

YOU ARE COMPLETE in HIM.

COLOSSIANS 2:10, NOV

A new creation focus through Colossians ...

The New Heart

Since Christians are fantastic new creations in Christ Jesus, what should their behavior be? Over and over again, the new covenant writings stress that the old man of sin was done away with, and that a new being has come up out of the water. "As Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father," was Paul's reminder, "so we too might walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). "I have been crucified with Christ," was the apostle's personal application for the benefit of the Galatians, "and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 5:20). "God,"

emphasized Peter, "has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). "Moreover," the Father had prophesied, "I will give you a new heart and put a new Spirit within you" (Ezekiel 36:26). The Almighty has done much to bring these new creations into existence, and therefore has much instruction for each.

▼ **The chosen of God** — Jesus, the Lamb of God of the book of Revelation, "is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those who are with Him are the called and chosen and faithful" (Revelation 17:14). Christians are "the called" because they heard the message of the gospel and obeyed it; they are "chosen" because they have been sifted out of the masses of mankind by the winnowing fork of Jesus; and they are "faithful" because they have maintained their God-ordained beliefs and practices through all the fiery challenges that earth can offer. "And so," says Paul to the brethren at Colossae, "as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved ..." (Colossians 3:12). The saints of God are those for whom the Father looked down the ages in eagerness, choosing them out of this world, setting them apart for His purposes as holy, and showering His love upon them.

▼ **Put on a new heart** — When each disciple of Christ was immersed into Christ, he received a new heart, or what the apostle Paul called "circumcision ... of the heart, by the Spirit" (Romans 2:29). But this new heart, like the new self, must continue to be put on. "Put on a heart of compassion ..." is the apostle's exhortation. Every day, with the rest of the clothing, the new heart must be donned!

▼ **These qualities** — The qualities of the new heart are not vague or nondescript. The first on the list is *compassion*, that ability to feel with those who are hurting or in need of encouragement. He continues with *kindness*, the thoughtful actions of those who think of ways to help others or to show them favors that strengthen the bonds of

love and sharing. Next is *humility*, the willingness to do whatever needs honorably to be done, to suffer as Christ suffered if necessary for the sake of others and the gospel. This is followed by *gentleness*, that calming strength-like quality to move people and situations in the right direction. These are coupled with *patience*, the capability of cheerfully waiting for people and for the Lord to accomplish what needs to be done next.

The children of God work together inside the framework of what is called "the church of God" or "the body of Christ." As a result, they occasionally bump into each other in the process of getting that work done, and tempers could fly or jealousy could flare. Instead, these that put on the new heart are "bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so should you" (Colossians 3:13). Even if the complaint is legitimate, the followers of Christ work it out, keeping in mind the big picture of how much Christ forgave each of them. The cause of Christ is great, and the spread of the gospel is of utmost importance and urgency. It is imperative, then, that no deeds of the flesh interfere with the brethren's ability to work together; it is critical that each saint of God continue to put on the new heart!

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