

Message #16**Colossians 3:12-17**

The Bible is very clear and very precise to demand that a new position demands new practice. A new creed demands new conduct. A new character demands new characteristics.

IN VIEW OF OUR NEW POSITION IN JESUS CHRIST, WE ARE COMMANDED BY GOD TO DEVELOP CERTAIN QUALITIES AND CHARACTERISTICS IN OUR LIVES.

SECTION #1 – What we have been commanded to put on . **3:12-14**

The Scriptures often use the clothing imagery as a metaphorical picture of spirituality.

Now we have been commanded by God to put on certain things, or more specifically, to put certain things into our lives and personalities.

Now before Paul begins his list, he intensifies the command by introducing an important and analogous thought which is the sovereign election of God. Paul prefaces the list of qualities by reminding us that we have been chosen by God. In other words, the fact that we have been sovereignly elected by God is all the motivation we need to put these qualities into our lives.

The Bible is very clear to point out that those who are saved have been elected to be saved from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8; 17:8). Those who believe on Christ are the elect.

Now Paul brings out two specific realities about God's election—1) In God's election we are holy—we are set apart unto Him; 2) In God's election we are beloved—we were uniquely loved as a child of God at the moment of our salvation and continue to be at the present and into the future.

Quality #1 - We have been commanded to put on compassion . **3:12a**

The words “put on a heart of compassion” are words that mean in the innermost part of our being, we are to be compassionate. The word “compassion” speaks of having pity and mercy toward people, their struggles and sins.

This does not mean we do not stand for what is right. This does not mean we never stand against someone. What it does mean is that as long as we do not compromise God's righteous standards and Word, we do our best to show compassion to those who are needy, who are struggling and sinful.

Quality #2 - We have been commanded to put on kindness . **3:12b**

The word “kindness” is a word that carries with it the idea of demonstrating a good, pleasant, upright gracious spirit and attitude toward others (G. Abbot-Smith, p. 484).

Quality #3 - We have been commanded to put on humility . **3:12c**

Of all the things God hates, pride is at the top of His list. When we come to faith in Christ, we come having been in proud, arrogant rebellion. This haughty spirit of conceit does not just automatically vanish.

Quality #4 - We have been commanded to put on gentleness . **3:12d**

The world does not understand a meek gentleness. The world applauds those who push and shove, who are hard and even cruel. In fact, Theodore Roosevelt once said: “I hate a meek man.”

Quality #5 - We have been commanded to put on patience . **3:12e**

Patience is a real mark of spiritual maturity and character development. Patience is just the opposite of shortness of temper. The word has to do with being long-tempered as opposed to short-tempered, particularly when experiencing troubles and difficulties (G. Abbot-Smith, p. 276).

(Way #1) - By forbearing one another. **3:13a**

The words “one another” mean another of the same kind, not another of a different kind. In other words, we are to especially demonstrate these qualities to other believers.

(Way #2) - By forgiving each other. **3:13a**

The words of J. Vernon McGee are significant here: “Paul is including situations where there is blame involved and the complaint is justified. What are we to do in such circumstances? ‘Even as Christ forgave you, so also do you.’ This does not mean that you become a doormat. But it does mean that when we have a complaint, we’re to go to the individual and try to work out the matter. There are always going to be some people with whom you cannot work out things—we must realize that” (p. 181).

The Lord forgave us and we repented and turned to Him. Therefore, if our brother or sister repents and turns to us, we are to forgive each other.

Quality #6 - We have been commanded to put on love . **3:14**

The noun “love” is articular, meaning this is a specific type of love, agape love, which is the type of love specifically described in the Scriptures and in the previous verses.

When Paul says love is the “perfect bond of unity,” the words literally mean love is the ligament of the body that binds it together.

Now God's love is very specific. It is not the emotional kind of love; it is the concrete kind of love that seeks these qualities in every situation. Isn't it interesting that it is not philosophy or education that makes one complete. It is not success or achievement that makes one complete. It is the development of a godly character that is permeated by love. That is what makes one complete in the mind of God.

SECTION #2 – What we have been commanded to permit. **3:15-17**

Trait#1 - We are to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts. **3:15**

The word “rule” is an athletic term which speaks of an arbitrator or umpire. It refers to that which decides, rules and controls the game.

Paul's point here is that the peace of Christ is to rule our hearts. We are not to be ruled by our circumstances or our problems or pressures, or our emotions, but we are to be governed by a Christological tranquility.

A very valid question to ask is “If I do this, will I be at peace with myself and God, or in war with myself and God?”

I understand the command to “be thankful” as closely related to being peaceful in your heart. In other words, thankfulness is a key to determining how tranquil our heart really is.

Trait #2 - We are to let the Word of Christ richly live in our lives. **3:16**

The “Word of Christ” refers to the whole Word of God as it pertains to the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Word of God is to run our lives. We are to live our lives with God's Word richly living in us.

(Way #1) - The Word of God richly lives in us through teaching. **3:16a**

The prepositional phrase “in all wisdom” implies a teaching that is based on all of the truth of God's Word. In other words, it is through careful teaching and instruction in the whole counsel of God that this growth occurs.

(Way #2) - The Word of God richly lives in us through admonishment. **3:16b**

The word “admonish” is one that means to put into the mind. The more we are putting into our minds all the wisdom of God according to the Word of God, the more God's Word will richly live in us. Both positive and negative instruction is beneficial for us.

(Way #3) - The Word of God richly lives in us through singing. **3:16c**

It is so important what we sing and that we sing. Music should be both spiritual and sound, for it certainly is sacred in the sight of God.

Notice the purpose of singing; it is not to entertain, it is to impart the true Word of God and doctrines of God to the heart so that it can richly live in the life.

SECTION #3 – What have we been challenged to do. **3:17**

Here is a critical principle that can govern any decision of life, both word and act—“Can I do this in the name of the Lord Jesus?”

J. Vernon McGee called this verse a “marvelous yardstick” by which we can measure everything.

In whatever we do or say, we are to do all things, everything in the name of our Lord Jesus and are to give thanks through Christ to God the Father.

If we govern our lives by this principle, the peace of Christ will truly rule our hearts and our lives.

How are we dressed? How is our spiritual look in the sight of God? Did we do everything this week in the name of our Lord Jesus?