

What to Put On

Colossians 3:12-17

¹²Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.

¹⁴Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.

¹⁶Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts.

¹⁷And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.

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We are called upon to live as the people of God, the Church. There is a saying,

To live above with saints in love
That will be grace and glory
To live below with saints we know
That's another story.

Why is so hard to live in peace and harmony with other Christians? One reason certainly is that we are all imperfect people who do things to hurt others, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Paul speaks of people "who offend," this literally means they do something for which they legitimately could be blamed.

When that occurs we need to deal with it. In our previous study on *Biblical Forgiveness*, we learned much about how to repair relationships through true confession of fault and through forgiveness. Paul here addresses some of the qualities that are need.

What should we put on (3:12-13)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

How would you define each of these?

What is true about us that is the reason for doing this (3:12-13)?

We have been chosen as God's holy people (1:2). It is to a high honor that we have been selected (3:1). We, as well as the person who offends us, are God's beloved ones. God loves us both and wants us to learn to get along as His children.

These three terms are a description of Israel as the people of God. Here Paul applies them to a church composed of both Jews and Gentiles! How can these two groups who have different customs, religious ideas, and diets get along in one church?

What is the most important trait to put on (3:14)?

The verb translated "*put on*" in verse 12 governs not only the five qualities, but also the supreme quality of love. Without love for one another, the church will not stand together. Offenses will happen at nearly every church supper and the resentment will build until it explodes the group apart.

What is to rule in each of our hearts (3:15)?

The word for rule is used of an official in an athletic contest who chooses the winner. When there is a conflict in the church, peace is to be the winner. This does not mean that we don't confront the offender and talk it out, perhaps involving another, maybe even the whole congregation, but at the end of the day all parties should work for peace.

How would they have understood the expression, "the word of Christ" (3:16; compare 1:5, 25)?

This is the only place in the New Testament which refers to the "*word of Christ*." The expression the "*word of the Lord*" is equivalent and also refers to the Gospel (*Acts 8:25; 12:24; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Thessalonians 3:1*). They would have certainly included not only the facts of the Gospel, Christ's death and resurrection, but also the teachings of Christ and about Christ along with His interpretation of the Scriptures.

How were they to use the word (3:16)?

Where does "thankfulness" fit in with all this (3:15-17)?

How should the fact that you represent the Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father effect what you say and do (3:17)?