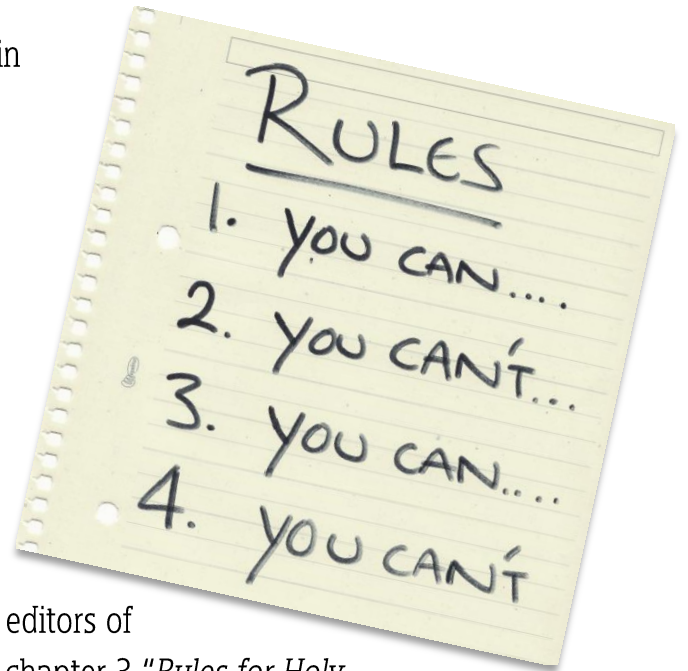


Real Change

Colossians 3

It's Not about Rules!

If you have an NIV Bible (like the ones we use in church), you need to realize that the section headings are not part of the original text of the Bible. That's a good thing, because whoever came up with the heading for Colossians 3 really blew it! Paul has just told the Colossians that there are no 'rules' that can produce holy living... rules like 'do not handle, do not taste, do not touch' might sound wise and good. But they don't make you holy at all! In fact, there are NO RULES that can make you holy! How odd and unfortunate, then, that the editors of our NIV Bible decided to make the heading for chapter 3 "*Rules for Holy Living*"!



- a) **Read from Colossians 2:20 to 3:17.** Can your group suggest a better title for the section than "Rules for Holy Living"?

- b) Both 2:20 and 3:1 begin with the words "Since... you". What's the connection and the sequence?

- c) Where will our hearts and minds be set, and why? What will this look like in practical terms?

- d) Both verse 2 and verse 5 use the phrase “the earthly things.” In verse 2, our minds are not to be set on ‘the earthly things’, while in verse 5, we are to put to death ‘the earthly things’ of our natures.

Which of the earthly things that he lists do you think are most dangerous?

Which are the easiest to hide?

Which are the most socially acceptable?

Which are the biggest challenges for you?

Maybe you’re thinking not ALL those problems are YOUR problems. And you’re right. At this point, Paul is talking to the Colossians as a group – the word “you” in the original greek is clearly “you-plural”, which is equivalent to ‘ye’ in old English, or ‘youse’ in Australian! AS A WHOLE, the Colossian gentiles lived that kind of life. Before they became Christians they lived in a world where sexual immorality and lust and greed were just as normal as it is today. But they died to that world. Their obituaries have been printed, they’ve been buried in their baptism... and now, things are different.

- e) From verses 8 and 9, list the things they need to get rid of. But re-order the list to put your own top priorities first. (What do you MOST need to get rid of?)
- f) From verse 9 and 10, WHY should they stop lying to each other?

Did you notice? The words “Since you have” and “which is being” talk about something which already HAS BEEN DONE and something which IS BEING DONE. These people don’t need more “rules for Holy Living” ... they just need to stop being what they were, and start being what they already are, and are in the process of becoming. The fact is, they are being renewed in knowledge, and in the image of their creator!

- g) As we saw last week, the Jews always wanted to make gentile Christians obey all their rules, as found in the Old Testament law. What does verse 11 say about these old ways? What is the only big issue now?
- h) In the past, the Jews were indeed God's chosen people, and his 'holy saints'. Now, the non-Jewish Colossians have joined them. What is the 'dress code'? (v12-14)
- i) The ends of verses 15, 16 and 17 have a common theme. What is it, and why?
- j) Christians are to be people of song! Colossians 3:16 is a key verse for our MPC musicians as they choose suitable songs and lead in our services. Here are some pointers...
- i. From the first phrase of the verse, what will be the centre and goal of our teaching and admonishing?
 - ii. Likewise, what will be at the centre and goal of our singing? How will this affect our choice of song words?
 - iii. What 'attitude of heart' should we have as we sing? How could our music teams help us in this from week to week?

It's no surprise that the **word of Christ** should be right at the centre of our thanks and praise. The fact is, our new lives are all about Jesus!

Through the chapter, Paul made a number of links between Jesus and us. Can you find them in the table below?

