

**The Christ Centered Life**

**Set Your Heart and Mind in the Right Place**

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*Ravi Zacharias International Ministries*

*Colossians 3: 1-17*

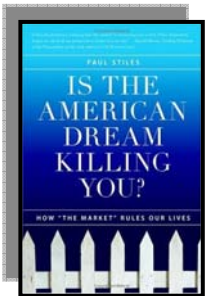
- Begin with the end in mind

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*“The gods we worship write their names on our faces; be sure of that. And a man will worship something - have no doubt about that, either.*

*He may think that his tribute is paid in secret in the dark recesses of his heart – but it will out. That which dominates will, determines his life and character. Therefore it behooves us to be careful what we worship, for what we are worshipping, we are becoming.”<sup>1</sup>*

- The exchanged life

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Stiles, *Is the American Dream Killing You? How “The Market” Rules Our Lives* (New York, New York: Harper Collins Publishing Inc., 2005), intro.

- The journey

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## **I. Our Vision and Focus Determines our Life**

*“Worship is the submission of all of our nature to God.*

*It is the quickening of conscience by his holiness, nourishment of mind by his truth, purifying of imagination by his beauty, opening of the heart to his love, and submission of will to his purpose. All this gathered up in adoration is the greatest of all expressions of which we are capable.”<sup>2</sup>*

### **A. What you “see” depends on where you look.**

*Colossians 3:1-4*

The word “*set*” is (zeitete), “to seek or strive for earnestly”  
(*Revelation 9:6; 1 Corinthians 7:27*)

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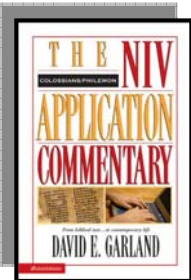
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### **B. Idolatry and the battle for the heart**

*Colossians 3:5-11*

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<sup>2</sup> Patrick Kavanaugh, *Worship – A Way of Life* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Chosen Books, 2001), p. 23



*“likens the situation of believers to immigrants who have moved to a new country but have not yet become habituated to the new ways of life”.*<sup>3</sup>

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*“Greed refers to the haughty and ruthless belief that everything, including other persons, exists for one’s own personal amusement and purposes. Essentially it turns our own desires into idols. It is the overweening desire to possess more and more things and to run roughshod over other persons to get them. It stands opposed to the willingness to give to others regardless of the cost to self. Greed can crave after persons and is never satiated by its conquests but always lusts for more.”*<sup>4</sup>

*“Anger refers to a chronic feeling as opposed to outbursts of ‘rage’ (Sandra Bullock’s character in Crash). More subtle expressions of anger ooze out in the ‘malice’ we bear others and the spiteful potshots we take to defame their reputations. ‘Filthy language from your lips does not simple refer to curse words. It has in mind the abusive language we use to hurt others. Christian speech is not determined solely by whether it is true or false, but by whether it helps or harms another.”*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Colossians/Philemon* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1998), p. 204

<sup>4</sup> David E. Garland, p. 204

<sup>5</sup> David E. Garland, p. 205

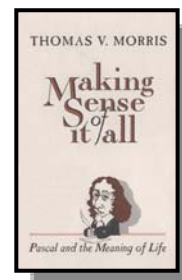
### C. Just as I am versus just as He intends

#### *Colossians 3:12-17*

- To work on our attitude and adopt the way of Christ (*verse 12*)
  - To put up with others and to exercise forgiveness (*verse 13*)
  - To let love be primary and central (*verse 14*)
  - To let peace reign and rule, and to seek ways to nurture and encourage others (*verse 16*)
  - To cultivate a thankful heart and the practice of thanksgiving (*verse 17*)  
(*Philippians 4:6*;  
*1 Thessalonians 5:18*)
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### II. Is the “Good Life” Good Enough?

*“The only good thing for men therefore is to be diverted from thinking of what they are, either by some occupation which takes their minds off it, or by some novel and agreeable passion which keeps them busy, like gambling, hunting, some absorbing show, in short what is called diversion.”<sup>6</sup>*



<sup>6</sup> Thomas V. Morris, *Making Sense of it All: Pascal and the Meaning of Life* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), p. 33

- If life is a battle for the heart, how better to get it than by offering shorter, quicker, snappier options?
- If I am willing to take my walk with God seriously, then I must be alert and on guard against anything that captures my attention or will.

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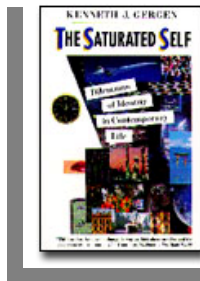
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**A. The “saturated self”, no time, no place!**

*Colossians 3:1-2*



*“Modern man is afflicted with a permanent identity crisis, a condition conducive to considerable nervousness.”<sup>7</sup>*

*“Information anxiety is produced by the ever-widening gap between what we understand and what we think we SHOULD understand.”<sup>8</sup>*

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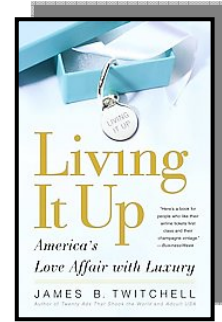
**B. The selling of greed, idolatry with a flair**

*Colossians 3:5-11*

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth J. Gergen, *The Saturated Self* (New York, New York: Basic Books, 1991), p. 73

<sup>8</sup> Kenneth J. Gergen, p. 76

*“In a world informed by marketing, the shame of consuming too much has been reconfigured into the shame of not consuming the proper stuff. We don’t scoff at having children out of wedlock, but please don’t dress the baby in mismatched outfits from Baby Gap. We don’t glower at the Wall Street banker filing for bankruptcy, but don’t let him be seen in an Armani suit and Weejuns. And, please let his second wife, the trophy wife, be smart enough not to wear silver with gold. Don’t mix Tommy Hilfiger with Gucci, don’t get your SUV dirty, don’t wear your cell phone on your belt.....”<sup>9</sup>*



- In a consumer culture, greed is considered good.
- In a consumer culture, unrestricted indulgence is really viewed as essential.
- In a consumer culture, unbridled passion is encouraged.
- In a consumer culture, winning becomes everything.
- In a consumer culture, you do what you have to, to get ahead and to stay ahead.

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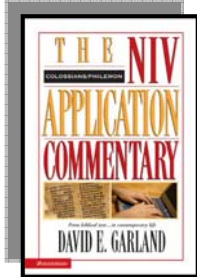
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<sup>9</sup> James B. Twitchell, *Living It Up: Our Love Affair With Luxury* (New York, New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 9

### C. Idealism or Biblical wisdom?

#### *Colossians 3:12-17*



*“Our holiness will not come from our futile attempts to comply with an arbitrary list of observances and taboos. Our godliness is not measured by the things we do not do. It comes from being in Christ, dying with Christ, and being raised with Christ.”<sup>10</sup>*

*Colossians 3:15-16 and Philippians 2:12-13, note the order!*

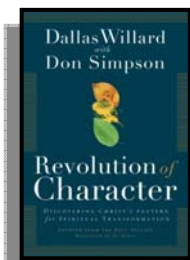
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### III. How Should We Then Live?



*“Spiritual formation is God’s grace-filled process by which a person moves from self-worship to Christ-centered self-denial as an increasingly steady disposition of heart.”<sup>11</sup>*

#### A. It won’t happen unless you choose it

#### *Colossians 3:1-2*

<sup>10</sup> David E. Garland, p. 219

<sup>11</sup> Dallas Willard & Don Simpson, *Revolution of Character: Discovering Christ’s Pattern for Spiritual Transformation* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress, 2005), p.70

*“The idea that you can trust Christ for the hereafter but have no intention to obey him now is an illusion generated by a widespread unbelieving ‘Christian culture’. In fact, you can no more trust Jesus and not intend to obey him than you can trust your doctor and not intend to follow his or her advice. If you don’t intend to follow the advice, you simply don’t trust the person.”*

*“If I intend to obey Jesus Christ, I must decide to become the kind of person who WOULD obey.”<sup>12</sup>*

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**B. Our bodily life and its importance**

*Colossians 3:5-11*

*(cf. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Romans 6:13).*

1. We must actually release our body to God. As an intentional act of consecration, surrender, worship.
2. No longer idolize your body. Do the necessary to care for it, but don’t become a slave to fashion, appearance, and image as your sole concern.
3. Do not misuse your body.
  - From sensual indulgence or any form of addiction.

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<sup>12</sup> Dallas Willard & Don Simpson, p. 76



- From appearance as a means of control, or
  - From overwork, by wearing ourselves out.
4. The body is to be properly honored and cared for. Nourishment, rest and exercise.<sup>13</sup>
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### C. Forgiveness and love

*“To be human is to be in conflict, to offend and to be offended. To be human in light of the gospel is to face conflict in redemptive dialogue.”<sup>14</sup>*



*“The gods we worship write their names on our faces; be sure of that. And a man will worship something – have no doubt about that, either. He may think that his tribute is paid in secret in the dark recesses of his heart – but it will out. That which dominates will, determines life and character. Therefore it behooves us to be careful what we worship, for what we are worshipping, we are becoming.”<sup>15</sup>*

<sup>13</sup> Dallas Willard & Don Simpson, pp. 138-140

<sup>14</sup> Shane Hipps, *The Hidden Power of Electronic Culture* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2005), p. 121

<sup>15</sup> Paul Stiles, intro.

