

canceled the unfavorable record of our debts with its binding rules and did away with it completely by nailing it to the cross. **15** And on that cross Christ freed himself from the power of the spiritual rulers and authorities; he made a public spectacle of them by leading them as captives in his victory procession.

16 So let no one make rules about what you eat or drink or about holy days or the New Moon Festival or the Sabbath. **17** All such things are only a shadow of things in the future; the reality is Christ. **18** Do not allow yourselves to be condemned by anyone who claims to be superior because of special visions and who insists on false humility and the worship of angels. For no reason at all, such people are all puffed up by their human way of thinking **19** and have stopped holding on to Christ, who is the head of the body. Under Christ's control the whole body is nourished and held together by its joints and ligaments, and it grows as God wants it to grow.

Dying and Living with Christ

20 You have died with Christ and are set free from the ruling spirits of the universe. Why, then, do you live as though you belonged to this world? Why do you obey such rules as **21** "Don't handle this," "Don't taste that," "Don't touch the other"? **22** All these refer to things which become useless once they are used; they are only human rules and teachings. **23** Of course such rules appear to be based on wisdom in their forced worship of angels, and false humility, and severe treatment of the body; but they have no real value in controlling physical passions.

3 **1** You have been raised to life with Christ, so set your hearts on the things that are in heaven, where Christ sits on his throne at the right side of God. **2** Keep your minds fixed on things there, not on things here on earth. **3** For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. **4** Your real life is Christ and when he appears, then you too will appear with him and share his glory!

The Old Life and the New

5 You must put to death, then, the earthly desires at work in you, such as sexual immorality, indecency, lust, evil passions, and greed (for greed is a form of idolatry). **6** Because of such things God's anger will come upon those who do not obey him. **7** At one time you yourselves used to live according to such desires, when your life was dominated by them.

8 But now you must get rid of all these things: anger, passion, and hateful feelings. No insults or obscene talk must ever come from your lips. **9** Do not lie to one another, for you have put off the old self with its habits **10** and have put on the new self. This is the new being which God, its Creator, is constantly renewing in his own image, in order to bring you to a full knowledge of himself. **11** As a result, there is no longer any distinction between Gentiles and Jews, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarians, savages, slaves, and free, but Christ is all, Christ is in all.

12 You are the people of God; he loved you and chose you for his own. So then, you must clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. **13** Be tolerant with one another and forgive one



another whenever any of you has a complaint against someone else. You must forgive one another just as the Lord has forgiven you. **14** And to all these qualities add love, which binds all things together in perfect unity. **15** The peace that Christ gives is to guide you in the decisions you make; for it is to this peace that God has called you together in the one body. And be thankful. **16** Christ's message in all its richness must live in your hearts. Teach and instruct one another with all wisdom. Sing psalms, hymns, and sacred songs; sing to God with thanksgiving in your hearts. **17** Everything you do or say, then, should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks through him to God the Father.

Personal Relations in the New Life

18 Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, for that is what you should do as Christians.

19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

20 Children, it is your Christian duty to obey your parents always, for that is what pleases God.

21 Parents, do not irritate your children, or they will become discouraged.

22 Slaves, obey your human masters in all things, not only when they are watching you because you want to gain their approval; but do it with a sincere heart because of your reverence for the Lord. **23** Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as though you were working for the Lord and not for people. **24** Remember that the Lord will give you as a reward what he has kept for his people. For Christ is the real Master you serve.

25 And all wrongdoers will be repaid for the wrong things they do, because God judges everyone by the same standard.

4 **1** Masters, be fair and just in the way you treat your slaves. Remember that you too have a Master in heaven.

Instructions

2 Be persistent in prayer, and keep alert as you pray, giving thanks to God. **3** At the same time pray also for us, so that God will give us a good opportunity to preach his message about the secret of Christ. For that is why I am now in prison. **4** Pray, then, that I may speak, as I should, in such a way as to make it clear.

5 Be wise in the way you act toward those who are not believers, making good use of every opportunity you have. **6** Your speech should always be pleasant and interesting, and you should know how to give the right answer to everyone.

Final Greetings

7 Our dear friend Tychicus, who is a faithful worker and fellow servant in the Lord's work, will give you all the news about me. **8** That is why I am sending him to you, in order to cheer you up by telling you how all of us are getting along. **9** With him goes Onesimus, that dear and faithful friend, who belongs to your group. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

10 Aristarchus, who is in prison with me, sends you greetings, and so does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have already received instructions to welcome Mark if he comes your way.)

11 Joshua, also called Justus, sends greetings too. These three are the only

Thank God for All He Has Done for You



Colossians 3:15-17 (For the full story, read Colossians 3:12-17.)

15 The peace that Christ gives is to guide you in the **decisions** you make; for it is to this peace that God has called you together in the one body. And be thankful. **16** Christ's message in all its richness must live in your hearts. Teach and instruct one another with all wisdom. Sing psalms, hymns, and sacred songs; sing to God with thanksgiving in your hearts. **17** Everything you do or say, then, should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks through him to God the Father.

decision choice



Understand It!

This Bible passage tells us that it's important to let people know that we are grateful for what they do for us. How much more important it is to thank God! He has given us everything. He made the world for us and all the wonderful plants and animals in it. He gave us life so that we could think and love. Best of all, God gave us his Son, Jesus. Because of Jesus, we can live forever in Heaven.

During the day we can say, "Thank you, God" whenever something good happens. We can say, "Thank you, God" before and after we eat the food he gave us. The greatest way we can give God thanks for all his gifts is by attending Mass. At Mass we thank God especially for Jesus and all he did for us.

Live It!

We show we are grateful for gifts by taking care of them. Do something to take care of one of God's gifts to you. Here are some ideas: Take your dog for a walk. Water the flowers at your house. Pick up litter. Teach your younger brother or sister something. Help your mom or dad in the kitchen. Remember to say, "Thank you, God!"

Tell It!



1



2



3

Using the pictures above, retell this reading in your own words.

