**Reflections 3 - 9 August 2025 – A new focus**

**Bible study on Colossians 3:1-11**

**Begin with an opening prayer**

Lord God,
we come with our love seeking your love afresh.
We come with our questions seeking your guidance.
We come with our certainties seeking your challenge.
We come with our sinfulness seeking your forgiveness.
So come, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and be
whatever you need to be to us today.
**Amen.**

**Read the passage**

*Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.*

 Colossians 3: 1-11

**Living as Those Made Alive in Christ**

**3**Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. **2**Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. **3**For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. **4**When Christ, who is your[[a](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians%203&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29522a)] life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

**5**Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. **6**Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians%203&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29524b)] **7**You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. **8**But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. **9**Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices **10**and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. **11**Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

**Explore and respond to the text**

*Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once, or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.*

**Bible notes**

Paul invites his hearers to look beyond everyday realities to the life hidden with Christ in God. This change of focus takes them into the presence of the risen Christ, seated at God’s right hand (cf Psalm 110:1). They can access this new reality only because they are baptized. They have died with Christ in the symbolic drowning of immersion in the water of baptism. Now, rescued from the water, they share new life with Christ, looking towards God and so seeing the world from Christ’s perspective. They are a new creation (cf 2 Corinthians 5:17), able to inhabit a world where the risen Christ is fully present.

In baptism, they have received the Holy Spirit, the gift of God’s grace. This is what enables them to move on from the sins of the past into new life. Paul reminds them of the new resources available to support them in changing the way they live, so that their focus on the risen Christ makes real differences to their lifestyle. This new life is not yet fully revealed, so Paul’s hearers need support in making life choices as they move on from their Gentile past. The list of sins in verse 5 is similar to that found elsewhere in the New Testament and other writings, suggesting a shared view that Gentiles needed particular encouragement to avoid sins relating to sexuality and idolatry (cf Romans 1:22-25, where sexual immorality is understood as a consequence of idolatry).

A baptized believer’s new identity is centred on Christ. In language paralleled elsewhere in his letters (1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:28), Paul sweeps away the major social divisions of the Roman Empire and makes it clear that nothing matters so much as our new being in Christ. The community of the Church transcends the social divisions of its day to create a transnational family united in Christ.

**Reflection**

*Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.*

The Passport Index ranks the passports of different nationalities by their ‘power’ – the higher the number of countries for which the holder needs a visa, the lower the power of the passport. In light of this, how do we engage with Paul’s description of a renewed community where ethnic or economic identity is secondary to our being in Christ?

New life through baptism is at the centre of Christian identity. What impact does this have on our relationships with other Christians locally and globally? What is there to celebrate about this new focus?

**Questions for reflection**

*You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week’s Bible passage.*

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| A close-up of a plant stem  AI-generated content may be incorrect. |   |

**Questions**

* This image is a microscopic close-up of pine. When has a new focus changed your perspective on a situation?
* Where do you need to change focus in your life right now?
* Is your church focusing on the right things at the moment?

 **A prayer to end the Bible study**

As we go, Lord, please help us to look up,
seeking the things that honour and please you,
letting go of the things that damage us and others,
clothed with Christ-likeness,
to live and work to your praise and glory.
**Amen.**