

# Colossians -Jan 2014 Class

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, thank you for being here this morning, and welcome to our January class. We are continuing our exposition of Colossians, and I want to emphasize once again that I would prefer that these be more conversational rather than just lecture.

But so many of you, I think, once we get underway, you just kind of forget about that, and you just kind of sit and listen without any comebacks. So I want to assure you that your comebacks are more than welcome.

Don't feel that you are interrupting me because I think there is something to be said for a conversational-type study, and I would not be the least bit put off by any interruption or questions or comments that you may have, and I hope that you would feel free to raise them.

Good morning, John. Good morning. Glad you made it. The doctor gave you a reprieve? Yeah. Okay. Took some of my precious blood, though. Oh, yeah. Yeah. Well, that goes with the territory, you know.

We only do these things to stay alive. Yeah. And you may need this. May not. I don't know. But we are in Colossians chapter 3. And dealing with an issue that on the surface isn't very controversial, but once you look under the surface and start asking some pertinent questions, it becomes very controversial and sometimes problematic because what the apostle is doing here is drawing upon and acknowledging the volition that God gives to each one of us.

[ 1 : 37 ] And I think that is something that we really tend to lose sight of. And I just want to elaborate on that a little bit before we get underway. And that is there is no question all throughout Scripture from Genesis to Revelation that our Lord is a sovereign God.

He does work all things after the counsel of his own goodwill. He really is in charge. He does that which pleases him. At the same time, and this is the other side of that scale that we try to balance, God has given us mere mortals and angels the power of volition.

And I think sometimes we tend to lose sight of that. In an effort to emphasize the sovereignty of God, we would almost take man out of the mix and say that it's all under God's sovereignty, period. As if man had nothing to do with it. And yet, at the same time, the Scriptures make it very clear, equally from Genesis to Revelation, that we are responsible for our actions.

And I cannot escape the idea that God can hold us responsible for our actions without having given us the ability to make choices.

[ 3 : 00 ] And he has. That's where our accountability comes in. Because we do have this thing called a will. And God allows us the free exercise of our will.

There have been a number of times in Scripture, and frankly, I don't have any off the top of my head, but if you can think of one, you feel free to offer it, because I'm sure they're out there. It just didn't occur to me now. I'm speaking off the top of my head, which is always dangerous. But I am satisfied that there are times when God, in his sovereignty, countermans human will. He overrides some of our choices. But these appear to me to be rare instances. I think most of the time, God respects the volition that he has given us by allowing us the free exercise thereof. And with that exercise, there are always consequences, because we live in a cause-and-effect world. And we are responsible for the choices that we make, and we have great latitude in making those choices.

[ 4 : 16 ] But we don't have any latitude in determining what the consequences are going to be, because once we make a choice, certain dynamics are set in motion as a cause-and-effect thing, and that's the way it's going to be.

So I say all that to say that we've got a kind of conflict here, if you can call it that, where Colossians 3, by way of conclusion, the Apostle Paul is saying, Mortify therefore your members which are upon

the earth.

And Marie and I were talking about this word just this morning. And to mortify literally means to make dead.

And she was looking up some things in the dictionary, and it referred to mortify. The synonym is embarrassed.

Now that's a curious expression, embarrassed. And mortify is related to the word mortician, which has to do, of course, with death. And what Paul is saying is, make dead, or put to death therefore.

[ 5 : 27 ] Goodspeed says, treat is dead. Williams says, so once for all, put to death. Rhames-Douet says, make dead therefore. And it's all related to this word mortify.

And to be mortified. Have you ever heard anyone say, such and such a thing happened, and I was absolutely mortified. What they meant was, I could have died. Because of the embarrassment associated with it.

So what Paul is saying here, and all of these terms are tied together, what he is saying here is, make dead, which essentially means, make inoperative.

So it isn't working. And the therefore, of course, is connected with that which went before. So verse 5 is actually a remark of conclusion, based upon what he has said.

And if we could go back to verse 1, let me just read the verses. We've talked about verse 1, which better would be translated, since or because.

[ 6 : 31 ] Since or because you are risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sits on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Why should we do that? Because you are dead. This is the mortification of that old nature, and it means to render inoperative.

It doesn't mean, and this is the way some of our holiness friends translate it, it doesn't mean to make dead so as not to be able to function anymore.

And that's the way some translate it, and that's where the holiness movement comes from. This leads to the idea of entire sanctification, or you might call it, what's the other term?

Perfectionism in this life. The eradication of the old nature. And if the old nature is eradicated, then of course it has no base of operation, and that means if you have eradicated your old nature, you cannot sin any longer.

[ 7 : 41 ] You cannot displease the Lord, because you don't have the capacity to do that. But if you tie this in with the Romans 6 passage, where he's talking about the same principle, he is talking about not making dead so that it is no longer able to function, but make dead in the sense that it is separated from the Spirit.

It means that we have, by virtue of the grace of God and the Spirit of God that dwells in us, we have in this new nature an ability to overcome the old nature.

And perhaps the best way we could illustrate this is that the old nature is there, and it will be there until your flesh, your physical body, dies.

That's the depository of that old nature, and then it will be put to death too. In the meanwhile, the old nature seeks to dominate and control, and this is reflected in the Romans 7 passage, where Paul talks about his own testimony, saying the things I want to do, I don't do, and the things I don't want to do, I do do.

He is simply recounting the fact that this old nature exists. And what actually takes place is, when Christ comes in, and we possess the new nature, the old nature is not eradicated, but it is still very active, and wants to control our lives.

[ 9 : 15 ] However, the new nature is able to overcome the old nature, and what is it that gives it the ability to do that?

Here we come back to the volition thing again. Now what I'm suggesting, and I'm posing this merely as a Wiseman theory, and I don't have a chapter or verse for it, but I don't know how else to interpret this, and what I'm saying is, is that our volition, our ability to do this or that, right or wrong, remains intact.

I'm taking the position that our volition, our will, is in a state of neutrality. That means it can go this way or that way.

Now, I hadn't intended to get into this, but I think I'm going to have to, because I can't complete this whole thought without it. And let me just pose this. Bear with me for a little while, while I detour from this, but this is important background stuff.

What I'm saying is this. When God created our first parents, we know one of the things he gave them was a will, a power and an ability to obey him or disobey him.

[10:42] They were not made robots or automatons. They were created free moral agents. And we know they exercised that will contrary to God's will.

And they took upon them a nature that God didn't put in them when he created them. And we call that the sin nature. Well, what happened when they took this new nature upon them?

What happened to the will that he gave them? What happened to the volition that he gave them? The power to make right and wrong choices. What happened to that? My only conclusion is nothing.

It remained intact so that they could go on either obeying or disobeying. and even after God made provision for them and what is symbolized with the animal skins and the animals having had been killed in order to provide their skins for covering, et cetera, and all of this is tied in with atonement and forgiveness, et cetera.

Nonetheless, that volition did not change. And I think it is this volition. Now, I know this is absolute anathema to our Calvinist friends, but that volition that remained intact after the fall is the same volition that you used when you made a decision to trust Jesus Christ as your Savior.

[12:18] And prior to the positive decision that you made with that volition, you probably made some negative decisions before because most people reject the gospel upon their first hearing and it isn't until repeated exposure usually that they come around.

All the while, your volition is intact. Now, I suppose our Calvinist friends would say that the volition falls with man when he fell, therefore, his will is under bondage and Luther wrote that work on the bondage of the will and that man cannot, he does not have the ability to make right choices.

That's the Calvinist position. And because of that, no man would be saved or could be saved, so God has to take the full initiative and God has to overpower your will that would reject and make you so that you will accept and believe the gospel.

I've preached that, taught that for several years as you all know and I just no longer can sustain it and I don't. So, I see the will as being, and I don't know what else to call this, but I see the will as in some state of neutrality capable of going either way both before and after your salvation.

And beyond that, I can't explain it further although I'm certainly open to suggestions and looking for answers. So, what I am saying is when Paul gives this command here and it is in the imperative in verse 5 of chapter 3, we are to mortify our members which are upon the earth.

[14:11] I suggest that he is saying this is what is expected of us, this is what is required of us, and you can do this.

But the implication also is you can not do this if you choose. And you know something? Most Christians do not choose to do this.

And it is reflected in the kind of life they live. if every believer in Jesus Christ followed this instruction, I think we would make such a significant impact upon our culture the difference would be noticed overnight.

But we have all too many believers who are walking in the flesh. And that is self-seeking and self-serving. This is in concert with walking in the spirit.

So make dead your members which are upon the earth. And what are your members? The members are identified back in Romans 6. Members are the things you use to sin with. Your eyes, your ears, pornography, the eyes, deeds of unrighteousness with our hands, places where we ought not to be or go with our feet.

[15:36] Those are our members. members. And Paul is here saying, mortify, make dead your members which are upon the earth. And they are spelled out in these kind of activities, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, etc.

And all of these things which is idolatry. For these things' sake, the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience. But listen, you are children of disobedience.

What are you doing dabbling in these things? This is what he's saying. You have no right to live that way anymore. For which things' sake, the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience, in the which you also walked sometime when you lived in them.

That's what you used to be. But you don't have any excuse for doing that now. Well, how can you rise above that? And although Paul doesn't say it, if I were reading in the white spaces here, I would say, listen, you have a will.

You don't have to do that stuff. And we talked earlier about exercising the will. Remember the illustration I gave? I think I probably gave it here, about the gun and the power?

[16:55] And the way this works is, as best as I understand it, and I'd be the first to admit, my understanding is definitely deficient. I don't have any questions about that. But I do know that the power to do these things, and the power to be what we are called upon to be, is not our power.

It's God's power. It's the power of the Spirit. It is the power that is in concert with walking in the Spirit, as opposed to walking in the flesh. And if we walk in the Spirit, then we will produce the fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, gentleness, meekness, etc. That's what the Spirit produces. And if we are walking in the Spirit, that's what we'll produce. If we're walking in the flesh, then we will produce the works of the flesh, even as a Christian. But now, being in Christ, we have no justification whatever for doing that.

We can't say, oh, I am so weak. I just don't have the willpower. Well, we are supposed to have the willpower because God has given us a will. And let me, with that illustration again, make this really clear.

The will to do these things is based upon your volition. The power that allows you to do these things is not your will and not your power.

[18:20] It is God's power. I think this is what Paul meant when he said in Galatians 2 and 20, in a verse that you're all familiar with. I am crucified with Christ.

Nevertheless, I live. Yet, not I, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh or now live in this body, I live by the faithfulness of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. So, how these things work in concert, I think, is really, really important. And when I say that the will is yours, but the power is God, I'm coming back again to that neutrality and the ability of the will and the power that is unleashed when we use our will to unleash it.

And what I am saying, and I realize this may really sound bizarre, but I am confident that God is committed to working in concert, partnering with man.

God will provide the power if we give him, and again, I'm going to use a term that sounds kind of bizarre.

[19:46] God will apply the power if we give him the go-ahead, permission. And the first time I had that thought, I was ready to dismiss it because it sounds so bizarre.

We all know that God does not need our permission to do anything. God can do whatever he pleases, however he pleases, with whomever he pleases, whenever he pleases.

He's not limited at all. But again, I come back to this, God has instituted a system, a dynamic where he utilizes humans and our cooperation.

He doesn't have to do that. He has chosen to do that. So when we unleash his power with our will, that's when we get the results.

Now, what I am not talking about here is living a Christian life out of sheer willpower. I'm not talking about that at all. That's an impossibility. Like someone has said, living the Christian life is not difficult.

[20:47] It's impossible. And that's why only the power of Christ can do it. But how is that unleashed? And let me ask you this. Why is it that some believers consistently manifest the fruit of the Spirit and they are known in the community of believers as godly individuals who live a consistent Christian life and they are looked upon as people of integrity and trustworthiness and all the rest of it.

And there are others who profess to know Christ and their lives are one inconsistency after another. Does this not prevail in the body of Christ?

How do we account for that? It's easy to say, well, the latter, they're not really Christians. They're not true Christians at all. They don't really know the Lord. Well, I'm sure that's true in some cases.

But in other cases, it is simply a matter of they are walking in the flesh rather than in the Spirit. Don't tell me Christians can't do that.

Sometimes we think there are more doing that than walking in the Spirit. I've often said, you know, the greatest asset, the greatest asset that God has on this earth is a believer who is walking in the Spirit.

[22:16] And the greatest liability is a believer who is walking in the flesh. Sends all kinds of mixed signals to people. So what I'm proposing is this.

the will to unleash the power is ours. The power that is unleashed is God's. And the illustration I gave you because I don't have a better one is if you take a handgun and put a round in the chamber, you pull the trigger, the trigger releases a hammer, a hammer hits the shell, and an explosion occurs.

And the projectile that is in that gun looks for the easiest way out of that explosion.

And that is right out through the barrel and the muzzle of the gun that propels it. Now, what was responsible for the projectile being fired?

Was it the explosion or was it the trigger? the trigger? How do you separate them? There wouldn't have been an explosion if the trigger hadn't been pulled.

[ 23 : 35 ] But the trigger was not the explosion. It was separate from it. And all I'm saying is this, by way of an analogy. The trigger is your will.

You can pull the trigger or not pull the trigger. Once the trigger is pulled, the explosion occurs. the energy is released.

The power is not in the trigger. The power is in the explosion. God is represented by the explosion. The power of the spirit is represented by the explosion.

Your volition or your will is represented in pulling the trigger. I realize that's an inadequate illustration. I don't think there is an adequate one. But it's the only one I can think of that separates the trigger from the power.

And I think this is exactly what happens. God will release his power on our behalf to walk in the spirit, provided our will wants that.

[ 24 : 41 ] Lots of believers, lots of believers are self-willed, self-serving. We know this to be true. Matter of fact, the likelihood is every one of us at this table has been there or is there or you visit there from time to time.

Is there any of us that lives a completely consistent Christian life? I don't know of such an animal. I don't think so. So we cycle between walking in the flesh and walking in the spirit.

When we walk in the flesh, we do things that displease God. the only way to get back in the spirit is guess what? We confess our sin.

He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, cleanse us from all unrighteousness, then we're back on track again until we get off. And what do you use to get off with?

Your will. So your will remains in that pivotal position of neutrality. You can go either way. God will not make you.

[ 25 : 50 ] Live a godly life. He has made provision for you to live a godly life, but he will not impose his will upon your will and make you do only right things.

Does this make any sense? And if you can come up with an objection to it, I really would appreciate it because I'm looking for holes in my theory the way this works, and I certainly don't want to go on teaching it if it's not valid, but it's the only way I can understand this, and I hope that it makes some sense to you.

So when Paul says in verse 5, this is a command, it's an imperative, he isn't saying this as a suggestion. You know, it would really be a good idea if you would mortify your members upon the earth.

He isn't saying that. He's saying it's your responsibility to do this, do it. And we're saying, oh, I can't, I don't have the ability. Yes, you do. Yes, you do.

You have the ability to say yes to God and let him unleash his power on your behalf. And the only other way that I can see this working, whereby you can walk in the spirit without it being your decision, if God just says, I know I gave you volition and power of choice, but I'm going to ignore that and set it all aside and I'm going to take charge of your life and I'm going to do what I want to do in your life, whether you want it or not.

[ 27 : 14 ] Your will doesn't matter. He doesn't do that. He doesn't do that. He interacts with our will and we ought to be humbled and grateful that he does because you know what?

This makes you a player. This makes you involved. This gives you responsibility and it also, I think, provides a basis for reward.

reward. Only if your will is real is there any basis for reward. Otherwise, if there are rewards and according to 1 Corinthians 3, there are, then are we saying that, well, the rewards you get, you didn't have anything to do with.

God just made you do what you did and now he's going to give you this, you know, it almost reminds me of this present-day self-esteem kick that you get an A for trying your best. You didn't do anything worthwhile, but you're going to be praised for it anyway. It's wonderful that you were even willing to try and that kind of nonsense. I don't think it works at the judgment seat of Christ.

[ 28 : 30 ] And I think this is all involved in this picture of mortifying or making dead. Who is to do that? you are. And in verse 8, but now you also put off all these.

You do it. You don't have to do this stuff. You don't have to display anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. You're not locked into that.

And if you engage in these things, shame on you, because you don't have to do that. God's power is available if you will call upon him and simply say, oh God, I'm confronted here with a temptation or with an opportunity to do thus and so, and I don't think this would be pleasing to you, and I can't resist this thing.

I am looking to you to release your power on my behalf because this thing is too big for me, too tough for me. And I really do believe that God will come through and he will do what we cannot do, but he will not do it against your will.

And that's a pretty powerful thing to think about. You put off all these things. Lie not one to another. Is there such a thing as a Christian liar?

[ 29 : 54 ] Oh my goodness, I guess. I guess. Do we have the ability to lie? Sometimes we can tell whoppers. As a Christian, you can lie.

You can be untruthful. You can deceive. You don't have any justification for doing so, but don't try to tell us that you can't.

Of course you can. And the reason that he is admonishing them not to do that is because why? Some were.

Paul's saying, knock it off. Let every man speak truth with his neighbor, one to another. Lie not one to another, seeing that you have put off the old man with his deeds.

And that old man is that old sinful nature, and when you put him off, you set him aside. And how do you do that? You do that with your will. That's your volition, coming from that position of neutrality again.

[ 30 : 55 ] When you put it off, it means you relegate him to a position of inability. It isn't that he is done away with. Some think that putting to death the old man means that you no longer sin.

We talked a little bit about that earlier, and that's the Romans 6 thing. And all this means is that the old nature is there, but the new nature is able to overcome the old nature if you will exercise your volition to do so.

And to illustrate that further, think in terms of aerodynamics and the ability of an airplane to fly.

When that plane takes off and leaves the ground and soars into the atmosphere, has the plane flying, has it done away with the law of gravity?

Not hardly. The law of gravity is still very much in force. And if the plane wants to prove that, all he has to do is cut his engine. And the law of gravity will take over and he'll be right back on the ground again.

[ 32 : 13 ] And all we are saying is that the power that is represented in that engine and the aerodynamic aspect of the plane is stronger and greater than the power of gravity.

It doesn't eliminate it, it overcomes it. It surpasses the law of gravity. And it's the same way that the new nature within us surpasses the old nature.

So what is it that determines which one is in the ascendancy? That comes right back to your volition again. You do. You do. I remember hearing, reading, reading a commentary by Dr.

Harry Ironside. And he was the pastor of Moody Memorial Church for several years and wrote all kinds of commentaries. You know, great Bible teacher. And every summer he would go down to an Indian tribe in Arizona and he would teach there on the reservation for a couple of weeks.

And he was teaching on this subject in Romans chapter six about the old nature and the new nature. and he said an old elderly Indian, all wrinkled and everything, came up to him after the meeting was over and told him how much he appreciated the teaching on Romans chapter six.

[ 33 : 36 ] And he said, I always thought of what you were teaching as two dogs.

And Dr. Ironside said, two dogs? And he said, yes. He said, in me, there are two dogs, white dog and a black dog.

And they both want to control. And Dr. Ironside said, well, which one is them that wins? And he said, the one that wins is the one that I say sick of to.

You know what the sick of is? That's a volition. That's the trigger. That gives the white dog ascendancy over the black dog. And I think it works that way with the spirit and the flesh.

So our neutrality remains intact, but the power to do right or wrong is there. And it's our choice. And there is reward for the right choice.

[ 34 : 44 ] There is loss of reward for the wrong choice. All of this is tied together. And he says, lie not one to another. Why shouldn't we? Why shouldn't we lie one to another when it's beneficial or profitable to do so?

He says, you can't do that because you have put off the old man with his deeds. This is you have rendered inoperative. You have overcome this law of gravity with a greater power.

And that is the new man of verse 10. You have put on the new man. When did you do that? You put on the new man when you receive Christ as your Savior.

That is this new nature that dwells within, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. That is in God's own image. Where?

There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond, or free.

[ 35 : 42 ] In other words, when Christ comes into a human life, it doesn't make any difference.

What your background is, what your race is, what your religion is, what your ethnicity is, none of those things matter because you are all on an equal plane in Christ.

But Christ is all and in all. Before we turn the page here and begin with this new material on your sheet that you've got distributed today, have you got some questions or comments?

any feedback? Yea or nay, pro or con, I would welcome it. Feel free. Anybody? Dave. I just want to back out to verse 2.

Just elaborate on that. You set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

What do you interpret that to mean? Well, I think that the things above are the spiritual truths and realities that become ours by virtue of being in Christ.

And these are not material things. They are spiritual truths. They are realities. They are what it means to be in Christ. They are connected with our new position.

[ 36 : 58 ] It's a new drive that we have as opposed to things on the earth because the things on the earth are temporal, usually physical, material things. Some of the translations here might help in verse 2.

Weymouth says, give your minds to the things that are above. See, these are mental things, spiritual things. Knox says, you must be heavenly minded.

Phillips renders it, give your heart to the heavenly things. And the New English Bible, let your thoughts dwell on that higher realm. Not on things on the earth.

And I might have shared with you earlier about the fact that some Christians are described by some non-Christians as, oh, so and so, all he does is preach or read the Bible or pray or whatever.

He's so heavenly minded he's no earthly good. You may have heard that accusation made about some Christians. Christians. And yet, I think it is appropriate to counter with that the problem with so many Christians is that we are so earthly minded that we're no heavenly good.

[ 38 : 11 ] and that's certainly the opposite of what we ought to be. So, I think he is talking about things eternal, things spiritual, priorities, things that matter a whole lot more than the stuff we become so engrossed with and so upset about here on earth.

It's a matter of priorities, etc. John, did you have something? Yeah, Philippians 2.8, it says,

Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, things that are lovely, whatsoever things are good, of good report, gain, virtue, embrace, think on these things.

So, that's what our mind should be on, not on these fleshly things, like the bad things that we're talking about.

Temporal, fleeting things. Yeah, things that are lasting and got virtue. Yeah, in fact, what you just read there in Philippians is probably the best commentary on this verse right here in chapter 3 that we're talking about.

Excellent commentary. Thank you. Anybody else? Marie? Back to the definition of mortified, was that gargonous?

[ 39 : 31 ] Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's an interesting term, the dictionary gave that as an illustration or synonymous of what it means to mortify, means to make gangrenous.

And we know if you have a wound in your body or something and gangrene sets in, gangrene is nothing more than the death of flesh.

And it will spread and it will kill other flesh around it. and that's why gangrenous flesh has to be cut out and separated from the good flesh.

Otherwise, it will make it dead too. So that's an excellent connection here, one that we can understand. When gangrene sets in, you've got real problems. That needs to be cut out and halted. Exactly. Any other thoughts? thoughts? All right, we have a few minutes remaining and we've got the positive aspect of this in verse 12 then of Colossians chapter 3.

[ 40 : 36 ] Put on therefore. Who is responsible for putting off those negative things? We are. We are. Who is responsible for putting on these things?

Adding these things to our spiritual repertoire? We are. And it is, we would be remiss if we asked God to do it for us. God says, hey, I gave you the ability to do that with your volition.

You do that. You're responsible for something. Some people see God as so sovereign, as so absolutely completely sovereign, man isn't responsible for anything. And I think that's a huge mistake.

And they might even apply the same kind of logic to angels. Angels too have volitions. And we know that they certainly exercised them in the past.

So you put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, as God's chosen people. And here is a term of election that our Calvinist friends really take to heart and elaborate on.

[ 41 : 38 ] And I've given you before my understanding of this, and I think that it certainly holds true, at least it does for me.

And that is, we are the elect of God, believers are the elect of God, because we are in Christ. And when you are in Christ, that simply means that you are part of his body.

And Christ is referred to as God's elect. Christ is God's elect son, elect savior, elect messiah.

And when you are in Christ, you share everything that Christ is and that Christ has. We were crucified with him, we were raised with him, we were crucified with him, we were buried with him, we were raised with him, and we are seated with him in the heavenlies.

And all of this is true of us just because we are in Christ. Christ is elect and we share in his election, we share in his forgiveness, we share in his righteousness, we share in his eternal life, we share in everything that he is.

[ 42 : 49 ] That is where our election comes in. Chosen, because Christ is chosen, we are in him, we are chosen. And as a result of that, this verse 12 again is a conclusion.

It is a therefore, as a result of what he said previously about what we are to put off, what we are not to do, what we are not to engage in, then verse 12 is the positive aspect of it.

Therefore, in light of what I have just said about that, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy, put on these bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, verse 13, forbearing one another and forgiving one another.

What it means to forbear one another is to put up with one another, to be willing to tolerate one another. We all know people that really wind our clock.

They just know where our hot buttons are and they push them. And the tendency may be to just, you know, write off people like that, have nothing to do with them.

[ 44 : 07 ] But we are supposed, this to me, this is a true definition of what it means to be tolerant. This is a traditional definition of toleration.

You completely disagree with someone regarding some issue or something, but you are willing to allow them their position and you put up with them.

And you know something? We usually tend to think that that's one-sided. We're always putting up with somebody else. But has it ever occurred to you that there are probably people who put up with you?

So it works both ways. And all this means is that none of us has arrived. And we ought to all be willing to cut each other some slack.

You know, everybody's got a story. And it's very, very easy to come down on someone and criticize them or condemn them because of what we think we see outwardly and we don't know their story.

[ 45 : 18 ] We don't know where they've been. We don't know what they've experienced. We don't know what they've been through. And yet we can be so quick to be judgmental and condemning of them.

And this is what we are not to do. I think it means we are to give one another the benefit of a doubt. We are to be kind, generous, one toward another.

We are to give each person their space. And when you are tolerant with someone, it means you disagree with them, but you are willing to let them have their position.

And I guess you would say you just agree to disagree. and a favorite comeback for people who really see things differently from you.

And I say this in the sense of jesting. You can always tell them, well, I really wish I could agree with you, but if I did, we would both be wrong.

[ 46 : 21 ] And that diffuses a lot of arguments. And sometimes we'll even bring a chuckle. And I'll never forget what my friend Art Crawford used to say, and I found it to be very valuable.

It diffuses a whole lot of situations. And preachers need this, especially. When you teach or preach something and somebody vociferously disagrees with you, tells you how wrong you are and how it cannot be that way, and blah, blah, blah, blah.

And he says, I've never seen it to fail. It really diffuses all situations. You can always come back to this, dear brother, and say, you know something? You may just be right.

What? Yeah, I mean, it just takes all the wind out of their sail. Hey, I could be wrong. You just may be right. And what's there left to argue about?

What's there left to fuss about? Nothing I know of. Because, hey, when we put forth a position, just like I have put forth here, have I some kind of guarantee that my understanding of this is absolutely right, and you're an idiot if you don't agree with it?

[ 47 : 28 ] Of course not. All I can say is, this is the way I see it. And I might not be seeing it right. Because I don't know everything that's involved in this.

I don't understand this text entirely. Not by a long shot. But this is my best understanding of it to the present. And if you disagree with me, all I can say is, you may be right.

You may be right. Because I can't teach it with that kind of certainty. A lot of things the Bible is very, very clear on. But what I've done in part is I've created a kind of scenario in an effort to explain some concepts that have been working in my mind.

And I don't know if my understanding and explanation is right on or not. Seems right to me now. But that's no guarantee it is. But if you're wrong, then the Word of God is wrong.

Because it makes it so clear, it seems to me, that if that's not right, then we're not believing what the Word says. Well, that's my conclusion too.

[ 48 : 32 ] And I don't know how else to state it. Except I just want to make it very clear that I don't speak with any kind of complete authority at all.

But I do believe that the Scriptures are meant to be understood. They are not meant to confound or confuse. And when we take the Word of God at face value, these are the only conclusions that I've been able to reach.

And if I am wrong, and I have no absolute guarantee that I'm right, but I know the Word of God is right, and maybe my interpretation of it is necessarily flawed, but I'd like to know where the flaws are.

Mary? So don't you have to be careful when you say, okay, maybe you're right? Isn't that putting a thought in their mind that, oh, maybe it's not wrong what I'm doing?

They're thinking, you're not thinking that's wrong? Well, all I can say is, all I'm saying is, is there are places, there are a great many places, and thank God for every one of them, where the Word of God is very plain, very straightforward, very unequivocal, and there are places where it could be this way, it could be that way, and we don't know for sure which it is.

[ 49 : 59 ] So I cannot speak with the dogmatism that I would like. I'd like to speak with absolute dogmatism on every passage and every verse and every word, but I can't do that, because there are some places where it might not be that way.

Marv, you may not have it right. And do you know what that does? That's what stimulates the study of the Scriptures. If everything in the Bible were set forth with such crystal clarity, then reading the Bible once, you got it.

That's it. It would be just like reading a novel. You know everything that's in it. You know the butler did it before you ever get to the end. It's all straightforward and laid out.

Does anybody ever study a novel? Why don't you study a novel? Because the writer of the novel lays it out in a kind of clarity and unambiguity so that you really get it.

it. But when you come to the Bible, this book is inexhaustible and the more you study it, the more connections you see because everything in the Scriptures is connected with everything in the Scriptures and it makes an incredible whole.

[ 51 : 27 ] But it is set forth in such a way that the Bible never speaks its full mind in any one place. So you've got to compare Scripture with Scripture and allow the Bible to be its own best commentary and we find ourselves going from Genesis to Revelation and if you want to understand some of the things that are in Revelation, you know where you have to go?

You have to go to Genesis. Well, what's that got to do with it? That's clear back at the beginning. Yes, but the beginning is connected to the ending. It's amazing. This book, the way it's put together is just incredible.

just a work of God. Did you have something? Well, there again, these passages are repeated different places, so in this instance, I don't think there's anything that you can't say, well, this is the way it is.

To me, I'm more embatic about this being absolutely like it says it is. Well, I appreciate that. And let me make it clear. I'm not being unambiguous about what I think is the teaching of the text.

What I'm really, what I am really more in question about is my understanding of the volition and the neutrality of the volition before and after salvation.

[ 52 : 48 ] I don't understand very much about that, but my understanding of it is the only way I can see it. And I've come to this over, you know, 55 years of studying the scriptures, scriptures, but that's no guarantee that it's right.

Yet, this is a real problem. It's a real theological problem. What part, to what extent, does the human will have to play in the plan and program of God and in your destiny and in your decisions and your actions?

It's a very important concept, is it not? And I'm just, we don't have a chapter, verse explanation of the human volition that I have given you.

What I have given you is a Wiseman conclusion trying to take into consideration what the Bible has to say about God's sovereignty and man's responsibility from the beginning to the end.

And I know I don't have a complete handle on it. I know that. But what I have shared with you is as much as I've got, as much as I understand.

[ 54 : 00 ] I've tried to connect the dots, and I'm not sure that I've connected them all correctly. So, anything else?

If the volition and our will and our operation of it, if it isn't as I have described, I have no idea what it is.

I just, it's a complete puzzlement to me. It is an incredible thing, the way we are created. The human spirit, and I don't want to go over here, but I do have about two minutes left.

Let me just throw this out to you for your consideration. When God created Adam, we are told, and I think it's 2-7 of Genesis, that God breathed into Adam the breath of life, and Adam became a living soul.

He was, God, God breathed into the physical something that was not physical, and that was the spirit. It is the spirit that animates the body, and it's the spirit that leaves the body at death, as James tells us.

[ 55 : 31 ] And in this human spirit, which is part of our soul, part of our total personhood, in that human spirit dwells all kinds of spiritual realities, none of which can be seen or identified, but they are all true.

And my contention is, and again, this is something that I cannot prove, chapter and verse, because I just can't. There is no verse that says it. But what are the properties of the human spirit?

What is the human spirit made up of? Well, it can't be made up of anything physical. It's got to be spiritual. And what are these spiritual properties?

I think the very first one is volition. Volition. Personality. Temperament.

IQ. Creativity. All of these are spiritual properties. None of them are physical. And we can create physical things from them, but their origin is spiritual.

[ 56 : 54 ] So, the verse that the psalmist left with us is, surely I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Boy, oh boy, is he ever saying a mouthful.

And I think the volition, I think the human volition, the power of choice, lies in the human spirit. And it's the spirit and that volition that we use to make decisions.

Pretty powerful concept. Anything else before we close? Marie. These verses seem to point out to me the vast contrast between God's word and what I've heard about the Koran and above all these things put on charity.

Just the opposite of what they teach. How our conduct is to be in godly life. The contrast between Satan and God. You will search in vain to find an expression assigning love to Allah.

It is just not there. Allah is not a God of love. He is a God of power, not of love. And there's a huge difference there.

[ 58 : 05 ] Okay, well you all have a great day. I appreciate you being here this morning. Good Lord willing, and the creek don't rise, we'll be here for the second Tuesday of February. And that will be really close to Valentine's Day.

Okay, thank you all.