

**NEW LIFE IN CHRIST**  
*Putting On The Virtues Of The New Life*  
**Colossians 3:10-15**

Because of our new life in Christ, as a believer we are called on to clothe ourselves in *virtue*, letting Christ's *peace* rule our heart. That is precisely Paul's point in this passage. As Christians, we must *dress ourselves spiritually* in accordance with our *new identity*. We have *died* with Christ and *risen* to new life. Salvation thus produces a *two-sided obligation* for believers. *Negatively*, we must **put off** the garments of the *old, sinful lifestyle*, as Paul pointed out in **verses 5-9**. *Positively*, we must **put on** the lifestyle of our *new identity in Christ*...the *new man*.

You can tell a lot about people in our society by the way they dress. Many years ago, a very wealthy man in a Southern California town was found wandering around a local private country club wearing shabby, worn-out clothes. The police were called and he was arrested for vagrancy. Later, it was revealed that he owned the country club.

**I. A NEW PERSPECTIVE: (vs. 10-11)**

**And have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him (vs. 10)...**

A Christian is to **put on the new self (vs. 12)**...Put on...it's *not a natural response*. We must *choose* to do it. And from now on our conduct should be in accordance with this *new position*...in Christ.

**Who is being renewed...Present tense**...This new self needs *constant* and *continual renewal* or *revitalization* in order to keep it *victorious* over *sin*.

*"In reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth."*

~Ephesians 4:22-24

This *renewal* of the **new self** brings forth a **true knowledge** of who Jesus Christ is...*personally*...*experientially*. And this takes place as a believer comes to a *personal, deep knowledge of*...and *develops an intimate fellowship with*...Jesus Christ.

According to the image of the One who created him...its goal is to *make believers like Christ (Ephesians 4:24)*...*image* or *reflection*.

Man was *created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27)*...which included a *moral, spiritual, and intellectual likeness*. Since the **image** was *corrupted by the Fall*, it needs to be **renewed**...a *return to its original design*. This occurs through *sanctification*...the working of the Holy Spirit. This *will ultimately be completed* in the *resurrection of believers* when *we shall be like Him (I John 3:2)*.

**A renewal in which there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all (vs. 11)...**

**Jews call all those outside their nation Greeks**...and thus *several distinctions were made*:

- **Religious distinctions**...Between **Greek** and **Jew**...the difference between the **circumcised** and the **uncircumcised**.
- **Cultural distinctions**...to be called a **barbarian** described a people who *spoke* in an *inarticulate* and *stammering* way. A **Scythian** was a *wild, warlike, savage nomad*.
- **Economic or Social distinctions**...the distinction between the **slave** and the **freeman**.

*"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."*

~Galatians 3:28

In Christ, **distinctions** are *removed*. This includes every *ethnic, social, economic, cultural, and national* distinction. If a **Greek**, an **uncircumcised person**, a **barbarian**, a **Scythian**, or a **slave** became a believer...they became a *new creation in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17)*.

**Christ is all, and in all**...All *barriers* are destroyed by Christ...and all believers are **in Christ**...being *continually transformed into His image* by the complete *sufficiency* and *sovereignty* of God.

**II. A NEW IDENTITY: (vs. 12a)**

**So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved (vs. 12a)...**

Righteous *identity* must bring righteous *behavior*. Such *behavior* is the *outward manifestation* of the *inward transformation*. It's the only *sure proof* that such *transformation* has taken place.

**Chosen of God...election.** The truth of divine election is clearly taught in Scripture.

*"...He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love, He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."*

~Ephesians 1:4-6

*"...knowing, brethren beloved by God, His choice of you."*

~I Thessalonians 1:4

*"But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth."*

~II Thessalonians 2:13

**Holy...**Gk. *hagios*, means *set apart* or *separate...separated to God*.

**Beloved...**means *the believer is the object of God's special love*.

**Chosen...Holy...Beloved...**all *three* are used of **Israel** in the Old Testament. What was once true of the *elect nation* is now true of *all who come to faith in Christ*.

*"Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity"*

~II Timothy 1:8-9

### III. A NEW BEHAVIOR: (vs. 12b-13)

**Put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you (vs. 12b-13)...**

**Put on...**Gk. *endysamenoi*, means *to clothe one's self...to put on the new self and live accordingly*. To live with appropriate *attributes* and *attitudes*.

In **verses 8-9**, Paul listed *six vices...anger, wrath, malice, slander, abusive speech, and lying*. Now in contrast, Christians...*God's chosen people...are to have new virtues. A new heart*.

**Compassion...**Gk. *oiktirmos*, literally means *mercy, sympathy, or pity...tender empathy of heartfelt compassion...an unusually touching expression*.

**Kindness...**describes *grace that permeates the whole person...it's benevolence in action*. It's when someone's as concerned about someone else as he would be for himself. I.e. **The Good Samaritan**.

**Humility...meekness...unpretentious.** Characterizes **Jesus**. It, along with other related words, always had a *negative connotation in classical Greek*. It took Christianity to elevate **humility** to a *virtue*.

**Gentleness...a humble attitude towards others.** It describes the willingness to suffer injury instead of inflicting it.

**Patience...**Gk. *makrothymian*, means *self-restraint...a steady response in the face of provocation*. The *opposite* of *resentment* and *revenge*.

The *last three* of these *virtues* are mentioned in the same order in **Ephesians 4:2**. In **Galatians 5:22-23**, *three of the five* are listed as **Fruits of the Spirit**.

**Bearing with one another...**means *to endure...to put up with each other* with the *attitudes just mentioned* in **verse 12**. *Not retaliate*.

**Forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone...** means *to be gracious*. Whatever *grievances you may have against others...forgive*. How?

**Just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you...graciously and freely.**

*"Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you."*

~Ephesians 4:32

**Resentments** and **grudges** have no place in a Christian's life...since they *may lead* (and probably will lead) *to the sins* mentioned in **verses 8-9**.

#### IV. A NEW PRIORITY: (vs. 14-15)

**Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity (vs. 14)...**

Over all the *virtues* listed...the one that Christians are to have and live...to **put on...is love.**

*“But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.”*

~I Corinthians 13:13

In the list of all the *virtues*...**love** is of *supreme importance* and is the one that brings **the perfect bond of unity**...the one that *holds everything else together.*

**Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful (vs. 15)...**

**Peace**...includes *both* the concept of an *agreement, treaty, or bond*...and that of an *attitude of rest or security.* It describes *a transcendent, God-given tranquility.*

**Rule**...Gk. *brabeuelo*, means *to make a decision.* It describes *the activity of an umpire* in enforcing the rules of an athletic contest. A word that is used only here in the New Testament.

**To which indeed you were called in one body**...the closer believers are to Christ and His likeness...the closer they are to each other. In interpersonal relationships, **peace** should **rule.** I.e. *Be a man of peace.*

Christ's followers who have **put on** the *virtues Paul* listed in **verses 12-14**, should know that in *every trying situation*, the *circumstances* are being used to *arbitrate* His **peace** that **rules in your heart.**

**Be thankful**...an attitude of *gratitude* and *thankfulness* contributes to an enjoyment of *spiritual peacefulness.* The opposite is where *bickering* and *arguing* makes for *agitation* and *tension.*

#### LESSONS WE NEED TO LEARN:

- When we become a believer and follower of Christ, there's more to the victorious Christian life than just **PUTTING OFF** the old nature. We must also **PUT ON** the new life. Righteous **IDENTITY** must issue in righteous **BEHAVIOR.**

- The key virtue to oneness with Christ...to unity in the body of Christ...is **LOVE.** *Agape love...sacrificial love.*
- The redeeming quality in all relationships is **FORGIVENESS**...just as Christ has forgiven you.