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Read Colossians 3:1–11 in your Bible. I will print the Net–2 translation.

### CHAPTER 3 ~ EXHORTATIONS TO SEEK THE THINGS ABOVE

3:1 Therefore, if you have been raised with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Keep thinking about things above, not things on the earth, 3 for you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ (who is your life) appears, then you too will be revealed in glory with him. 5 So put to death whatever in your nature belongs to the earth: sexual immorality, impurity, shameful passion, evil desire, and greed which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming on the sons of disobedience. 7 You also lived your lives in this way at one time, when you used to live among them. 8 But now, put off all such things as anger, rage, malice, slander, abusive language from your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another since you have put off the old man with its practices 10 and have been clothed with the new man that is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of the one who created it. 11 Here there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all and in all.

#### COMMENTS:

Let me say clearly, FAITH in Jesus is the born again experience, the new birth God is looking for. It is not some additional experience beyond being raised from death to life by the power of faith given to us by the Holy Spirit. That is the misunderstanding of those who will tell you that if you can't tell the day and the hour when you were converted, you are not a Christian.

In v. 1 today Paul says, "if," but you can also understand it as "when" or "since" you have been raised with Christ. Remember the words of Paul in Ephesians 2. We were all dead in trespasses and sin when we entered this world. God made us alive through faith. That is the first resurrection which prepares us for the second resurrection when Jesus returns at the end of time.

Now he continues with advice which will keep us from falling into a twisted faith like he read about yesterday. Simply put it is keep your eyes fixed on the Christ. Look at where he is sitting: At the right hand of God so keep thinking on things above, not on things of the earth.

Being made alive in Christ is the beginning of dying to sin. Now your life is hidden (kept in a safe place) with Christ in God. Christ is our source of life, protector of life, and preserver of life. When he appears then we will be revealed in glory with him. The transformation to glory begin as God helps us destroy our earthly nature.

In v. 5 a specific list of earthly nature behaviors are listed for us. The word for sexual immorality is the base word in English is "porn." Impurity refers to anything else which makes us unclean. "Shameful passions" refer to any and all addictions which control us rather than our controlling our desires.

Evil desires included racial hatred or any form of hatred. Coveting and greed are identified as idolatry. There is no doubt that the love of money and things has supplanted God in the lives of many.

This is why the wrath of God comes to those who ignore him. Before we begin to feel too self-righteous, we are reminded that those behaviors were a part of our life before. We don't have to be nasty, sex crazed, hate filled people. We need only to ignore God who created us, redeemed us, and continues to care for us.

Then in verse 8 we see a list of what we probably a list of lesser sins. Malice is whenever we try to take advantage of others. Abusive language is a hallmark of our society today. It happens with children who bully others. It happens with adults who are abusive to workers they consider less important and act like they are masters and those who serve them are slaves.

Since God is truth, lying is a form of God rejection. It is a sign of the old man, not the resurrected person who has faith. The growth of the Christian is working at restoring the image of God with which we were created.

God's universal love transforms us into universal lovers of our fellow human beings. Our ethnic or national background, our social standing as slave or free, Jew or gentile, nothing divides us. Christ has brought us together.

**REFLECTION QUESTION:** The secret of the Christian life is not trying harder. It is letting Christ lead us and the power of Holy Spirit helping us to love fully and free. And then reminding ourselves that we live under the forgiving grace of God. Too often we look at our failures instead of seeing God's word and help in our life. Keep your eyes on Jesus.