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GROUPS Comerstone Chapel

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Colossians 3 – 4

“Taking Off the Old, Putting on the New”

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When we come to faith in Jesus Christ, God transforms our lives. At the moment we get saved, he does some supernatural things for us that we cannot do for ourselves. He forgives sin, he pours his love into our hearts, and he will often remove certain desires. There are, however, some things the Lord calls us to do for ourselves. In **Colossians 3:5, 8 and 12**, Paul makes it personal when he writes that we must take action in certain areas of our lives by putting certain things to death, ridding ourselves of certain things and clothing ourselves with Christ-like things. It’s easy to see that Paul is declaring that there is a personal responsibility that every Christian must assume when it comes to our behavior and conduct.

In the study last week, Pastor Gary emphasized the warnings Paul gave in the first two chapters: the pull of worldly philosophies and hyper-spirituality. Both of these can take Christians off course and away from the simplicity of being a follower of Jesus.

In **Colossians 3:5** Paul refers to another danger – the pull of the “old self.” Paul calls it the “*earthly nature*.” He indicates there’s a heavenly nature and an earthly nature. Believers will recognize the heavenly nature in their relationship with the Lord when they are with him. (**Colossians 3:4**) Yes, there will be a day when every Christian will be with Jesus in glory, but in the meantime, how are supposed to deal with our earthly nature? There are three things we must do: set your heart and mind on things above, take off your old self, and put on your new self.

Set Your Mind On Things Above

1. **Colossians 3:1–3** – “*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*”

2. Paul is writing about the salvation experience, which is a time of dying to self and a time when you're raised from the dead, as it were, to a new life in Christ.
3. As Christians we live a life that is "*hidden*" in Christ, in the sense that when we accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, all of the sinful things we did were covered by the blood of Jesus.¹
 - a. **Psalm 103:11-12** – "*For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*"
4. Paul's point is that since we've died to your old selves, been raised with Christ and our lives are now hidden with Christ, keep a heavenly focus!
5. Unfortunately, there is a pull toward a focus on earthly things that many Christians experience.
6. In **Philemon 3**, Paul commends Demas as one of his "*fellow workers*," but six years later, Paul said that Demas had deserted him "*because he loved this world.*" (**2 Timothy 4:10**)
7. **1 John 2:15** – "*Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*"

Take Off Your Old Self

8. The second and third things Paul instructs Christians to do are linked together; you cannot do one without the other.
9. **Colossians 3:9-10** – "*Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.*"
10. No matter who you are or what your background, nationality, race, etc., everyone must take off the old self and put on the new. (**Colossians 3:11**)
11. Notice that it's not just taking off the old!
12. The instructions don't include adding the new on top of the old but as ridiculous as that seems, some people think that's what's needed; Christianity is not about putting on another layer!
13. It's important to recognize that we're not supposed to negotiate, pacify or pamper that which belongs to our earthly nature; we're supposed to execute those things! (**Colossians 3:5**)
 - a. Sexual immorality²
 - b. Impurity

¹ The Hebrew word for atonement is *kaphar*, which means, "to cover."

² The KJV uses fornication. The Greek word is *porneia*, which refers to all forms of sexual sin.

- c. Lust³
 - d. Evil desires
 - e. Greed (this is really idolatry)
14. **Colossians 3:5–8** – *“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.”*
15. When you look at the fact that Paul said Christians are supposed to “put to death” and “rid yourselves,” it’s easy to see that he’s aware of the importance of a changed life.
16. We’re to get rid of the following:
- a. Anger (impulsive vengeance)
 - b. Rage⁴
 - c. Malice (the desire to injure)
 - d. Slander⁵
 - e. Filthy language

Put On Your New Self

17. **Colossians 3:12–14** – *“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”*
18. Here’s the list of things with which we’re to clothe ourselves:
- a. Compassion
 - b. Kindness
 - c. Humility
 - d. Gentleness
 - e. Patience
 - f. Forbearance⁶
 - g. Forgiveness (as the Lord forgives!)
 - h. Love⁷

³ This Greek word is only used three times in the New Testament, and it’s different from the typical word for lust. The word used here is *pathos*, which means, “an inordinate affection.” The reference is to homosexuality in **Romans 1:26**. The KJV translates this “*vile affections*” or “*shameful lusts*.”

⁴ The KJV uses the word *wrath*. This word indicates anger that’s taken to an elevated height. The Greek word *thumos* is used, meaning, “to breathe hard.”

⁵ The KJV uses the word *blasphemy*, which means, to speak evil of others, especially of God.

⁶ The KJV uses *forbearance*. The NIV uses the phrase “*bear with each other*.”

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read **Colossians 3:1–14** to provide an overview for this study.
3. Have you ever known anyone who was really focused on the things of heaven?
 - a. Did their heavenly focus make an earthly difference?
4. What does it look like to focus on heavenly things?
5. How do you live a life that is “*hidden*” in Christ?
6. Read and discuss **1 John 2:15**, focusing on the pull of the world and the need to set your mind on things above.
7. Are there people you know, like Demas in **Philemon 3**, who’ve lost sight of heaven and a relationship with the Lord?
 - a. What are some of the specifics in their story?
 - b. What can you learn from their story?
8. Has there been a time in your life when you attempted to just put on the old coat over the “Jesus coat”?
9. Spend time talking about the ways some Christians pacify, pamper and negotiate with “the old self.”
10. Read and discuss Paul’s lists of things to execute and things that must be gotten rid of. (See #13 and #16 above)
 - a. Are there certain things in these lists that you’ve seen the Lord help you conquer?
 - b. What is it about the things that you struggle with that make it so difficult to conquer?
11. Read and discuss the list of “new clothes” Christians are supposed to put on.
 - a. How are you doing with these?
 - b. Are you becoming more Christ-like and do you notice the difference when you take a look at your life?
12. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to point out the things that need to be put to death in each person’s life, so that they would go about the business of intentionally starving them

⁷ The Greek word is *agape*. *Harper’s Bible Dictionary* – **agape** (ah-gah’pay), the principal Greek word used for ‘love’ in the [New Testament]. Of the three words for love in the Hellenistic world, it was the least common. The other two words were eros, which meant sexual love, and philos, which meant friendship, although their meanings could vary according to the context in which they appeared. Agape, because it was used so seldom and was so unspecific in meaning, could be used in the [New Testament] to designate the unmerited love God shows to humankind in sending his son as suffering redeemer. When used of human love, it means selfless and self-giving love. (Libronix Bible Software)

to death; the Lord to help them become more like Jesus as they put on the “new clothes” that every Christian should wear; thank the Lord that they’re not what they used to be and that he is working in them and through them for his glory.