

3:5-17 (Part 1) Discussion Questions

Discussion Questions

Read 3:5-17

1. Paul opens us this week with “Put to death therefore . . .” Take some time to quickly review last week’s passage (3:1-4) and its main idea.

a. The fact that Paul uses the word “therefore” means that what he is saying now is connected in some way and follows from what he previously said. What was the main idea of 3:1-4?

b. How does Paul’s instruction in this passage, and specifically in v. 5, relate to what he said in v. 3:1-4? The key phrase to focus on is “put to death what is earthly.”

2. Paul follows his initial imperative (“put to death what is earthly in you . . .”) with a list of vices that illustrates the kinds of things that Christians are supposed to put to death.

a. Take a look at the first five listed in v. 5. The first term refers to any kind of sexual sin. The second term means moral corruption in general, but often specifically to sexual moral corruption. The third refers to selfish sexual desire. “Evil desires” is a general category of the desire that lies behind our sin, especially sexual sins. The word translated “greed” or “covetousness” refers to an inappropriate desire for more. What is the connection between all of these?

b. What is idolatry? Why does Paul say that this inappropriate desire for more is idolatry? What does this teach us about one of the main roots of our sin?

c. How have you seen this play out in your life?

d. What does this teach us about how we should address our sin?

3. V. 6 says that these things are reason why the wrath of God is coming. What is the wrath of God?

a. If God is perfect then why does He get so angry?

4. In v. 8 Paul provides another list. The first three terms all pretty much have the same meaning and are often used together to refer to an attitude of anger and ill will towards others. The last two refer to defamatory speech towards others and obscene and coarse language.

a. What do these things have in common?

b. Clearly, the way we speak to and about others is a measure of the degree of anger in our hearts. What attitudes and beliefs lie behind our sinful anger?

c. How does the gospel address our anger?

5. Paul concludes and actually summarizes his vice list with the admonition: "Do not lie to one another." For Paul lying is not ultimately about misleading people with false statements, but is much bigger than that. It is about denying the truth, which is represented by God himself (cf. Romans 1:25). In other words, lying is basically living in a manner that denies or rejects sovereignty, wisdom and goodness of God: it is saying that God is not worth trusting and obeying.

a. What reason does Paul give us in this passage for not lying about God by living a sinful lifestyle?

6. In v. 10 Paul says that our "new self is being renewed . . ." If we are new already then why would we need to be renewed?

7. What is the goal of God's renewing work? What is he transforming us into? (See v. 10b).

a. Where else in Colossians have we seen Paul talk about the image of God? Who is *the* image of God? (See 1:15)

8. What does v. 11 have to do with the image of God? Why would Paul talk about the fact that we are all one in Christ right after talking about the image of God?

a. Consider these two important facts:

(1) In Gen 1:26-27 when it talks about man being made in the image of God, God speaks about himself in the plural ("us"). Also, He speaks of mankind in both the singular and plural ("him" and "them").

(2) The church is often called the body of Christ in the NT. (E.g. Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:12, 27; Eph 4:12).

b. What does all of this reveal about the importance of community?