



Living for the Lord Jesus

Colossians 3:17

October 11, 2026

Open your Bibles to Colossians chapter 3 this morning, Colossians chapter 3, and we're going to focus our attention on verse 17, Colossians 3:17, where Paul summarizes everything in the grand design for our lives, grand design for your life and for my life.

He summarizes it all in a single verse, Colossians 3:17. He writes this, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

That verse encapsulates and sets forth a paradigm for living life. This paradigm for living life is comprehensively broad. In our study of it, you'll see it's deep, penetratingly deep; and it's also infinitely high, lofty in purpose and in its practice.



For what greater goal is there to aim for? What greater purpose is there to live for? Some live for money, and I wouldn't say they live for the love of green paper or gold and silver rocks, plastic cards, Bitcoin, whatever form it takes today. They love not what money is, but what it symbolizes to them, what it can do for them.

Money provides the liberating sense of the pursuit of pleasure. Money can be intoxicating in the wielding of power and influence. Money opens doors for people, gives access to the great and the powerful people of the world. Money provides comfort in the safety and the security that it provides or at least promises, mitigating against disaster.

The Bible says, "Do not weary yourself to gain wealth," Proverbs 23:4. "It certainly makes itself wings like an eagle that flies to the heavens." So don't chase money.

In fact, there's an even more devious purpose afoot in the love of money. James says that riches rot. The clothing bought by money becomes food for the moths. In the end, the gold and the silver itself rusts.

So those who trust in their wealth will discover, and they'll discover way too late, on the last day, that their

riches were going to betray them. Their riches are going to stand on the side of the prosecution and accuse and testify against those who love riches. Don't live for money.

Others live for family, family harmony, family unity, family peace, family, family, family, right? They focus on the family. They do whatever it takes to keep family members happy, satisfied, keep coming to the table even if it means compromising righteousness, even if it means betraying others, betraying what is true and right and good.

The Bible is very clear about trusting in man, in flesh, even in the men and the women of family, blood. Jesus makes it very clear that focus on the family is a false religious paradigm when it comes to faithfulness. And he had the same problem in his own day, and he addressed it.

He promised us that faithfulness would mean deciding between himself and family in many cases. He said in Matthew 10:34, "'I didn't come to bring peace. I came to bring a sword, and I came to set family members against one another.'" Family members will oppose each other, dividing over the truth. "'A man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'"

I know many of you have experienced that. Lest we mistake Jesus' meaning, he describes the choice between himself and commitment to himself and commitment to family. He describes it in clear, unmistakable terms. He says, "'He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. He who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.'"

Tough words to swallow, but Christ demands absolute loyalty, the deepest fidelity. And the more we know him, the more we see him clearly in Scripture, the more we realize there's a reason for that: because he is most glorious. Anybody who will not line up with him deserves to be set aside, passed by, passed over, even if it's family.

There are many today who are willing to forego wealth. They're even willing to separate from their families in order to live their lives for something else, to live lives of significance in this world, to be part of something great, to become part of something bigger than themselves. Could be military campaigns, plenty of those going around. It could be political or cultural movements, some sort of activism.

We should really reflect on our recent history in the world, Nazi Germany, Soviet Union. Anybody who tries to find meaning in this world, find significance in great social,

cultural, political movements of this age, ideologies, he's not only going to be disappointed in the end, but that end can become a bloody nightmare, a scourge in the pages of human history, a lesson that we don't ever want to see repeated.

Got to be careful about that, too, don't we? Those who want to find significance in what seems to be great in our age, in any age, the great movements, the great people, the great ideologies, even at the highest levels of politics and military service, must remember what God Most High has said in his Word about nations and kings.

Isaiah 40 verse 15, "Behold, nations are like a drop in a bucket. They're regarded as a speck of dust on the scales." Nations are like that. Empires are like that to God. God delivers up nations. He says in Isaiah 41:2, "He subdues kings. He turns them into dust with his sword. They're like wind-driven chaff as he turns them into wind-driven chaff with his bow."

Take all those vain ambitions and empty pursuits which many people live for, money, family, finding significance in something great, and now join all those worldly, fleshly ambitions to religion, Christian religion, evangelical religion, and you have a very powerful elixir, a deceptive, cunning, subtle, and damning delusion.

There are many today, and I think this hits close to home, far too close, I'm afraid, there are many today who have dipped their idolatrous desires into the liquid to form up from the evangelical faith, reformed faith, even, a coated idol, an idol coated with evangelicalism, Christianity, reformed faith.

It's just a veneer. It's just, it's just on the surface. Jesus would call it the hypocrisy of a mask. Hiding behind it is the pursuit of idolatry. And they are under the illusion that all is well with their souls, doing great things for God, building great movements, erecting big monuments, building big buildings, measuring success in numbers, following voices of apparent influence.

All these pursuits of money, family, significance become baptized in the waters of religion. And when that happens, it only thickens the veil that's over the eyes and darkens the vision, obfuscates motives, it obscures true godliness, and in the end, it desecrates holiness and leads to damnation.

In Jesus' day, those who lived thusly, those who lived for such things were called Sadducees and Pharisees. They had educated, scholarly scribes on their sides. They were bankrolled by the wealthy and the influential families of the city and the nation. Money, family, significance: all those worldly motives



were hidden behind a religious mask, draped in the shining robes of an apparent but fraudulent righteousness.

Where do the spirits of the Sadducees and the spirits of the Pharisees hide out and haunt today, I wonder. I look in the mirror and have to ask myself that question. And I think it's a good question for all of us to ask at all times.

I'm not here to confess some form of hypocrisy, okay? I'm not saying that. I'm just saying we must check ourselves. We must look at the pages of Scripture and recognize that could happen here, too. It could happen in our time, and in fact it is happening in our time. We should warn ourselves. We should ask God to examine us and search our hearts and know our thoughts, "see if there'd be any wicked way in us." Abandon it.

The only pursuit with lasting value is the pursuit of God, who is the everlasting God, Yahweh, the Eternal One. Knowing him, trusting him, believing him, obeying him, that's all that matters. Your pleasures, your pastimes, you're frittering away your time. You're frittering away your stewardship. Don't live for this world. Don't live for its pleasures, its pursuits, its vanities, its distractions. It is a lie.

Paul had the same thing in his day. And he tells the Colossians there is only one name to live for, only one purpose that matters, only one source of eternal significance, and only one will be accomplished. He says, "So whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

To live for this purpose, to pursue this goal, you must put to death and mortify in yourself all forms of covetousness and idolatry, and you must, all fleshly desire and ambition has to go, and you must plead with God to make it so, to show you what you have not abandoned.

You have to rid yourself of all the accompanying sins. You see the one list to mortify in Colossians 3:5, all the accompanying sins that cover over or are revealed from a heart like that in Colossians 3 verses 8 and 9.

All that stuff's got to go, and you must instead outfit yourself with Christian graces and virtues, which are the fruit of the Spirit, which are the result of the ministry of the Word in your life.

You must pursue what others in this world, even religious others in this world, even professing Christian others in this

world will disregard as unimportant or demean or assume that they have it in spades, even as they live like the rest of the world does and are no different than their non-Christian moral neighbors.

You have to put on, Colossians 3:12 says, "hearts of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, gentleness, patience." These are the things that the world around us disregards, but God notices, God sees.

You must work, verse 13 says, to be forbearing, that is, to overlook offenses; to be forgiving, that is to let it go when you're offended, when you're hurt, when someone does something unjust to you, when someone speaks slanderously of you. You have to have a forgiving heart and be ready and willing to forgive when they come and ask, every time they ask.

And above all, verse 14 says we're to put on love. We're to put on love. It's a love that we do not have naturally on our own. It comes from God. Love comes from God. It's defined by God. It's demonstrated by God. And if we compare any worldly love, any love of family, and love of all those other lesser loves, we compare and contrast them by what the Bible teaches about love, we understand how far short we fall.

We're to put on love, and it's a divine love. It's a love demonstrated in Christ, and that love is the perfect bond of unity. In other words, offenses against you do not matter because what matters to you is unity and harmony and affectionate love shown toward fellow sinners, especially those who are redeemed. You realize that that which so many today disregard, they're the highest value, they're the greatest worth.

Having put off and put on, you must partake regularly, deeply, sincerely of these ministries of Christ found in Colossians 3:15, 3:16. First, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts," and then, second, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."

For it's by these special ministries of Christ that you see, and you see most clearly, those things that are of greatest and lasting value in life. Things like reconciliation with the Father, peace that Christ won for you, to live that out and to live in it and let it rule you and rule your heart.

And then by the message of Scripture that culminates in Christ, that proclaims Christ, broadcasts Christ, teaches about Christ, illumines Christ; by this clarity that you learn by the

wisdom of the Spirit what really matters in life. So you set your sight on the great aim in your life.

What is that great aim? By the wisdom of the Spirit, by the teaching of the Word, my prayer for you today is that you will see this great aim in life, which is to live for him, to live for his name.

That is the great aim here in the verse. It's what culminates this section. It's what Paul uses to summarize this section, to bring everything together in one salient, concise, clear thought and expression. It's to live for him, to live for his name. So it behooves us to understand what that is, right?

In this one verse, we're going to consider several things this morning that encompass what it means to live for Christ. We'll talk about four things: the scope, the height, the heart, the sphere.

We're going to expand on those terms, too, adding the words extensivity and sublimity and felicity and secularity, not just so I can show off my alliteration, but so I can further elucidate what it means to live for Christ, what it means to live for his name.

So first, number one, let's talk about the scope. What's the scope, here? Or you could write down, the scope: the extensity of living for Christ. The extensity.

What is the extent or the scope of living for Christ? How far does this aim and purpose go? It's comprehensive, utterly comprehensive, and as I said earlier, deeply penetrating because it concerns everything, in word, in deed, everything that comes forth from the heart, everything you want, desire, pursue, live for, all your pastimes, ambitions, what you do passively, what you do actively, everything in word or deed; that is, whatever comes out of the heart.

So when Paul says, "Whatever you do in word or deed," he is putting the entirety of our lives in view. That's under the scope. He's talking about the full spectrum, a massive scale, not only of what we say and do, but also deeper, what we think, what we want, what we pursue.

The combination, here, in the original of these relative terms, kind of heightens the indefiniteness; and by making it less definite, he's abstracting it to broaden it. The mood of the verb, it's a subjunctive mood. It kind of embraces the broadest of potentiality that keeps the scope of this as wide, as far, as extensive as possible. So it's like he's saying this,

And whatever it is, if some one of you, if any one of you should probably, possibly, even potentially do anything, speak anything, accomplish anything.

We also need to see in this verb that Paul directs our attention, here, to understand this using the tense of the verb. He's using the subjunctive mood, keeping the thought as broad as possible. He's also using the present tense or the present aspect, which is talking about a kind of action.

And the kind of action he's talking about is ongoing action, daily action, habitual action, how you continually live. It's the stuff of life, regular habit of life. Paul's not interested simply in our contemplation about acting or doing or behaving. He's interested in that, of course. He has an eye on future actions as well, but he is more concerned to draw our focus to our present behavior.

So it's always worth asking the question, Right now, right now, what am I thinking? What am I living for? How am I speaking? What am I doing? Think about it: whatever you're doing, whatever you may be doing or engaged in or planning on doing.

Notice further, it's not merely the outward extensivity of the scope, but inwardly, he's talking about kind of an intensiveness here. What we are saying, what we are doing, that it all comes from the heart, because the product of our lives, the fruit that we bear, the things that we say and do, these things come from the heart, which is what makes our thoughts manifest. Our intentions, our plans, our purposes and ambitions and aims are known to everybody else by what we say, by what we do, how we live.

Jesus said in Luke 6:45, "The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what's good, and the evil man likewise; he brings forth from the evil treasure, brings forth what is evil." His mouth speaks from what, that which fills his heart. So we get this principle: Words are the outflow of the heart. Actions make the intentions, ambitions, desires of the heart manifest, known.

In other words, everything, whatever you do in word or deed, it comes from your heart. It makes manifest what's in your heart, whether that's good or whether that's bad. What comes out, then, is what comes to characterize you either as good in character or bad in character, worthless in character, useless in character. Each tree is known by its fruit.

By God's grace, those of us who are in Christ because of the work of the Word in our lives, because of the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, because God miraculously grants us a new nature, giving us a whole new way of thinking, new lives, new desires, new ambitions, new ways we want to spend time, what we want to do with our life, the stewardship that we want to offer unto him, all that comes by the work of the Word and the Spirit in our lives, right?

We become known, then, as good trees bearing good fruit. It happens over the course of our lives, and for many, as will become clear at the judgment seat, when Jesus says to the wicked and the goats on his left, "'You never came to me in prison. You never, you know, fed me, you never clothed me, never gave me something to drink.'" And they said, 'Well, when did we see you like that?'"

But to the sheep, he says the same thing, he says, but opposite. He says, "'You, you came and visited me when I was in prison. When I was sick, you comforted me, healed me. You, you offered me a cup of cold water. You fed me.'" And the godly, too, the sheep, they say, Really? "'When did we do that?'"

He sees, he knows. Sometimes it's imperceptibly that fruit is growing in us who are his. And inasmuch as he makes that

fruit known to us and lets us see and lets others commend and appreciate and give thanks to God for what he's producing in us that benefits and blesses others, it's as the Word of Christ that dwells richly in us, this becomes increasingly true of us that we're fruitful Christians, and for which we give thanks.

The fruit of our lives is what we say, what we do, how we live and all that, whether common or uncommon, whether ordinary or extraordinary, whether routine or mundane on the one hand, or spontaneous and remarkable on the other.

And we have to just admit that most of our lives: ordinary, routine, mundane, not truly remarkable, uncommon. Moms doing loads of laundry, wiping noses, changing diapers, running errands, running kids to and from school, serving families.

So much, apparently, to the outside world, so much unnoticed work that the women of the world scorn women who live like that and for that, and try to pressure them into doing something, actually something with themselves other than being wives and moms. As if that's a low goal.

But moms know this. Wives know this. There's so much that you do for others, but only God sees, and so much that you do from your heart, and only God knows your heart. Whether you do

those tasks with a complaining, grumbling heart, or whether you do them with joy because you serve the Lord, God knows. God sees. He's helping you to grow, to have the right heart in the right work, and the right work in the right heart.

Dads, also, in their daily work, conducting their business, signing the contract, solving problems, conducting reviews, fixing things, building things, managing people, so much that they do and how they do it, known by God and God alone. Also for them, as we're going to see later in the passage, also for them, doing what they do with the right heart, the right attitude, working as unto the Lord and not unto men.

Kids and young people attending classes, hearing teachers, reading books, learning subjects, doing homework, completing assignments, taking tests, and then home to practice piano, go to sports practice, do chores, care for pets, help with dinners, do dishes, whatever it is that kids are doing at home, that, too, often the stuff of the mundane, the routine, the common, but can be done nobly, as under the Lord.

Older people, empty-nesters, retirees taking care of home, property, they can visit friends, family to minister to them, to minister to others. They've got time to, in between doctor



appointments, to give of themselves and give of time and money and energy.

They can invest in tomorrow's generations, serve those in need, make the most of every opportunity to invest just one more time in that stewardship of their lives and their experience and their counsel and their wealth. They know that when they hit the grave, all that stuff is gone. So they need to use it well, now, while they've got a mind to do so.

So whether at home or at work or in school or out of school or at church ministering, serving, teaching, learning, admonishing one another with all wisdom, singing with gratitude in our hearts to God in psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, caring for facilities and property during the week, visiting those who are in sick or in need; or whether you do it out there or whether it's alone times, whatever it is you do, whether on the Internet, consuming some form of media, reading some form of media like a book or a Bible daily, quieting the soul for daily times of prayer, giving of thanks, making of requests, petitioning God, pleading with God, the scope of living for Christ is extensive.

It's utterly comprehensive. It's an outward-facing thing, but it's also inward-looking, because it's concerned not just

about the output of the heart, but also the intentions and the thoughts and the motives and the ambitions. All those things coming from the heart result in the words that we speak, the things that we do, the things that we plan, and all of that is that by which we're known.

What Paul wants us to understand, these matters of our daily lives, many of which seem to us to be mundane, routine, common, ordinary; when we live for Christ, our words and our deeds reach up to sublime heights of importance.

Second point, the height, number two, the height, the sublimity of living for Christ. The sublimity of living for Christ. And this is the next phrase, here. Paul says, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." "In the name of the Lord Jesus."

Now we all should and do pray in Jesus' name, right? We often say "in Jesus' name, amen." We before eating meals, we give thanks for food and we thank God in Jesus' name. We pray to God the Father in the name of Jesus Christ, and we do it by the will of the Holy Spirit, in step with the Holy Spirit.

Because the Spirit would glorify Jesus Christ to us, and Jesus Christ would take us to the father. Every time we pray, we

ought to be thinking about that. Every time you give thanks for a meal, every time you put your kids to bed, you ought to be thinking about what it is you're doing when you're praying.

Because if you do it thoughtlessly and mindlessly, you're no better than the Gentiles, who repeat meaningless phrases. Even if they're phrases that actually have in and of themselves meaning, if you do it in a meaningless way, it's meaningless to you. So be cognizant of the prayers you pray because we're to be praying in Jesus' name.

And I do wonder, not only in our prayers, but do we consciously, intentionally, thoughtfully, do we do all that we do, and whatever we do, whether in word or deed, do we really do all in the name of the Lord Jesus?

I would venture to guess that if we're all going to be honest, here, we're going to have to answer that with a hard, no. All that we do, whatever we do? You got me there. By using such universal terminology, you got me, pastor. But it's not me getting you. It's the Scripture, right? I'm just, I'm just the messenger. But do we do whatever we do, are we thoughtful about that, intentional, conscious about that?

I think sometimes the failure to do all that we do in his name is because it's a failure to kind of understand even what this means, "do it in the name of Jesus." We just kind of flippantly say those things, repeat that phraseology and terminology without really reflecting on it. And that's what Paul is allowing us to do, here. That's what we're going to use our time today, for us to reflect on this.

So it kind of boils down to this: How aware are you of the great and magnificent purpose of your life, that your life is not about you doing you and making the most of it right now, living your best life now. It's not about that. It's not about checking off everything on your bucket list. It's not about, he who dies the most toys wins. It's not about living for pleasure and entertainment. It's, it's not about any of that.

So what is it about? We need to understand that. And then we need to ask, how complicit are you? How cooperative are you with the father and the Spirit in this great endeavor to glorify the son? Or how complicit are you and how cooperative and how much do you partner with the son by the Spirit to join in glorifying God? Because that is the great and chief end of man, to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

Such an amazing charge, here, from the Apostle Paul because he has done this by the direct authorization of the Holy Spirit, who is the divine author of Scripture, working through Paul. But Paul has clearly modified what is here an extremely familiar phrase, because all the saints of all the ages past before Paul spoke of, in the name of the Lord.

You can find that, in the name of the Lord, all through the Old Testament. In Hebrew, the language of the Old Testament, in the name of the Lord, that's the divine name. So it's, in the name of the Lord is literally, in the name of Yahweh.

As early as Genesis 4:26, after the tragedy of Cain killing his brother Abel, then the banishment of Cain, then God gave Adam and Eve another child and they named him Seth. It means gift from God, and the text says that "at that time men began to call upon the name of the Lord." Literally, "They began to call upon the name of Yahweh." Under Seth and in his line, he taught his family to worship, to live for the name of Yahweh.

Ever since then, all the way through the Old Testament, nearly a hundred times, the name of the Lord referred to God, the Lord God whose name is Yahweh, and the name is all that characterized him.

After the resurrection of Jesus, after his ascension to heaven, after the coming of the Holy Spirit to indwell his people in the New Testament church, there's a new name appended to that expression, the name of the Lord. It's the name Jesus appended to the expression, the name of the Lord.

Acts 8:16, new converts were baptized "in the name of the Lord Jesus." Ephesian converts, Acts 19 verse 5, "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." When the power of that name became known in the casting out of demons, Acts 19:17 says, "Fear fell upon all," a deep, deep reverence, and even in the unbelieving, a craven fear of the power of this name, "and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified."

Early Christians saw the change in the adding of Jesus to in the name of the Lord, in that expression, not as a blasphemous thing, as all the Christ-rejecting Jews saw it. The early Christians saw this as a most proper, fitting amendment to that original formula, that original expression.

To add the name Jesus to that formula, in the name of the Lord, it really honors the one whom God chose to send to save us, Jesus Christ. Paul tells the Corinthians, "Therefore, you were washed and you were sanctified and you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Paul makes use of the same expression here in Colossians 3:17, and again, he does it in a most fitting way because he's addressing the particular error of the false teaching, as we've discussed, the false teaching that infiltrated the ranks of the Colossian church.

The false teachers had entered in and were trying to draw people away from this church and away to their own movement. They were saying, Jesus Christ isn't sufficient. Jesus Christ, he's good, no, he's good. He's great, great for you. He's a good mediator. He's just, he's just a lesser mediator. He's one among many mediators. He could even be the greatest among the many mediators. But his work does require the assistance of some other divine figures, some other mediators, to get the fullness of God, the *pleroma* of God.

So it is with divine sanction that Paul writes, here, with the imprimatur of God himself, and by the inspiration and authority of the Holy Spirit, that Paul adds the personal name Jesus to that original, in the name of the Lord, in the name of Yahweh. And by doing that, he made it a most proper, fitting saying: in the name of the Lord Jesus.

I recently spoke with a man who mistakenly thought that the concept of the Trinity is kind of a doctrinal error that's crept

into Christian teaching, and that God is one, strictly one, and that he's just really known throughout the sweep of history, kind of by three names, or manifest in three different modes. here's the mode of the Father; then the mode of the Son, which is Jesus; and the mode of the Spirit.

He was a little fuzzier on the third one, but he even quoted back to me a very common illustration, an erroneous illustration, but he used this illustration to explain his view to me. He said the Father, the Son, the Spirit is like the three different forms or modes of water.

You ever heard this? It could be in the form of liquid, solid, solid ice, or invisible vapor. Liquid water, solid water is ice, vapor is water, steam, same substance, he said, three different modes of being.

If you grew up as I did, in an evangelical youth group, especially from the 1970s through the 1990s, you probably heard that same illustration used to explain the Trinity. God's like water. He's like H₂O. There's a solid and a liquid and a gas.

That man perceptively realized, Oh, so you mean modalism? God's just in three different modes. That illustration is totally wrong. It does illustrate modalism, or what was

originally called Sabellianism, after its first teacher Sabellius, condemned in the third century and then formally condemned at the councils of Nicaea, 325, and Constantinople in 381. Ancient heresy, ancient misunderstanding.

Other illustrations: The Trinity is an egg, so its visible outer shell, inner shell of golden yoke, invisible egg white surrounds everything. That's wrong, too, because that's illustrating tritheism, three different things, not Trinity.

Or the Trinity is a three-leafed clover. You got a branch which, you know, rises to three different leaves: leaves one thing, but three. No, that's partialism, each leaf making up part of the united whole. That's not how God is either.

It's so important to clarify some of these doctrinal errors and confusions because they prevail today, don't they? And this man I talked to was no scholar. He wasn't trying to influence me or evangelize me as a member of a cult. Just a common guy, and really neat guy, nice guy, willing to listen to my correction.

So by adding Jesus to the original, in the name of the Lord formula, Paul is not asserting, here, that God is not taking the mode of or appearing in the form of Jesus. That's not what he's saying. He is, on the one hand, he is clearly asserting a divine

identity for Jesus, that he is none other than the Yahweh of old.

So it's not blasphemous at all, but rather entirely fitting, most appropriate, most pleasing in fact, to pray in the name of, and in fact to do everything in the name of Yahweh Jesus.

But on the other hand, notice that Paul is quick to add right after this, very next phrase, "giving thanks to God the Father through him." Two persons of the Trinity, here, clearly differentiated and distinguished, but one in essence and united in purpose.

Tuck this verse away for the next time you have that encounter with a cultist, whether a Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, or one that's Pentecostal, that teaches a false view of the Trinity as well, people like T. D. Jakes and his ilk, or any other ignorant, uninformed person who doesn't understand, and how all these bad teachings and bad analogies have filtered and permeated into the culture. People just think like this now. We've got to teach them basic teachings about the Trinity.

As interesting, though, as this verse is for its apologetic value, the main point, here, is to connect the first phrase to



the second phrase so that we come to recognize everything we do, whatever we do, word or deed, reaches the sublime heights of an eternal value in the name of the Lord Jesus.

So what does it mean to do, speak, or act in his name? The name of a person, as I mentioned before, it is the symbol of one's character. It speaks to one's essential nature or his disposition, his aims, his purposes, his intentions. It kind of just summarizes his life.

You can think of any person in your life and you just say their name, or someone says their name to you, you don't actually picture a name; you picture a person, a face, you, you remember a character, you remember deeds, you remember conversations, good and bad.

So when we do or speak or act in the name of Yahweh, in the name of the Lord Jesus, we are doing, speaking, acting with his character in mind, with his aims, his purposes, his intentions in view in our hearts.

So that is to say, his will becomes our will. We aim at achieving his ends, not our own selfish ends. We live in the pursuit of pleasing him with our thoughts and our words and our

actions, not pleasing ourselves, chasing Christ-less ambitions, doing meaningless things.

Not only that, but when his will becomes our will, when we aim at his ends and pursue his purposes, we're also concerned about doing his will in his way, to conduct ourselves consciously, thoughtfully, according to his character, so that we think, speak, and act as though we represent him, because we do.

So how can we be sure we're representing him well, accurately, according to his name and character and will? Well, this is why Colossians 3:16 comes before 3:17. We know that what his name represents, the unmitigated glory, the unparalleled clarity, the unrivaled beauty, the unequalled supremacy, we talked about that last time, when we "let the Word of Christ dwell richly within us," we know when with all wisdom we are teaching and admonishing one another so that we grow and learn and mature, all that is in his name.

Living for Christ means we live in such a way, thinking, speaking, behaving in such a way that we can be confident from all that we know from Scripture, all that we're learning from Scripture, all that God has revealed about his Christ, we can be

confident in our Lord Jesus when he considers our thoughts, speech, actions.

He would say, Yeah, that one represents me. That one speaks for me. This one acts, lives in keeping with my purposes. He does it according to my character. He does all that he does in my name.

So what does this name, Jesus, represent? Well, it's all in the name, isn't it? "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." When we unpack that further, in the name of the Lord, again, we see this as the name of Yahweh. What does, the name of Jesus, mean? It's the Greek version of the old Joshua, Yeshua, which means, Yahweh saves. Yahweh saves.

So to "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" is to "do all in the name of Yahweh," comma, Yahweh saves. That's how we live. We're to be his evangelists. We're to be proclaiming salvation from God in him and him alone.

Amazing thought, isn't it, that to act in his name, it sanctifies every activity, every thought, every word, every deed, sacred or secular, holy or profane, common and uncommon, routine or out of the ordinary, mundane or remarkable. Nothing

is wasted. Everything turns into an act of worshipful, believing obedience that we get to tell others about him.

Paul said the same thing using different language in his letter to the Romans. He said, "I urge you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, you present your bodies as a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship."

So you use your bodies, your eyes, ears, mouth, hands, feet, brain, brawn, thoughts, imaginations, ambitions, all of it, use those as instruments God gave you of righteousness, to serve God and to serve these interests.

This is the sublimity of living for Christ, that everything in your life becomes an opportunity to please him, to do his will, serve his purposes, to invest in eternity. And you do that by proclaiming God's salvation. And it's a salvation that is in the name of Jesus and in his name alone. "There is no other name under heaven by which men must be saved."

Living life for Christ now elevates everything you do, everything you say, everything you think, everything you plan, imagine, want, desire, all of it. It elevates it to this sublime

act of worship to him and leading others into worship of him. So cool, isn't it?

We've seen the comprehensive scope, the sublime height of living for Christ. Third, let's see the heart, the heart, which is the felicity of living for Christ. The heart is happy living for Christ.

In our soul, at the core of our being, is a deep and ever-deepening heart of joy, contentment, satisfaction; and all that comes out in a spirit of gratitude. "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

All the things that people live for on this earth, chase after, I mentioned money, family, significant great things, when you aim for those things, you lose everything. When you aim for living for Christ, the wealth of heaven is open to you. The family of God is your family, and that is an abiding family that lives forever.

We talk about greatness, significance, purpose, meaning. Is there anything more meaningful than what God is doing on this earth, in his eternal decree and you being a part of it, and you

eternally living with him and enjoying him forever? Is there anything better?

The chief act, then, of a felicitous heart, a happy, cheerful, joyful heart, which is the heart of all who truly live for Christ, the chief and defining act of that heart is a heart of thanksgiving, giving thanks, not grumbling, complaining, not whining, not asserting your own preferences, not putting forth your own will. It's thanksgiving.

A heart of thanksgiving represents a perfect contentment, an abiding peace, total satisfaction, serenity, so that Paul could honestly say, Look, I don't care if I have everything or nothing. I have Christ. I'm happy. He could be rotting in a jail, as often he was, singing psalms, hymns, spiritual songs of praise to God.

You want to live an untroubled, safe, secure, happy, peaceful, contented, harmonious and happy life? Live it for Christ.

Those who live for the aims and the pursuits I mentioned at the start, money and all that money can buy, comfort of friends and family, significance of involvement in great things, social, political, cultural movements; and even worse, to blend all

those kind of fleshly desires with religion; especially offensive to God, I think, has to be blending it with evangelical religion, Christian religion, reformed faith.

People who live their lives in the service of lesser gods are betrayed by false promises. They become disillusioned and bitterly so. They become resentful. They've sacrificed all that really matters to gain what they can't keep, to invest their life's labor, pouring it into buckets that have holes in the bottom. It all leaks out.

And the dominant attitude of such a heart is complaining and critical-spirited, bitter, resentful, rehearsing grievances, all the injustices and offenses. Such a heart is discontented, always ill at ease, unsatisfied. It always has, looming out in front of it and fears the certain coming judgment just ahead. They know not when, but it is coming, and it is certain when that soul will give its account to God.

On the other hand, the soul in which the peace of Christ rules and reigns, in which the Word of Christ illumines, teaches, admonishes, brings wisdom to see the glory of Christ with crystal clarity, to gaze upon the beauty of Christ in his unequal place of supremacy, that soul is most blessed, contented, satisfied, and joyful.

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Being well-taught, instructed in the ways of divine wisdom, that person knows, he, she knows, old, young, that person knows that Christ came for the purpose of reconciling us to God the Father. And how our souls need reconciliation!

That person knows that this entire plan of creation and redemption is for the purpose of glorifying the triune God. That's what we're made for, to bring him glory and praise. That's why we bear his image. You think it's for own sakes? Yes. I mean, there's a reciprocal benefit, I should say, of that. But when we reflect his glory, we reflect it to others, we bring glory and honor to him. It's the greatest thing to live for. It brings all praise and honor and glory to God the father who did all this, planned on this, decreed all this, and he did it in the name of Jesus.

So we give thanks then to God the father, who is our great and our eternal reward. Through Jesus Christ, we give him thanks, and we do so in his most glorious, most blessed name.

We've learned from this verse what it means to live for Christ, consider the scope, the height, the heart. The scope is extensive and intensive; it's comprehensive and deep. The sublime height of living for Christ, everything in our life takes on a significance, has meaning in him. When we live for

Christ, all grumbling, complaining is banished from our hearts, shoved out, cast out by this, a radical joy.

Now we see that the role of this verse, Colossians 3:16, is now so tremendously important because Paul uses this verse to pivot from the abstract to the concrete, from the conceptual to the practical, from this more abstract teaching on sanctification that is really the stuff of every individual believing heart, now to the concrete and the practical application of that sanctification in the rest of the chapter here in real life.

So this brings us to a fourth and final point: the sphere, the sphere, the secularity of living for Christ, the secularity of living for Christ. And if you're having trouble writing down that word *secularity* because you are, you know, kind of squeamish, and it kind of, react against it, don't be scared off by the word *secular*. I don't mean by it, obviously, godless, anti-Christian, anything of the sort. That's not how I'm using it.

The word *secular* comes from the Latin word *seculum*, which means age or era or generation or lifetime. The concept of this has to do with that which pertains to the temporal world, or the

stuff of daily life, the stuff of the age, the stuff of your life.

This is the sphere in which we live our lives for Christ, in which that sanctified life is manifest in our secular living; in the home, first; then in the workplace; and then in the ministry of the gospel.

We start in verses 18 to 21 with the sphere of the home, where we live for Christ and the stuff of daily life. I love this because the immediate beneficiaries of this new life dwelling in us and enriching us and maturing us and bearing fruit in us, those who ought to benefit most are those who are closest to us, those who are nearest to us in relationship.

Shouldn't they be the beneficiaries of our Christ-centered, thankful heart? Shouldn't they receive the forgiveness and the forbearance and the love and the affection, gentleness, patience and all the rest? Absolutely, they should.

Out of the local church, which Paul is kind of describing, here in verses 12 through 17, the work of the church and how that works inside the church, and then emerging, then, out of the formative in the shaping and culturating sphere of the home, marriage and family, we move to the public, into the workplace,

the stuff of daily life that takes place in our business endeavors, in our work, we find through, in Colossians 3:22 and all the way through the first verse of chapter 4.

And remember, all of this done in the name of the Lord Jesus according to his will, according to his character, by the dictates of his purposes, for his good pleasure, proclaiming God's salvation in the home, in the workplace, out in public, in the marketplace.

This is what we're about. This is what it is to live for Christ in the concrete practical realities of the sphere of our daily lives. Again, we're here working as unto the Lord, doing his will in his way, and we do it in the workplace.

Whether slave or master, whether employee or employer, our chief concern is the glory of God, which means we do what we do in Christ's name, which means we glorify God's redemption in Christ.

And when we do his work this way, God will open up opportunities to us. He'll open doors. He'll help us to see the opportune time to make most of that opportunity to speak a word for Christ, to lead others to salvation in Christ. So we need to

be on the lookout, prayerfully looking, watching, waiting, looking for those opportunities.

And that's really what we see if you, I'll just all read this, verse 2 of chapter 4 through verse 6. This is the mentality we're to have. "Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful in it," again, "with thanksgiving, praying at the same time for us as well," Paul says, "that God will open up to us a door for the word, that we may speak the mystery of Christ, for which I've also been bound, that I may make it manifest in the way I ought to speak."

So you guys, as you pray for me, then be, if you're going to pray that for me, pray it for yourselves. "Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, redeeming the time. Let your words always be with grace, seasoned with salt," that is, "so that you will know how you should answer each person." That's how we live for Christ.

We've got a lot of good stuff coming up in the text before us, but I pray to God that everything we cover as we go through the role of wives and husbands, parents and children, employers, employees, Christians in the workplace, Christians in the world, Christians out and about, that you will filter all of it through the grid and through the prism of Colossians 3:17, so that

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"whatever you do in word or in deed, that you do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," in "the name of Yahweh, Yahweh saves," that your life is a testimony to that changed life that God produces in Christ, that you demonstrate salvation, you speak about salvation, it is your love to speak and proclaim his name, and you give thanks to God the Father through him. Let's pray.

Our Father, we thank you so much for this great salvation, that we here who know you, who have been radically saved and changed by your amazing grace, we do pray that you would help us to live more fervently, consistently with this great charge of the Apostle Paul, that you would help us to make it our aim, whether we're at home or away, to be pleasing to him.

We love you, Father. We thank you for the salvation of Christ. We thank you for the opportunity to live a little bit longer on this earth, not for ourselves, but for you who's called us with a holy calling. It's in Jesus' name that we do pray. Amen.