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## Cultured Olive Branches – A Different Kind of Home (Col 3:12-21)

- A Redeemed Culture #15

**Introduction** – When Christ gets a hold of a household, a household He redeemed, the world is going to see a different kind of home. Your family life, including your children and your relationship with them, is going to look very different than an unbelieving home.

**Some Bible Study First** – “Therefore,” in Col 3:12, requires that we look to see what that word is *there for*.

**Complete in Christ** (2:8-10) - We are not to let anyone cheat us with empty philosophy (empty of Christ) for in Christ, we are complete (2:8-10).

**Died with Christ** (2:20-23) - We are to deny any instructions of holiness-by-regulations and instead find our complete hope in Christ and His death alone for the fullness of our salvation.

**Raised with Christ** (3:1-4) – We are not to seek earth-born remedies when we are in fact heaven-born individuals. Christ’s ascension to heaven is critical to our triumph here on earth and to our final appearance with Him in glory.

**First Therefore: Put to Death/Put Off** (3:5-11) – We are commanded to become in practice what we are in principle, and therefore, those “members” (Calvin called them vices which adhere so closely to us) must be put to death. Filthiness within (anger, wrath, malice) and without (blasphemy, filthy language, lying) must be put off.

**Second Therefore: Put On** (3:12 – 4:1) – Finally, to this paragraph. In like manner, seeking Christ, the heavenly things, and not depending upon self-help methods of denial or Christ-less ethical systems, we who are “*holy and beloved*” (the very “*elect of God*”) are to put on these graces, because we have put on “*the new man*,” that is Christ Himself.

**A Different Kind of Home** (Col 3:12-17) - While these passages need to be applied to all of the Christian life, it is apparent that even Paul has the Christian home in mind as a primary place of application. He is not changing subjects in 3:18 and following; he is applying the subject. In regard to how husbands and wives live here upon this earth in Christ, and in regard to how parents live with their children, Col 3:12-17, with the entire previous context, is crucial. These verses describe how we are to live with one another in the home – a home which has died with Christ and is raised with Christ.

**Tender Mercies** – In the Greek, *splichna*, the deeply felt affections of Christ Jesus (Phil 1:8) for His children. Our homes should imitate the displayed affections that Joseph had upon seeing Benjamin (Gen 43:30) or the relationship of David and Jonathan (1 Sam 18:1).

**Kindness** – This is Spirit-imparted goodness of heart and is the very opposite of the wrath and malice mentioned in v8. The kindness of the Good Samaritan was Jesus’ way of teaching that we are to already have determined to love the very next person in our presence. And in the home, that is usually your mother, your child, your sibling, etc.

**Humility, Meekness** – We, like the Colossians, can easily fall into a feigned humility as some kind of self-wrought virtue (2:18, 23). But true humility and meekness are also the gifts of God alone. Humility lives with an honest and grateful “I am always treated better than I deserve” mindset. Meekness, not weakness or spinelessness, is the Spirit-imparted gift of suffering injury rather than afflicting it.

**Longsuffering** – Towards others, we are to continually treat them lawfully from the heart regardless of how they are acting. Longsuffering is then described in greater detail in the next verse; “*bearing with one another, and forgiving one another...*” We are to see how Christ forgave us in the way we forgive one another (which is to be all the way, all the time, again and again).

**The Capstone: Love** (v14ff) – Love is at the top of the list of the fruit of the Spirit. Love can be understood as overflowing, intelligent and purposeful self-giving. It is overflowing in that it comes from the Spirit working through us. It is intelligent in that it operates from the Law of God (love is the capstone of all the commandments). It is purposeful in that it moves from the heart of man with the intent of edifying others. It is self-giving in that it sacrifices self, following Christ’s example, for the sake of others.

**The Peace of God** – There are many aspects of the peace of God (resting in Christ’s completed work and therefore knowing your sins are forgiven, for instance), however Paul most likely has the social aspect in mind here – peace with one another. This peace rules a believer’s heart – he only wants to act towards his brother in the way that keeps him at peace with God.

**A Rich, Thankful, Indwelling of Christ** – Fellowship that is shared in song, in teaching, in grace from the heart to the Lord – together. God is rarely only interested in your individual heartfelt devotion. He also has the body of Christ corporately in mind.

**And Then** – Wives, husbands, children, and fathers are particularly instructed with this “*Therefore*” in mind. We have considered these commands in great detail in previous messages. With several discussions and questions that have come from those messages, I want to make some applications (some of which overlap other messages) with the entire passage in mind.

**The Elect of God, Holy and Beloved** – Here is where we must always start (every morning) and the application is to your home. Your home, by faith, is addressed as the elect of God, the holy ones, the beloved of God ones. Everything starts there – and it all starts

there by faith, not by sight. You may not base this declaration upon your worthiness, but only upon Christ's righteousness. Remember, "unless the Lord builds the house..." Psalm 127.

**"But we're so far behind..."** – Look carefully at the text. Paul had to address Colossian Christians who struggled with lust and envy, with malice and bitterness, who had not forgiven one another, struggled to realize the power of singing the Psalms – that is why he had to write these things. Some of you think others (like the elders) are so far ahead of you, and frankly, you should repent of such idolizing. Your shepherds are to be examples to you, yes. But they are not to be thought of as super-Christians, and they aren't. In truth, we are all in the process of rebuilding a completely ruined culture. And if someone here is five pieces of rubble ahead of you, what is that but encouragement to you to join in – we have a culture to rebuild.

**Love or Discipline?** – This passage is full of words like love and kindness that, when interpreted with "enlightened" language, means that we should not discipline our children. However, "Fathers, do not provoke your children..." includes not provoking them by hating them, and we know that we hate our children if we do not discipline them promptly, painfully, and with a view to God's work (Heb 12:7-11 and the many Proverbs we looked at – remember?). At the same time, the *splachna* never leaves. In fact, most of us need to change the way we show affection to our children. Loving your kids is like pouring water down a rat-hole. Discipline must never carry with it wrath or malice, ridicule, favoritism, and it must always come in the atmosphere of much, much fellowship, affection, and love.

**Just Start** – Some of you never have family devotions. Just start. Some of you never spank your children. Just start. Some of you rarely hug your children. Just start. Some of you never sing psalms and hymns at home. Just start. Some of you never pray for your children by name. Just start. Some of you men have never read a good book on child-rearing. Just start. See an elder for suggestions, accountability, and help. But do not read this paragraph out of context of the entire message. Actually, never "*just start*"; rather, "*therefore start*."

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