

# Colossians 3:12-17

## Godly Living

### May 3, 2009

#### I. Looking Upward

As in several of the letters of the NT, Col. 3:12-17 also uses clothing as an analogy for behavior.

How can earth-bound Christians be holy?

**1 Peter 2:9-10**

**9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.**

NIV

Note that we have some of the same ingredients of the Spirit as in:

**Gal 5:22-23**

**22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.**

NIV

Now we see how this fruit should manifest in the lives of the Colossians:

- Imitating Christ's compassionate, forgiving attitude (3:12-13)
- Letting love guide their lives (3:14)
- Letting the peace of God rule in their hearts (3:15)
- Always being thankful (3:15)
- Keeping God's Word in them at all times (3:16)
- Living as Jesus Christ's representative (3:17)

#### II. God's Chosen People

**Col 3:12**

**12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.**

NIV

What is required for the Christian to show compassion? Kindness? Humility? Gentleness? Patience?

The words have these meanings (per Life Application Commentary):

Compassion: Genuine sensitivity and heartfelt sympathy for the needs of other. (NOTE: Don't let it put you off, but "compassion" is really "bowels of compassion.")

Kindness: Acting charitably, benevolently toward others, as God has done toward us (also in Gal. 5:22-23).

Humility:	An attitude of self-esteem that is neither puffed up with pride, nor self-deprecating.
Gentleness:	Humble, considerate of others, submissive to God and his word.
Patience:	Long-suffering, or putting up with people who irritate (a lot) (also in Gal. 5:22-23)

Why should a Christian show these traits?

### III. Forgiving

**Col 3:13**

**13 Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.**

NIV

The sections on forgiveness in the NT are usually quite short, such as this one. There is not much to be stated. If someone wants forgiveness, one must forgive. What does “bear with each other” have to do with forgiving?

### IV. Love

**Col 3:14**

**14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.**

NIV

Love is always at the head of lists of important Christian traits, such as in this well-known ending to the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians:

**1 Cor 13:13**

**13 And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.**

NIV

There are many wonderful passages concerning love. What are some of your favorite ones? Describe “love” as expressed in the NT in your own words.

How does love result in perfect unity? Part of the answer is:

**Prov 10:12**

**12 Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs.**

NIV

### V. Peace of Christ

**Col 3:15**

**15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.**

NIV

“Dwell” (or “rule” as translated here) means to reside permanently in one heart, the center of one’s existence.

If the whole body has the peace of Christ ruling in their hearts, then it is incredibly easy for the body to be united. With this peace, is it possible for the body to be disunited?

How do you gain this peace? What does being thankful have to do with it?

## **VI. Word of Christ**

**Col 3:16**

**16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.**  
NIV

“The word of Christ” refers to the gospel. The entire body is supposed to help teach and build up each other. “Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” are part of the way in which we learn.

What does gratitude have to do peace of Christ, or the word of Christ?

## **VII. Whatever You Do**

**Col 3:17**

**17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**  
NIV

The Christian leads his life for the Lord Jesus, not for himself. This verse provides the guiding principles for all our interactions with one another. The little bracelets are correct when they pose the question of what would Jesus do...but a better question is what would Jesus have us do?

“Be thankful (verse 15), “gratitude in your hearts” (verse 16), and “giving thanks to God (verse 17)! Do you think that God through Paul’s writing wants us to learn something from this passage?

Following this verse in the Col. 3:18ff passage, Paul writes concerning how wives, husbands, children, slaves, and masters should behave toward each other. Clearly, the guiding point is that we do not put our rights first, but rather that we put Jesus first. Note Eph. 5:22 which points out that we must submit ourselves to each other.

## **VIII. Question**

Do you hold a grudge against anyone? Are you irritated by what others do at church? What makes you happy and what makes you sad at church?

How can we more loving and thankful to those around us?