

Read Colossians 3:1-11.

The Fertile Soil of the Gospel (v. 1-4)

Throughout Colossians, Paul claims that one of the profound mysteries of the Gospel is that, through it, we can have *inner union* with God in Christ (Colossians 1:27, 2:12-13, 2:20). This inner union with Christ is the fertile soil of the Gospel from which spiritual life grows.

Chapter three begins with a condition: “*If then* you have been raised with Christ...” Paul assumes that the reader has been raised from spiritual death with Christ and knows what it is to live in Him.

- Do you have confidence that you have been made alive together with Christ through the power of the Gospel? Why or why not?
- How and why can we have confidence of this reality?
- How often do you think about the reality that Christ is *in* you and you are *in* Him?
- Why is it so important to make sure we are grounded in the fertile soil of the Gospel as we hear the commands of Scripture?

The Strategy for Spiritual Growth (v. 1-4)

- What two commands summarize Paul’s strategy for our spiritual growth here?
- What are some ways we can obey these commands practically, on a day-to-day basis?
- How are you doing at consistently obeying these commands in your own life?

The Strategy for Defending against Spiritual Disease (v. 5-11)

Paul gives two lists of sins in this section, one list that focuses on sexual sin and one list that focuses on sins of the tongue.

- As you look at this representative list of sins, are there any in particular that you struggle with? Or are there other sins not on this list that have been a habitual problem for you?

Paul says that we are to “put to death” these kinds of sins and the covetous heart that motivates them. We are to kill them. We are to stop them with a lethal determination.

- Would you say you have a lethal determination to kill sin in your life? Why or why not?
- What strategies might need to be a part of a plan to kill sin in your life?

The reason Paul tells us seek God, to set our minds on Him, and to put our sin to death is this: “you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.” These are *past* actions. Paul understands spiritual growth as *killing the sin that’s already dying*. He understands discipleship as *becoming righteous, because you are already righteous*. Paul is *not* commanding, “Stop being who you *are*!” He is commanding, “Stop being who you *are not*!”

- How might this shift your perspective and motivation when it comes to seeking God and killing sin?
- What is one adjustment to your attitude or actions you need to take in light of God’s Word?