

Col 3:15-4:1, Imperative to Godliness
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Overview

1. 2:4-4:1 works out the first two themes, chiastically. The Practice sections are marked by imperatives, and also make reference to the believer's Position in subordinate clauses.
 - a) 2:4-8, Practice
 - b) 2:9-15, Position
 - c) 2:16-4:1, Practice

2. Second major Practice section:

	3pimpv	condition
Warn vs. Heresy	2:16-19	2:20-23
Exhort to Godliness	3:15-4:1	3:1-14

3. We have now arrived at the second section of 3p impvs, focused on positive exhortations to godliness.

- a) Each of these leads to second person imperatives:

- 1) 3:15, The Peace of God in us leads to thankfulness.
- 2) 3:16-4:1, Christ the Word in us leads to successful relationships.
- 3) Compare Philippians 4:6-9
 - a> Thanksgiving (6) leads to the peace of God (7).
 - b> Godly living (8-9a) leads to the presence of the God of peace (9b).

- b) Compare these with 2:16-19. There, the emphasis was on external legalism, and the message was, "Don't be subject to the false teachers." But this does not mean we live unconstrained lives, and here we see the source of this constraint: the indwelling presence of the Peace of God and Christ the Word, both issuing in very definite conduct.

- c) The first pair (3:15) is much shorter than the second.

NOT IN SERMON: Notes on overall structure:

- 1) *As proposed here, 3pimpv, 2pimpv, 3pimpv, 2pimpv, which yields a strong imbalance--but at least both the 3pimpv and the 2pimpv are unbalanced, and this flow fits with the parallel section in Eph, where the paired relationships in 5:22-6:9 grow out of the final participle in 5:18-21.*
- 2) *Perhaps the longer 2pimpv is a separate section, to which the previous three are an introduction. Then there are two possible ways to organize the first three:*

- a> *Chiastic about the first 2pimpv*
- b> *ABAB, with B = "be thankful," realized by finite verb in 3:15 and ptc in 3:17.*
- 3) *This would imply two skewed structures:*
 - a> *Alternation in 3pimpv and 2pimpv*
 - 1> *2:16-19, 3pimpv*
 - 2> *2:20-3:14, 2pimpv*
 - a: *2:20, "If ye be dead ..."*
 - b: *3:1, "If ye be risen ..."*
 - 3> *3:15-17, 3pimpv*
 - 4> *3:18-4:1, 2pimpv*
 - b> *Shift from Heresy to Godliness happens at the minor juncture 3:1, not at a major juncture.*
- 4) *Stick with unbalanced for now.*

A. 3:15, The Peace of God brings Thankfulness

1. "The peace of God."
Genitive indicates source; compare the common opening of Paul's epistles, as in Col. 1:2, "Grace and peace, from God the Father and our LJC." cf. Isa. 45:7, "I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these [things]."
2. "To which you are called in one body."
This peace is reserved specifically for God's children. Cf. Rom. 2:6-11 for the psychological consequences of righteousness and wickedness. Even though the wicked may appear prosperous and comfortable, Psalms 73:1-13, yet inwardly they are in terror, Psalms 73:19.
3. "Let [it] rule in your hearts."
 - a) "Rule" is a simpler form of the verb from the earlier 3p impv section, 2:18, "let no man disqualify you." Means "umpire" or "rule." We are not to be without an umpire, but we must submit to the right one.
 - b) Here is the biblical basis for the notion of "having peace over a decision." If we are attuned to the Spirit of God, he can give us subjective peace or disturbance depending on whether our conduct pleases him or not. Let the presence or absence of God's peace be your guide.
4. "Be thankful."
God's direction by means of his peace does not always line up with our natural, carnal desires. In such cases our natural tendency is to complain, which in itself squelches the Spirit. The world says, "Go where you want and ignore your lack of inner peace." The Spirit says, "Follow my peace, and give thanks for where I take you." You cannot generate inner peace if you give priority to your desires. But if you follow the rule of God's peace, you can in faith give thanks for whatever the Lord brings to you.

Compare the parallel in Phil. 4:6-7, the only other occurrence of "peace of God," which also connects it with thanksgiving in the midst of suffering. Background to that verse is in Acts 16, which exactly illustrates the point commanded here.

- a) 6,7,9, the rule of the peace of God.
- b) Brings them to Philippi, where they are imprisoned, 22-24!
Have they misread the will of God?
- c) No, they sing praises at midnight, 25.

B. 3:16-4:1, Christ the Word brings Godliness

1. What does "word of Christ" mean in 3:16? Does the genitive indicate the speaker, the subject matter of the word, or apposition (the word, that is, Christ)?
 - a) This is the only use of "word of Christ" in the NT. Paul's usual expression is "the word of the Lord"
 - b) The verb *enoikew* appears only four other times in the NT; three of these have a divine person (God or the Spirit) as their subject: Rom. 8:11; 2 Cor. 6:16; 2 Tim. 1:14. (The fourth speaks of faith, 2 Tim. 1:5.)
 - c) Two strong parallels in other prison epistles both point to an emphasis on an indwelling Person, not just a Text.
 - 1) Phil. 4:6-9 sets "the God of peace" alongside "the peace of God" in a similar context.
 - 2) Eph. 5:18,19, makes the "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" result from being filled with the Spirit.
Could Paul be thinking of Christ as the Logos here? He does use appositional genitives with *logos* elsewhere (assuming Pauline authorship of Hebrews, which is the other book besides John that has a strong *logos* doctrine, 4:12).
 - d) *NOT IN SERMON--"Word of" (logos) in Paul*
Use of article on "word" and the genitive: either aNarthrous or aRthrous. Thus "NN" means both are anarthrous.
 - 1) *Speaker*
 - a) *God*
 - 1> *Rom 9:6 RR Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect.*
 - 2> *1 Cor 14:36 RR Came the word of God out from you?*
 - 3> *2 Cor 2:17 RR For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: ...*
 - 4> *2 Cor 4:2 RR ... not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; ...*
 - 5> *Col 1:25 Whereof I am made a minister, ... to fulfil the word of God;*
 - 6> *1 Thes 2:13a NR when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ...*
 - 7> *1 Thes 2:13c NN ... but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that*

- believe.
- 8> 1 Tim 4:5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.
- 9> 2 Tim 2:9 ... but the word of God is not bound.
- 10> Tit 2:5 ... that the word of God be not blasphemed.
- 11> Heb 4:12 For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, ...
- 12> Heb 6:5 And have tasted the good word of God, ...
- 13> Heb 11:3 Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, ...
- 14> Heb 13:7 who have spoken unto you the word of God:
...
- b> Lord
- 1> 1 Thes 1:8 RR For from you sounded out the word of the Lord ...
- 2> 1 Thes 4:15 NN For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, ...
- 3> 2 Thes 3:1 RR ... pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have [free] course, ...
- c> Other
- 1> 1 Thes 2:13b NN ye received [it] not [as] the word of men,
- 2) Attributive
- a> Heb 1:3 ... upholding all things by the word of his power,
- 3) Apposition
- a> Rom 9:9 RN (reversed) For this [is] the word of promise,
...
- b> Heb 7:28 RR ... the word of the oath, which was since the law, [maketh] the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.
- c> Heb 13:22 RR And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: ...
- 4) Subject matter, content (s.t. might also be attributive)
- a> Truth
- 1> 2 Cor 6:7 NN By the word of truth, by the power of God,
- 2> Eph 1:13 RR In whom ye also [trusted], after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: ...
- 3> Col 1:5 RR ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;
- 4> 2 Tim 2:15 RR ... rightly dividing the word of truth.
- b> Rom 10:8 RR ... the word of faith, which we preach;
- c> 1 Cor 12:8a NN For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; ...
- d> 1 Cor 12:8b NN ... to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit;
- e> 2 Cor 5:19 RR God ... hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.
- f> Phil 2:16 NN Holding forth the word of life; ...
- g> Heb 5:13 NN For every one that useth milk [is] unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.
- 5) Col 3:16 RR Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly ...

2. Christ is already in every believer, but the exhortation here is to let him dwell there richly, not just as one who rents a bedroom, but giving him full run of the house. Three prepositional phrases with "in" amplify "richly":

a) 16a, Exhortation "in all wisdom"

1) "Teaching and admonishing" recalls "warning and teaching" (same verbs, reversed order) in 1:28. Recall the discussion there of "warning": addressing someone's problem verbally, in order to seek their improvement. "Teaching" is subject to gift, but there is no gift of "admonition"; all can and should do it (Rom. 15:14).

2) There is one qualification: it should be done "in all wisdom." It may not require a specific GIFT, but it definitely requires the GRACE of spiritual wisdom.

3) Means: "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs." We don't need to have a face-off to do this. Appropriate selection of music (say, at the Lord's Supper) can be wonderful encouragement and exhortation to our brethren.

a> Psalms: the OT psalms. It is because we desire to be obedient to this exhortation that we include Psalms in our blue binder. Greatly overlooked in the church at large.

b> Hymns: praise to God. Not all of the songs in our hymnal are "hymns" in this sense, nor even all of the psalms. In our hymnal, for example, 102 and 212 are, but not 213 (which focuses on the church, not God), nor 29, 31, 284 (personal resolve or testimony), nor 32, 138, 195, 289 (exhortation to other people) nor 38, 148, 149, 150 (request and supplication). It's important to be conscious of what we sing, and in particular to use the various classes of songs appropriately.

1> "Hymn" appears in titles of Pss. 6, 54, 55, 61, 67, 76, translating "neginoth," for which it is the dominant translation in the Psalms (2x NGN is translated "psalmos"). It is in the part of the title that (following Thirtle) should be associated with the previous Psalm, and in most cases the previous Psalm is clearly one of praise.

c> Spiritual songs: The broadest category of all. Includes the various sorts of song that are neither praise to God nor included in the inspired Psalter, thus can include songs of testimony, exhortation, and supplication as well as worship.

b) 16b, Heart Singing "in grace"

- 1) Three qualifications to guide our singing:
 - a> "in grace" probably expresses the qualification for the song: not a beautiful voice, nor musical training, but God's grace. "Singing by means of grace."
 - 1> *en xariti* 2 Cor. 1:12 "by grace"; 8:7,19 (arthrous); 2 Tim. 2:1 (arth.)
 - b> "in your hearts," sincerely. Don't sing lies! Pay attention to what you are singing.
 - c> "to God." Again places the emphasis on the need for a worshipful attitude.
 - 2) Progression beyond the first statement:
 - a> Grace is greater than wisdom.
 - b> Singing to God is greater than admonishing one another.
- c) 17, Working "in the name of the Lord Jesus"
- 1) "Whatever you do." Demolishes the notion of a distinctive group of people in "full-time Christian service." God requires that EVERY believer serve him full-time. Whether it's preaching on the street corner or taking out the garbage, if you do it as here specified, it is a fragrant offering to God; and if you do not, it is worthless to him.
 - 2) "in the name of the Lord Jesus."
 - a> Basic meaning from 1 Sam. 25:5-9; 1 Kings 21:8, to act on the behalf and authority of another.
 - b> Examples:
 - 1> Priests minister in the name of the Lord, as representing him before the people, Deut 18:5,7; 21:5
 - 2> Prophets speak in the name of the Lord, as though it were he speaking, Deut 18:20,22; 1 Kings 22:16; Ezra 5:1
 - 3> Kings fight holy wars in the name of the Lord, as his army, Ps 118:10-12
 - 4> The LJC enters Jerusalem as the Lord's representstive, Ps 118:20-26 and gospel citations.
 - 5> Prayer in the LJC's name, as though he were asking, John 14:13-14, etc.
 - c> Application here: Paul exhorts us to do everything as though Christ were doing it, recognizing that we are members of his body and that it is no longer we who live, but he who lives in us (Gal 2:20-21). If Christ wouldn't do it, neither should we; what we do in his name, is important to him. And the exhortation covers all of our deeds, not just "Christian work."
 - 3) "giving thanks ... by him." Two lessons:

- a> All of our deeds are to be accompanied by thankfulness. "In everything give thanks." If we are living as Christ's representatives and conscious of the Father's sovereign care for us, our lives should breathe a constant prayer of thanksgiving.
- b> Our thanks are to be "through him," that is, the LJC; compare Rom. 1:8, "I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all." The parallel in Eph. 5:20 speaks of "giving thanks ... in the name of our LJC." It is not difficult for us to understand that our *requests* should be in the Lord Jesus' name; but here we understand that even our *thanks* are unacceptable to God unless they are mediated through the merits of our Savior. Prov. 15:8; 21:7; "the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord." We are accepted in, and ONLY in, the Beloved, Eph. 1:6.

3. 3:18-4:1, Paired Categories

The closest parallel is in Eph 5-6, with the same three categories. Compare also, 1 Tim 5-6, which treats four categories: Elder women (widows), younger women (widows), elder men (elders in the church), younger men (servants).

a) 3:18-19, Spouses

The parallel in Eph 5 shows that we are concerned here with husband and wife, not with a general exhortation for women to be subject to men.

Note that each member has a particular besetting sin against which the apostle warns:

- 1) 18, Wives are tempted to Independence. It is fitting in the Lord for wives to submit to their husbands. As citizens to governments (Rom. 13:1) and servants to masters (1 Pet 2:18), thus a true submission; but at the same time, Christ was this to his parents (Luke 2:51), thus the point is one of administrative order, not any inferiority.
- 2) 19, Husbands are tempted to be bitter against their wives. The noun appears in Eph. 4:31, at the beginning of a linearized version of Col. 3:8, in place of "malice." It is a tragic characteristic of the fallen nature that "familiarity breeds contempt," and Paul knows that without the intervention of God's Spirit it is easy for a man to become bitter against the weaknesses of his wife--easy, but wrong.

b) 3:20-21, Parents and Children

1) 20, Children

This command illustrates the double direction implicit in all of these: our conduct toward someone is to be regulated

by our attitude toward someone else. Obey parents, not because it is well pleasing to them, but because it is well pleasing to the Lord. Gives an immediate answer to objections based on the unworthiness of the person we are asked to submit to or love. The worldling bases his attitude toward his fellow on that fellow's character and worthiness. The believer bases is on the Lord's request and our devotion to him.

2) 21, Parents

- a> Both Col and Eph focus on the Fathers. Mothers have an essential role to play, but the Scriptures place special emphasis on the Father's responsibility.
- b> The particular responsibility is not to provoke unto discouragement. This is not to deny the importance of discipline (Heb. 12), but there is always a danger that the parent may use his superior power in a way that leaves the child feeling there is no possible way to please, no avenue of success, and thus leads her to give up. We need to teach our children not only that sin is wrong, but also that in God's strength they can do right.

c) Masters and Slaves

Five verses are devoted to this pair, in contrast with only two verses for each of the others. The unbalance probably anticipates possible problems resulting from the return of Onesimus.

1) 3:22-24, Slaves

- a> What things are governed by this injunction? "All things." They are still slaves, and must serve the slave's role, even though in Christ there is neither slave nor free.
- b> How should they do them? Eyeservice vs. singleness of heart (23 "heartily). The believer should never be known for "a lick and a promise" or sweeping the dirt under the rug. Our work should be solid, thorough, done right rather than the easy way.
- c> Whom do we serve? Not the master, but Christ. Dave doesn't really work for Ford, nor I for ITI. Ford and ITI are merely the channels through which the Lord provides for us. We serve him. A human master or bureaucracy could be fooled into satisfaction with substandard or slovenly work. God who knows all things cannot.
- d> Why do we work? Not just for our wages, but (24) for "the reward of the inheritance." The stakes are far greater than just a monthly paycheck. Cf. Rom. 2:6-10; and recall the warning against being disqualified from

our reward in 2:18.

2) 4:1, Masters

(Skip 3:25 for the moment.)

Masters are not absolute. They must one day answer to the Lord for how they have treated the slaves entrusted to them. Paul here specifically addresses what the masters give or furnish to the slaves; their wages, which are to be just (before God) and equal (in comparison with one another).

3) To which group does 3:25 belong?

a> Parallel in Eph. 6:9 suggests that the warning is for the masters. They are the ones whose "persons" seem most worthy of "respect," and the verb "do wrong" frequently has the special sense of "injure," which seems more appropriate for what masters do to slaves than the other way around. Eph. makes clear that masters are to pay heed to this. But then why did Paul put it here in an ambiguous position in front of the address to the masters?

b> The return of Onesimus in favor after his conversion might raise hopes among believing slaves of another kind of "respect of persons," the notion that a child of God can with impunity do things for which unbelievers will one day be judged. Moving the exhortation into an ambiguous position guards against this misunderstanding. Both parties should understand that the prohibition against wrongdoing is "without respect of persons," whether with regard to social standing (the masters) or spiritual condition (believing slaves).

c> What is the warning? "He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done." God's harvest law, cf. Gal. 6:7-8.

Analysis

A. 3:15a, 3p impv: The Peace of God

kai\ h(ei)rh/nh tou^ qeou brabeue/tw e)n tai^s kardi/ais u(mw^n,
1. ei)s h(\n kai\ e)klh/qhte e)n e(ni\ sw/mati:

B. 3:15b, 2p impv

kai\ eu)xa/ristoi gi/nesqe.

C. 3:16-17, 3p impv: The Word of Christ

o(lo/gos tou^ Xristou^ e)noikei/tw e)n u(mi^n plousi/ws,
three prepositional phrases with "in":

1. e)n pa/sh| sofi/a| dida/skontes kai\ nougetou^ntes e(autou\s
yalmoi^s, u(/mnois, w)|dai^s pneumatikai^s

2. e)n [th^|] xa/riti a)/|dontes e)n tai^s kardi/ais u(mw^n tw^|
qew^|:

3. 3:17 kai\ pa^n o(/ ti e)a\n poih^te e)n lo/gw| h)\ e)n e)/rgw|,
 pa/nta e)n o)no/mati kuri/ou)Ihsou^,
 a) eu)xaristou^ntes tw^| qew^| kai patri\ di' au)tou^.

D. 3:18-4:1, 2p impv: Paired Categories

1. Spouses

- a) 3:18 Ai(gunai^kes, u(pota/ssesqe toi^s a)ndra/sin,
 1) w(s a)nh^ken e)n kuri/w|.
 b) 3:19 Oi(a)/ndres,
 1) a)gapa^te ta\s gunai^kas
 2) kai\ mh\ pikrai/nesqe pro\s au)ta/s.

2. Parents and Children

- a) 3:20 Ta\ te/kna, u(pakou/ete toi^s goneu^sin kata\ pa/nta,
 1) tou^to ga\r eu)a/resto/n e)stin e)n kuri/w|.
 b) 3:21 Oi(pate/res, mh\ e)reqi/zete ta\ te/kna u(mw^n,
 1) i(/na mh\ a)qumw^sin.

3. Masters and Slaves

- a) 3:22 Oi(dou^loi,
 1) u(pakou/ete kata\ pa/nta toi^s kata\ sa/rka kuri/ois,
 a> mh\ e)n o)fqalmodouli/ais w(s a)nqrwpa/reskoi,
 b> a)ll' e)n a(plo/thti kardi/as, fobou/menoi to\n qeon.
 2) 3:23 kai pan o(\ ti e)a\n poih^te, e)k yuxh^s e)rga/zesqe,
 w(s tw^| kuri/w| kai\ ou)k a)nqrw/pois,
 a> 3:24 ei)do/tes o(/ti a)po\ kuri/ou lh/myesqe th\n
 a)ntapo/dosin th^s klhronomi/as.
 1> tw^| gar kuri/w| Xristw^| douleu/ete:
 b) Masters: grounds p
 1) 3:25, Grounds
Parallel in Eph, use of _de_, and general sense of _adikew_ as "injure" rather than just "do wrong," suggest that this verse goes with the Masters rather than with the Slaves, but see discussion in text.
 a> 3:25 o(de a)dikw^n komiei^tai o(\ h)di/khsen,
 b> kai\ ou)k e)/stin proswpolhmyi/a.
 2) 4:1, Text
 Oi(ku/rioi, to\ di/kaion kai\ th\n i)so/thta toi^s dou/lois pare/xesqe,
 a> ei)do/tes o(/ti kai\ u(mei^s e)/xete ku/rion e)n ou)ranw^|.