



STUDY 5

TAKE OFF THE OLD SELF, PUT ON CHRIST

COLOSSIANS 3:1-17

“Out with the old, and in with the new.” It’s a saying we’ve all heard before. And it makes a lot of sense. Time and circumstances change, and we have to keep leaving the past behind and embracing new ideas, experiences, and people. That’s why most people don’t dress like they did in the 1980s – those days are long gone! They are behind us, and we must embrace life as it is today.

Paul is saying the Christian life is a bit like that. It’s a new kind of life that God has called us to. Paul explained that Christians now have “fullness” because of Jesus – a new spiritual life that does not need propping up with additional rules and regulations (2:8-23). Jesus is enough for us to grow through every age and stage of life. This means we can leave old ways of thinking and living behind us, and embrace the new, full way of living in relationship with God.

As we turn to chapter 3, Paul starts by reminding us that the story of our lives has been caught up into the story of Jesus – in his death, resurrection, and reign. Paul does this because who we think we are will shape what we do, and why. Because of Jesus, every day is a matter of “out with the old, in with the new!”

4. Colossians 3:5, 8-9 lists several attitudes and actions that don't "fit" in our new Christian life. Let's pick three. Why do these things have no place as we serve our risen King?

a) greed (v. 5)

b) malice (v. 8)

c) lying (v. 9)

...ON WITH THE NEW

Read Colossians 3:12-17

5. Is the 'putting on' of our new nature simply a matter of our personal decision and action? What else? (v17)

6. Scan the list of the qualities we are to "put on." How might these things help grow our church and keep it unified?

7. How does verse 17 match up with verses 1-4?

This is an entirely new ethical framework for how to live, a framework centred on Christ through faith. God draws us into the big story that centres on the person of Jesus. His death for sin, resurrection to life, and reign in glory are now something we share in! His story has become the defining factor in our lives. Since we belong to King Jesus, we have a whole new identity that is focused on “things above,” not on popular opinion or the preferences of our culture.

This is a radical and exciting calling! We are to daily leave our old life behind in the tomb of Jesus – the old ways of sin and self-rule – and learn to walk the new way of life in Christ! As we follow him, bit by bit, his peace will fill our lives. As the truth of Christ dwells in us, we’ll encourage and challenge each other. And with thankful hearts we will follow Jesus as one united people. We’ll remind each other that growing through life doesn’t start with rules and hard work. It starts with the good news, the gospel. So what’s Paul telling us? When it comes to change, it’s “out with the old, *in with the news!*”

8. People have lots reasons to want to change. Fear of failure. Ambition to succeed. Desire for acceptance. But Christians change purely out of *thankfulness* for what Jesus has done for us (v15, 16, 17). What difference does it make when this is the motivation to change?

9. What issues has this study raised that you can be genuinely *thankful* for? Focus on them as you spend some time in prayer.

M.V.