

Colossians 3:9-17  
Putting on the New Man - 4

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## Introduction

Christians must dress themselves spiritually in accordance with their new identity. They have died with Christ and risen to new life. Salvation produces a two-sided obligation for believers. Negatively, they must throw off the garment of the old, sinful lifestyle. Positively, they must put on the lifestyle of the new man. To do that, they must understand the **position**, **progress**, **partnership**, **performance**, **perfection**, and **priorities** of the new man.

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# Colossians 3:12-17

Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*. <sup>14</sup> But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. <sup>15</sup> And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. <sup>16</sup> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. <sup>17</sup> And whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

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## The Perfection of the New Man

Colossians 3:14

But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

Verses 12-13 gave a list of things that the believer is to put on, “Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.”

In keeping with the idea of putting on clothes, **love** is the belt or sash that pulls **all these things** together. Love is the most important moral quality in the believer’s life, for it is the very glue that produces unity in the church.

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Believers will never enjoy mutual fellowship and unity unless they love one another. In fact, the way to sum up the commands of 3:12–13 is to say, “Love one another.” Paul said in **Romans 13:10** that “Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.” To try to practice the virtues of 3:12–13 apart from love is legalism. They must flow from love, which in turn is a fruit of the Spirit-filled life (Gal. 5:22). Nothing is acceptable to God if not motivated by love (1 Cor. 13:1–3). Love is what keeps our sins from destroying the unity between believers.

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## The Priorities of the New Man

Colossians 3:15

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Paul concludes his look at the qualities that should mark the lifestyle of the new man by giving three priorities. They are the outermost garments of the new man, those which cover all the others. The new man is concerned with the **peace** of Christ, the **word** of Christ, and the **name** of Christ.

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## The Priorities of the New Man – Peace of Christ

Colossians 3:15

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

The Greek word peace includes both the concept of an agreement, pact, treaty, or bond, and that of an attitude of rest or security. Both aspects are in view here. Objectively, **believers are at peace with God.**

“Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). The war between the believer and God is over, and the treaty was paid for by the blood of Christ. Because of that, **believers are at rest, and secure.** The word translated “God” is actually “Christ” as translated in the Old King James and most other newer versions. Paul calls it the peace of Christ because it is the peace He brings (cf. John 14:27; Eph. 2:14).

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Rule is a word used to describe the activity of an umpire in deciding the outcome of an athletic contest. The **peace of Christ guides believers in making decisions.** When faced with a choice, the believer should consider two factors. First, **is it consistent with the fact that he and Christ are now at peace** and thus on the same side? Does it show that oneness with the Lord that is the believer’s possession?

(1Corinthians 6:17–18). Second, **will it leave him with a deep and abiding peace in his heart?** These two factors are also the two greatest deterrents to sin in the believer’s life. Sin offends Christ, with whom he is at peace, and thereby shatters the rest and security in his heart.

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**Peace** is not only objective and subjective, but also **relational**. Believers **were called** to live in peace **in one body**. Individuals who have peace with Christ and in their own hearts will live in unity and harmony with each other.

To maintain a peaceful heart, one must **be thankful**. Thankfulness is a constant theme in Colossians (cf. 1:3, 12; 2:7; 3:15, 16, 17; 4:2). Gratitude comes naturally to believers in response to all God has done (Eph. 5:20; Phil. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:18; Heb. 13:15), whereas ingratitude marks unbelievers (Rom. 1:21). A spirit of humble gratitude toward God will inevitably affect our relations with others. Peace and gratitude are thus closely linked.

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## The Priorities of the New Man – Word of Christ

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

The **word of Christ** refers to the revelation He brought into the world, which is Scripture. Peace and thankfulness, as well as unity, love, and all the required virtues, flow from a mind controlled by Scripture. **Dwell** means “to live in,” or “to be at home.” Paul calls upon believers to let the Word take up residence and be at home in their lives. **Richly** could also be translated “abundantly or extravagantly rich.” The truths of Scripture should permeate every aspect of the believer’s life and govern every thought, word, and deed.

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The Word dwells in us when we **hear it** (Matt. 13:9), **handle it** (2 Tim. 2:15), **hide it** (Ps. 119:11), and **hold it fast** (Phil. 2:16). To do those things, the Christian must **read, study, and live the Word. To let the word of Christ richly dwell** is identical to being filled with the Spirit (cf. Eph. 5:18). The Word in the heart and mind is the handle by which the Spirit turns the will. Colossians 3:18–4:1 is a parallel passage to Ephesians 5:19–6:9.

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Paul then mentions two specific results of the Word of Christ dwelling in the believer, one positive and the other negative: **with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another. Teaching** is the impartation of positive truth. **Admonishing** is the negative side of teaching. It means to warn people of the consequences of their behavior. Both are the result of a life overflowing with the Word of Christ.

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Having the Word of Christ richly dwell in us produces not only information, but also emotion. It generates **psalms and hymns and spiritual songs**, and **singing with grace in your hearts to God**.

**Psalms** were taken from the Old Testament book of Psalms. They sang psalms put to music, much as we do today. **Hymns** were expressions of praise to God. It is thought that some portions of the New Testament (such as Col. 1:15–20 and Phil. 2:6–11) were originally hymns sung in the early church. **Spiritual songs** emphasized testimony (cf. Rev. 5:9–10). They express in song what God has done for us.

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The word translated “**grace**” has a double meaning and perhaps Paul intends us to understand both ideas. One idea is that it means “grace” as is translated in our passage. It can also mean “thankfulness” as in some of the other translations. Believers should be thankful for God’s grace.

When Paul tells believers to sing **in your hearts**, he is not forbidding singing, rather his concern is that the heart agree with the mouth (cf. Amos 5:23). Singing is to be directed to God as praise and worship offered to Him for His pleasure and glory. That it is edifying to believers is a byproduct of its main purpose.

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## The Priorities of the New Man – Name of Christ

Colossians 3:17

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

The simplest, most basic rule of thumb for living the Christian life is to do everything, whether **word** or **deed, in the name of the Lord Jesus**. To do everything in the name of Jesus is to act consistently with who He is and what He wants. Paul expressed the same thought in 1 Corinthians 10:31: “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Again, Paul reminds that it is always to be done without reluctance or despair or legalistic duty, but with **giving thanks to God the Father through Him**.

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## So What ...

To put on the new lifestyle is to put on Christ. That is the obligation of every believer: “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts” (Rom. 13:14). The goal of the Christian life is Christlikeness.

Believers should so clothe themselves with Jesus Christ that when people look at them, they see Christ.

Let’s encourage each other to become more like Jesus!

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