

# the new self

**LIVING CHOSEN, HOLY AND BELOVED  
COLOSSIANS 3**



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## LIVING CHOSEN, HOLY AND BELOVED

### COLOSSIANS 3

DATE	TOPIC	TEXT
10.4.23	1. A New Identity	Col. 3:1-4
10.11.23	2. Kill Or Be Killed: Choosing Repentance or Retribution	Col. 3:5-9
10.18.23	3. A New Creation: How A Holy Life Fulfills God's Purpose	Col. 3:10
10.25.23	4. Christ Is In All: The Gospel, Racism and Intersectionality	Col. 3:11
11.1.23	5. The Sensitive Man: How Christians Embody Compassion	Col. 3:12
11.8.23	6. Kindness: Christ's Attitude Toward Others	Col. 3:12
11.15.23	7. Humility: Christ's Attitude Toward Oneself	Col. 3:12
11.22.23	8. Meekness: Christ's Approach to Others	Col. 3:12
11.29.23	9. Patience: Christ's Reaction to Others	Col. 3:12
12.6.23	10. As The Lord Has Forgiveness: Receiving and Giving Grace	Col. 3:13
12.13.23	11. Above All These: Living Out Love and Peace	Col. 3:14-15
12.20.23	12. Overflow: How the Word Inspires Teaching, Worship and Gratitude	Col. 3:16
12.27.23	13. Full Speed Ahead	Col. 3:17

# LESSON 1

# A NEW IDENTITY

## TEXT: COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

**Summary:** Baptism is the foundation of who we are in Christ.

1. Who are you? (Answer the question in a couple sentences or less.)

Listen to how the group answers the first question. What themes emerge for how people determine a sense of self?

2. If ever you became dissatisfied with “the man in the mirror” and who you perceive yourself to be, how would you go about changing that?

3. Baptism becomes the foundation of a new identity (Colossians 2:12-13).  
How does Paul develop the following themes to illustrate the changed life?

Death

Burial

Resurrection

4. How does Paul use the same themes to describe the new life (Colossians 3:1-4).

Death

Resurrection

Appearance

5. Complete the prompt: Because of Jesus I am now... (Answer with a list or a few sentences.)

# LESSON 2

# KILL OR BE KILLED

## TEXT: COLOSSIANS 3:5-9

**Summary:** The gospel offers a choice between repentance and retribution.

1. Which of these two phrases makes you more uncomfortable? Explain your answer.

“Put to death therefore what is earthly in you.”

“On account of these the wrath of God is coming.”

2. Trace the theme of death in Colossians:

Colossians 1:18

Colossians 1:22

Colossians 2:12

Colossians 2:13

Colossians 2:20

Colossians 3:3

Colossians 3:5

3. Which of the sins in Paul’s list most needs to be “put to death” in your life?

Sexual immorality

Covetousness

Slander

Impurity

Anger

Obscene Talk

Passion

Wrath

Lying

Evil desire

Malice

4. In practical terms, describe the process of putting a sin to death.

5. Which would you rather choose: to put to death your sin (repentance) or to suffer the wrath of God (retribution)?

# LESSON 3

# A NEW CREATION

## TEXT: COLOSSIANS 3:10

**Summary:** Through Christ we can go back to God's purpose for creation.

1. A couple has been fighting. Their voices are still sore from all the yelling and the tension is only just leaving their shoulders when he turns to her and says, "Can't we just go back to how things were?"  
What do you suppose he means by "go back?"
2. What one word did God use to describe what he had created (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31)?
3. Identify Christ's role in creation in each of the following verses:  
Colossians 1:16  
Colossians 1:15  
Colossians 1:18-20
4. Paul describes the new self as being "renewed... after the image of its creator" (3:10). How is this like "going back?"
5. Use the following verses to describe how the mind is integral to becoming a new creation:  
Colossians 1:21  
Colossians 2:18  
Colossians 3:2  
Colossians 3:10 (see also Romans 12:2)

# LESSON 4

# CHRIST IS IN ALL

## TEXT: COLOSSIANS 3:11

**Summary:** The gospel confronts both racism and intersectionality.

1. In class define the following terms:

Racism

Intersectionality

What do they have in common?

2. Circumcision dates to the time of Abraham as the physical demarcation between ethnic Jews and non-Jews, also called Gentiles (Genesis 17:9-14). Paul uses circumcision as an illustration of a racism that is present in the Colossian church.

What racial tension underlies each of the following verses:

Colossians 2:13

Colossians 2:16-18

Colossians 4:10-11

3. The gospel is not limited to any particular race, or ethnic group. It is bearing fruit in the whole world (1:6), the mystery revealed among the Gentiles (2:27). How does this appropriately answer the ethnic tension in Colossae?
4. Paul concludes, “Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all” (Colossians 3:11). How does this statement challenge both racism and intersectionality?

# LESSON 5

# THE SENSITIVE MAN

**TEXT: COLOSSIANS 3:12; MARK 6:30-44**

**Summary:** Jesus' disciples learn to embody his compassion for the crowds.

1. Describe a time in your life in which you were tired, hungry, and irritable. What caused you to feel that way?
2. The disciples were also tired and hungry (Mark 6:31). How does this seem to shape the way they saw the people who surrounded them (Mark 6:30-36)?
3. Jesus, in contrast, was "moved with compassion" and saw the people "as sheep without a shepherd" (Mark 6:34). How would this change the way he interacted with them?
4. Jesus responds to the disciples' plea to send the people away by calling them to serve (Mark 6:37). Compassion inspires service, but can the opposite be true? Can the act of serving ever inspire compassion? Explain your answer.
5. "Compassionate hearts" is the first thing that Paul encourages the people to "put on" as part of their new self. Why does this attribute deserve immediate attention?

# LESSON 6

# KINDNESS

**TEXT: COLOSSIANS 3:12; MARK 10:46-52**

**Summary:** Kindness is Christ's attitude toward others.

1. When Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, heard Jesus was coming, he began to cry out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me" (Mark 10:46-47). What do you suppose he means by "mercy"?
2. Contrast how the "many" respond to Bartimaeus with how Jesus responds to him (Mark 10:48-49).

What does this reveal about Jesus' kindness?

3. Jesus asks him, "What do you want me to do for you?" (Mark 10:50). What would make you hesitant to offer such an open-ended request?
4. Consider Paul's encouragement to "put on" kindness (Colossians 3:12). How would you explain to someone else how to develop greater Christlike kindness?



# LESSON 7

# HUMILITY

**TEXT: COLOSSIANS 3:12; PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11**

**Summary:** Humility is Christ's attitude toward oneself.

1. Use Philippians 2:1-4 to construct a working definition of humility.
2. Which aspect of Jesus' humility (Philippians 2:5-8) most amazes you?
3. The final depiction of Jesus is the exalted one to whom every knee will bow and every tongue praise (Philippians 2:9-11). James reflects a similar promise for the humble, saying, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble," and "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you" (James 4:6, 10).  
Explain God's backward logic. Why do those who do not seek glory receive it, and those who crave it do not?
4. Paul concludes the section by offering Timothy and Epaphroditus as exemplars of humility (Philippians 2:19-30). Who in your life best embodies humility? What specifically about this individual would you like to emulate? (For obvious reasons your answer should not be yourself.)

# LESSON 8

# GENTLENESS

**TEXT: COLOSSIANS 3:12; JOHN 8:1-11**

**Summary:** Gentleness is Christ's approach to others.

1. Some translations use the word "meekness" in Colossians 3:12 (KJV, NKJV, ESV) whereas others use the word "gentleness" (NASB, NIV, NLT). What picture do these two words create for this Christian attribute?
2. The event in the temple with the woman caught in adultery (John 8:2-11) is like a stick of dynamite; Jesus must handle it with care. John reveals the Pharisees' motivation saying, "This they did to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him" (John 8:6). What underlying danger does their challenge present?
3. Jesus responds with gentleness. How is he gentle toward the woman? How is he also gentle toward the Pharisees?
4. Some "wake up and choose violence." What can you do to prepare for gentleness in your interactions tomorrow?

# LESSON 9

# PATIENCE

**TEXT: COLOSSIANS 3:12; MARK 14:53-65; 1 PETER 2:18-25**

**Summary:** Patience is Christ's reaction to others.

1. Peter encourages servants to be subject even to unjust masters (1 Peter 2:18-20). Put yourself in the servant's sandals. How would you want to respond to unjust suffering?
2. Jesus' trials were filled with injustice (Mark 14:53-65). What does Peter hope the servants will take from Jesus' example (1 Peter 2:21-23)?
3. Patience is "the capacity to tolerate delay or trouble without getting upset" (Oxford Languages). What enabled Jesus to be patient (1 Peter 2:23-24)?
4. A college football coach always carried a mysterious little black book on the sideline. When asked what was in it, he replied, "The secret to my success." Some speculated it was gameplans or player analyses. In truth, the only thing written in the book were the lyrics to the hymn "Love One Another (Angry Words)." How might the words to this hymn help you to be more patient?

Note also the second verse to the hymn "Mended and Whole."

# LESSON 10

# AS THE LORD HAS FORGIVEN

**TEXT: COLOSSIANS 3:13; MATTHEW 18:21-35**

**Summary:** Forgiveness requires forgiveness.

1. Paul sets “as the Lord has forgiven you” as the standard for forgiveness (Colossians 3:13). How would you describe the forgiveness you have received?
2. Jesus tells a story about an unforgiving servant to clarify his teaching about forgiveness (Matthew 18:21-35). In contrast to our debt before God (symbolized by the ten thousand talents owed to the king, Matthew 18:24), how are others’ debts to us like the hundred denarii owed by the fellow servant (Matthew 18:28)?
3. Even if you don’t seize, choke and demand repayment (Matthew 18:28) from people in your life, how are you most likely to manifest unforgiveness?
4. After Jesus reports that the unforgiving servant was delivered to the jailers (Matthew 18:34; NASB renders it “torturers”), he offers a solemn warning, saying, “So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart” (Matthew 18:35; cf. Matt. 6:14-15). Why would God’s forgiveness be impacted by our unforgiveness?

# LESSON 11

# ABOVE ALL THESE

## TEXT: COLOSSIANS 3:14-15

**Summary:** Love makes perfect harmony possible.

1. Verses about love often become favorite verses for Christians. We memorize them or use them as decorations in our homes. Which passage do you think best summarizes Biblical love?
2. Concluding the list of virtues defining the Christian's new self, Paul says "Above all these put on love" (Colossians 3:14). In what sense is love supreme? Is it that love is the most important, or that love is required for all the others? Make your case for both.
3. "Perfect harmony," and "peace" are mentioned in the same context (Colossians 3:15). What is the connection between love and relational harmony?
4. Paul defends the need for love and peace by asserting, "you were called in one body" (Colossians 3:15), connecting these concepts to the dynamics in a church. Imagine you were a visitor to a church. What would you hope to see in a group that perfectly embodies love and harmony?

# LESSON 12

# OVERFLOW

## TEXT: COLOSSIANS 3:16

**Summary:** The word of God inspired teaching, worship, and gratitude.

1. Paul encourages, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Colossians 3:16; “richly” carrying the sense of “abundantly”). If this verse were a picture, how would you illustrate it?  
(There’s plenty of room. Draw it!)
  
2. Paul depicts how that abundant word affects our time together as a church. How should the “abundant word” change how the following participate in worship:
  - Teacher or Speaker
  
  - Song Leader
  
  - Prayer Leader
  
3. Notice how many times Paul mentions thanks or thankfulness in this section (Colossians 3:15-17). What is the connection between the abundant word and gratitude?
  
4. If a person’s life was hardly full of God’s word, much less overflowing, what should that person do to have God’s word in abundance?

# LESSON 13

# FULL SPEED AHEAD

## TEXT: COLOSSIANS 3:17

**Summary:** Having put off the old self with its practices and put on the new self, it's time to put the pedal to the metal full speed ahead in the right direction.

1. Consider the following “whatever you do” passages. How should they shape our attitude about our activities for each day?

Ecclesiastes 9:10

1 Corinthians 10:31

Colossians 3:17

2. A girl wanted to get her co-worker named Amber in trouble. She noticed that Amber had left her name tag. She decided to wear the name tag and be exceptionally bad in customer service. That way the customers would complain about “Amber” and get her fired.

In a way, we have stolen Jesus’ nametag; everything we do bears the name of Christ on it (Colossians 3:17). How should that change what we do and how we do it?

3. This study of Colossians 3 has encouraged many practices and changes. Put yourself in the shoes of the one who feels overwhelmed and doesn’t know where to start with so many changes.

What is your first step?

How do you ensure that these changes become lifelong habits and characteristics?