

Colossians Bible Study Week 3 Part 2

Put on the New - verses 10-17

We turn from the negative characteristics of behaviour to how we should live as Christians. This is the Jesus way!

1. Becoming more like Jesus.

“Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him”. **Verse 10.**

“Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives.” **Verse 16a**

The word used for **put on** means it is a once for all action. We need to see clearly that when we put our trust in Jesus, we became a new person. Jesus did all that was necessary on the cross for us to become new people in Jesus.

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! **2 Corinthians 5:17.** These are very familiar words to many of us but they have to become part of our everyday life, particularly when we don't feel like it's true of us.

The word **renew** in verse **10** is in the continuous tense. That means we have to continually be renewed in our thinking, feelings and behaviour. Our thoughts are key to being renewed, and thoughts are deeply affected by our knowledge. Continually filling our minds with the truth means that this truth will gradually become the most dominant part of our thinking.

“Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives.” **Verse 16a**

Jesus said *“And you will **know** the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*
John 8:32

2. Jesus is all that matters

“In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.” **Verse 11**

In the “Jesus Family”, all human differences disappear. No nationalities or religious back ground counts. We don't concentrate on our differences, we concentrate on our King Jesus. We are all part of His Kingdom and we all have the same family.

In the times of the New Testament, there were many differences based on religious and social background. One that still seems to be around in some churches today is that Christians from a Jewish background have a special status but this is simply not true. There is no such thing. There are no social differences depending on back ground. No poor or rich, working class or middle class. We

are all one in Jesus. The more we put Jesus first, the more differences are irrelevant.

Paul told the Galatians *“For you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Galatians 3:28*

3. We are holy, chosen and loved people

“Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves” Verse 12a

Before Paul goes into a detailed list of how Christians should behave, he reminds them of three important points.

(a) We are Holy means to be set apart from how the world around us behaves and to be God’s special people. When we sin, we are turning our back on Jesus and insulting Him. It hurts Him.

(b) We are chosen. Our minds find it difficult to understand this but it is true and we should enjoy it. We are special people, handpicked. We must keep reminding ourselves of this or we will fall back into listening to the lies of the enemy.

*“Even before he made the world, God loved us and **chose us** in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.” Ephesians 1:4*

*“For you are a **chosen** people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God’s very own possession.” 1 Peter 2:9*

(c) He loves us. Our reaction might be “I know that!”, but there is a big difference between intellectually understanding it and living in the truth of it. He loves us unconditionally, which means it does not depend on how we behave or how we are feeling. That is a very special kind of love which gives us freedom from condemnation.

Paul asks the question in **Romans 8:35** *“Can anything ever separate us from Christ’s love?”* He then gives a big list of difficult situations and says in **v37** *“No, despite all these things, **overwhelming victory is ours through Christ, who loved us.**” Hallelujah!*

All of these points highlights the word **grace**. We don’t deserve that kind of love, that’s what makes it so special.

4. The new clothes we must put on

Paul now moves on to give a list of how Christians should behave when we relate to one another.

(a) Tender hearted mercy. Verse 12

It is being compassionate towards others. This should be the permanent attitude of our heart. Putting ourselves in the position of the person who is struggling.

(b) Kindness. Verse 12

Practical acts of helping others. In other words, Jesus in action. Acts of kindness can open the door for people to find Jesus.

(c) Humility. Verse 12

In the Roman world that Paul lived in, it was not thought that humility was a good characteristic to have. They admired pride and domination. Paul was clearly going against the culture of his day in writing this, but he knew it was the Jesus way. In many areas of the western world it is the same. It's mainly the successful (particularly in business, sports and music) who catch the public eye. The humble person is often in the background.

Humility is not thinking poorly of yourself, it is seeing yourself as God sees you. We are deeply loved and treasured by God, but we are also servants of God who give Him the glory. **Don't try and be what you are not.**

Don't think you are better than you really are. Be honest in your evaluation of yourselves, measuring yourselves by the faith God has given us. Romans 12:3

(d) Gentleness. Verse 12

This is not weakness, it is power under control. The original Greek word was used to describe a soothing wind on a hot day, or a healing medicine. Both of these can be powerful, but they are under control. It is expressing the heart of God into a situation.

(e) Patience. Verse 12

This is a characteristic that many of us struggle with in our culture, including me. Getting angry is not always bad, we can see this in Jesus driving out the moneychangers from the temple, but it is wrong to get angry quickly at the wrong things and for the wrong reasons.

(f) An attitude of tolerance and forgiveness. Verse 13

"Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others."

This sums up what Paul has written in **verse 12**. The challenge of being in a Church is getting on with each other. It is the same in every area of our lives. There will always be some people we find "difficult"! What Paul is talking about is having a lifestyle of forgiveness based on the fact that none of us are perfect.

Jesus said, *"How can you think of saying, 'Friend, let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye."* **Luke 6:42**

If we don't forgive, then a root of bitterness will grow in us that will be very destructive to our spiritual lives and relationships in general.

"Look after each other so that none of you fails to receive the grace of God. Watch out that no poisonous root of bitterness grows up to trouble you, corrupting many."

Hebrews 12:15

It was part of the Prayer that Jesus used to teach His disciples how to pray.

"Forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us."

There is another serious warning that Jesus gave about the need to forgive.

"If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Matthew 6:14-15.

(g) Love. Verse 14

"Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony."

Love ties the "Jesus lifestyle" together. All these characteristics we have looked at so far can be summed up in the word **Love**. It is like the conductor of an orchestra that puts together all the sounds the different instruments make, so making beautiful harmonious music. Without love we will be like people trying to be better but failing miserably. The local church, and our individual lives in the community are the visible message of the good news of Jesus to a lost world.

Tertullian was a Roman theologian and Christian leader in the 2nd and third centuries AD. He quoted what other people were saying about Christians, even though the church was experiencing a lot of persecution. *"Look, they say, 'how they [Christians] love one another' (for they themselves hate one another); 'and how they are ready to die for each other'."* What a wonderful testimony.

(h) Let peace rule. Verse 15a

"And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace."

The word translated **rule** is an athletic term which means the **umpire** or **referee** in sport. The peace of Jesus is like our umpire. When we have this peace it can show us we are doing God's will, but when we step out of His will we can lose His peace. If we find that our hearts are not at peace, it could be the umpire (Jesus) is showing us we need to get back on track again. Be careful though, because there is a kind of false peace that comes when we persuade ourselves we are right rather than genuinely asking God.

Peace is also vital at all times, but particularly when we are in the middle of a storm. In these days when feelings are emphasised so strongly, it is vital to emphasise the promises of God and receive them as an act of our will. Exercising faith is an act of our will, not our feelings.

Remember what Jesus said *“I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.”* **John 14:27**

When peace rules in the hearts of people in the local church, it affects the whole body of people creating harmony. When we are not at peace it can affect our attitude towards others and create disharmony. Verse **15** that we are looking at says that we are *“called to live in peace”*. We must be on our guard.

Paul says in **Philippians chapter 4 verses 6 and 7** *“Don’t worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God’s peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will **guard your hearts and minds** as you live in Christ Jesus.”*

(i) Always be thankful. Verses 15b and 17b

“Always be thankful.” And *“Giving thanks through him to God the Father.”*

When peace comes, being thankful comes easier. It’s very easy to fill our minds with problems, discouragement etc. Being thankful means we are turning our attention to the person who deserves our thanks, God our Father and His son Jesus who opened the way for us to know God.

It is no surprise that the need to be thankful is mentioned 6 times in Colossians. It is at the heart of our relationship with God. The fact that Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter makes it even more special. Being thankful does not depend on our circumstances, but on what God has done for us in Jesus in giving us eternal life. Remember, we are turning to the answer (Jesus) when we are thankful, and turning away from the problems we face.

5. Be an encouraging and worshipping people

“Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.” **Verse 16b**

Teaching and counselling one another does not mean that we should always do that in a formal way. We all need the encouragement of the word of God and helpful loving words of others. This needs to happen among all of us and not just leaders. Whatever we say must be mixed with wisdom or we could end up saying the wrong things at the wrong time. Wisdom comes from God and we need to continually ask for it.

Our singing must always be from a thankful heart. It is only too easy to sing worship songs and have our mind on other things. This is not worship but merely singing a song paying no attention to the words. In the early church they sang the psalms from the Old Testament regularly as part of their worship. This carried on for many centuries until fairly recently. A lot of our worship songs have been inspired by the psalms. Why not choose a psalm and sing it in your heart to God.

That can be very uplifting. Notice we sing our worship songs and hymns to God. That is what worship is all about. He must always be central.

6. Represent Jesus well

“And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus.” Verse 17a

As **Christians** we carry the name of **Christ** with us wherever we go. We are Jesus to a lost world. When people meet us they are meeting a representative of Jesus. People will judge what Jesus is like when they meet us. Our faith is not just words on a page but living it out wherever we go.

Notice what the text says; “*Whatever you **do** or **say**”* shows others what Jesus is like. Our words and our actions are either a powerful reflection of the one we follow and love or they can turn people away from following Jesus.

“So we are Christ’s ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, “Come back to God!” 2 Corinthians 5:20

We are His voice and His heart to all the people we meet. God is speaking through us to a world that desperately needs Jesus. This is serious stuff and we should be relying on the Holy Spirit every day to be that true reflection of Jesus.