

COLOSSIANS

Lesson 7

“ROOTED IN HUMILITY & PEACE”

Ice Breaker: Who is the most selfish person you know? How well do they get along with other people?

INTRO: Most of us naturally have ourselves at the center of our universe. In our selfish attitude, we try to get God and everyone else to revolve around us. Putting on the new man means dressing our attitude differently and putting Christ at the center of the universe. It takes humility not to have self at the center of your universe, but the pay off is huge. Being rooted in humility will result in loving relationships and inner peace.

Col. 3:12-17

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

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. 17 And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Q: In verses 12-13, Paul gives a list of things to “put on” which are consistent with the “New Man.” What do you notice about this list?

- All of these, except humility, are attitudes we must “put on” in regards to other people.
 - Towards others there is to be compassion, kindness, gentleness and patience.
 - Towards self there is to be humility.
- Compassion, kindness, gentleness and patience are probably intended to be both a **proactive approach** to people in general and our **reactive response** to how people treat us.
 - Gentleness is about not pushing for your way and not retaliating when people push you.
 - Patience is an internal thermostat that gives you the ability to remain calm and loving in the face of provocation.
- Both the proactive and reactive behaviors we are to “put on” come from the proper attitude about ourselves.
 - If we are not truly humble in our thinking, we will not be able to walk in true gentleness, patience, or bearing with others and forgiving them.
 - We might be able to fake it for a while, but we will not be able to really maintain those behaviors for long.

- Humility is not putting myself at the center of my concerns, but truly considering others as more important.
 - **Phil. 2:3-4** *“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility **consider others better than yourselves.** 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”*
 - Paul seems to endorse low self-esteem while today much is made of having high self-esteem.
 - Humility is the foundation for all relationships that are Godly.

Q: In verse 14, Paul says to put on love over all these other virtues. How does love bind them all together in perfect unity?

- He probably means that love is what binds all these behaviors together into a Christ like character.
- If you do any of these behaviors without love, you are just acting.
 - **1Cor. 13:1-3** *“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, **but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.** 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, **but have not love, I am nothing.** 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, **but have not love, I gain nothing.**”*
 - The highest mark of Christ likeness is not the ability to overcome sin or perform Christian service or ministry: it is love.
 - You can be gentle and patient towards people without love, but you can't be pleasing to God like that.
- **Eph.4:2** *“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”*
 - In order to be completely humble and gentle (rooted in humility), we have to do what we do out of love.

Q: In verse 15, Paul tells us to let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts. How do we let peace rule in our hearts?

- The Greek word for “rule” is an unusual word... it refers to someone who acts as an umpire in a game. This could mean:
 - In relationships, when there is a dispute, we let the peace of God be the determining factor that decides how the conflict will be resolved.
 - Maybe you defer to other person to keep peace... or you sacrifice your preferences in order to maintain the peace of God.
 - Or it could mean: when you don't know what God wants you to do in a given situation (or there is a conflict of interests in your heart) you need to let the peace of God make the call... be the umpire.
 - In other words, you need to get alone with God, lay your options before Him, and see which option you feel more at peace about.
 - This doesn't mean you should do what ever feels good... you must always reconcile your decisions to the Word of God.
 - But when there are several options that could be right in light of God's Word, God may give you a greater sense of peace about one option over the others, and “play the umpire” or “rule” in your heart.

- Be careful about making decisions you are not at peace about!

Q: How often have wished God would just tell you what to do in a given situation? In these verses (14-17), Paul gives us more or less an outline on how to receive guidance from God. Can you find the steps Paul lists? How would you explain it to another believer?

1. **Verse 14: Acting in love.**
 - a. If you don't know what to do in a given situation, ask, "what's the loving thing to do?"
 - b. Usually the loving thing is the right choice.
2. **Verse 15: Let the peace of God play the umpire in the matter.**
 - a. When there is more than one godly, loving choice, ask yourself, "which one brings a godly sense a peace?"
 - b. Let that peace of God make the choice in what you will do.
3. **Verse 16: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.**
 - a. When the word of Christ dwells in you richly, your heart will change and so will your actions.
 - i. **Matt. 12:34** *"For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks."*
 - b. The inward environment the Word creates will produce a grateful heart that sings and instructs others.
 - c. When we meditate on the Word inside, it will change what happens on the outside... there will be fruit!
 - i. **Psa. 1:2-3** *"But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3 He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers."*
 - a. **John 15:7-8** *"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. 8 This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples."*
4. **Verse 17: Whatever you do, do all in the name of the Lord.**
 - a. To do something "in His Name" means doing what He would do in that situation as a faithful agent and representative of Him. We are His ambassadors.
 - b. Considering your choices in light of being His ambassador will often bring clarity to what you should do.

God does give divine guidance, but it seems we can only find it if we are rooted in humility and peace.

APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT: *Answer the following questions as best you can, then get with your discipler/discipleship group and discuss your answers.*

1. According to verses 12-13, how well dressed would Jesus say you are?
 - a. What does your answer reveal about your humility?
2. What plays the umpire in your heart most of the time? Is it the peace of Christ or something else?
3. If people were to look at all the things you do in an average week, who's ambassador would they think you were?