

Further Bible Study Questions

- A) I find it amazing that the “new self” characteristics of Colossians 3:12-17 get so mixed up with the “old self” (read Colossians 3:5-9) characteristics. Have you noticed that when the “new self” characteristics take a greater place in your life, the “old self” seems to scream a little louder and insist on more attention? How do you handle the pressure of “kicking the addiction” to the “old self” and establishing the right relationship of the “new self” in your life? If you could be freed of any stubborn “old self” characteristic, what would it be? If you could implement any “new self” characteristic, what would it be? What would it take for this to occur?
- B) Oftentimes, Christianity is explained in very individualistic terms. It is “personal salvation,” and “individual sanctification.” We are often asked who God is “in our lives.” What changes will “you make” in “your walk” with Jesus...? Interestingly enough, all of Paul’s descriptions of the “new self” (re-read Colossians 3:12-17) have an outward expression. They are all designed for the community, not the individual. The fullest expression of each Christian virtue cannot be achieved in solitude, but only in community. Yet, for many of us, we don’t like to interact with others until we are a “completed package” -- kind of “all-polished-up” for public consumption. Is this fair? Is it possible? Can the virtues of the Christian life be developed privately or must they be developed in the same way they are manifested, in community? What would have to change in your life to allow for “communal transformation?”
- C) We have been pushing up against an underlying theme for the past several weeks which could be simply summarized as “all efforts to justify my relationship with Jesus Christ through self-effort or selfishness are worthless.” Whether it is being captured by false teaching, the well-intentioned mixing of works with faith (legalism), or expressing faith in Christ without any responsibility for personal transformation (licentiousness) -- there is only one true path to “living the life” of Christianity. But, what is the difference in living the authentic Christian life of Colossians 3:12-17 and living the false life of Colossians 2:8-3:11? Can you tell the difference in others? Can you tell the difference in yourself? How do you know for sure your faith in Christ is authentic?

Give It Like You Got It

Long Beach Alliance Church • September 23rd, 2007 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**SO, AS THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN CHOSEN OF GOD, HOLY AND BELOVED, 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.
~COLOSSIANS 3:12-13 (NASB)**

1) Don't Be Fooled By Paths Of "Lazy Grace"

- A) First Key Warning: **Don't Be Captured By False Teaching!** Earlier in his letter to the followers of Christ in Colossae (Colossians 1:2ff), the Apostle Paul warns about believing the “traditions of men” & “empty deceptions” (2:8).
- B) Second Key Warning: **Crucify Legalism!** Paul calls on Christians to experience dissatisfaction with human rules and regulations (the earthly), and rather find satisfaction in following Christ (the heavenly), (2:16-18, 23).
- C) Third Key Warning: **Strip Away Licentiousness!** Paul calls on Christians to shed the actions of the “old self” and put on the “new self” in a continuing renovation into the image of Jesus Christ (3:5-11).

2) Authentic Living From The Heart

- A) After setting aside these "lazy" and misleading responses to Christ, Paul gently reminds Christians (the chosen), of their place in Christ (the holy), and their position in God's eyes (the beloved) (3:12).
- B) In the same specific fashion in which false teaching, legalism, and licentiousness were addressed, Paul describes "putting on" the "heart" of the true believer (3:12-16):
- 1) **Compassion** ~ a "heart" (the bowels, insides) marked by the characteristic of "compassion." In the same way that compassion is characteristic of God we are to be characterized by compassion, mercy, merciful deeds.
 - 2) **Kindness** ~ incomprehensible kindness extended to all people. Desiring the salvation of all sinners, not their death (Romans 2:4, 11:22).
 - 3) **Humility** ~ combines the twin themes of humiliation, fearing God, being meek and lowly in light of God's greatness, and exaltation, furthering/extending the fame and awe of God in the world.
 - 4) **Gentleness** ~ comforting those who need mercy, especially the poor. In Scripture, the "poor" are the oppressed, cheated, or exploited. Especially involves our attitude when we encounter those who have less (spiritually and physically).
 - 5) **Patience/Forbearance** ~ long suffering which doesn't react/respond with hostility or a desire for vengeance when confronted with exasperating behavior. The original language gives special emphasis that this is a characteristic which manifests itself especially within the church family.
 - 6) **Forgiveness** ~ to give favor to another, especially when undeserved. The basis of forgiveness is the reconciling work of Jesus Christ (cf. Matthew 6:12).

- 7) **Unifying Love** ~ in one sense, this is the "crowning" characteristic which capstones all the other virtues. However, the love to which Paul refers here is meant to dissolve and prevent factions between people, especially in the church. This is unifying love (lit. "ligament love"), which breaks down walls and is meant to be an outward characteristic, not simply an inward "state of the heart."
- 8) **Umpiring Peace** ~ this is the peace which comes from a relationship with Jesus Christ and acts as a judge (lit., umpires) in disputes between people. In the same way which Christ gives us peace despite our incompetence, we are to be peaceful in unity with one another.
- 9) **Thankfulness** ~ Paul's idea here is not just an attitude of thanksgiving (although included), but an outward expression of thanksgiving in relationships, life, and worship. "Be thankful" means expressing gratitude for what God has done and what He has provided in all aspects of life, especially in devotion and worship.
- 10) **Word Focus** ~ the Word (Scripture/Christ) is to "dwell" (live/abide) in His followers. The Word is to be the basis of how we interact and are transformed. We are being conformed to the content of Jesus, His Word.
- 11) **Worship Focus** ~ the Word is accompanied by outward singing worship which supports and instructs the follower of Christ with the full bevy of Spirit-led singing. While there is not sharp distinguishment between the three, "psalms" seem to refer to Older Testament songs (song of praise), "hymns" (expression of praise to God/Christ in Newer Testament), and "spiritual songs" (in which the acts of God are exalted and praised). Taken together, they represent the full range of God-oriented worship.

3) God Has Given It To You, Give It Back To Everyone!

- A) Summarizing the life of the follower of Christ, Paul calls each of us to place every thought and action of our lives under the name of Jesus Christ. Being "Jesus with skin on" for His church and the whole world! Like a signature which authenticates the author, our lives bear Christ's name (3:17)!