

:00 (1) If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above --- where Christ is --- seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

(5) Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.

(9) Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its Creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free: but Christ is all and in all.

(12) Put on then --- as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved --- compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other. As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

(14) And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

(15) And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

(16) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

(17) And whatever you do --- in word or deed --- do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Think on these things:

- 1) Jesus said that, "...Where your treasure is, that's where your heart will be" (Luke 12:34). In v.1 Paul gives us guidance on what we ought to focus on as Christians. What are we to focus on, and what reason is given to live this way (v.3)?

Focus on? We are to seek and focus on heavenly things.

Reason to live this way? We have died to earthly living now that we are in Christ.

- 2) What event do you think is being referred to in v.4?

Possibly the Rapture. When Christ returns in the air we will rise to meet Him.

- 3) The command in verse 5 makes you an "executioner." Who/what are you to put to death? Also put into your own words the 5 terms provided here.

Put to death... **What is "earthly" in me, my sinful nature.**

5 Terms – **Answers from members may vary. Something along these lines: 1) immorality; 2) my thought life of impurity; 3) my evil drives and desires; 4) my cravings to do wrong things at times; and 5) wanting what others have.**

- 4) V.7 says we all, in some respects, used to live this way --- before we were saved by Jesus. Being “born again” is the only way to change our natures (John 3:3). What does v.6 tell us about how God is affected by people still living like this?

People living sensually, driven by their passions and desires, are the reason why God’s wrath and judgment is coming upon this world of ours.

- 5) Vs. 8-9a add another list of unacceptable attitudes and speech sins. Which of these do you feel you need to work on most (you don’t have to share with anyone, unless you want to)? How does Paul say we need to deal with them in v.8a? Think carefully: can you really put something behind you...?

I want to work on... **Personal answers will vary, and though you may ask for volunteer answers, don’t press it. The Q allows for keeping this answer private.**

How do we deal with these things? **We are to put them away, almost like changing garments. Philippians adds, “Forgetting my past (failures), I press on to reach the ‘upward’ call of God.” God lift me up where I belong...!**

- 6) Consider v.11 with Galatians 3:28. Paul continues to emphasize that common classifications that often divide us are to be done away with. No one in the Church has a special claim on God, and no one is to be treated with less dignity. While in creation and people there is great diversity in God’s world and within Christ’s Body --- the Church --- what is a key characteristic that gives a witness to the world? Consider Ephesians 1:9-10 and 4:1-7, 11-13 and 25.

The key characteristic is when among diversity of people and cultures in the Church, we are unified. Ephesians - It is the unification of believers into one body that Paul declares is the mystery revealed to the world. Believers, walking in the Spirit, are to be patient and fore bearing with one another to unite in peace --- as ONE! Even God’s gifts to the Church are meant to minister to the Body so that we all grow into (measure up to) the fullness of Christ.

NOTE: The reference to “Scythians” is a nod to Greek discrimination problems. Worse than barbarians (in general), the Scythians were considered a violent, uneducated, uncivilized, and inferior people group as contrasted with the Greeks. It paralleled the Jew-Samaritan conflict. The Scythians resided north of the Black Sea, the present-day home for Ukraine and Romania.

Including the Scythians, as well as Jews vs. Greeks, circumcised vs. uncircumcised, slave vs. free, is intended to confront “discrimination” practices within the Church. Each of us should consider who we are challenged to accept in Christ’s Church and then purposely work to understand why we feel this way and work to overcome our hesitations to accept them. There are no distinctions among people in God’s eyes....

People and situations I want to pray for this week: