

# **The Most Excellent Way**

## **Discipleship/Leadership Bible Study Homework**

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### **“Rules for Holy Living”**

#### **HEART ATTITUDE: Putting On New Life (Imitating Christ)**

True Christians follow the rules. We put on the new nature by accepting Christ and we regard our old nature as dead. We change our moral and ethical behavior by letting Christ live within us, so that He can shape us into what we should be. Our strategy is described in Colossians:

- (1) Imitate Christ’s merciful, forgiving attitude (3:12-13);
- (2) Let love (charity) guide our life (3:14);
- (3) Let the peace of God rule in our heart (3:15);
- (4) Always be thankful (3:15);
- (5) Keep God’s Word in our hearts at all times (3:16); and
- (6) Live as Jesus Christ's representative (3:17).

#### **COLOSSIANS 3:1-17 (NIV)**

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.*

<sup>2</sup>*Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.*

<sup>3</sup>*For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*

<sup>4</sup>*When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.*

<sup>5</sup>*Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*

<sup>6</sup>*Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.*

<sup>7</sup>*You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.*

<sup>8</sup>*But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.*

<sup>9</sup>*Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices*

<sup>10</sup>*And have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*

<sup>11</sup>*Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.*

<sup>12</sup>*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*

<sup>13</sup>*Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.*

<sup>14</sup>*And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.*

<sup>15</sup>*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.*

<sup>16</sup>*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. (16)*

<sup>17</sup>*And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

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- **FOCUSING**

1. What's the nicest suit or outfit you have ever worn?

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2. When you're finished with your old clothes, what do you often do with them?

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- **UNDERSTANDING**

3. Where did Paul tell the Colossians to turn their attention? (3:1)

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4. Where did Paul tell the believers to focus their concern? (3:2)

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5. What was the Colossian's security? (3:3)

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*For you died* means we should have as little desire for this world as a dead person has. The Christians real home is where Christ lives. This gives us a different perspective on our lives here on earth. To *set your minds on things above* means to look at life from God's perspective and to seek what He desires. This is the antidote to materialism; we gain the proper perspective on material goods when we take God's view of them. The more we see the life around us as God sees it, the more we live in harmony with Him. We must not become too attached to what is only temporary.

6. Why should believers look forward to Christ's return? (3:4)

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Christ gives power to help us live now, and He gives us hope for the future.

7. What must die? (3:5)

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8. What evil activities does God seek to eliminate from our lives? (3:5)

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*Put to death (mortify therefore your members, KJV)* means we should consider ourselves dead and unresponsive to evil desires: sexual sin, impurity, lustful desires and materialism. We must make a conscious, daily decision to remove anything that supports these desires within us, and to rely on the Holy Spirit's power.

9. Why is God's wrath coming? (3:5-6)

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10. What had the Colossians taken off? (3:7-9)

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*Rid yourself* (verse 8) of these sins can also be translated, *lay aside the old self and put on the new*. This action is not so much mystical as it is practical and moral. Be done with your old morals and commit yourself to those Christ teaches. Paul is appealing to the commitment believers made in their baptism, and urges them to remain true to their confession of faith. We are to *put off* the old life and *put on* the new way of living given by Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit. If you have made such a commitment, are you remaining true to it?

11. What had the Colossians put on? (3:10)
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We, as disciples, are in a continuing education program. The more we know of Christ and His work, the more we are being changed to be like Him. Because this process is lifelong, we must never stop learning and obeying. There is no justification for drifting along, but there is an incentive to find the rich treasures of growing in Him. It takes practice, review, patience and concentration to keep in line with His will.

12. What distractions are removed when one is “in Christ?”
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Barriers of nationality, race, education, social standing, wealth, religion and power should not apply in Christianity. Christ breaks down all barriers and accepts all people who come to Him. Nothing should keep us from telling others about Christ, or accepting any and all believers into our fellowship any and all believers. We should be building bridges, not walls.

13. What virtues does God seek to plant in us? (3:12, 14)
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(The key to forgiving others is remembering how much God has forgiven you. Is it difficult for you to forgive someone who has wronged you a little when God has forgiven you so much? Realizing God’s infinite love and forgiveness can help you love and forgive others.)

14. How were the Colossian believers called to clothe themselves? (3:12-17)
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15. Why did Paul call on the believers to be peaceful and thankful? (3:15-16)
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We should live in perfect harmony with one another. This does not eliminate all differences in opinion, but loving Christians will work together despite their differences. Such love is not a feeling, but a decision to meet others’ needs. It leads to peace between individuals and among the members of the body of believers. Do problems in your relationship with other Christians cause open conflicts or mutual silence? Consider what you can do to heal those relationships with love.

The word “rule” comes from athletics: Paul tells us to let Christ’s peace be the “umpire” in our hearts. Our hearts are the center of conflict because there our feelings and desires clash — our fears and hopes, our distrust and trust, our jealousy and love. How can we deal with these constant conflicts and live as God wants? We must decide between conflicting elements by using the rule of peace — which choice will promote peace in our souls and in our ministries?

16. What should we do? How? (3:17)
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17. What is one principle that ought to guide everything we do? (3:17)
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As a Christian, you represent Christ at all times—wherever you go, whatever you say. What impression do people have of Christ when they see or talk with you?

- **UNDERSTANDING**

18. If you consistently set your sights on Christ and heaven, how would your life be different?

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19. What old, "earthly" clothing do you need to get rid of?

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20. How does wearing "Christ's clothing" affect the way you live your daily life?

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21. What Christian virtues are you lacking?

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22. What spiritual process is involved in "putting off" and "putting on?"

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23. What is involved in replacing old habits with new ones?

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24. How should life in Christ affect the way you treat others?

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25. How are all your relationships to be built around Christ?

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26. Why do we need to be loving toward others?

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27. Why is a thankful spirit an important part of holy living?

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- **DOING THE WORD**

28. Which of God's goals for holy living do you need to apply to your life on a regular basis?

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29. How can you be more thankful and loving to those who are close to you?

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