

Victory Over Sin

Colossians 3:1-5 (Part 1)

Colossians 3:1-5 - *“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. ⁵ Put to death, therefore, your members, which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”*

Background Notes

The simplest outline for the letter to the Colossians would be 1) Doctrinal (chapters 1-2), and 2) Practical (chapters 3-4). The first two chapters are primarily doctrinal in nature, and the last two chapters are primarily practical in nature.

The great theme of Colossians is the supremacy of Christ and the all-sufficiency of Christ. In chapter 1 the supremacy of Christ is emphasized. He is supreme over all. As Creator, He is supreme over all creation. As Lord, He is supreme over the Church.

In chapter 2, the all-sufficiency of Christ is emphasized. All that we need is found in Christ. Adding anything else to Christianity would be a distortion of the Christian faith.

In chapter 3, we get real practical! If Jesus Christ is supreme and all-sufficient, how does that work out in my everyday life and experience? How do I, in a very practical way, emphasize in my life that Jesus Christ is supreme and all-sufficient? Colossians 3:1-5 has to do with getting victory over sin in our lives. This is of first importance. If you're going to make Christ supreme and all-sufficient in your life, it is of primary importance to have victory over sin.

Do any of you have a problem with sin? We **all** have problems with sin - and the letter to the Colossians can be very helpful in dealing with sin.

Doctrinal Point

The biblical method of victory over sin is the “RAM” method.

This doesn't mean that you “ram” the Bible down your throat and you'll have victory over sin! “RAM” is an acronym, made up of the first letters of our three points.

R = Realize your position in Christ.

A = Aspire to the things of Heaven.

M = Mortify your members on earth

First of all, we all must acknowledge that we still sin, even as Christians. 1 John 1:8-10 says that if we say, as Christians, that we don't sin, we are deceiving ourselves, the truth is not in us, and we make God a liar. There's no doubt that when we become Christians our sins are forgiven, but that doesn't mean we stop sinning. However, as we grow and mature in Christ, we should sin less and less often. However, the idea that you can get to a place in your Christian life where you no longer sin at all is not taught in the Bible.

So if we're supposed to sin less, how do we get victory over sin? What's the biblical method of victory? Is it through our willpower? No, although willpower comes in when you dedicate your will to the Lord. But if you try to overcome sin in your life just through willpower, it will never happen. It's just like trying to pick yourself off the floor by pulling on your shoes. No matter how hard you pull, you will never be able to pick yourself up.

In the same way, in your own strength with your own will you will never get victory over sin. That is not the biblical method. We've got to avail ourselves of **God's power**.

How do we avail ourselves of God's power? Do we sit back and wait for a great feeling to come over us, and then we are on the way to victory over sin? No! We have to employ the RAM method, that's found in Colossians 3:1-5.

Step One: **Realize your position in Christ.**

Verse 1: *“If you then were raised with Christ.”* That word “if” could be translated “since.” It's not a question – it's a very positive statement of our position in Christ. You **have** been raised with Christ; as Christians, that is our position. *“For you died and your life is hidden in Christ with God”(v3).* Our spiritual position is emphasized here. When God looks at us, He sees us as having been raised with Christ! That's the way He sees us!

This spiritual position was taught back in Colossians 2:13 – “*you, being dead in your trespasses, He has made you alive together with Him.*” The idea of dying and being made alive in Christ - that’s our spiritual position. That’s how God sees us. In other words, when we became Christians, God not only forgave us our sins, but He now sees us **in Christ!** He sees us as having died with Christ, He sees us as having been buried with Christ, and He sees us as having been raised with Christ. (These three points are pictured by believer’s baptism.) Not only that, Ephesians 1 teaches that God sees us as actually ascended with Christ and seated in heavenly places! That’s our spiritual position.

Verses 3 says that “*your life is hidden with Christ in God.*” Besides our spiritual position and way God sees us, our life is hidden with Christ in God. What an amazing statement – but what does that mean? When you became a Christian, you not only received forgiveness of sin - you were **born from above.** We have brand new life!

Remember that the Lord told Nicodemus that he must be born again? 2 Corinthians 5:17 says that a Christian is a **new creation** in Christ. 2 Peter 1:14 says that Christians are partakers of the divine nature. So we have brand new life.

Right now that divine life is hidden. I look around and I don’t see anybody with halos! You can’t see the divine life you have in Christ now - but it will be revealed when Christ comes back and we’re with the Lord. There’s nothing genetically different between you and an unbeliever. But we really do have divine life, even though it’s hidden now. Perhaps right now there are some glimpses – for example, 2 Corinthians 4 talks about Christ being seen in our mortal flesh. But when Christ returns, then it will be obvious.

In any case, we need to realize these truths. There are spiritual realities now. They really are true and we need to realize it. Realization of these truths is the first step to getting victory over sin.

(Steps Two and Three are in our next Talk, Part 2 of Colossians 3:1-5.)

Practical Application

Memorize and practice Romans 6:11 everyday.

Romans 6:11 - “*Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” Memorize and practice that! That’s what Step One in the RAM method is about. We really do have new divine life in Christ. We’re not just pretending that we died with Christ and now we’re alive with Christ. It really is true, and God sees believers that way, and we need to **realize** and internalize that truth.

Illustration: After World War II was over and peace had been declared, some Japanese soldiers continued to hide out on some of the islands in the Pacific - some of them for years! They had never gotten the word that the war was over. They didn't **realize** their position. They thought of themselves as prisoners, because they didn't **realize** they were free!

In the same way, some Christians never really get victory over sin because they don't **realize** what their position in Christ really is. As believers, we don't just have forgiveness of sins; we have new life! Divine power is available, and victory can be gained over sin. But it's not through trying with all your might and willpower to do it. Dedicate your willpower, yes, but follow the biblical method of getting victory over sin. We need to practice Step One: realize, understand and internalize your position in Christ.

This is a great truth to **realize**, that you can have victory over sin. But don't try it in the unbiblical way, by your own strength. Practice the biblical method and the first step is "R" – realize your position in Christ. We will look in Steps Two and Three in our next Talk: aspiring to the things of Heaven, and mortifying (putting to death) your members on earth.