Leader's Guide

Session 6: Colossians 3:1–17

SESSION GOALS

Every session has a point—what each participant should walk away from the discussion knowing, feeling, and doing.

Main Idea: Since we're alive in Christ, we can take off the old self and put on the new self, which affects our mindset, our actions toward each other, and how we engage in corporate worship.

Head Change: To know what it means to put on the new self so that we can identify the things that are of Christ and that are of the world in our lives.

Heart Change: To feel certain of the new life God gives us to replace our life of sin.

Life Change: To daily put on the new self by putting sin to death through confession and repentance, and embracing the actions and characteristics of Christ both corporately and individually.

OPEN

Describe a time when you showed up somewhere— like an event, a trip, or a celebration—wearing the wrong clothing. (Some examples include: dressing casually for an important business meeting by accident, wearing a t-shirt and shorts to a get together that was actually a formal party, forgetting to wear a costume to a costume party, etc.)

How does it feel to be over or under dressed for something? What do your clothes potentially communicate about yourself to others?

Throughout this series, we've been talking about what Jesus's supremacy over all things means for us and our lives. As we've discussed, this truth has a profound impact on our salvation and our day to day. This session dives into some specific ways we apply the supremacy of Christ in our lives—by taking off the old self and putting on the new. Like changing into a new outfit, we put on a whole new identity when we follow Jesus.

READ

Read Colossians 3:1–17.

WATCH

Before viewing the session, here are a few important things to look for in Louie's teaching. As you watch, pay attention to how Louie answers the following questions.

What three words summarize this section of Colossians?

What does it mean to take off the old self and put on the new self?

How can we do all things in the name of Jesus? How does that truth apply to all areas of life?

Show Session 6: Colossians 3:1–17 (11 minutes)

DISCUSS

Louie used three words to outline this section of Colossians: glory, garment, and glory. Read the first section, which is in verses 1–4. **How does the first part of verse 1 connect with the other things we've studied in Colossians?** (Back in chapter 2, we talked about how God made us alive with Christ. We have new life in Jesus through faith in Him. See Colossians 2:9–15 for a quick review.)

What do you think it means to set your mind on things that are above? What does it mean to think about earthly things?

GO DEEPER

Learn more about the right hand of God in these passages: Luke 22:66–71; Acts 2:32–33; Acts 7:54–56; Rom. 8:34–39; Heb. 12:1–2

What do these verses reveal about the character and nature of Jesus?

Would you say the right hand of God is an indication of Jesus's authority? If so, why?

Jesus is at the right hand of God, which means He intercedes for us, has authority, and offers us hope as we persist in following Him. He is God. He hears our prayers. He acts on our behalf. He loves us. And He will one day return.

What difference does it make in your life knowing that Jesus intercedes for you, offers you hope, and stands in authority at the right hand of God?

What things do you do to keep your heart and mind focused on God?

Paul tells the Colossians to set their minds above because their life is now found in Christ. He is our hope. One day, when He returns we will also be with Him in His glory—Louie's first point. **How could focusing on the future glory of Christ help you keep your mind on Him today?**

PEEK AT THE GREEK

Paul says in verse three that we've died, but our life is now "hidden with Christ in God" (NIV, ESV). Paul uses the word *krupto*—the word we translate as "hidden"—to describe this life we have in Christ. Paul wants the believers to know that though they've died with Christ, their new source of life is now found in Christ. Rather than it being a visible life source, the life Christ gives us is hidden and it goes beyond what the world could ever give us. With Jesus supplying our life, He strengthens us to pursue the new self.

What does it mean to you that you will appear with Christ when He returns? How does that truth offer hope?

We have an incredible hope in Christ. He will return and when He does, we'll see Him and be with Him in glory. The future hope we have changes the way we live today.

Read verses 5–14.

Louie summarized these verses with the word "garment." Now that we're in Christ, we take off the old self and put on the new self. **How would you describe your old self, or who you were before Jesus?**

What does it look like to put to death the old self and its habits? How have you done this in your own life?

GO DEEPER

Learn more about what it means to put sin to death in these verses: Gal. 5:16–26; Rom. 8:12–17

What does it mean to put sin to death? What does it mean to live by the Spirit?

What are we to do instead of sinning? How does the Spirit empower us to do that?

What's one way you could put sin to death in your life?

A great exchange occurs when we decide to follow Jesus. We move from death to life, from the old self to the new self. Now with the Spirit of God in us, He empowers us to walk in His ways by embracing our new identity as the children of God.

How would you define the new self? What's been different in you since following Jesus? How have your actions also changed?

All of these sins listed in these passages have relational consequences, and all the things Paul encourages the Colossians to "put on" are also relational. **How has following Jesus changed the way you interact with other people, specifically other Christians?**

In verse 10, Paul talks about how our new selves are being "renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator." **How have you experienced the renewing of your mind as a Christian? In what ways are you more like Jesus than when you first believed?**

Verse 11 reminds us of the unity we have in Jesus. No religious, cultural, racial, or social divisions divide Christians any longer because Jesus demolished them when He died and rose again. His blood has redeemed all of us—none of us is above the other. **How have you experienced the unity of the body of Christ? In what ways do you think Christians could improve in this area?**

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PEEK AT THE GREEK

In verse 11, Paul gives a few examples of opposites (Gentiles and Jews, circumcised or uncircumcised, etc.) to show that Jesus unifies all believers. The only time he doesn't use opposites is with barbarians (*barbaros*) and Scythians (*skuthes*). Barbarians were considered to be those who were uncultured and uncivilized. Scythians were considered barbarians as well, but to a whole other extreme—the GrecoRoman world considered Scythians to be the ultimate example of paganism and being uncivilized. Paul uses these two as examples to show that not only do race, religious backgrounds, or social class no longer bar us from other Christians, but also cultural backgrounds don't separate us either—even if the cultural background is barbaric and pagan.

Verse 13 says to forgive others as God has forgiven us. **What does it look like to forgive someone? How have you seen forgiveness at work in your life?**

In verse 14, Paul encourages the Colossians to clothe themselves with love above all else. **Why do you think Paul tells the Colossians to put on love over all the other virtues he mentions?**

The love of Jesus enables us to take off the old self and put on the new self. As we saw in verses 11 and 14, His love unites all believers. Everything we do should flow from Jesus's love for us to the people in our lives, which includes putting sin to death, caring for the other Christians in our lives, and, as we'll see in the next verses, bringing glory to God.

Louie summarized verses 15–17 with the word glory.

Read verses 15–17.

How does putting on the new self and living in Christian community bring glory to God?

Paul encouraged the Colossian church to let the gospel—the message of Christ—dwell among them. He told them to do so through teaching through psalms, hymns, and songs. **How do songs and psalms help you remember and reflect on the gospel?**

What are some of your favorite psalms, hymns, or spiritual songs? Why are they your favorites? What do they teach about God and His gospel?

There's a theme of gratitude in these verses—we see thankfulness in all three of these verses. **As you think back over your story, what are some things you're thankful to God for?**

Louie talked about how important it is that we do all things in the name of Jesus. He said following God is less about our job or position in life and more about who we work for. **What about Louie's perspective could give deeper meaning to your day-to-day life?**

What do you think it would look like for you to do everything in Jesus's name this week?

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What's one practical way you could take off the old self and put on the new self this week?

LAST WORD

As we saw in this passage, taking off the old self and putting on the new isn't something we're meant to do alone. It can seem like an overwhelming—maybe even impossible—task on our own. But we know that not only do we have the power of Christ in us through the Spirit, but we also have a community of believers to encourage us forward.

This week, look back through these verses and ask God to show you one thing He wants you to put to death and one thing He wants you to put on. Consider sharing what He teaches you to a trusted Christian friend, so he or she can hold you accountable. We look more like Jesus when we're unified together through His love, peace, and compassion.

Let's not neglect to remind each other of the gospel message, as Paul tells the Colossians to do at the end of this passage. As we come to a close, let's thank God and pray He would solidify the truths from these verses in us this week.

Leader: *Consider ending your small group with a short time of corporate singing as a way to practically live out Paul's instructions in verse 16. If you have someone in your group who's gifted in leading worship, ask him or her beforehand to prepare a couple songs to sing. If not, play music over a speaker, TV, or smartphone.*

LIVE IT OUT

Pray: Pray through the characteristics of the old and new self this week. Ask God to show you what you need to put to death and what you need to put on and ask Him for the strength to obey.

Memorize: Commit Colossians 3:1–3 to memory this week. Use these verses to remind yourself to keep your mind on Christ and not on the things of this world.

Reflect: Every time you get dressed or change clothes this week, reflect on what it means to take off the old self and put on the new self. Pray God would continue to remind you that you have been made new in Christ.

Worship: The next time you're in corporate worship or listen to a worship song, pause to consider the words you're singing. Let the truths of the song settle in as you praise God for who He is and what He's done.

Thank: Make a list of things you're grateful to God for. Consider going back through your story of coming to know Jesus and making note of the things God's done for you. Take a few minutes to thank Him for how He's brought you from death to life.