

DRESSING APPROPRIATELY

Colossians 3:5-14

Lake Atitlan in Guatemala is one of the most beautiful places on earth! Nestled in the Sierras, this picturesque lake is lined by 3 majestic volcanos —one of God’s masterpieces.

Our family always enjoyed escaping for a few days rest there. On the shores of this beautiful lake are numerous Indian communities. They’ve been invaded by young tourists who’ve come to live there. Wealthy parents used to pay bills so these young people would stay away and not embarrass them by their lifestyle.

When you walk into typical stores in these towns, you find two kinds of clothes.

You can buy new typical clothes at normal price, plus a premium for tourists.

You can buy old, worn typical outfits,
if you want to spend a *LOT* more money for the privilege!

Tourists’ desire for worn out clothes resulted in huge increase in price.

It’s great for locals!

They buy new clothes, wear them out, then sell them for a profit!

I wish I could do that!

Children of wealthy North Americans who went there to enjoy the “good life” have chosen the old worn out clothes and simple lifestyle of the local Indian people.

They could leave that lifestyle any time they want.

Poor Indians have no choice. It’s their only option.

But these young people choose to dress like poor, oppressed people!

Paul addresses Col., as parents might wish to address these kids.

We're children of the King of kings; we have *everything!*
we ought to dress *appropriately*.

Paul's dealing with Christians, under pressure to accept legalistic rules to please God.

The answer to that quest for fellowship with God isn't legalism; it's new life in Christ!

One of main reasons for Christ's coming is the FREEDOM Christ gave us from old legalistic attempts to please God by living by the rules!

**PRINCIPLES FOR LIVING A GODLY LIFESTYLE:
WALK BY FAITH—AS YOU RECEIVED CHRIST BY FAITH
2:6-7**

Learn to trust *Him* daily, not ourselves; as we did for salvation
IN CHRIST WE'RE COMPLETE; WE LACK NOTHING!
2:9-10

We have everything we need to please God.

DON'T DEPEND ON HUMAN RULES 2:16-23

Law only serves to *steal the prize* God wants to give us.

Law's a *shadow* of reality; it points to the real thing, but it ISN'T the real thing!

Christ is the real thing!

Rules don't supply the power we need to live by them!

FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION ON THINGS ABOVE 3:1-4

Not on ourselves, nor on what's going on around us!

We walk with our eyes fixed on Christ.

He's seated at the right hand of God.

His work is complete and has already been accepted by the Father.

Therefore, our hope for the future is found in Him; NOT in ourselves

Get your eyes off yourself and what you have, or have not, accomplished.

Focus on what Jesus has accomplished.

Since we're in Christ, our union with Him should be evident.

[NEGATIVELY, things we used to do in "old country" should be left behind:]

PUT TO DEATH THINGS WHICH CHARACTERIZE OLD LIFESTYLE 3:5-11

Lit., [-ow verb ending] => "*consider them dead*" – "*pronounce them dead.*"

Since we're no longer citizens of world, we should abandon world's lifestyle and adopt practices which correspond to the lifestyle of our new home.

Sinful deeds we've grown used to in the world should be eliminated.

It's what we do, when we "*do what comes naturally!*" (Gal. 5:19-21)

Previously we all walked this way, but now we ought to be different.

Things common in world; not appropriate for God's people.

3:5-7 – TWO MAIN KINDS of activities we should eliminate:

3:5 *Put to death, therefore, [consider dead] whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*

Sins of sexual immorality – both acts and desires

God's people should have a different attitude about sexual ethics

Paul's concept was radical to pagan culture

No one thought sexual morality was an important value!

The popular attitude was *"If it feels good, do it!"*

Our society still thinks morality is old-fashioned! It's stupid!

This popular lifestyle isn't appropriate among God's people.

Sexual immorality & godly living oppose each other.

FLEE any activity that focuses our attention on such things

Pornography, fornication, draw us away from fellowship with God.

Members of God's family, shouldn't play around with such things.

That's not legalism. That's *essence of godly character and integrity.*

[2nd kind of sins to eliminate are]

Sins of greed or coveting

Materialism – desire for more—things, possessions

Amounts to idolatry =>puts desires and possessions in 1st place.

It gives them the place that rightly belongs to God alone.

Why are such things inappropriate? 3 reasons:

* **They're earthly–3:5a–earth-centered–focus on things above 3:2**

* **They deserve God's wrath 3:6**

Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

* **They characterize our old lifestyle—without Christ 3:7**

You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.

These sins are battleground in modern times.

Turn on TV or computer, you'll be bombarded by appeals in these areas.

They're so natural we don't even sense the nature of the poison.

Like the frog in a slowly heating kettle, we're desensitized to danger and becoming used to life in the dark!

Paul says these things don't belong in our lives. *Consider them dead!*

Why are these things so difficult to leave behind?

Things MY NATURE produces — fruit of the flesh (Gal. 5)

=> they "*belong to your earthly nature.*" **3:5** They're part of us.

This is ME! (Pogo: "*We have met the enemy and they is us.*")

Maclaren: "It's easier to cut off the hand, which after all is not me,

than sacrifice desires which, though they be my worst self, are myself."

But I *can* consider them dead, because I died with

Christ **3:3** "*Consider yourselves dead to sin, but alive to*

God by faith in Christ Jesus."

"I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live..."

I'm in Christ.

I don't have to live by rules of old lifestyle!

Such activities belong to the past.

They don't conform to what God has made us in the present.

It doesn't belong among God's people.

However hard it may be for me to clean house, I need to weed it out!

Things from old life that are common among God's people.

3:8-11 *But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.⁹ Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.¹¹ Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.*

The “old clothes” we need to change out of to dress appropriately

Have you noticed strange appearance of people from “the old country” who never change dress style?

The old clothes don't belong here. They're no longer appropriate!

Even after we trust Christ, we continue to wear “old clothes” of old lifestyle.

It doesn't occur to us that this “clothing” doesn't fit new life in Christ.

Paul urges us to change clothes—put on something more appropriate

What are these “old clothes?”

TWO KINDS: Sins of attitude & sins of the tongue.

Sins of attitude

Anger—*internal* reaction to what is going on around us

Often no one even knows we have a problem, because we hold it in.

Attitude normally comes and goes. Sometimes it festers for years!

Ex.—the angry person—Beatriz: “I’ve been angry all my life!”

Rage—internal attitude converted into *external* expression—

Everybody suddenly becomes aware of problem.

Sooner or later, the ticking time bomb goes off!

Malice—like other 2 articles of clothing, refers to attitude, not activity; it’s a disposition—the ***desire to harm another person***

Sins of the tongue – words

Slander—accusing and criticizing others.

We expect such “out there” among pagans in the old country!

We criticize *one another*, even spreading false accusations.

Abusive or filthy [lit., “shameful”] **speech**

Can refer to *indecent* language, e.g., sexual inuendos, swearing, etc.

Can also refer to *abusive* words, e.g., personal attacks, etc.

Lying—“*stop lying to one another*” Implies they *are* lying to each other.

Stop it! It’s not appropriate for citizens of heaven.

WHY SHOULD WE “CHANGE OUR CLOTHES?”

* **We’re no longer the same as we used to be**

—**God has transformed us**—given us a new nature.

3:9b-10

We *HAVE BEEN* transformed.

The old self has been removed; we have put on a new self.

We aren’t perfect, but we aren’t what we used to be.

We don’t change our clothes, our lifestyle, *to get* status.

It's because we *have* status that we dress appropriately.

- * **We *ARE BEING* transformed day by day 3:10b-11**
 - to new knowledge—not theoretical but practical
 - into His image

[So how should we dress? What's appropriate lifestyle for God's people?]

DRESS YOURSELVES AS GOD'S PEOPLE 3:12-14

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kind-ness, humility, gentleness and patience.¹³ Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord for-gave you.¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Certain kinds of clothing serve to identify those who wear them—
 School or work uniforms Gang outfits Team uniforms
 Officials of the royal house had outfits that identified them.

***If the king's son should dress royally,
 how should a child of the King of kings dress?***

We should dress in a way that is appropriate for who we are.

WHO should dress this way? 3:12a

People whom God has *already* chosen

People whom God has *already* set apart (saints/holy)

People whom God *already* loves

These are *already* true of us. We don't have to earn them!
 Therefore, ...

HOW should we dress?

What kind of clothes *should* we wear?

6 articles of "clothing"—

4 included in Paul's list of the fruit of the Spirit

He produces them. Other 2 are, likewise, produced by Him.
NOT legalistic things we do to earn approval,
but His expression of Himself and what He is through us.

Compassion—sincere interest in people who suffer or face serious need.

God's people should be known as caring people!

Kindness—goodness, graciousness, friendly disposition

Humility—not false; NOT “humility and how I attained it!”

Attitude which considers others superior to selves (Phil. 2:1-4)
Instead of seeking our benefit, we seek welfare of others.

Gentleness—meekness

Tendency to think of it as a “Caspar Milk-Toast” or “Doormat” personality.

J. Upton Dickson decided to found a group called “DOORMATS”
=> “Dependent Organization Of Really Meek And Timid Souls.”

Motto: “Meek shall inherit the earth—if that's OK with everybody.”

This is NOT the biblical concept of meekness or gentleness.

Not a lack of convictions

Jesus and Moses are both described as “meek.”

Like powerful horse with a bridle

=> “***power under control***”

Interest in feelings of others.

Willing to sacrifice rights for others.

Patience—long suffering—Patience with unbearable person **13**

Putting up with offensive person, their insults and offenses,
seeking their welfare in spite of offensive behavior.

2 things that accompany this kind of patience:

- 1) Bearing with one another**
- 2) Forgiving one another**

When we recognize how Christ accepted and forgave us,
we can respond the same way to those who offend us. Eph. 4:32

Love—the most important—“at the top of the list”! **14**

Summarizes the rest. That which unites us

HOW'S OUR WARDROBE?

DRESSING APPROPRIATELY?

Can our neighbors tell we belong to God's family by the way we
“dress”?

Does our outward expression demonstrate that God changed us
on inside?