

Embracing the “Already But Not Yet”

Colossians 3:8-11

READY

Can you think of examples in which people are given something important but can't use it until later in life?

SET & GO

Primary Text: Colossians 3:8-11 **Supporting Texts:** Romans 12:2

Set 1 *Read Colossians 3:8-11 aloud. Answer the following questions:*

What are the five vices listed in v 8? What vice is also mentioned in v 9?

In v 9, what reason does Paul give for putting these things away?

What does Paul say is happening to your “new self” in v 10?

V 11 lists several kinds of people. What categories or classes are represented here?

Set 2 *Briefly discuss: In v 8 we are commanded to lay aside the practices of the old self; but in v 9, Paul grounds this command in the reality that we have **already** laid aside the old self with its practices. We must realize that we live this life in tension between what God has already done in us and what still remains to be done to us. Though we are “in Christ,” we are still in this body; and that means that we must contend with ongoing sin. If we do not embrace this tension, we will either not expect enough or we will expect too much. The first leads to destruction; the second, to despair.*

Go 2a Look up the five vices in v 8 in a dictionary and discuss. Which do you struggle with most?

Go 2b Why does Paul remind you that your old self has **already** been put off as a motivation for you to put off these things? How would things change if you really believed that your old self has been put off?

Go 2c All of these vices, including v 9, deal with interpersonal relationships. Why is this Paul's focus?

Set 3 *Briefly discuss: In v 10 we are told that we have **already** put on the new self but that this new self is still being renewed according to the image of God. Again there is tension between what has been done and what is yet to be done. We can have great hope for change because we are new people, and yet we cannot expect to achieve all that God desires while still in this body. Notice that this renewal is connected to a growth in true knowledge (cf. Rom. 12:2).*

Go 3a Discuss the reality that you are a new person. Do you believe this to be true? What keeps you from fully believing this? What will happen if you don't really believe this?

Go 3b Do you ever find yourself frustrated with the lack of change? Whom do you usually blame? How will remembering that you are still in need of renewal help you respond rightly when you sin?

Go 3c How does Rom. 12:2 relate to v 10? What does Paul specifically say needs renewal? What is your part in making this happen?

Set 4 *Briefly discuss: You've become a “new person” who is now a part of a new community of “new people.” Within this community Christ is the One who **is** all and **in** all, so the normal distinctions and barriers among us have been removed. Race, religious rites, and rank no longer mean anything. This equality of status, however, does not necessarily result in an equality of treatment, though it should.*

Go 4a Have you thought of yourself as having been made a part of a community of “new people?” What makes this community different from the others you may be a part of (e.g. family, work, associations)?

Go 4b What kinds of external circumstances might tempt you to compare yourself with others?

Go 4c What are some specific ways you can work toward equal treatment of others in our midst?

FINISH

Your mind will be renewed by allowing Scripture to reshape your thinking. Are you taking time to read and meditate upon God's Word? What would need to change for this to become consistent for you?

Walk it Out!
Living Christian in a New Reality
Embracing the “Already But Not Yet”
Colossians 3:8-11

If you don't embrace the “already but not yet” reality of the Christian life, your expectations for change will be dangerously distorted.

1. Embrace the already but not yet of your old _____ .
 - a. The old you has **already** been _____ .
 - b. But you **still need** to put away your old _____ .

2. Embrace the already but not yet of the _____ you.
 - a. The new you has **already** been _____ .
 - b. But you are **still in need** of _____ .

3. Embrace the already but not yet of your new _____ .
 - a. Your **already** belong to a new community of _____ .
 - b. But you **still need** to work for _____ .