

Digging Deeper...

A Study of Colossians 3:16

1. Explain Colossians 3:16 in its context. Starting back in **Colossians 2:20** we will find this verse in a rather instructive context. Paul begins by asking the brethren in Colosse how they can be dead with Christ (**Colossians 2:12-14**), and still yet living according to the course of this world. He tells them not to touch, handle, or taste the things that perish with the using according to the commandments and teachings of men. He tells them that these things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility, and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh (**Colossians 2:20-23**).

We come into the third chapter of this book with a statement based on what Paul had already said. Since they were dead with Christ and now risen with him, their focus needs to be on those things which are above and their life has to be about Christ. To accomplish this task, they are going to have to put to death their carnal ways and desires. It is those works of the flesh, which these brethren once partook in, that will bring the wrath of God upon those who follow disobedience (**Colossians 3:1-7**).

Now that these brethren are new creatures in Christ they need to put off the former ways wherein they walked. These brethren will no longer be of anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, they will not allow filthy language to come from their mouths. They will not lie to one another seeing that they have changed from the course they use to walk and have become new men, renewed in knowledge according to Christ. This new life does not see racial, economical, and other carnal distinctions often made in the flesh. Seeing that this is so, these brethren who are called and chosen of God need to put on tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, and longsuffering. They needed to bear with one another and forgive one another as Christ has us. We need to recall that our forgiveness and Jesus' is conditioned upon repentance (**Luke 13:3; 17:3-4**). Above all these things they [note: "they" means us too] are to put on love, which is the bond of perfection. The peace of God needs to rule in the heart of a Christian. In this peace they were called to one body and need to be thankful for it (**Colossians 3:8-15**).

In light of the new creatures these brethren have become, they are to: *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 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"* (**Colossians 3:16-17**). Folks, if a Christian will fill himself or herself with the right ways of God and purge themselves from the carnal ways wherein we once walked, we will be full of God's word. We will teach one another in Psalms struck upon the chords of our hearts, hymns, and songs which reflect spiritual things revealed by God to us through the Spirit in His word rather than the carnal things we need to leave behind. These songs will be sung with thanksgiving in our hearts. In staying with the context, these things we say and do while the word of Christ dwells in us will be according to His authority. Remember, the context started with a question. If we are dead to this world why are we living according to its course?

2. Do a word study on the following words / phrases in this verse:

- Psalms (KJV): Strong's number 5568; "psalms": "a set piece of music, i.e. a sacred ode (accompanied with the voice, harp or other instrument; a "psalm"); collectively the book of the Psalms" (*New Strong's Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek New Testament* [The dictionary in the back of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance]; page 100). "A striking, twanging of a pious song, a psalm" (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*; page 675). "Impulse, touch, of the chords of stringed instruments; in the N.T. a sacred song, psalm" (*The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*; Wesley J. Perschbacher; page 442).
 - Other translations: "psalms" in both ASV 1901 and NKJV.
 - Tyndale's Word Study Concordance shows "psalmos" in the following verses (page 806): **Luke 20:42** (Psalms; speaking of the O.T. book); **Luke 24:44** (psalms; speaking of the O.T. book); **Acts 1:20** (Psalms; speaking of the O.T. book); **Acts 13:33** (psalm; speaking of the O.T. book); **I Corinthians 14:26** (psalm); **Ephesians 5:19** (psalms); **Colossians 3:16** (psalms).

- Hymns (KJV): Strong's number 5215; "humnos": "Apparently from a simpler (obsolete) form of ὑδέω hudeō (to celebrate; probably akin to G103; compare G5567); a "hymn" or religious ode (one of the Psalms): - hymn." (*New Strong's Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek New Testament* [The dictionary in the back of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance]; page 93). "In the Scriptures of God, a sacred song, hymn" (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*; page 637). "A song; a hymn, song of praise to God" (*The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*; Wesley J. Perschbacher; page 417).
 - Other translations: "hymns" in both ASV 1901 and NKJV.
 - Tyndale's Word Study Concordance shows "humnos" in the following verses (page 767): **Ephesians 5:19** (hymns); **Colossians 3:16** (hymns).

- Spiritual Songs (KJV): Strong's number ¹4152 [spiritual] & ²5603 [songs]; "¹pneumatikos": "non-carnal, that is, (humanly) ethereal (as opposed to gross), or (daemoniacally) a spirit (concretely), or (divinely) supernatural, regenerate, religious: - spiritual" (*New Strong's Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek New Testament* [The dictionary in the back of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance]; page 72). "Belonging to the Divine Spirit, divinely inspired so redolent [suggestive] of the Holy Spirit" (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*; page 523). "Spiritual, pertaining or relating to the influences of the Holy Spirit" (*The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*; Wesley J. Perschbacher; page 334). The second word "²ōdē": "From G103; a chant or "ode" (the general term for any words sung; while G5215 denotes especially a religious metrical composition, and G5568 still more specifically a Hebrew cantillation: - song" (*New Strong's Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek New Testament* [The dictionary in the back of Strong's Exhaustive Concordance]; page 100). "A song, lay [a simple narrative poem], ode" (*Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*; page 679). "An ode, song, hymn" (*The New Analytical Greek Lexicon*; Wesley J. Perschbacher; page 444). Webster defines a ode as: "a lyric poem usually marked by exaltation of feeling and style, varying length of line, and complexity of stanza forms" (<http://mw1.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ode>).
 - Other translations: "spiritual songs" in both ASV 1901 and NKJV.

- Tyndale's Word Study Concordance shows "pneumatikos" followed by "ōdē" in the following verses (page 635): **Ephesians 5:19** and **Colossians 3:16**.

3. Having done the word study, you can see that some dictionaries could leave some to conclude that mechanical instruments are to accompany our singing. How would you answer this? I would answer this by agreeing that instrumental music is authorized by the dictionary and by the word of God. However, the instrument is different than many believe. The Scriptures plainly reveal that they we are to use our hearts as the instrument while we are "singing", not playing a mechanical instrument (**Ephesians 5:19**). Furthermore, even the dictionaries point to the type of music, rather than the type of instrument.

4. Does this word study prove that we need to look further than dictionaries to arrive at the truth? What then is the point of doing a word study at all? Yes. The dictionaries are helpful even in this study. The introduction of mechanical instruments into the definitions make the study misleading if you do not compare God's words with man's. A dictionary is an aid to HELP you understand the meaning of words. However, we must allow God's word to teach us (**II Timothy 3:15**; cf. **Luke 24:27**), not a dictionary.

5. What are the applications for us to learn from Colossians 3:16 and the context in which this verse appears? When converted to Christ we need to change the way we think, act, talk, etc. This being done properly will put us into a spiritual mindset pleasing unto God. This will allow us to be full of Christ's words and to worship in an edifying and instructive manner according to the will of Christ.