

# Colossians

## New Life: Full and Free

### Introduction

When John was in seminary, many families lived in the apartments on campus. It seemed like an idyllic situation: a whole community of Christian people and Christian friends for the children! But things aren't always as perfect as they seem. One mother told me she saw this scene in her backyard one day. Two children had a death grip on the same toy and as they both yanked at the toy, they shouted at one another, "*Be ye kind!!*"

We all know what the rules are, but following them is often a different story! In this study we will look at the instructions Paul gives to the Christian community about how they should live together.

It may seem contradictory of Paul, having just told the Colossian Christians that they are not bound by human regulations, to now give so many 'rules.' Paul knows that godliness is not attained through certain spiritual rituals or ceremonies, as the false teachers claimed. But he also knows that it does not come automatically; we need to cooperate with the work that God is doing in us. ~D.S.

## New Life, New Lifestyle

### Col. 3:5–4:1

### Observe & Interpret

1. *Read Colossians 3:5-11.* Paul recommends a radical house cleaning! What things does Paul say should never be a part of the Christian's life? What do you think Paul means by expressions like "Put to death..." (v. 5) and "take off your old self" (v. 9)? How can that be done?
2. What does Paul say that Christian community should look like? Paul lists issues that divided the churches of his day. Would you add any categories to his list for modern readers?
3. *Read verses 12-17.* What attitudes should characterize Christians? Paul uses expressions like "clothe yourself with..." and "put on..." phrases that we might associate with insincerity. Do you think Paul is recommending hypocrisy? Explain your answer.



## Study Notes

## Apply

8. Is there an area of your life where you have been able to 'put to death' something that was at odds with your life as a Christian? If you feel comfortable doing so, share a little about how that came about and what resulted from it. Why are some things harder to put to death than others? How can you continue to make progress in other areas?

9. How can knowing that you are "chosen, holy and dearly loved" help you to

- be humble?
- be patient?
- forgive someone who hurt you?
- put up with someone who bothers you?

