

The Dwelling Place

Scripture Reading: Colossians 3:1-17

The spiritual depth of this subject has made it difficult to speak briefly from the previous notes. There are many facets to this diamond. Here is a restatement of the original topic:

Psalm 90:1-2 – God is our “dwelling place” (“Refuge” / “Home”). He is the eternal creator and sustainer of all things. He is ever present and available to every generation (Acts 17:22-29; Matthew 6:24-34). He is the “I AM” – Self-existent. He has no beginning and no end (Exodus 3:14). This is always true, yet man has a problem participating in this reality.

Psalm 90:3,8 – Sin has separated man from knowing and participating in the reality of God (Romans 3:23; 5:12; I Corinthians 2:14). Man is in a state of spiritual death. God calls men to repent, to come back, to return to Him; to truly live (Isaiah 55:6-7; Acts 17:30-31 cp. Psalm 139:1-24; John 3:3; 5:24-25; 6:63; Ephesians 2:1).

Please note that not only is God our dwelling place, but He is willing to make us His dwelling place (The temple and the humble worshipper – Isaiah 57:15; The individual believer – John 14:15-20,23; I Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 8:9; Corporately – the church – I Corinthians 3:9-17; Ephesians 2:11-22; I Peter 2:5).

Proverbs 27:8 – After we have come back to God and experienced His salvation, we must guard against wandering away from Him. We can be like a bird that has wandered from its nest. Our homing device needs to get us back and participate closely with His Spirit, in His word.

That brings us to **Colossians 3:1-17**. Christ brought us back to God and will keep us in fellowship / partnership with Him (John 14:1-6, 15-23; 15:1-11; I Peter 3:18; I John 1:1-7; 5:19-21).

Let us not wander!

Colossians 3:1-2 – We are to seek that which belongs to heavenly fellowship with the Lord.

Colossians 3:3 – We have entered a new life “hidden with Christ in God”.

Colossians 3:4 – Christ has become the center of our new life. We look forward to a glorious appearing of Christ in which we will also be glorified (Philippians 1:21; 3:20-21; Colossians 1:25-29; Romans 8:18; I John 3:2).

Colossians 3:5-8 – Old worldly habits, natural desires and patterns of the flesh can cause us to wander. We are to “mortify” them (i.e. cut the power from them / take the life out of them / don’t give fuel or opportunity for them). We target our “members” (Greek = “limbs”). These are parts of our earthly nature, our physical self. See Matthew 5:29-30 (metaphorical/ethical – not literal/physical); Romans 6:13; 7:23 cp. Romans 6:1-18; 8:9-14; 13:14; Galatians 5:16-18.

Colossians 3:9-17 – The “*put off*” in Colossians 3:8 is equivalent to the “*mortify*” in Colossians 3:5. In Colossians 3:9-10 we see that this activity is based on the fact that, when we came to Christ, we died to self / we put off the old man and gained a new life / we put on Christ and have a new nature (II Corinthians 5:17). The old nature was crucified when we were saved (Galatians 5:24), but we must deal with the residual leftovers of sinful tendencies and weaknesses while living in these bodies (Romans 7:14 – 8:4,23 cp. II Peter 1:2-11). There is maintenance work to be done while we remain in our old fleshly bodies and live in this sin-cursed, demon-filled world.

Let’s consider a few of the areas in which we are encouraged to stay in the environment of our “*nest*” (Proverbs 27:8).

- **Colossians 3:12-15** – Nurturing good relationships with others who are followers of Christ.
- **Colossians 3:16** – Nurturing a love life with the words of Christ. See John 8:30-36; 10:27-30; 15:1-8; Ephesians 5:25-26; II Timothy 3:16-17.
- **Colossians 3:17** – All of our thoughts, words, and deeds are to be dedicated to the honor of Christ and for the purposes of Christ in a spirit of thanksgiving. As we honor Christ, we honor the Father – we honor the triune God. See **Colossians 3:18 – 4:6** (An extended application of Colossians 3:17 cp. Ephesians 3:20-21 – See the extended application in Ephesians 4:1 – 6:20); I Corinthians 10:31-33; Philippians 1:20-21; 4:4-9; I Peter 2:9-11.

Now we repeat the ending of the previous lesson. Each bullet point is a potential study to compliment and fulfill the following questions. In essence, it is you who must bring this lesson to a conclusion.

Are we staying close to Christ? Or (Proverbs 27:8) are we wandering around in life, like a bird wandering from its nest? Is our “homing device” guiding us back to the place of our “first love?”

- **John 8:29-36** – Continue in Christ’s word / the truth that makes you free. (Colossians 3:16).
- **John 15:1-16** – Abide in Christ. Love the brotherhood and be fruitful (cp. **John 17:13-26**).
- **Acts 2:42** – Devote yourselves continually to the apostle’s doctrine, the fellowship / communion of the saints, the prayers. Keep in touch with your “*first love*” (**Revelation 2:2-5; Ephesians 3:14-19**).
- **Colossians 2:6-8; 3:1-17** – Seek Christ-centered thoughts/affections/values. Mortify fleshly passions/impulses. Seek brotherly love and fellowship with God’s children that is based on / centered on Scripture. All is to be done with a humble, submissive, joyful, and thankful heart (Psalm 16:11).