modesty’ (as in Phil. 2:3; Eph. 4:2; 1 Pet. 5:5; *1 Clement* 21:8; 31:4; 44:3), without reference to a spiritual discipline like fasting (see on 2:18). For Greek thought generally ταπεινοφροσύνη was too closely related to servility for it to be able to serve as a positive virtue (W. Grundmann, *TDNT* 8.1–4, 11–12), though in the sense of ‘modesty’ it gained a positive ring (Gnilka, *Kolosserbrie*f 194).”

⁸ Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 103: “Some time ago humorist J. Upton Dickson said he was writing a book titled *Cower Power*, and that he had also founded a group for submissive people called DOORMATS, which stands for: “Dependent Organization Of Really Meek And Timid Souls—if there are no objections.” Their motto is, “The meek shall inherit the earth—if that’s okay with everybody.” Their symbol is the yellow traffic light.⁷ Mr. Dickson has a clever sense of humor, but the misconception he exploits is no laughing matter, for most people think that meekness/gentleness is weakness. Nothing could be farther from the truth.”

⁹ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 230: “‘Put up with’ catches the sense of an acceptance requiring an effort of will because the actions or attitudes in question are immature and tiresome. Such a positive response is of a piece with the practical wisdom (as in Rom. 12:9–13:10) which small groups of Christians needed if they were to live without disturbance in unsympathetic and often hostile environments”

¹⁰ Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 106: “It is not enough to put up with each other, to refuse retaliation—we must truly forgive.”

¹¹ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 231: “It is the experience of having been forgiven which releases the generous impulses to forgive others (which is why the parable of Matt. 18:23–35 is so shocking), just as it is the refusal to forgive

Jesus illustrated this beautifully in his parable of the unforgiving servant in **Matthew 18**. A leading servant owes the king millions, even billions of dollars—ten thousand talents! It's about as large a debt as could be imagined in that world. And the king amazingly forgives him. But then that wicked servant shakes down his own servant for a measly debt. And that indebted servant pleads with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you" (**Matt 18:26**). But the wicked servant throws him in jail. And once the king finds out about this, he's incensed. "You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?" (**Matt 18:32–33**).

The implication of that story is clear. Forgiven people should be forgivers, especially in the case of Christians, because God has forgiven us a greater debt than we could ever forgive in another.

And again, the context of this statement is in the church family. Look again at **verse 13**.

¹³ bearing with one another

That's the Greek word ἀλλήλων that I mentioned last week. That's code for "fellow believers."

¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another,

Does that ever happen in the church? One believer having a complaint against another believer? "**No, Pastor Tony!**"

Mark Twain said once that, "Most people are bothered by those passages of Scripture which they cannot understand; but as for me, I have always noticed that the passages in Scripture which trouble me most are those which I do understand."¹² Listen, there's not a lot of explanation or understanding needed for **verse 13**. **We bear up with one another. And we forgive one another as Christ forgave us.**

I think it's instructive here that Paul doesn't use the word "sin" or a synonym for sin. If sin is involved, then there's a process of church discipline that needs to be initiated. See **Matthew 18:15–20** for more on that. But "complaint" here feels more like one person in the church aggravating another person or rubbing another person the wrong way. And in cases like that, there needs to be forgiveness.

forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

Even in cases where sin is involved, there needs to be repentance and forgiveness. Because there are no lasting relationships without forgiveness.

Write this down as a third point in your notes. No surprise here with this third virtue.

3) **Love** (3:14)

Love (ἀγάπη [*agape*]) is the superlative virtue for Christians. We know that from **1 Corinthians 13**.

Paul says here in **verse 14**.

¹⁴ And above all these put on love,

Above "compassion," put on love. Above "kindness," put on love. Above "forgiveness," put on love.

I think what Paul is saying here is that all those other things flow from a place of ἀγάπη love.¹³ This is you before me love. This is not a love that is weak or wishy-washy or indulging in sin. Love is not a license to do evil—that is a modern perversion of this virtue.

Real love is sacrificial. It's ennobling. It's Christ-imitating. "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" (**1 Cor 13:4–7**).

Those were Paul's words in **1 Corinthians** seven to eight years before he wrote **Colossians**. Now in **Colossians**, he writes,

which betrays the reality that forgiveness has not been received, that the individual has not even recognized the need for forgiveness (hence again Matt. 6:14–15). A community has hope of holding together and growing together only when the need for forgiveness is recognized on each side where fault has been committed and only when forgiveness is both offered and received."

¹² Taken from Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 111.

¹³ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 232: "That ἀγάπη ('love') was the most important grace for Paul is clear beyond dispute (Rom. 13:8–10; 1 Cor. 13:13; Gal. 5:6, 14, 22), with, once again, the implication that it is Christ's self-sacrifice which provides the model for such love (see on 1:4)."

¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

And this is Paul's expectation for the church. This is Paul's desire for Colossae and for Messiah Bible Church. He wants us to love each other on this side of eternity.

There's an old poetic ditty that goes like this:

**"To live above with saints we love; Ah, that will be glory!
To live below with saints we know; well, that's a different story."**¹⁴

Tommy Nelson asked once, **"Have you discovered that the Christian life has to be lived among humans? My Christian life would be so good if I could just get rid of humans."**¹⁵ But love can't exist in isolation. Love is a verb.¹⁶ It has to be demonstrated to another person. In this context, we are dealing with love that is demonstrated in the life of the church.

Literally Paul says here that "Love is the bond of perfection." It's like supernatural superglue for the Christian community.

I was telling Mitch Palermo the other day that I've been in several church environments throughout my life since childhood. And praise God, every single one of them, including Messiah Bible Church, have been wonderful places full of love and joy and peace and compassion. None of those churches were perfect, don't get me wrong. And those churches certainly weren't made up of perfect people (myself included). But in each case, we had this bond of perfection that was made possible through Jesus Christ. And no institution in this world has that. Nothing in this world can demonstrate love like the church.

I know that not all of you have that same experience in churches you've been part of. And if that's the case, I'm sorry for that. But this is the standard. Colossians 3:14 is God's expectation for the church:

¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

And why can churches demonstrate love better than the rest of the world? Here's why. Look at verse 15. We share this. Here's a fourth virtue for you:

4) **Peace** (3:15a)

Paul says in verse 15.

¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body.

Notice the language of "one body" at the end of that sentence. That's another church reference. We were called into one body, namely the church. Christ is the head. We are the members of that body. That's true in terms of the local church. That's also true in terms of the church universal: One church. One faith. One baptism. One God and Father of all. One Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

¹⁵ ... let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body.

Now here's a question for you church about peace. Let me ask you this—do you have the peace of Christ? You might say, "Well, my life's a mess right now. My kids aren't doing great. My health is on the decline. My job is unpredictable. My boss is a jerk. My marriage is unstable."

No, no, no. I didn't ask, "Do you have the peace of the world?" You're not going to have the peace of the world until Christ returns. I asked, "Do you have the peace of Christ?" In other words, do you know Christ? Have you put your faith in him? Do you have eternal assurance that he has saved you and is coming back for you?

¹⁴ Taken from Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 105.

¹⁵ Tommy Nelson, "Romans – The letter that Changer the World, Vol. 2," Session 5 (accessed through RightNow Media).

¹⁶ Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 104: "One other fact about this wardrobe: all these garments can be worn only in community with others, in relationships. How tempting to think that these garments would be so much easier to wear if we did not have to wear them among people. How much easier to *think* about 'compassion' than to *do* it. How much easier to be kind when we are away from mean people. It would be far easier to put on 'humility' and 'gentleness' if we were not being jostled by the proud and assertive. How much easier 'patience' is in isolation. But that is not the way it works! Christians become better Christians in community, in their families, among their associates, in their dorms, in their churches, where there is sweat and breath. The truth is: the very things we may think are keeping us from putting on these garments are the things which make possible their wearing. 'Clothe yourselves' is a present imperative: 'Put them on and keep putting them on.'"

If the answer to that is yes, then that's what should rule in your hearts not the peace (or lack thereof) of the world.¹⁷ And that's what should rule in the church, even if the church is persecuted and imprisoned and lacking the "peace" and "freedom" of worship.

Coincidentally, the church in Colossae didn't have the peace of the world. They were probably persecuted like the rest of the churches in Paul's day. They were harassed by governmental officials. They were harassed by false teachers too. And yet Paul says here, **"Let peace rule. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts."**

Also in verse 15, there's a fifth virtue.¹⁸

5) **Gratitude** (3:15b)

Paul says in verse 15.

¹⁵ ... let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

"Be thankful?" "Be thankful, Paul? The officials in Colossae are persecuting us. The false teachers are harassing us. Life is painful right now. And the church isn't doing great. And you're telling us to be thankful!"

Paul's like, **"Well, I'm in prison right now and I'm thankful. I'm thankful for the gospel. I'm thankful for my fellow believers like you. I'm thankful for your faithfulness in the midst of adversity. I'm thankful that God is using me, even though I'm incarcerated."**

Paul practices what he preaches.

Write this down as #6 on your list.

6) **Worship** (3:16)

Paul says in verse 16.

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,

Paul says in verse 15, "let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." Here he says "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." Both of these are commands. Both of these are expectations of the Christian community at large.

And the emphasis on the Christian community is going to upshift in this verse. Because Paul is going to go right into the heart of the Christian gathering for worship.

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

So in your worship services... when you teach... when you admonish one another... when you sing psalms and hymns... let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.

And that prompts the question, "What is the word of Christ?" If we're supposed to let this thing saturate all that we do in Christian worship, what is that thing? What is that word? What is that *logos* of Christ?

Well, it might not be what you think it is. It's not the Scriptures. Not directly. It's the gospel. It's the truth about Christ that is recorded in the Scriptures... the truth that Christ died for your sins, rose from the dead, and by faith in his death and resurrection, you can be saved. That's "the word of Christ." That's "the word about Christ" or "the message concerning the Messiah."

Paul says essentially here, **"Let the gospel dwell in you richly... let it be emphasized in your teaching... let it be emphasized in your conversations with one another... let it be emphasized in the songs that you sing. Let everything that you do in the church family be gospel-rich and gospel-driven."**

¹⁷ Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 110: "The peace of Christ' is different from any other kind. In the brief hours before he died, Jesus said to his disciples, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives' (John 14:27). He gives us a special peace which he calls 'my peace.' He gives us his own *personal* peace. It is not just the peace we experience when there is no conflict. It is a sense of wholeness and well-being, completeness and totality. But it is even more—it is the *presence* of Christ."

¹⁸ Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 235: "No doubt the themes of 3:13–15 are intertwined and interdependent: forgiveness and love of others, the peace of Christ, and thankfulness to God; without any one the others are unsustainable."

Some of you might ask in light of **verse 16**, what's the difference between a psalm, a hymn, and a spiritual song? I know that's something that I've spent a fair amount of time in my life exploring. Well, as far as I understand, these are different forms or genres of praise songs that were utilized in the church community. Probably they sang the psalms of the OT. Probably they sang more formal hymns and standardized music. And yet they also sang simpler "spiritual songs" of praise and worship, maybe even extemporaneous songs. I don't think the form matters as much as the substance. And the substance, according to Paul, needed to emphasize the gospel.¹⁹

Whenever Derek and Kyle and I get together on Tuesday afternoons to plan out the order of service for Sundays, one of the things that we address is how is the gospel central to all that we do. How is it emphasized in our singing? How is it emphasized in our preaching? How is it emphasized in prayer, in communion, in baptism, etc.? In other words, how can we obey Colossians 3:16 in our worship service?

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

And to that, you might say, **"Isn't that a bit limiting? What about the other six days of the week? What about the other ways that worship is demonstrated every day in the Christian life?"**

Well, good! Paul deals with that too in **verse 17**.

¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Here's a seventh virtue of the new self. I'll just call this...

7) **Devotion** to Christ (3:17)

Paul says,

¹⁷ And whatever you do,

Whatever you do! Whether you're a surgeon or a stay-at-home mom... whether you're a bricklayer or a barista... whether you're an engineer or an endocrinologist... whether you're a butcher, a baker, or a candlestick maker... Whatever you do, in word or deed...

¹⁷... do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Do everything in the name of the Lord! Even your play should be in the name of the Lord. Even your rest should be in the name of the Lord. Even your date night with your spouse should be in the name of the Lord. Even your changing of diapers should be in the name of the Lord.²⁰

What does that mean that every word and deed should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus? What does that mean? It means that everything in our life has a vertical orientation. It means that everything in our life has a worshipful feel to it. It means that we should never do anything or say anything that demeans or brings dishonor to the name of the Lord Jesus. It means our lives are lived as a living sacrifice before the Lord.

And by the way, Paul's going to get super practical with us here in the next few verses. He's going to talk about being a wife and being a husband and being a child and being a worker and being a bondservant and being a master. And Paul's not going to leave you in the abstract. He's going to climb down the ladder of abstraction and say, "Doing everything in the name of the Lord Jesus" means as a husband "loving your wife and not being harsh with her." And Paul is going to get so specific, and he's going to get in your business so precisely, that you're going to get uncomfortable. Or you're going to get inspired. And it's going to be good.

So come back next week, and let Paul get in your business.

And let me close with this. This list of virtues might be intimidating to you: tenderheartedness, forgiveness, love, peace, gratitude, worship, devotion to Christ. That's quite a list right there.

¹⁹ Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 112: "The Protestant Reformation brought a rebirth of music to the Church. When we think of the Wesleyan Revival, we not only think of John Wesley, but his brother Charles who has given us so many great hymns. The great harvest of souls here in our own country in the late 1960s and 1970s brought a revival of Scripture singing. When the Word of God dwells richly within you, you want to sing 'with gratitude in your hearts to God.'"

²⁰ Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 112: "'Deeds' can be preaching, teaching, eating, exercising, driving, cleaning house, shopping, visiting, working, playing (basketball, soccer, tennis, fishing, even watching)—everything!"

But listen, don't be intimidated by this. I don't want you to be intimidated. I want you to be inspired. This is what Christ wants to produce in you. This is what Christ has empowered you to demonstrate before the watching world. We are Christ's ambassadors for tenderheartedness, forgiveness, love, peace, gratitude, worship, and devotion to Christ. Nobody in our world can produce these things like us. No other institution in the world has the Holy Spirit's backing to produce these things. So praise God for that. And let's get after this.

And let me just give you some encouragement in that regard. I'm your pastor, and I'm one of your elders, so I have a unique vantage point from which to see all the things that Messiah Bible Church does. And let me encourage you in that regard, these things are happening here. This is a church that loves and cares for one another. This is a church that lives out the expectations of **Colossians 3:12–17**.

But—I say this all the time—let's not rest on our laurels. Let's be motivated to go after these things. And may God help us to demonstrate these virtues in increasing measure as followers of Christ. Amen?

Gorday, ed. *Colossians, 1–2 Thessalonians, 1–2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon*, ACCS, 33.
 Graybill, *Philippians, Colossians: New Testament*, RCS, 22.
 Keener, *The IVPBBCNT*, Colossians.
 Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, PNTC, 26
 MacArthur, *Colossians*, MNTC, 5.
 Pao, *Colossians and Philemon*, ZECNT, 44.
 Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, TNTC, 53–4.

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21 Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 232–3: “If τελειότης does not have a specific reference (to clothes perfectly fitted and worn), it simply denotes the ‘completeness’ and ‘maturity’ (cf. Heb. 6:1, the only other New Testament occurrence) of the community where ἀγάπη is ‘on top of all.’”

22 Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 233: “As elsewhere in Pauline thought, a close complement of love is peace (2 Cor. 13:11; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:2–3, where the same imagery is used, ‘the bond of peace’; 2 Tim. 2:22).”

23 Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, NIGTC, 235: “As in the earlier Paulines, the thought seems to be primarily of the local (Colossian) church as the one body (of Christ in Colossae), that is, the house church where they would meet for worship (3:16). But the same applies to the church now seen as the universal body of Christ (1:18a, 24; 2:19), a oneness which is itself an effect of the peace of Christ and which can only be sustained by that peace (hence again Eph. 4:3).”

24 Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 102: “The ancient world, apart from Biblical revelation, was merciless. The maimed and sickly and aged were discarded; the mentally ill were subjected to inhumanities. But Christianity brought compassion, and it still does.”

25 Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon*, 103–4: “the supreme characteristic of the meek man or woman is that he or she is under perfect control. Gentleness/meekness is strength under control. Numbers 12:3 tells us that Moses was the most ‘meek’ (kjb) man on earth, but at the same time Moses was a man who could act decisively, be as hard as nails, and rise in anger at the proper time. Those wearing the true garment of gentleness/meekness are immensely powerful people, for they are controlled by God.”