



Colossians 3:17

17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Reflection

Paul's on a roll. Not rules, but responses. Not bullet points, but beauty. Not work for us to do, but a vision of who we can be, who we are, together as the people of God in Jesus Christ. After Paul has raised our

vision of Jesus to the highest heights, he now turns to raising our vision of ourselves to the heights that we can attain in him if we'd just stop settling for the low watermark of our culture and our former way of life. Just listen to the picture that Paul has painted these last couple of days.

12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since

as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

Can you picture a community of people like this? The happiness and security, the warmth and depth of relationships, the impact that a people like this might have on our world? Can you picture the community that Paul is describing? A community so moved by Jesus Christ and what he has done for them that each and every member can't help but want to grow increasingly like him, resulting in a people filled to overflowing with compassion,

kindness, gentleness, patience, forgiveness and peace. A community in which the Spirit moves. A community filled with love for God and each other and bound together by that love in perfect unity. The peace of Christ overflowing out of every heart. Thanksgiving on every face. And the message of Christ dwelling in each and every person richly, deeply and profoundly, and the gratitude of such hearts overflowing in joyful songs of praise. With these words Paul is describing the trajectory of the church, where we're headed together; but also, what makes us stand out in the world right now. And Paul ends his beautiful run today with one final, summary verse. In response to the grace that we have received, how then shall we live? Colossians 3:17,

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And at one level, it's hard to think of a more comprehensive exhortation in all of Scripture than this one.

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Whatever we do. Whether in word or deed – which takes in everything in life. Deeds can be preaching, teaching, eating, exercising, driving your car, cleaning your house, buying groceries, picking your children up from school, that project

at work, relaxing at the beach, unwinding watching Netflix or reading a good book – deeds are everything which takes place in life. And our words are everything that passes our lips, perhaps even the vocalised thoughts of our hearts, every word we put voice to, or write or text, even in those unguarded moments.

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You may have heard it said that actions speak louder than words. Our actions must say that Jesus is exactly who he says he is, and that everything he says about himself and us is true. You may have heard it said that the pen is mightier than the sword – that ultimately our words are more pow-

erful than our actions. Our words must express that Jesus is exactly who he says he is, and that everything he says about himself and us is true. We must do and say everything in the name of the Lord Jesus; in the honour of his name, in the strength of his name and to the glory of his name.

This is the high watermark of human existence, the way God intended us to live and the pathway to the most peaceful and productive life on earth. By no means does this preclude suffering; but there is deep fulfilment here. By no means does this guarantee wealth and prosperity; but there is deep blessing here. By no means does this guarantee health and physical well-being; but there is eternal life for you, your family and your friends here. The high watermark of human existence,

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Think & Pray

What do you do? What are your roles? Your daily activities? What fills your days and weeks and months? What is that you do? Perhaps you're a lawyer, a mum, a wife, a daughter, a neighbour, a bible study leader, a friend, and a member of your local community. Perhaps you work 40 hours a week, drive your car for another 10, play with your children, cook dinner, go to the gym, watch lifestyle shows on television, drink good coffee, go to church on Sundays and lead a mid-week group, read

books, look after your ageing mother, love fishing, and planning holidays, and catching up with old friends.

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What do you say? In those unguarded moments at work, at home to your children, to an overseas call centre operator, in text messages and online. What do you speak about most often? What do you praise the most? What percentage of your words are taken up by prayer? What does your tone communicate? If you were to replay everything you've said this past week what would your communication amount to? How many times did you tell someone that you love them? How many words would you take back? How many words were

wasted or well spent?

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And finally, how thankful are you to God in every situation? Does your life overflow with thankfulness as you recognise every blessing as from his hand? Do you enjoy everything in life through our Father in heaven who has so graciously given us all things?

As you approach today why not take this frame and try and live it out. Live today deliberately, your every action and word done in the name of Jesus. And thank God continually in prayer for every blessing. The blessing of a job to go to, and a me-

chanical means of transport to get there so you don't need to walk. The blessing of money in your pocket, clothes on your back, the sun in the sky, a family to come home to and an eternity secure – no matter how this day turns out. Turn this verse over and over in your mind. Pray it for your life and the life of your family. Write it on your heart and impress it into your life as you live today for the glory of our Lord. Colossians 3:17,

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