

COLOSSIANS: DISCERNING TRUE DOCTRINES
"Part V: Using Christ's Person & Work To LIVE Above Errant Beliefs"
(Colossians 3:1-4:1)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Today we are face a significant question on **how** we are to **live**!

Last Sunday I was handed some articles from the July-Aug. '77 Midwest Christian Outreach Journal that were downloaded from the internet, articles revealing major errors in Bill Gothard's view of living (<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/9575/gothalmud1.html>):

(1) The material cited Gothard's words that one must obey the human authority above him **even** if it makes him **counter God's will**! Using the 12-year-old Jesus in the temple as an example in his 1979 Basic Seminar Textbook, p. 20, Bill Gothard wrote: "Should He follow His spiritual calling and be about His Father's business (Luke 2:49), or should He become subject to His parents and leave His ministry at the temple? He did the latter..." By writing this, Mr. Gothard left Jesus **SINNING** against the Father which would disqualify Him to be our **Savior**! In reality, Jesus was not yet in the ministry, so He did not choose between obeying God or His parents! Yet, Gothard's **view** taught here has been used to teach women must submit to their husbands even if asked by them to **SIN opposite** what Acts 5:29 says!

(2) Much of Gothard's writings exist as nonbiblical rules for all areas of life that leave critics rightly charging him with legalism!

Well, if Bill Gothard of *all* people resists *reputable* counsel on *rightly* teaching *how* to live a godly life, *HOW* should we *LIVE*?

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "If Bill Gothard's Institute of Basic Life Principles has much errant legalism and even some outright HERESY in it, and yet his ministry seeks to equip people to live a godly LIFE, what is God's idea on handling wrong BEHAVIOR to live RIGHTEOUSLY?!"

- I. **Colossians 3:1-4 is Paul's call to focus on the believer's position in Christ to CORRECT errors about LIVING facing the Colossians:**
- A. As we learned last week, in Colossians 2:1-23, Paul countered the theological errors of gnosticism, Jewish legalism, Oriental mysticism and human asceticism that afflicted the Colossian believers.
 - B. These theological errors led to errant **lifestyle ACTIONS** as follows:
 - 1. Since the gnostics felt the body was essentially evil, they promoted **lustful indulgences** of the body, including immorality, gluttony, etc. Col. 2:8-10; cf. Ryrie St. Bib., KJV Intro. to 1 John, p. 1770.
 - 2. Since the Jewish legalists felt the Christians were still tied to the Law, they pushed Old Testament regulations upon them, including **rules of diet, holy day and Sabbath observances**, Col. 2:16 implied.
 - 3. Since the Oriental mystics held to a self-promoted spirituality, they pushed developing a **false humility**, the **worship of angels** and **special insight by visions**, Colossians 2:18-19 implied.
 - 4. Since the ascetics loved to feel they were spiritual by heeding many restrictive rules, they promoted **"touch not"**, **"taste not"** and **"handle not"** man-authored rules to be godly, Colossians 2:20-23.
 - C. In reality, all these **ACTIONS** slipped away from a proper **focus** on **Christ**, from a life of faith in His finished work of Calvary and perfect Personhood as the Creator-God-come-in-the-flesh, Colossians 2:1-3. Thus, in Col. 3:1-4, Paul **resumed** his theme introduced in Col. 2:1-3: he called Christians to set their focus on **CHRIST** and their position in **HIM** in the **HEAVENLIES** far above such **unfruitful, EARTHY** focuses that led to the **false beliefs** and their **errant lifestyle actions!**
- II. **Then, Paul DETAILED just HOW the believer's BEHAVIOR was to be CORRECTLY UPGRADED from sinful failure with this correct focus on one's POSITION IN CHRIST, Colossians 3:5-25:**
- A. By **reckoning** himself to be dead to sin but risen to new life in Christ, the believer by the Spirit's power (implied, see Rom. 6:11 with Rom. 8:2-4 in Paul's similar phrasings) is to put to death by **faith** all sinful indulgences of the body promoted by errant gnosticism, Col. 3:5-9:
 - 1. A lack of sexual drive control is to be countered by the indwelling Spirit as one reckons himself to be dead to sin in Christ, 3:5a,b.
 - 2. Greed is countered by the Holy Spirit's control as the believer reckons himself to be dead to greed in Christ, Colossians 3:5c.
 - 3. Harm done in relationships is countered by the Holy Spirit's power as a believer reckons himself to be dead to sin in Christ, Col. 3:6-9.
 - B. By **reckoning** one's self to be alive from death to the restrictive Law by faith in the Spirit's power (implied, see II,A above), the believer **views** himself as being in spiritual equality with others (opposite Judaism, Oriental mysticism and asceticism which all promote pride), 3:10f. This **equips** him to view others in love, kindness, humility, and meekness that comes in realizing he is equal with others, Col. 2:12-15.
 - C. Such **reckoning** of one's death to sin and resurrection to newness of life in God's **power** alters how one **behaves** relative to others as well:
 - 1. Our worship in musical expression, affected by the Spirit's control, causes one to **dwell** on God's **Word** in God's honor, Col. 2:16-17.

2. In the Spirit's control, wives **submit** to their husbands to honor **GOD**, implying they submit **ultimately** to **God** in the process, 2:18
3. In the Spirit's control, husbands **love** their wives without harshness (NIV), recalling **God's** unmerited favor to **them in Christ**, 2:19.
4. In the Spirit's control, children **obey** their parents to be pleasing to **GOD**, implying they submit to **God** in the process, Col. 2:20.
5. In the Spirit's control, parents **stop provoking** their children to wrath, but recall **God's** grace to them in Christ as a motivation to nurture their children in that save **God-like graciousness**, 2:21.
6. In the Spirit's control, servants **obey** their masters to please **GOD**, implying they submit **ultimately** to **God's** will in the process, 2:22ff
7. In the Spirit's control, masters relate to slaves **in Christ** with **justice** and **respect**, for they see they are *equal* with them, 4:1!

Lesson Application: *God's CORRECT route of behavior control for us rises from (1) our being given a new nature and the Holy Spirit from God through faith in Christ, Jn. 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:17. (2) Then, to IMPLEMENT such good behavior, one (a) AVOIDS gnostic, legalistic, mystical and ascetic self-help styles of living by (b) FOCUSING on his GRACIOUS position in his dead-to-sin and risen-to-new-life, heavenly Christ: In SO doing, he (c) depends on the Holy Spirit's power to boycott his sinful nature's lusts and pride to (d) stop indulging in carnal lusts, (e) to cease competing with others in a man-made spirituality, and (f) begin to value God's GRACE toward him in Christ so as to act in REAL humility, love and honor for other people. (Romans 8:3-4)*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

While attending Bible College in Portland, Oregon, I was privileged to be able lead a seasoned alcoholic on skid row to Christ.

It happened when we were fulfilling a Christian Service assignment in holding street meetings outside a Rescue Mission near Burnside Avenue in a rough part of downtown Portland.

On the occasion, an elderly drunk who obviously had lived a hard life came up to me as I was taking my turn to preach. He pointed his finger in my face and blurted out, "I wanna talk with you!"

I explained, "O. K., but please wait until I'm done preaching!"

He backed up, leaned up against a car parked at the curb and listened until I was done.

Afterwards, I went up to him and said, "You wanted to talk?"

He said, "Yeah, but I want to do it in **private!**"

I took him into one of the counseling rooms in the nearby Rescue Mission building, and there he opened up.

"Look, I'm dying of leukemia, and I want to go to heaven to be with my Mother and Dad. I don't know how to get there, so can you level with me and show me how a guy like me in my condition can ever get to heaven?! Whatever it takes, no matter how hard, I'll do it!"

Right there, I was privileged to lead him to Christ.

After he had finished repeating a prayer after me, and with no coaching from me whatsoever, he declared, "I'm going to get a job!"

The man **then** stayed for the indoor meeting that followed. [The derelicts on the street who wanted a meal and a bed for the night had to attend the indoor meeting that followed, so he joined the group.] During the message in that second meeting, this new convert kept jabbing his finger into the ribs of the guy sitting next to him and trying to get him to pay attention so he could be saved!