



The New You

Part Two – Colossians 3:12-17



The New Self

- ❑ The believer has been united with Christ through faith. Thus the believer has “died” with Christ (*Colossians 3:3a*) and been “raised with Christ” to a new life (*3:1a; 2:12-13*).¹
- ❑ Paul contrasts the believer’s old life with the new life (*3:7*). He says, “you have taken off your old self...and have put on the new self” (*3:9-10*).² The believer has a new identity “in Christ”.

Putting Off the Old

- ❑ Since the believer has a new position in Christ, he/she needs to “put off” old, bad attitudes and actions (*Colossians 3:5-11*). This was the subject of “The New You, Part One” (Lesson 7).

Putting On the New

- ❑ After telling believers what to “put off” (*3:5-11*), Paul tells them what to “put on” (*3:12-17*). He continues to use the language of changing clothing. Read Colossians 3:12-17.³

1. In verses 12 and 14, what does Paul tell believers to put on?⁴

- ❑ These attitudes are characteristic of Jesus Christ. Thus the words “clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ” (*Romans 13:14*) make a similar point. Though Paul is using a clothing metaphor, he is not talking about mere outward appearance. True change occurs in the heart, and only God can transform the heart.⁵

2. Verse 13 tells us how to put these attitudes into action. What must believers do? Why should they do it? *How* can they do it?⁶



📖 “Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (*3:13*).

¹ Paul says elsewhere, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me” (*Galatians 2:20a*). “We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead...we too may live a new life” (*Romans 6:4*). This new life is the resurrection life of Christ (*Colossians 2:4a*).

² When a person is united with Christ through faith, he/she has a new identity. “The old self” is the believer’s old identity – the fallen “in-Adam self”. “The new self” is the believer’s new identity – the redeemed “in-Christ self”.

³ Paul addresses the Colossian believers as “God’s chosen people (*eklectoi*), holy (*hagioi*) and dearly loved (from *agapaō*)” (*3:12*). In the Old Testament, these designations are applied to Israel. However, believers in Christ (whether Jew or Gentile) are the new people of God (see *1 Peter 2:9-10*).

⁴ In verse 12, “compassion” (*splanchna oiktirmous*) – literally “bowels of mercy” (KJV), thus NASB’s “heart of compassion”; “kindness” (*chrēstotēs*); “humility” (*tapeinophrosynē*) – a typical Christian virtue though often viewed negatively in the ancient world as servility or weakness; “gentleness” (*praütēta*) – closely related to humility; “patience” (*makrothymia*). In verse 14, “love (*agapē*), which binds them all together in perfect unity”. The virtues mentioned in verse 12 “attain their full power only when they are unified by and empowered by love” (Douglas Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmann, 2008], 282).

⁵ The virtues listed in this passage are “fruit of the Spirit” (see *Galatians 5:22-23*).

⁶ Believers must “bear with” or “put up with” (*anechomai*) one another. But we need to go farther. We need to “forgive” (*charizomai*) one another. The verb *charizomai* conveys the idea of forgiving others as an act of grace. Jesus Christ is the greatest example of, and the basis for, this type of forgiveness. As believers, we *ought* to forgive others because of what Christ did for us (*1 John 4:9-11*), and we *can* forgive others because we are united with the Source of love (*4:7*).

New Life in the Body

- ❑ Paul gives instructions about life in the “body” – that is, the body of Christ – the church (3:15).
 - ❑ As Christians, we are members of the body of Christ. Since believers “were called to peace”, we must “let the peace of Christ rule in [our] hearts” (3:15). In other words, a genuine attitude of Christ-centered peace should rule⁷ in our relationships with one another.
 - ❑ We must also “let the word of Christ dwell in [us] richly” (3:16). In other words, the word of Christ should “reside” or “makes its home” among us. The “word of Christ” probably refers to the teaching concerning Christ as well as the words of Christ himself.⁸
3. If the word of Christ is dwelling among us, it should be evident in our activities. What particular activities does Paul mention in verse 16?⁹

4. How does the singing of songs in church (or other Christian settings) affect *you*? How can we get the most out of our singing?



Whatever You Do

- ❑ Paul says, “And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks¹⁰ to God the Father through him” (Colossians 3:17, NIV).
- ❑ A Christian has a new identity in Christ. Thus whatever we say or do, we should “do it the name of Jesus”. All of our attitudes and actions should be in harmony with the character of our Lord. We should seek to be “clothed with the Lord Jesus” (Romans 13:14). When faced with a moral issue, we should ask, “What is the Christian thing to do? Can I do it ‘in the name of Jesus’?”

Reflection/Application

- Do you desire a new life? Newness of life is found in Christ. Do you need to receive him?
- If you are a true believer, you have already died with Christ, and been raised with Christ. You have a new life! Are your attitudes and actions in harmony with the character of your Lord Jesus Christ? What attitudes and actions do you need to “put off”? What attitudes and actions do you need to “put on”? Review this lesson, and commit to live according to verse 17 by God’s grace.

⁷ “rule” (*brabeuō*) means to “act as an umpire, arbitrate, decide”. The peace of Christ should be the decisive factor. The peace of Christ “should be given preference over competing concerns and interests” (Moo, 283).

⁸ *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2229. The “word of Christ” is recorded in the Bible.

⁹ Paul mentions teaching and admonishment. “Teach” (*didaskō*) refers to the positive presentation of Christian truth. “Admonish” (*noutheteō*) refers to the negative warning about the dangers of straying from the truth. Such instruction should be given “with all wisdom” – that is, wisely and tactfully. If the word of Christ has truly made its home in our hearts, we will respond positively to biblical teaching. Paul also mentions singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, which are one of the ways that believers are instructed in the word of Christ. Paul may or may not intend to list three different types of songs, so classification is questionable. “Psalms” (*psallō*) might refer to Old Testament psalms. “Hymns” (*hymnos*) might refer to songs written by Christians. “Spiritual songs” (*ōdē pneumatikais*) might refer to spontaneous songs prompted by the Holy Spirit – “songs from the Spirit” (TNIV).

¹⁰ Thankfulness is an important theme in Paul’s letter to the Colossians. He mentions thankfulness three times in verses 15-17: “... be thankful” (3:15). Sing “with gratitude in your hearts to God” (3:16). “...[give] thanks” (3:17).