

**Put on the Clothes of Unity!**  
**Col 3:12-17**

**I. Review: THROW AWAY the CLOTHES of DISUNITY**

**Col 3:8** But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, *and* abusive speech from your mouth. **9** Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, **10** 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— **11** *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.

**A. The Requirement**

1. But now you also put them all aside
  - a) = Clothing metaphor -Take off / never wear again!
2. The list!
  - a) ATTITUDES of Disunity: Anger, Wrath, Malice
  - b) ACTIONS of Disunity: Slander, Abusive Speech, Lying
  - c) Work from Inside → out! (previously outside→ In)

**B. The REASONS**

Col 3:9 Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, 10 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—

1. Reasons = You're dead to sin / You're SAVED and becoming like Christ!
  - a) Lying is associated with your old life!
  - b) You're becoming like Christ!
2. who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—
  - a) "who is" = the new self
  - b) "being renewed" is a VERY rich word!
    - (1) This renewal is what we call "sanctification" or "progressive sanctification"
    - (2) What's the PURPOSE of this renewal?
  - c) to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—
    - (a) = deep knowledge of Jesus Christ!
    - (2) Point-We're being transformed into the image of Jesus Christ
    - (3) BUT – overall POINT of the v.9-10 is what?
      - (a) Key – what do you get with a full, complete, super-deep knowledge of Christ?
      - (b) A: YOU KNOW HIS WILL
      - (c) Then you know That this stuff must go AND Christ-like stuff must be put on!

**C. The RESULT: No MORE PREJUDICES!**

11 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.

## 1. The Context:

Col 3:11 a renewal in which there is no distinction between

- a) Paul In the new man/body of Christ, THERE IS NO DISTINCTION IN HUMAN TERMS
- b) Removal of ALL HUMAN barriers / classifications / etc.
- c) NO PREJUDICE!

## 2. The Many Prejudices:

- a) Racial Prejudices: Greek and Jew,
  - (1) Summarize all the Scripture we studied: SINCE...
  - (2) God has created ALL MEN, ALL NATIONS
  - (3) God has created ONE NEW MAN with NO RACIAL distinction
  - (4) God has ESTABLISHED PEACE for all believers
  - (5) God has PUT ALL Christians INTO the body of CHRIST
  - (6) THEN – WHO ARE WE TO ALLOW PREJUDICE IN US as believers?!!!
- b) Religious Prejudices: circumcised and uncircumcised,
  - (1) SAME GROUPS BUT with RELIGIOUS VIEW
  - (2) = Religious Categorization from a Jew's Point-of-view
- c) Cultural Prejudices: barbarian, Scythian
  - (1) These two are NOT in CONTRAST to each other
    - (a) They GO TOGETHER but Scythian BUILDS ON “barbarian”
    - (b) Barbarian = FOREIGNERS WITH a negative connotation of UNCIVILIZED
  - (2) “Scythian” = LOWEST of the Barbarians!
  - (3) Barbarian wasn't a nation, Scythians were nomads – NOT a nation
    - (a) = PEOPLE DIFFERENT FROM US! = CULTURAL differences!
  - (4) THE GOSPEL BREAKS ALL CULTURAL barriers!
- d) Social Prejudices: slave and freeman
  - (1) Remember – Most of Roman world
    - (a) Either Roman or SLAVE to a Roman
    - (b) ALL could be a slave – Doctors, Lawyers, Business owners, Laborers, families, etc.
  - (2) Best example: Philemon and Onesimus
- e) Paul is using Slave/Master as representative of SOCIAL BARRIERS!
  - (1) NO class distinctions in Body of Christ!
  - (2) No Rich/Poor, No Upper Class, Middle Class, Lower Class

## D. The All and in All Christ

Col 3:11 ...but Christ is all, and in all.

1. Literally: “but – the all and in all – Christ”
2. “but” = Strongest form of Contrast to the preceding list!

3. “the all and in all – Christ”
  - a) “Christ” is in apposition to the phrase = means they are equal/say the same thing
  - b) TWO equally important phrases here!
  - c) English robs us of the word “all” used twice here!
  - d) First “all” is Neuter gender
    - (1) Refers to Christ
    - (2) He is ALL we need
    - (3) He is where ALL spiritual riches are found
    - (4) Everything we need is in Him/from Him
    - (5) HE IS OUR “ALL”
  - e) Second “all” is Masculine gender
    - (1) Refers back to the list of types of people groups!
    - (2) He is IN ALL members of the body of Christ – IN ALL Christians
    - (3) Regardless of RACE, RELIGIOUS UPBRINGING, CULTURE, SOCIAL STATUS – Christ is IN ALL CHRISTIANS!
    - (4) The amazing Mystery of the Spiritual Union of Christ in US!
4. POINT: ALL Differences DISAPPEAR IN HIM
5. Spiritual maturity = LOVE / ACCEPT ALL Christians.
  - a) There is NO COLOR, culture, etc. differences in Christian life of the function of the body of Christ
  - b) ALL DISUNITY by people groups are GONE!

## II. Col 3:12-17 – PUT ON the Clothes of UNITY

Col 3:12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. 14 Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17 Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

### **A. Main Themes**

1. Centrality of Jesus Christ just like every other passage!
  - a) Because this section deals with manifesting the reality of the life in Christ into the life of the body.
2. Passage talks about UNITY
  - a) Common theme in the prison epistles. Especially-
    - (1) Ephesians 4:1-16 is all about unity
    - (2) Philemon – Master & slave

- (3) Though the theme here is unity –nowhere directly commanded in v.12-17 AND
- (4) There is no directly stated problem that Paul is addressing about disunity.

b) Paul covers our UNITY –

(1) First Our Position (V.12a) then Our PRACTICE (v.12b-17).

(2) Within our PRACTICE he talks about

- (a) Our CORPORATE WALK in V.12-15
- (b) Our CORPORATE WORSHIP in V.16.
- (c) Our CORPORATE WHATEVER in V.17.

3. Last major Theme: Thankfulness – 3:15, 16,17.

### III. Our Positional Unity

Col 3:12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, ...

**A. First thing that unites us as Christians – we are all the chosen, holy, beloved of God.**

- 1. We are united by our POSITION in Christ
- 2. Chosen = elect
  - a) Ephesians – chosen before the foundation of the world...
- 3. Holy – set apart for God
  - a) Col. 1:2; 1:4; 1:12; 1:22; 1:26; 3:12
- 4. Beloved of God
  - a) perfect tense: I am a beloved one of God
  - b) He loved me and the results of that love continue on and on.
  - c) I stand in the state of being loved by God – being beloved of God.
  - d) Jesus Christ is the Son of God's love and
    - (1) We are beloved of God
    - (2) We are also the objects of God's love

**B. =UNITED in our POSITION in Christ – we are God's chosen, holy and beloved.**

**C. Notice how Paul "sets us up"!**

- 1. How can you NOT want to PUT ON whatever follows after being told WHO we are!
- 2. We know from Ephesians that we were chosen from the before the foundation of the world, right?
- 3. SO, If you do not PUT ON the following things, YOU ARE IN VIOLATION OF THE ETERNAL PLAN OF GOD SET IN MOTION BEFORE THE WORLD BEGAN.

### IV. OUR PRACTICAL UNITY

**A. Our CORPORATE WALK (vv.12-15)**

- 1. = 2<sup>nd</sup> half of metaphor of clothing from 3:8-11
- 2. v.12 = clothes we must now put on – clothes that match our new POSITION.
  - 12 ..., put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;
  - a) Heart of compassion
    - (1) Hebrew mind always gave a substantial concrete reality to anything that was a Greek philosophical concept.
    - (a) They related everything to an emotional response that was physical

- (b) = literally "bowels of compassion"
  - (2) = gut-level feeling of compassion.
  - (3) This was not a society of compassion – sick, old, whatever, were left outside the city to die.
  - (4) Whole new ball game this Christianity!
  - b) Kindness
    - (1) = your fellow Christian's good is as important as your own good!
  - c) Humility – used negatively earlier in the book
    - (1) No word of humility in classical Greek – They didn't believe in it.
    - (2) New concept from Jesus Christ! – Be humble!
  - d) Gentleness
    - (1) =willingness to suffer injury rather than inflict it
    - (2) "If someone's going to get hurt in this deal, let it be me!"
  - e) Patience or longsuffering
    - (1) Never lose patience with anybody.
    - (2) Just consider God's patience towards yourself and you'll get the picture!
    - (3) Paul told Timothy – "if you don't think Jesus Christ is patient, let me give you my testimony – I ran around killing Christians!" (1 Tim 1:16).
  - f) Do you think these give a good start on unity?
  - g) One writer: this list contains things we do to put ourselves “under” others – to put others before us.
3. Then look at verse 13...
- 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.
- a) Bearing with one another
    - (1) Paul doesn't say there were complaints.
    - (2) Simple test to determine if relationship problems are going to occur –
      - (a) count the people in the room –
      - (b) count > 1 you'll eventually have problems.
      - (c) With some people all you need is one to have problems!
    - (3) literally "hold yourself back from one another"
  - b) Forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone –
    - (1) Literally: “gracious forgiveness”
    - (2) = Grace = undeserved action toward GUILTY
  - c) just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you
    - (1) How has the Lord forgiven you? COMPLETELY FOR EVERYTHING
4. THEN look at V.14!
- 14 Beyond all these things put on (the) love, which is the perfect bond of unity.
- a) Greek: BEYOND ALL THESE THINGS THE LOVE.
  - b) Paul – “If there's one thing that you and I need within the body of Christ – within the place where unity MUST dominate – we MUST ALL put on love.

- c) First – notice the article: THE LOVE.  
 (1) = specific kind of love – THIS kind of love.  
 (2) What kind of love is this?  
 (3) This is Christ's LOVE.
- d) This kind of love is (NAS) the perfect bond of unity.  
 (1) This is one of the biggest issues in Colossians  
 (2) Literally the word of bond is sundesmos (used before as ligaments).  
 (3) So you could say love is the “ligaments that tie the body together” – love ties a body together (cf. 2:19)  
 (4) Real meaning is [“the love which produces maturity”](#)  
 (5) = Love is a binding that leads to maturity.
5. V.15  
[15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.](#)
- a) “eirene” (peace) root for "serene and serenity" from.
- b) Peace  
 (1) Greek Peace: agreement, pact, treaty, bond  
 (2) Hebrew: attitude of peace, rest, security  
 (3) Both present here.  
 (4) Greek: Let the decision making side of you consider who's side your on!  
 (a) Jesus and this body are on the same team – together in peace.  
 (5) Hebrew: Will it give peace to the body of Christ, rest to my congregation, security and rest knowing that Jesus Christ is in this decision too?  
 (6) Facts and feelings  
 (a) Is every decision consistent with FACT that Jesus Christ and this body are on same side?  
 (b) Will it leave this body with a deep and abiding security in Jesus?  
 (7) This is peace in the context of the body- not the individual
- c) [“rule”](#) = [“umpire.”](#) = COMMAND
- d) [“to which indeed you were called in one body”](#)  
 (1) Tells us this is CORPORATE PEACE  
 (2) “one body” = body of Christ = the Church
- e) = “Let the peace of Christ be the umpire in the body of Christ = the church”
- f) Remember – Christ only created ONE body –  
 (1) it's His, HE CREATED it  
 (2) The peace of Christ is the umpire – NOT us.
- g) Just a couple of words on peace...  
 (1) Bible begins with peace in Garden of Eden.  
 (2) The Bible ends with peace in eternity.

- (3) However, The peace on earth in the garden was interrupted when man sinned (important point - sin interrupts peace),
- (4) JESUS CHRIST made PEACE a reality again at THE CROSS.
  - (a) Both objectively (Rom 5:1)
  - (b) And Subjectively (John 14:27 peace).
  - (c) Jesus Christ is our peace.
- (5) You chart the spiritual history of mankind charted based on the theme of peace.
  - (a) Peace with God
  - (b) Peace between men.
- (6) Biblical peace is Christ's peace.
- (7) BIBLICAL PEACE IS A PEACE THAT IS NOT AFFECTED BY CIRCUMSTANCES BUT RATHER AFFECTS THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
- (8) IT MAKES NO SENSE IN CIRCUMSTANCES BECAUSE IT'S NOT RELATED TO THE CIRCUMSTANCES.
  - (a) Why Because it is THE PEACE OF CHRIST!
- h) [V.15...AND BE THANKFUL!](#)
  - (1) Thankfulness is a major theme in Colossians ESPECIALLY IN THIS SECTION! (3:15,16,17).
  - (2) Remember the context – this means to publicly express thanks in the assembly of believers
    - (a) Thanking CHRIST for WHO He is and WHAT He has done and HAS PROMISED TO DO.
    - (b) V.15 = [thankful](#) for the peace of Christ.
      - (i) Objective peace obtained at the cross.
      - (ii) Subjective peace in individual believers and in the body of Christ.
  - (3) When the body of Christ is continually thankful
    - (a) For who Christ is and What Christ has done
    - (b) And What Christ is doing through each person in the congregation
  - (4) THERE'S BOUND TO BE PEACE IN THAT BODY!

### ***B. Our CORPORATE WORSHIP (v.16)***

1. Now our PRACTICAL UNITY Focuses in on a particular aspect of the body of Christ – the collective, corporate body. = WORSHIP.
2. WORSHIP = area that we don't have a nice clear section in the Bible that says "Here, do it this way."
3. V.16
  - [Col 3:16](#) Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
  - a) First notice WHO he is talking to –
    - (1) Who does the [word dwell richly](#) in? ALL OF YOU

- (2) Who is [teaching](#) and [admonishing](#) – ALL OF YOU.
- (3) This doesn't say "the teacher" or "the admonisher" or "the elders" or "the pastor"
- (4) THIS IS HOW THE BODY – ALL OF THE BODY is TO WORSHIP.
- b) "[Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you](#)"
  - (1) "[let](#)" – NOT make! BUT = COMMAND!
  - (2) "[the word of Christ](#)" = word of God revealed in Bible.
  - (3) "[dwell](#)" – make its home in you! BTY you do that by obeying it!
    - (a) At home =The place where it is comfortable
      - (i) Place it wants to be /NO STRANGER!
      - (ii) Can you say the word of Christ is "AT HOME" in our church?
    - (b) Quote "this is ONLY GOING TO happen WHEN Church ACCEPTS and UNDERSTANDS THE AUTHORITY THE WORD HAS BECAUSE OF THE AUTHORITY JESUS CHRIST HAS."
  - (4) "[in all wisdom teaching](#)" – Key here
    - (a) [Wisdom](#) has been a big theme in Colossians.
    - (b) Paul's Col 1 prayer was for wisdom –that they would know and understand God's word.
  - (5) ALL [TEACHING](#) COMES FROM THE WORD OF CHRIST – Church functions by the WORD!
  - (6) "[admonishing](#)" – SAME THING – ONLY ACCORDING TO THE WORD!
  - (7) [Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs](#).
    - (a) There might have been a distinction then but who knows now
      - (i) [Psalms](#) – most like the psalter.
      - (ii) [Hymns](#) – rare word. Probably early Christian music.
      - (iii) [Spiritual songs](#). Who knows. Best "guess" = reflected personal testimony.
    - (b) Important
      - (i) They were based on the word of God so that they were useful for teaching and admonishing.
      - (ii) This is the congregation musically responding to the WORD OF CHRIST!
      - (iii) The music isn't primary here
        - (a) *The word of Christ is first*
        - (b) *The teaching and admonishing are second.*
        - (c) *The music is ONE WAY the teaching and admonishing occurred.*

### **C. Our CORPORATE WHATEVER (V.17)**

17 Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

1. Do you notice the theme of Jesus Christ here?
2. In a broad sense, it sums up chapter 3 as Paul has talked about our words (v.8) and our deeds (v.5), etc.
3. However, it does kinda follow verse 16!
4. Paul is saying – "Don't just be a Sunday Christian!"
5. Remember the analogy of the Sunday dinner Christian
  - a) A fast fading tradition in the world is the "Sunday dinner" where mom made a big meal, everyone dressed nice and you all ate in the dining room with the special plates and table cloth, etc.
  - b) You had to look nice, be nice to your sister, say please for everything. Remember that?
  - c) No one in right mind would sit down and just have one huge meal and then not eat again until next Sunday!
  - d) Well, that's what a lot of Christians do!
    - (1) They come home on Sunday and
    - (2) Bible literally goes in the closet with their Sunday clothes.
    - (3) By Sunday afternoon you'd swear they'd NEVER been to church in their lives!
    - (4) Rest of the week is lived entirely without Christ.
6. Paul here goes beyond worship to whatever – this is our CORPORATE WHATEVER!
7. All in the NAME of our Lord Jesus
  - a) This is doing all
    - (1) Under the AUTHORITY of Jesus Christ
      - (a) Every decision and action taken by the church is under the AUTHORITY of Jesus Christ.
    - (2) and AS an AMBASSADOR of Jesus Christ.
      - (a) We are His representatives
      - (b) His reputation is at STAKE IN EVERYTHING WE DO.
  - b) Paul is tell the CORPORATE body to make Jesus Christ's name THE ISSUE in everything we do.
8. giving thanks through Him to God the Father
  - a) Again the theme of THANKFULNESS!
  - b) Have you ever thought about the fact that Thankfulness is a sure way to identify a Christian?
  - c) Romans 1:21 – everyone else refuses to honor God or give Him thanks – EVEN THOUGH EVERY MAN KNOWS GOD.
  - d) You could probably say that Paul covers the theme of "thanks" in his writings about as much or more than anything but the theme of Christ!

**V. Theme of Christ again and again and again...****A. Paul has just covered our UNITY as a body–**

1. First Our POSITION (V.12a) –chosen of God –holy and beloved.
2. Then Our PRACTICE (v.12b-17).
  - (1) Our CORPORATE WALK in V.12-15
    - (a) All of those things to “Put on”
    - (b) Then above all those things, “the love”
    - (c) Then the Peace of Christ dwelling amongst us
  - (2) Our CORPORATE WORSHIP in V.16. – the word of Christ
  - (3) Our CORPORATE WHATEVER in V.17. – Giving thanks for all things through Him to the Father.

**B. What has Paul just told us? PUT ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND MAKE NO PROVISION FOR THE FLESH! (ROM 13:14).**