LESSON 11 *March 7–13

(page 84 of Standard Edition)

Living With Christ



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week's Study: *Col. 3:1–17, Rom. 1:18, Rom. 6:1–7, Eph. 4:22–24, Deut. 7:6–8, 1 Sam. 16:23.*

Memory Text: **"But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection"** *(Colossians 3:14, NKJV)***.**

It's commonly urged not to be so heavenly-minded; otherwise, we'll be of no earthly good. While true in some sense, there's an equally important concept that Paul highlights in Colossians 3: if we are too earthly-minded, we will be of no heavenly use to the Lord.

Paul draws our attention to many practical, real-life principles that are born of heaven and can be understood only by those who are "risen with Christ" *(Col. 3:1).*

Paul's counsels are very down-to-earth principles that will enhance all our relationships, and not just within the church.

Jesus said, " 'Love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you . . . that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust' " *(Matt. 5:44, 45, NKJV).*

Sound impossible? It is, humanly speaking. We need to die before we can really live for God. It's why we must be heavenly-minded if we hope to be of any earthly use to our heavenly Father.

This week we'll see ways in which living with Christ can make a difference, now and eternally.

** Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, March 14.*

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Heavenly-Mindedness

Read Colossians 3:1–4. What condition does Paul indicate is necessary for us to be heavenly-minded? What do you think that means?

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From a mountaintop, it is possible to survey a vast landscape that is all around you. From time immemorial, mountains have been frequented by those seeking a closer experience with God *(see Ps. 121:1, 2)*. Even human-made mountains, called ziggurats, have been constructed by pagans for a similar purpose—to meet with the gods. Interestingly, the city of Ur, which Abram was called to leave, had a very large ziggurat visible from miles around. But changing one's elevation will never by itself draw anyone closer to heaven in a spiritual sense. Human effort never could.

Instead, only through a miracle of grace, whereby we died with Christ and were raised with Him (figuratively pictured by baptism *[Col. 2:12, 13]*), is it possible to draw nearer to heaven.

Notice that from the beginning of Colossians 3, the repeated emphasis on what is above, that is, what there is in heaven: "those things which are above," "where Christ is," "things above," "with Christ in God," "with Him in glory" *(Col. 3:1–4, NKJV)*.

Admittedly, there is much in the Christian life that defies explanation. How can a person really "die" and "be raised" when, to all appearances, he or she is the same person and has had no such life-and-death experience? There is much that does not make sense to the natural mind, uninfluenced by the Holy Spirit. But to those who are spiritually-minded, because they have received the new heart promised by God, death to sin and being raised with Christ are genuine realities. As the hymn affirms: "You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart."

Nevertheless, Paul gives these commands because there is a constant need for this spiritual life to be renewed *(see 2 Cor. 4:16)*. We can, indeed, fall away and be lost! And we are never safe from temptation in this life.

We must, therefore, choose daily to "seek those things which are above" *(Col. 3:1)*. Our eternal life is safely "hidden with Christ in God" *(Col. 3:3, NKJV)*, but the outward expression of that life will be anything but hidden.

Where are your thoughts: usually above or usually below? If the latter, how do you change their direction?

End Earthliness

We hear many slogans today: "End war!" "End deforestation!" "End nuclear weapons!" But one we have probably never heard is "End earthliness!" That just doesn't fit with the sensibilities of our world. Not that any of the other slogans are wrong or what they advocate is wrong. They're just very shortsighted, considering the nearness of eternity. Our focus needs to be higher, eternally higher.

Read **Colossians 3:5, 6** *(see also Rom. 6:1–7)***. How do we experience what it means to be dead to self and to earthliness and alive to "those things which are above"** *(Col. 3:1)***?**

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Even though spiritually we have died with Christ, our "members"—that is, the temptations that our body and mind present us—need to be put to death.

But we should realize two things in connection with this command.

First, in Colossians 3:1, the Greek form that Paul uses assumes that we have, in fact, been raised with Christ. Second, the command in Colossians 3:5 is a consequence of that fact ("Therefore"). We can put to death earthly things (fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, covetousness, etc.) only because we have been raised with Christ and have His spiritual life and power to put these things out of our minds and lives.

Interestingly, the only other occurrence in Greek of the exact phrase that appears in Colossians 3:6, "the wrath of God," is in Romans 1:18. God "gives" people up to their own wicked ways, and so His wrath is also "coming" *(see Rev. 6:16, 17)* "on those who are disobedient" *(Col. 3:6, NRSV)*. In Romans 1:18, Paul refers to "ungodliness and unrighteousness," equating "uncleanness" *(using the same Greek word found in Colossians 3:5)* very specifically with people who indulge "the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies" *(Rom. 1:24, NKJV)*.

How do they dishonor their bodies? First, because they refuse to recognize the Creator but also by "vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful" *(Rom. 1:26, 27, NKJV)*.

How do we follow the words "mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth" *(Col. 3:5)***?**

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Renewed in Knowledge

Read Colossians 3:6–11. How does Paul continue with this train of thought?

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The initial words of Colossians 3:8 signal the dramatic and decisive change from death to life: "But now." The word "now" in Greek is emphatic. Now, that is, *because* you are risen with Christ and seek those things that are above, your present life is to show a marked contrast with your former life. Having put to death "what is earthly in you" *(Col. 3:5, ESV)*, "now you must get rid of all such things—anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth" *(Col. 3:8, NRSV)*.

Both anger and wrath can describe God's righteous response to sin (touched on yesterday) as it can for Jesus *(Mark 3:5, Rev. 6:16)*. By contrast, we are urged to "be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God" *(James 1:19, 20, NKJV)*. Malice wishes misfortune on another. Slander is designed to defame. Paul also condemns language that is abusive and obscene. Finally, lying to one another is forbidden *(compare Lev. 19:11, 18)*, "since you have put off the old man with his deeds" *(Col. 3:9, NKJV)*.

What does Paul mean by the "old man" in contrast with the "new man"? See Romans 6:6 and Ephesians 4:22–24.

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The verbs Paul employs for this transformation from the old to the new allude to clothing, as if one took off old filthy garments and was clothed with new white garments *(compare Zech. 3:4)*. A similar old/new distinction is made in regard to the old and new covenants, which are characterized respectively by the external letter of the law and by the law inscribed by the Spirit in the heart *(2 Cor. 3:4–18)*.

These metaphors describe conversion and its effects, which Paul calls a "new creation" *(2 Cor. 5:17, NKJV)*. We are "renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him [Christ]" *(Col. 3:10, NKJV)*, who is the image of the invisible God *(Col. 1:15)*. Gaining a knowledge of Christ through His Word transforms us "into the same image from glory to glory" *(2 Cor. 3:18)*. This places us above all ethnic, geographical, and social boundaries *(Col. 3:11)*, because we are citizens of a higher kingdom.

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Character of the New Life

Having described the bad habits and negative qualities that are removed and put away when we come to Christ, Paul proceeds to the positive—like moving from darkness to light.

Read Colossians 3:12–14. How are believers described, and how do you think it relates to the qualities they are to "put on"?

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Like Israel, called by God to be His special people and reflect His character, believers in Jesus are "the elect of God" *(Col. 3:12, NKJV)*, His "chosen ones" *(ESV)*. Not all, though, live up to this calling. As Jesus said, " 'Many are called, but few are chosen ' " *(Matt. 22:14; compare Matt. 24:22, 24, 31)*. Paul's references to the elect have a similar meaning *(Rom. 8:33, 2 Tim. 2:10)*. Also, like Israel, believers are "loved" by God and "holy" *(Deut. 7:6–8)*. This privilege carries with it an important responsibility: to "proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" *(1 Pet. 2:9, NKJV)*. And we do that by how we live now.

The eight qualities mentioned by Paul are quite a list! "Tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another," and "above all . . . love" *(Col. 3:12–14, NKJV)*. These can spring only from a heart united with Christ, because they describe His character and how He has dealt with us. We are to forgive others "even as Christ forgave you" *(Col. 3:13)*. Love is "the bond of perfection" *(Col. 3:14, NKJV),* because it is His love toward us that binds us to Him and enables us to truly love others *(1 John 4:11, 12)*.

These qualities impact our relationships in two ways. First, showing love, mercy, kindness, and forgiveness toward others blesses us and others. It is fulfilling to love and bless others. People will normally respond to us in kind, and we continue to receive God's mercy and forgiveness *(Matt. 5:7, Matt. 6:14)*. Second, and more important, it glorifies God and may encourage others to believe and follow Jesus, because it shows the power of divine grace. "No other influence that can surround the human soul has such power as the influence of an unselfish life. The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian."—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 470.

How well are you representing Jesus in the way you treat others, especially those who may be unkind to you?

Living the New Life

Paul's concern for peace and harmony in the church appears clearly in the last verses of Colossians 3. We've already looked at God's peace in some detail *(see Lesson 7)*. Unlike the *pax Romana*, the *pax Christi* is not a peace imposed from the outside but is to "rule" us from within. That can happen only if Christ is in control.

Read Colossians 3:16, 17. What specifically enables Christ to be in control, and what role does music play in all this?

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The language is very descriptive. It pictures the word of Christ making its home in us. That happens when we read the Bible attentively in order to listen and learn from God's wisdom. Apparently, though the Greek text is somewhat ambiguous, music plays an important role in "teaching and admonishing one another" *(Col. 3:16)*.

But not just any music. Paul uses very specific terminology both here and in Ephesians 5:19: "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs."

Though we can't be certain, it seems a distinction is made here between the existing Old Testament collection of psalms and a growing New Testament collection of hymns. "Spiritual songs" may be a more general term for any song of praise related to the spiritual life or the life of the church. The words of the songs are the means of teaching the truth and giving instruction on living the new life of a Christian. Many great hymns of the past few centuries have powerfully uplifting messages of hope and assurance, so needed in a world that so easily drags us all down.

Music's influence is powerful. David's playing of the harp had a soothing effect on King Saul *(1 Sam. 16:23)*. But when David became his rival, Saul's anger and resentment rose *(1 Sam. 18:10, 11)*. Calm classical music has been clinically shown to reduce anxiety, optimize brain function, increase relaxation, help with pain, and increase socialization.

Who among us has not seen for themselves the powerful influence music, for good or bad, can have on our emotions and thoughts? Music—the right music—can be spiritually uplifting.

We are told that whatever we do, "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" *(Col. 3:17)*. Can you truly say that you do that? If not, how can you change; that is, what must you stop doing if you cannot do it in the name of the Lord?

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Further Thought: "When the Spirit of God controls mind and heart, the converted soul breaks forth into a new song; for he realizes that in his experience the promise of God has been fulfilled, that his transgression has been forgiven, his sin covered. He has exercised repentance toward God for the violation of the divine law, and faith toward Christ, who died for man's justification. 'Being justified by faith,' he has 'peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' Romans 5:1.

"But because this experience is his, the Christian is not therefore to fold his hands, content with that which has been accomplished for him. He who has determined to enter the spiritual kingdom will find that all the powers and passions of unregenerate nature, backed by the forces of the kingdom of darkness, are arrayed against him. Each day he must renew his consecration, each day do battle with evil. Old habits, hereditary tendencies to wrong, will strive for the mastery, and against these he is to be ever on guard, striving in Christ's strength for victory. . . .

"The power of a higher, purer, nobler life is our great need. The world has too much of our thought, and the kingdom of heaven too little.

"In his efforts to reach God's ideal for him, the Christian is to despair of nothing. Moral and spiritual perfection, through the grace and power of Christ, is promised to all. Jesus is the source of power, the fountain of life. . . . In our behalf He sets in operation the all-powerful agencies of heaven. At every step we touch His living power."—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 476–478.

Discussion Questions:

❶ What has been your own experience with the promise that you have been "justified by faith"? How has this wonderful promise changed your life? How is that promise linked to the idea that you also "have been raised with Christ"?

❷ What does it mean to you to be heavenly-minded? Is it more important than doing earthly good? Where is the balance?

❸ Think about the kind of influence your life has on others. And though we tend to think of this in the context of our individual influence, what about our influence as a church? How does your local church impact your local community?

❹ Read Colossians 3:11. What should this tell us about the unity we should have in Christ?

INSIDE *Story*

Facing an Ultimatum

On the Sabbath that Rene chose to go to church rather than to the office, he returned after sundown to the building where he lived and worked. A coworker handed him a letter from the boss. He had been fired.

Rene was shocked. He didn't know what would happen next. As a foreigner working in a country hostile to Christianity, he wondered if he could stand firm for God if he were sent to prison or faced death.

He prayed, "Lord, is this the time for me to go home to the Philippines? If You want me to die here, it's fine with me. Many people know I'm fighting for my faith."

Early the next morning, he went to the office and emailed his boss. "I respect you," he wrote. "You are my friend and big brother. I know we need to discuss the problems that I have caused when you come to the office."

That night, his boss came to work. He seemed upset. Rene prayed, "Please help. Let my boss calm down. But if it's Your will that I die, I accept it."

Then the boss summoned Rene. Rene tried to stand up but couldn't. His knees wouldn't support him. He felt like he was dying.

With all his strength, he lifted himself out of his chair and walked awkwardly, hunched over, to his boss's office. As he raised his hand to knock on the door, he heard a voice whisper, "Don't be afraid. I am the true God. I am faithful to My promises."

A moment later, he opened the door and saw his boss's stern face. As he walked in, the voice whispered twice, "I am the true God. I am faithful to My promises." With each repetition, the voice grew louder.

The boss handed two pieces of paper to Rene and said, "Choose one." When Rene expressed bewilderment, the boss said, "One is a work contract. The other is a plane ticket." Relieved, Rene prayed silently, "Thank You, Lord, it isn't prison." He chose the plane ticket.

But the boss said, "Read the contract first."

Rene saw his pay would be doubled if he worked one hour on Saturdays. He chose the ticket again. As he wondered how he would pay for it, he heard the voice again, saying, "I am the true God. I am faithful to my promises."



Rene returned home to the Philippines. On the plane, he prayed, "You say, 'I am the true God. I am faithful to My promises.' What is Your promise to me?" The voice whispered, "You won't be able to use up all your money before you find a new job."

Rene Tucaldo is chief financial officer of the 1000 Missionary Movement, whose headquarters in Silang, Philippines, were constructed with the help of a 1996 Thirteenth Sabbath Offering. Read the rest of the story next week.

Provided by the General Conference Office of Adventist Mission, which uses Sabbath School mission offerings to spread the gospel worldwide. Read new stories daily at AdventistMission.org.

Part I: Overview

Key Text: *Colossians 3:14*

Study Focus: *Col. 3:1–17*

In Colossians 3:1–17, Paul discusses the characteristics of an authentic Christian life. He emphasizes the believers' union with Christ. Such a union means that the believer shares in Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and glorification. Paul elaborates on this notion by saying that Christ is our life *(Col. 3:4)*. We died with Him. Our life is hidden with Him in God *(Col. 3:3)*. We were raised with Him *(Col. 3:1)*. Thus, we must "seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God" *(Col. 3:1, NKJV)*, which implies that we reign with Him *(see Rom. 5:17)*.

The theme of "union with Christ" is a topic addressed elsewhere in the New Testament. In fact, this teaching comes from Jesus *(John 15:5)*. Paul, in referring to the believer's deep connection with Christ, uses the phrase "in Christ" *(see, for instance, Rom. 6:11, 2 Cor. 5:17, among many other passages)*. Paul also suggests that the life of a true believer is, in a sense, a "replay" of Jesus' mission. Thus, as followers of Jesus, we must walk as Jesus walked *(1 John 2:6)*. Our old self was crucified with Christ *(Rom. 6:6, Gal. 2:20)*. We died with Him *(Rom. 6:5)* and were buried with Him *(Rom. 6:4, Col. 2:12)*. We were raised with Him *(2 Cor. 4:14, Col. 3:1)* and sat with Him in the heavenly places *(Eph. 2:6)*.

This week's lesson emphasizes two major themes:

1. The true believer is one who has replaced an earthly mindset with a heavenly mindset.
2. The true believer exhibits the characteristics of a new life in Christ.

Part II: Commentary

Illustration

"In the old Roman walls the mortar seems to be as hard as the stones, and the whole is like one piece; you must blow it to atoms before you can get the wall away. So is it with the true believer: he rests upon his Lord till he grows up into him, till he is one with Jesus by a living union, so that you scarce know where the foundation ends and where the upbuilding begins; for the believer becometh all in Christ, even as Christ is all in all to him."—Charles H. Spurgeon, "Faith's Sure Foundation," in *The*

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons, vol. 24 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1878), p. 463.

Earthly Mindset Versus Heavenly Mindset

In Colossians 3:1–11, Paul discusses the contrast between the new life in Christ and the old life with its fleshly desires. Paul begins the section with the phrase, "If then you were raised with Christ" *(Col. 3:1, NKJV)*. However, there is no doubt as to the believer's participation in Christ's resurrection. Indeed, the phrase could be rendered, "If then you were raised with Christ, and you have been." This sentence completes the thought introduced in Colossians 2:20: "If you died with Christ" *(NKJV)*. Paul is arguing that because the Colossians died with Christ *(Col. 2:20)* and were raised with Him *(Col. 3:1)*, they must live accordingly. It is important to note that the expression "were raised" is in the passive voice in both English and Greek. The use of the passive voice indicates that the new life in Christ is not the result of human achievements but the work of God in the heart. This principle is a corrective to the teaching that humans can reach salvation through their own efforts.

In the early verses of Colossians 3, Paul encapsulates the concept of the new life in Christ through the phrase "those things which are above" *(Col. 3:1, 2; in Greek, ta anō)*. Conversely, the old life is portrayed by means of a similar phrase, "things on the earth" *(see Col. 3:2, 5; in Greek, ta epi tēs gēs)*. Paul strongly exhorts his audience to do two things in relation to the things above. They must seek them *(Col. 3:1)* and set their mind on them *(Col. 3:2)*. The Greek word translated as "set one's mind on" is *phroneō*. This term reflects the act of thinking *(see Rom. 12:3, 1 Cor. 4:6, Phil. 1:7, Phil. 3:15)*. In other words, Paul is saying that heavenly things should occupy our thoughts. Colossians 3:1–4, which introduces the new section, is saturated with references to Christ: we were raised with Christ *(Col. 3:1)*, Christ is at God's right hand *(Col. 3:1)*, our life is hidden with Christ *(Col. 3:3)*, and Christ is our life *(Col. 3:4)*. For Paul, seeking and thinking about the things above is synonymous with living a life for, and through, Christ until the day we share in His glory *(Col. 3:4)*.

To live for Christ means to be dead to earthly things *(Col. 3:2, 3)*. To make this point very clear, Paul provides a list of vices that believers should avoid at all costs *(Col. 3:5)*. He further mentions that "because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience" *(Col. 3:6, NKJV)*. In these two verses, Paul is characterizing the old life before conversion. The sons of disobedience are those who seek earthly things and set their minds on them. This contrasts with the attitude of those who died to self and were raised with Christ.

To further characterize the old life, Paul presents a second list of

vices: "Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth," and lies *(Col. 3:8, 9, NKJV)*. Paul labels the man who lives according to "the things on the earth" as the "old man" *(Col. 3:9)* and the man who lives according to the things above *(Col. 3:1)* as the "new man" *(Col. 3:10)*. The contrast between the two is further highlighted through the verbs "put off" (from the Greek *apekdyomai*) and "put on" (from the Greek *endyō*). Paul is employing a wordplay in order to emphasize an important Bible truth: the old man is immersed in his deeds *(Col. 3:9)*, whereas the new man "is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him" *(Col. 3:10, NKJV)*. Further on, the apostle provides more insight into what the new life in Christ looks like.

Characteristics of the New Life in Christ

Paul begins the new section in Colossians 3:12–17 with the word "therefore." By using this term at the beginning of the new section, Paul indicates that the exhortations in Colossians 3:12–17 must be seen as a consequence, or result, of what he discussed in Colossians 3:1–11. Those who seek the things above and think about them, in accordance with Colossians 3:1, 2 (and have been regenerated spiritually, as symbolized by the new man in Colossians 3:10), are now portrayed as "the elect of God, holy and beloved" *(Col. 3:12, NKJV)*.

According to Paul, the true believer is someone who puts **off** certain things *(Col. 3:8)* so as to put **on** other things, such as "tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering" *(Col. 3:12, NKJV)*. Whereas the old man's life is characterized by lying "to one another" *(Col. 3:9, NKJV; from the Greek allelōn)*, the new man's life is characterized by "bearing with one another *(Col. 3:13, NKJV; also from the Greek allelōn)* and "forgiving one another" *(Col. 3:13, NKJV)*. However, Paul says, "above all these things [that is, the virtue list in Col. 3:12, 13], **put on** love, which is the bond of perfection" *(Col. 3:14, NKJV, emphasis added)*. Paul implies that all the other virtues can be put into practice only if love marks the relationships within the church. In other words, Paul is saying that when we love, we demonstrate "tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering" *(Col. 3:12, NKJV)*. We also bear with one another and forgive one another *(Col. 3:13)*. What a powerful statement!

The new life in Christ also is characterized by the presence of God's peace *(Col. 3:15)*. This peace within the church community is possible only because God reconciled all things to Himself through Christ, who "made peace through the blood of His cross" *(Col. 1:20, NKJV)*. In other words, peace in human relationships is a result of peace with God.

Finally, the new life in Christ includes an unyielding adherence to the Word of Christ *(Col. 3:16)*. By saying that the word of Christ must

"**dwell** among you richly as you **teach** and **admonish** one another with all **wisdom**" *(Col. 3:16, NIV, emphasis added)*, Paul implies that Jesus' teachings ought to occupy our entire lives. This statement is very similar to the one found in Colossians 1:28: "He is the one we proclaim, **admonishing** and **teaching** everyone with all **wisdom**, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ" *(NIV, emphasis added)*. Three important things can be noted, based on the parallels between these two verses. First, Christ and His teachings are inseparable in the sense that it is not possible to accept Christ without accepting His teachings. Second, the goal of proclamation is to present "everyone fully mature in Christ" *(Col. 1:28, NIV)*. Third, people who have experienced a true conversion are involved in mission. Paul closes his teachings in Colossians 3:1–17 with a summarizing thought: he implies that those who live a new life do all things "in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him" *(Col. 3:17, NKJV)*.

Part III: Life Application

Meditate upon the following themes. Then ask your students to answer the questions at the end of the section.

The assertion that Christ is our life *(Col. 3:4)* is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable statements in the Bible. If Christ is our life, without Him we "can do nothing" *(John 15:5)*, and through Him we "can do all things" *(Phil. 4:13)*. If Christ is our life, His grace is sufficient for us *(2 Cor. 12:9)*. If Christ is our life, we "have been crucified" with Him, and we no longer live, but He lives in us *(Gal. 2:20)*.

Paul is talking about such a profound relationship with Christ that we participate in His life, death, resurrection, and glorification. In order to emphasize this reality, the apostle constantly uses the phrase "with Christ" (seven times!) throughout his letter to the Colossians. Thus, we died *(Col. 2:20)*, were buried *(Col. 2:12)*, were raised *(Col. 2:12, Col. 3:1)*, were made alive *(Col. 2:13)*, and are hidden *(Col. 3:3) with Christ*, in such a way that we "will appear *with Him* in glory" *(Col. 3:4, NKJV; emphasis added)*.

"In some mysterious fashion, every believer in Christ is united with Christ, so that his death is ours, his burial is ours, his new life is ours, his position in heaven is ours, and his glorious return is ours. . . . When we become 'one spirit' with Christ, our debts are transferred to him, and his assets are transferred to us."—"Christ, Your Life: Colossians 3:4," in *Devotions on the Greek New Testament: 52 Reflections to Inspire & Instruct*, ed. J. Scott Duvall and Verlyn D. Verbrugge (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2012), pp. 102, 103. Nothing could grant us a deeper sense of belonging than our union with Christ!

Questions

1. **Christ is our life. What does this remarkable statement suggest to us about the kind of relationship we can, and indeed must, have with Christ?**

2. **What does it mean to participate in the life, death, resurrection, and glorification of Christ? How do you participate in these things in your life today?**

Notes