

Dr. Daniel K. Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 5, Take a Stand (Col. 3)

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 5, Take a Stand (Col. 3), Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Daniel K. Darko's lecture, "Take a Stand, Colossians 3," part of his "Prison Epistles" series, examines Paul's instructions in Colossians. The session focuses on how believers should live rooted in Christ, specifically addressing what not to do regarding judgment on external practices and disqualification by false teachings emphasizing asceticism and visions. **Darko highlights Paul's emphasis on rejecting worldly rules and embracing their new identity in Christ.** He explains the call to develop a heavenly mindset, put to death earthly desires and detrimental behaviors, and put on new Christ-like qualities such as compassion, kindness, and love, transcending societal divisions. **The lecture underscores the believer's personal responsibility in embodying these ethical transformations and fostering unity within the Christian community.**

2. 21 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 5 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → Prison Epistles).



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3. Briefing Document: Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 5, Take a Stand (Col. 3)

Briefing Document: Dr. Daniel K. Darko on Colossians 3 - "Take a Stand"

Overview:

This briefing document summarizes the key themes and important ideas presented by Dr. Daniel K. Darko in Session 5 of his lecture series on the Prison Epistles, focusing on Colossians Chapter 3. Dr. Darko emphasizes the transition from the theological foundations laid in earlier chapters, particularly the centrality of Christ and the warning against false teachings in Chapter 2, to the practical ethical implications for the Colossian believers outlined in Chapter 3. The core message revolves around taking a stand by developing a heavenly mindset, shedding the old earthly nature, and putting on the new self in Christ, characterized by specific virtues and the breaking down of societal divisions within the church.

Main Themes and Important Ideas:

1. Rejection of False Teachings and Legalism (Review of Colossians 2):

- Dr. Darko revisits Colossians 2:16-19, highlighting Paul's warning against allowing others to judge them based on legalistic requirements concerning food, drink, festivals, new moons, or Sabbaths, stating, **"Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are shadows of the things to come, but a substance belongs to Christ."**
- He underscores the warning against those who disqualify believers through asceticism, worship of angels, and reliance on visions, emphasizing that these individuals are **"not holding fast to the head from which the whole body nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments grows with a growth that is from God."**
- The core issue with these false teachers is their lack of connection to Christ ("the head") and their promotion of worldly rules ("merely human commands and teachings"). **"They have no connection with Christ. The one whom we read about in high Christology. The one through whom we have been reconciled. And the one we have received. They have no connection with him. In fact, they seem to promote worldly rules."**

- Dr. Darko emphasizes the believers' agency in rejecting these judgments and disqualifications: **"You have the ability to not allow yourself to be judged... you have the ability not to accept their assessment, words, or characterization of you."** and **"you have the ability not to let anyone disqualify you. Personal responsibility."**
- He notes the deceptive appearance of wisdom in these false teachings, with their "self-imposed worship, their false humility, and their harsh treatment of the body," ultimately lacking value in restraining sin.

1. Transition from Indicative to Imperative (Shift to Ethical Living):

- Dr. Darko explains the shift in Paul's writing from laying a theological foundation ("indicative") to outlining practical ethical commands ("imperative") in Chapter 3. **"Now, we are moving from what we have been calling in scholarship, sometimes the indicative to imperative. We are actually moving from giving you a wider theological framework to actual ethical things you need to live your life by..."** This requires **"personal responsibility"** on the part of the believers.

1. Developing a Heavenly Mindset (Colossians 3:1-4):

- The first key imperative is to cultivate a **"heavy mindset"** focused on heavenly things. **"If you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on the things that are above. Not on things that are on earth."**
- This heavenly focus is rooted in the believer's death with Christ and their life being **"hidden with Christ in God."** Dr. Darko uses the analogy of a **"coconut dynamic"** to illustrate this security. **"For you have died and your life is hidden in Christ, in God. So, the image will be like this. You have died, and this is God, and actually, your life is hidden in Christ, who is surrounded by God, and you are tucked in there. Double security. Relax. Relax."** He cautions against over-interpreting the analogy.
- He explains the significance of Christ being seated at the **"right hand of God"** as a position of authority and primacy on behalf of believers.
- While our heavenly identity is currently **"hidden,"** it is real and will be revealed when Christ appears in glory. In the meantime, believers are expected to **"behave differently"** from those who belong to the world.

1. Killing and Stripping Off the Old Earthly Nature (Colossians 3:5-11):

- Dr. Darko emphasizes the forceful command to **"put to death"** what is earthly within them: **"Therefore, now that you know you are in this place with Christ and you are developing this heavenly mindset, put to death."** He clarifies that this is **"within the believer's power, by the grace of God."**
- The earthly nature includes: **"sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desires, covetousness, which is idolatry."**
- Believers are also called to **"strip off detrimental behavior,"** which primarily relates to speech and negative emotions: **"anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another..."** He notes that some of these forms of anger are harbored internally, while others are expressed violently or with malicious intent. Again, Dr. Darko stresses that **"it is within your power to strip it off by the grace of God."**
- This putting off of the old self and its practices is linked to putting on the **"new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator."**

1. The Nature of the New Self: Transcending Divisions (Colossians 3:11):

- A crucial aspect of the new self is the breaking down of traditional societal barriers: **"Here, there is no Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free, but Christ is all and in all."**
- Dr. Darko provides historical context, explaining the tensions between Jews and Gentiles (circumcised vs. uncircumcised, clean vs. unclean), Greeks and Romans (former superpower vs. current), and the social hierarchy between slave and free.
- He clarifies that the absence of distinction does not erase social realities but rather means these differences should not be sources of contention or division within the church.
- He highlights the extreme nature of the inclusion of **"Barbarian"** (non-Greek, considered uncultured) and especially **"Scythian"** (considered the epitome of unrefinement and savagery) to emphasize that no one is excluded from the new community in Christ. **"Even the wild, repulsive Scythians are not ruled out of courts. In Christ, it behooves the community of faith to live and work together and to exemplify the life of those who have received Christ and are working according to what they have believed in Christ."**

1. Putting On the New Self: Virtues and Mutual Responsibility (Colossians 3:12-17):

- Following the putting off, believers are commanded to **"put on"** the characteristics of the new self: **"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another. And if one has any complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony."**
- Dr. Darko emphasizes that this "putting on" is like adopting a new character or demeanor that is visible to the public and brings honor to the community.
- This call to action is rooted in their new identity as **"God's chosen ones, holy and beloved."** **"Paul's point is that you are not ordinary, and you should not appear in that fashion. You are not like how you used to be. Your new identity is a people chosen of God, set apart, and you are beloved."**
- He highlights the importance of **"mutual responsibility"** within the church, exemplified by the virtues listed, including compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience (involving inner calm and not showing frustration), forbearance (the ability to bounce back), and especially forgiveness, mirroring the forgiveness they received in Christ.
- The overarching virtue that binds everything together is **"love."**
- Dr. Darko also mentions the importance of **"teaching and admonishing one another"** (mutual support) and living with **"integrity."**
- He concludes by emphasizing the need for the **"peace of Christ"** to rule in their hearts and for them to be **"thankful"** and let the **"word of Christ dwell"** within them.

Conclusion:

Dr. Darko's lecture on Colossians 3 emphasizes a radical transformation for believers, moving beyond mere intellectual assent to the gospel to a lived reality shaped by their identity in Christ. This involves a conscious rejection of worldly influences and false teachings, a deliberate cultivation of a heavenly mindset, the forceful removal of sinful behaviors and attitudes, and the intentional adoption of Christ-like virtues within the community of faith. The breakdown of societal barriers within the church and the emphasis on mutual responsibility underscore the transformative power of the gospel to create a new kind of community grounded in love, peace, and gratitude.

4. Study Guide: Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 5, Take a Stand (Col. 3)

Colossians 3 Study Guide: Taking a Stand in Christ

Quiz

1. According to Dr. Darko, what two actions does Paul tell the Colossians *not* to allow others to do in Colossians 2:16-18?
2. What are some examples of the false teachings that Paul addresses in Colossians 2, and what is the underlying issue with these teachings according to Dr. Darko?
3. Dr. Darko emphasizes a shift from "indicative to imperative" in Paul's writing. Explain what this means in the context of Colossians.
4. What does Dr. Darko mean by developing a "heavenly mindset," and how does he illustrate the believer's position with Christ in God?
5. What does Paul urge believers to "put to death" in Colossians 3:5, and what category of sins does Dr. Darko highlight in this list?
6. According to Dr. Darko, what does it mean to "put off the old self" and what types of behaviors does this primarily involve according to the text?
7. How does Paul describe the "new self" in Colossians 3:10-11, and what are some of the boundaries that are broken down in this new identity?
8. What does it mean to "put on" as described in Colossians 3:12, and what are some of the characteristics of this new way of living?
9. Dr. Darko highlights "mutual responsibility" in the Christian community. Provide a few examples of this from Colossians 3:13-14.
10. What role should "peace" and "gratitude" play in the lives of believers according to Colossians 3:15, as discussed by Dr. Darko?

Answer Key

1. Paul tells the Colossians not to allow anyone to pass judgment on them in matters of food, drink, festivals, new moons, or Sabbaths, and not to let anyone disqualify them by insisting on asceticism, worship of angels, or dwelling on visions without holding fast to the head (Christ).

2. Examples of false teachings include dietary rules, emphasis on Jewish holidays, ascetic disciplines, and focus on angels and visions. The underlying issue is that these teachings are based on worldly rules and human commands, and they lack connection to Christ, the Head of the body.
3. The shift from indicative to imperative means that Paul moves from establishing the theological truths about who believers are in Christ (the indicative) to giving practical, ethical commands on how they should live their lives in light of these truths (the imperative), requiring personal responsibility.
4. Developing a "heavenly mindset" means focusing on the things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God, rather than on earthly, carnal things. Dr. Darko illustrates the believer's position as being hidden with Christ in God, a place of double security.
5. Paul urges believers to "put to death" what belongs to their earthly nature, which includes sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desires, and covetousness (which is idolatry). Dr. Darko highlights that the initial list primarily focuses on sexual sins.
6. To "put off the old self" means to discard one's former way of life and behaviors, particularly those related to anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk. Dr. Darko notes that this primarily involves speech-related detrimental behaviors.
7. The "new self" is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator (Christ), and within this new identity, ethno-racial divides (Greek and Jew), religious distinctions (circumcised and uncircumcised), and social boundaries (barbarian, Scythian, slave, free) are broken down because Christ is all and in all.
8. To "put on" means to adopt a new character and behavior that reflects their identity as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved. This includes cultivating compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, bearing with one another, and forgiving each other.
9. Examples of mutual responsibility include bearing with one another, forgiving each other if there is a complaint, and above all, putting on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. They are also called to let the peace of Christ rule in their hearts.
10. Peace, the peace of Christ, should rule in believers' hearts, fostering unity and concord. Gratitude should be evident as a virtue among believers, acknowledging what they have received in Christ and being thankful.

Essay Format Questions

1. Analyze the specific false teachings addressed in Colossians 2, as discussed by Dr. Darko, and explain why Paul considered them a threat to the Colossian church.
2. Discuss the significance of the "heavenly mindset" in Colossians 3:1-4, according to Dr. Darko, and elaborate on its practical implications for Christian living.
3. Compare and contrast Paul's instructions to "put to death the earthly nature" and "put off the old self" in Colossians 3, as explained by Dr. Darko. What is the relationship between these two commands?
4. Examine the implications of the statement that in the "new self" there is no distinction between various social, ethnic, and religious categories (Colossians 3:11). How does this impact the unity and function of the Christian community?
5. Evaluate the virtues that Paul encourages believers to "put on" in Colossians 3:12-17, as outlined by Dr. Darko. How do these qualities reflect the character of Christ and contribute to healthy relationships within the church?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Asceticism:** A practice of severe self-discipline and abstention from worldly pleasures, often for religious reasons. In Colossians, it refers to a strict, legalistic approach to spirituality.
- **High Christology:** A theological understanding that emphasizes the divinity and preeminence of Jesus Christ, as seen in Colossians' depiction of Christ as creator and sustainer.
- **Indicative:** In grammar, the mood of a verb that states a fact or asks a direct question. In theology, it refers to the statements of truth about who believers are in Christ.
- **Imperative:** In grammar, the mood of a verb that expresses a command or request. In theology, it refers to the instructions and commands given to believers on how to live.
- **Elemental Spirits (στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου - stoicheia tou kosmou):** Refers to the basic principles or rudimentary elements of the world, which in the context of Colossians, may refer to legalistic religious traditions or even spiritual forces.
- **Worldly Rules (δόγματα ἀνθρώπων - dogmata anthrōpōn):** Human-made rules and regulations, often contrasted with the teachings of Christ.
- **Heavenly Mindset (τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε - ta anō phroneite):** Focusing one's thoughts and desires on the things of God and the eternal realm, rather than earthly concerns.
- **Earthly Nature (τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς μέλη - ta epi tēs gēs melē):** The parts of one's being that are still influenced by the sinful nature and worldly desires.
- **New Self (τὸν καινὸν - ton kainon):** The transformed identity of a believer in Christ, renewed in knowledge and reflecting the image of God.
- **Mutual Responsibility (ἀνέχεσθαι ἀλλήλων - anechesthai allēlōn; χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς - charizomenoi heautois):** The shared duty and commitment of believers to support, forgive, and build one another up in the Christian community.

5. FAQs on Darko, Prison Epistles, Session 5, Take a Stand (Col. 3), Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Frequently Asked Questions on Colossians 3 (Based on Dr. Darko's Lecture)

1. According to Paul in Colossians 3, what is the fundamental shift in mindset that believers should cultivate, and why is it important?

Paul calls believers to develop a "heavenly mindset," focusing on "things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God," rather than on earthly concerns. This is crucial because believers have "died" to their old way of life and their true life is now "hidden with Christ in God." This heavenly focus reflects their new identity and secure position in Christ, guiding their values and behaviors toward what is pleasing to Him and away from the dictates of the world.

2. Dr. Darko highlights two initial warnings in Colossians 2:16-19. What are these warnings, and what is the underlying issue Paul is addressing with them?

The two warnings are: "Let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath," and "Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind and not holding fast to the head." The underlying issue is the presence of false teachers in Colossae who were imposing legalistic rules, emphasizing outward practices, and promoting mystical experiences that detracted from the centrality of Christ as the head of the body (the church).

3. In contrast to the false teachings, what does Paul emphasize as the believer's responsibility regarding external judgments and disqualifications?

Paul stresses that believers have the ability not to accept the judgment or assessment of those imposing these false teachings. They are not to let anyone disqualify them based on adherence to these human-made rules. This highlights the personal responsibility of believers to stand firm in their understanding of Christ and not be swayed by teachings that do not hold fast to Him.

4. Dr. Darko outlines a "call to kill and strip off the old" in Colossians 3. What specific behaviors and attitudes does this encompass, and why are these actions necessary for believers?

This call involves actively "putting to death" what belongs to their earthly nature, which includes sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desires, and covetousness (idolatry). It also means "stripping off" detrimental behaviors like anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk. These actions are necessary because these are remnants of the old self that are incompatible with the believer's new identity in Christ and hinder the unity and witness of the Christian community.

5. Following the call to "kill and strip off the old," Paul calls believers to "put on the new self." What characteristics define this new self, and where does this renewal originate?

The new self is characterized by compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forbearance, forgiveness, and above all, love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. This new self is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator (God). This renewal is not a passive process but requires the believer's active participation, grounded in their identity in Christ and empowered by God's grace.

6. How does the new self in Christ transcend social and cultural divisions, according to Colossians 3:11? What are some examples Dr. Darko uses to illustrate this point?

In the new self, there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, and free. Christ is all and in all. Dr. Darko illustrates this by highlighting the historical tensions between Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Romans, and the social hierarchy between slave and free. He uses contemporary analogies like the love-hate relationship between Britain and America and internal cultural biases within Ghana and Romania to emphasize that these earthly distinctions should no longer create division within the Christian community.

7. Dr. Darko emphasizes "mutual responsibility" within the Christian community in Colossians 3. What are some practical expressions of this responsibility that Paul calls for?

Mutual responsibility is expressed through actions such as bearing with one another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven them, teaching and admonishing one another, and letting the peace of Christ rule in their hearts. This fosters solidarity, unity, and a harmonious community where believers support and encourage each other in living out their new identity in Christ.

8. What role does gratitude play in the life of a believer according to Colossians 3, and how does it relate to the indwelling word of Christ and the peace of Christ?

Believers are called to be thankful. Gratitude should be an evident virtue in their lives. This thankfulness is intertwined with letting the word of Christ dwell in them richly and allowing the peace of Christ to rule in their hearts. When believers are grounded in the Word and experience inner peace through Christ, gratitude naturally flows as they recognize and appreciate God's grace and provision in their lives and in the community.