

Sunday, March 21, 2021—Colossians 3:5 Mortify Therefore Your Members, Part 2

Colossians 3:5

- **Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:**
- **Mortify**—is a verb in the active voice and the imperative mood i.e., it is a command. This is the third such verb in this chapter. The English word “mortify” carries the following relevant meaning according to Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language*:
 - To subdue; to abase; to humble; to reduce; to restrain; as inordinate passions.
 - Mortify thy learned lust. Colossians 3:5
- The Greek word rendered “mortify” carries the following meanings:
 - make dead, to put to death, slay
 - to deprive of power, destroy the strength of
- **Therefore**—based on the truth set forth in verses 1-4. The doctrinal truths set forth in the first 4 verses are the wellspring out of which we to live our lives here on planet earth. Our old earth suit has been infused with Christ’s spiritual life from above “therefore” we are commanded to mortify our “members which are upon the earth.” Doctrine always comes before practice.
- **Members which are upon the earth**—the first meaning of the English word “member” is “a limb of animal bodies, as a leg, an arm, an ear, a finger, that is, a subordinate part of the main body.” Paul is instructing the Colossians to “mortify” or put death the sin that resides in their “members.” This is practical application of positional truth.
 - Colossians 3:3—believers are dead but alive. The old you who you were in Adam needed to be killed to bring about a new creature. Reform of the old man was not possible. It needed to be crucified.
 - Romans 6:3-4—because of our identification with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection we have capacity to “walk in newness of life.”
 - Romans 6:5-6—our “old man” i.e., who were in Adam has been “crucified” with Christ the result of which is that we no longer need to serve the sin that resides in our members.

- Romans 6:14-19—because we are new creatures in Christ we have to capacity and ability by the indwelling Holy Spirit to “yield” the appendages of our old earth suit as “servant to righteousness unto holiness.”
- Colossians 3:5—is talking about the practical application of the positional realities.
- **Fornication**—Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828) defines “fornication” as follows:
 - The incontinence [“Want of restraint of the passions or appetites; free or uncontrolled indulgence of the passions or appetites”] or lewdness of unmarried persons, male or female; also, the criminal conversation of a married man with an unmarried woman.
 - Adultery. Matthew 5:32.
 - Incest. 1 Corinthians 5:1.
 - Idolatry; a forsaking of the true God, and worshipping idols. 2 Chronicles 21:11, Revelation 19:2.
- Put another way, “fornication” is any illicit sexual encounters between two unmarried persons, between one married and an unmarried person, or sometimes between two married persons.
- Fornication is plainly identified in scripture as a work of the flesh.
 - Galatians 5:19
 - Ephesians 5:3
 - I Thessalonians 4:3—the expressly stated will of God is that believers “abstain from fornication.” This would include pornography.
- **Uncleanness**—simply means impurity of a physical or moral nature, it is always closely associated with fornication in Paul’s epistles. Noah Webster defined it as follows:
 - Foulness; dirtiness; filthiness.
 - Be not troublesome to thyself or to others by uncleanness
 - Want of ritual or ceremonial purity. Leviticus 15:3.
 - Moral impurity; defilement by sin; sinfulness.
 - I will save you from all your uncleanness Ezekiel 36:17.
 - Lewdness; incontinence. Colossians 3:5. 2 Peter 2:10.

- Simply stated, “uncleanness” is impurity of a physical or moral nature, it is always closely associated with fornication in Paul’s epistles.
 - Galatians 5:19
 - Ephesians 5:3
 - I Thessalonians 4:7
- **Inordinate Affection**—is a translation of the Greek word *pathos*. the word “inordinate” means “irregular; disorderly; excessive; immoderate; not limited to rules prescribed, or to usual bounds.” “Inordinate affection” is passion, or inappropriate affection or lust.
 - Romans 1:26—“vile affections” is a translation of the same Greek word.
 - I Thessalonians 4:5—the word translated “lust” in this verse is the same Greek word rendered “inordinate affection” and “vile affections” in the other verses.
- Colossians 3:5—same sexual relations are clearly sinful and contrary to nature, according to the word of God. That said, I think we need to always bear in mind the following points.
- First, believers are often hard on homosexuality while at the same time being lax or soft on fornication, adultery, and pornography. This is inconsistent, all the afore mention behaviors are the work of the flesh that need to be mortified and put to death a believer’s life.
- Second, homosexuality is not an unpardonable sin. Rather it is a sin for which Christ died. Christ will redeem any child of Adam who trusts the death, burial, and resurrection as the only total and complete payment of their sins.
 - I Corinthians 6:9-11—Paul was not deterred by someone’s sexual orientation. He preached the gospel to anyone who would listen. We need to not let our disapprove of someone’s lifestyles choice keep us from sharing the cross with them in a loving and respectful manner.
- **Evil Concupiscence**—is an expression coming from two different Greek works. We all know what “evil” is but probably need to understand “concupiscence.” “Concupiscence” is a longing especially for what is forbidden, a desire or lust.
 - Romans 1:24—“lusts of their own hearts”
 - Romans 7:8
 - Romans 13:14
 - Galatians 5:16, 24

- I Thessalonians 4:5
- **Covetousness**—is “a strong or inordinate desire of obtaining and possessing some supposed good; usually in a bad sense, and applied to an inordinate desire of wealth or avarice,” according to Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language* (1828).
 - Romans 1:29
 - Ephesians 4:19, 5:3
 - I Thessalonians 2:5
- Colossians 3:5—Paul ends the verse by stating that “covetousness” is “idolatry.” According to the word of God, when one looks upon the things of another with envious thoughts of how they can obtain for themselves they are committing idolatry.