

Study Guide: Disciples – Live the Life

Anchor Text: Colossians 3:12–14

“So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.”

1. Historical & Doctrinal Context

- Date & Author: Written by the Apostle Paul around 61 AD.
- Audience: The church in Colossae, planted by Epaphras (not Paul directly).
- Purpose: To combat heretical teachings (Colossian Heresy) blending Jewish legalism, mysticism, and early Gnosticism.
- Main Point: Christ is sufficient. Believers need nothing outside of Him.

2. Paul's Flow of Thought

- 3:5–9 – Put off sinful attitudes and actions.
- 3:10–11 – Put on the new self, renewed in Christ's image.
- 3:12–14 – Live out virtues that reflect Christ's character.

Paul's challenge: Don't just believe in Christ, live the life of Christ as disciples, in community, with visible fruit.

3. Key Word Study

- Eklektos (Chosen): Picked out by God for salvation.
- Hagios (Holy): Set apart, saints belonging to God.
- Agapao (Beloved): Deeply loved and cherished by God.
- Splagchnon (Compassion): A heart where mercy resides.
- Chrestotes (Kindness): Moral goodness, integrity, gentleness in action.
- Tapeinophrosune (Humility): A lowly mindset, valuing others above self.
- Prautes (Gentleness/Meekness): Strength under control, tender in spirit.
- Makrothumia (Patience): Endurance, long-suffering, slow to anger.

4. Practical Application of Virtues

Paul gives discipleship clothing instructions—what to wear daily:

1. Compassion – Feel deeply for others.
2. Kindness – Act with moral integrity and grace.
3. Humility – See yourself rightly in light of Christ.
4. Gentleness – Respond with controlled strength.
5. Patience – Endure without retaliation.

And then:

- Bear with one another – Accept people, even when difficult.
- Forgive one another – Extend forgiveness as freely as Christ forgave.
- Above all: Love – The “outer garment” that holds everything together, producing unity.

5. Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. What false teachings in today's culture try to compete with the sufficiency of Christ?
2. Why does Paul emphasize both “putting off” (old nature) and “putting on” (Christ's character)?
3. Which virtue from Colossians 3:12–14 do you find most difficult to “put on”? Why?

4. How does forgiveness keep unity in the body of Christ?
5. How does love serve as the bond that keeps all virtues together?

6. Key Takeaways

- Discipleship is not only believing but living the life of Christ daily.
- Transformation is a process—we grow into Christlikeness step by step.
- Our identity (chosen, holy, beloved) determines our activity (compassion, forgiveness, love).
- Love is supreme—it perfects and balances all other virtues.

7. Life Application Challenge

This week, intentionally “put on” one of these virtues each day:

- Monday – Compassion: find a way to serve someone in need.
- Tuesday – Kindness: speak an encouraging word.
- Wednesday – Humility: prefer others above yourself in a decision.
- Thursday – Gentleness: respond softly in a conflict.
- Friday – Patience: endure delay without frustration.
- Saturday – Forgiveness: release someone from a past hurt.
- Sunday – Love: wrap all these together in unity at worship.

8. Closing Declaration

“I am chosen by God, holy and beloved. I will put on compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. I will bear with others and forgive as Christ forgave me. Above all, I will put on love, the bond of unity. I am a disciple, and I will live the life of Christ.”