

The Right Clothes for the Occasion

International Bible Lesson

Colossians 3:5-17

Sunday, February 17, 2013

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“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.”
(Colossians 3:12, 14—KJV).

“You are the people of God; he loved you and chose you for his own. So then, you must clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. And to all these qualities add love, which binds all things together in perfect unity.” (Colossians 3:12, 14—GNB).

“As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony”
(Colossians 3:12, 14—NRSV).

Jesus told a parable about a king who gave a wedding banquet and invited both good and bad people. When the king saw an invited guest without a wedding robe, the king cast him “into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Jesus explained that “many are called, but few are chosen” (Matthew 22:1-14). When we read Paul’s letter to the Colossians, we can better understand Jesus’ parable.

The Bible teaches that God’s chosen ones know that God loves them; therefore, they do not want to remain bad but live holy and pleasing to God. To please God, they carefully choose their clothing. Rich and poor alike can afford to wear the clothing that God wants His chosen ones to wear, and God’s chosen ones want to express their love for God and honor God by the way they dress at all times. God’s chosen ones know to clothe themselves with love, which “binds everything together in perfect harmony.” Invited to the king’s wedding feast, the bad guest never clothed himself with love; therefore, he would have brought discord and other shameful behaviors into the presence of the king and the other guests. He would ruin the perfect harmony of heaven. Therefore, all who claim to follow Jesus Christ must choose to live holy by clothing themselves with love, “with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.” By choosing to act according to these virtues, the followers of Jesus can bring some measure of harmony and peace into our world today and be dressed for heaven. — Copyright 2013 L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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Thinking Further

1. Why do Jesus and Paul draw attention to the attitudes or sins within us rather than just outward actions or sins?

2. Read Colossians 3:5 and Colossians 3:8 again. Which of the sins listed include outward actions, and which of the sins can reside within us without our acting them out?

3. Which is easier to do, eliminate outward acts of sin or inward acts of sin? Give a reason for your answer.

4. Read the virtues listed in Colossians 3:12. How are these virtues both inward virtues and outward actions?

5. What does Paul say believers need to let Jesus do for them? Why is this important?

Read the verse by verse commentary on this lesson at the BibleLessonForum.com. See the recommended study and worship resources at SmallChurchResources.com.