

The passage we are looking at this week begins with a call to “put on” certain traits. These qualities are not things that appear automatically or develop by chance; rather, they are virtues we must *actively pursue* in our daily lives. We must *put them on*—to choose them each day with intentionality. As we look at each of these callings, we should see them as invitations to live out our faith in action, constantly striving to reflect Christ in every part of life.

Compassionate Hearts

A good cross-reference for this is Ephesians 4:31–32. There, Paul not only tells us what to put on but also what to take off in order to cultivate a compassionate heart. We’re called to evaluate our own reactions toward those around us. Are we harboring bitterness or anger toward other brothers and sisters in Christ because of what God is doing in their lives? If so, we need to pause and examine our hearts. True compassion seeks the good of others before ourselves. Sometimes that means stepping in to help during difficulty; other times it means rejoicing in the blessings others receive even while we walk through our own trials. Compassion invites us to enter into both the joys and the sorrows of others with genuine love.

Kindness

Kindness, in many ways, complements humility. While the humble person avoids self-promotion or personal glory, the kind person actively seeks to honor and uplift others. Kindness looks for opportunities—big or small—to encourage, affirm, and serve those around us, whether through our words or our actions. It is the outward expression of a heart that values others above itself.

Humility

A good cross-reference is 1 Peter 5:5–6, where we are reminded to acknowledge that God has placed people in our lives whom we are called to submit to, even when we might think we are right, wiser, or more capable. Peter emphasizes that believers should willingly submit to those in positions of leadership within the church. One of Scripture’s clearest examples of humility is David’s refusal to kill Saul. Although Saul was not ruling well, David recognized that he was still the Lord’s anointed. Rather than taking matters into his own hands, David trusted God’s timing. His humility revealed deep faith—a willingness to wait for God’s plan instead of grasping for his own advancement.

Meekness

I once saw a picture of a strongman competitor—one of the world’s strongest people—napping peacefully with a baby. Despite his immense strength, he was gentle because the moment called for tenderness, not power. That image beautifully captures meekness. To be meek is not to be weak; it is to possess great strength and yet know when and how to use it. Meekness requires wisdom and restraint. As Galatians 6:1 reminds us, we are to restore others in a spirit of gentleness. If we are tempted to argue harshly with those who disagree with us, believing them foolish for not sharing our faith, meekness calls us to a different posture—one of patient grace rather than prideful confrontation.

Patience

Patience undergirds nearly every aspect of Christian living.

- In teaching – 2 Timothy 4:2
- In hope – Romans 8:25
- In affliction – Romans 12:12
- In awaiting Christ’s return – James 5:7–8
- As a fruit of the Spirit – Galatians 5:22–23

In all things, we are to walk patiently. This doesn’t mean being sluggish or indecisive; rather, it means surrendering to God’s timing and trusting His process. Patience teaches us to rest in the Lord’s wisdom and to act in His appointed time, not our own.

In verse 14, Paul tells us that above all these virtues, we must *put on love*, which binds them all together. Paul understood the centrality of love—it is the foundation of every other virtue. In efforts to better grasp what Paul’s understanding of love, it helps to look at 1 John 4:7–21, where Scripture gives a fuller picture of divine love.

God Is Love

“7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. 10 In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved

us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.

13 By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. 17 By this is love perfected with us, so that we may have confidence for the day of judgment, because as he is so also are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love. 19 We love because he first loved us. 20 If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother."

Here we see why Paul elevates love above every other virtue. Love binds all things together because *God Himself is love*. To show love is to reveal God—to make the Gospel visible. If God is love, then it is truly love that holds everything together: our salvation and our souls are sustained by love; creation itself, with all its intricacies, is held together by love; and the ongoing work of God through His Church continues only because of love.

Finally, in verses 16–17, we also find an answer to a common question: *What should we be thinking about when we worship or pray?* Scripture tells us that our hearts should dwell on gratitude—on thankfulness for who God is and what He has done. Whether we're gathered in a worship service, attending youth group, or spending time alone with the Lord, our minds should rest on our thankfulness for His goodness and faithfulness. Even when we're not the ones speaking in group prayer, our thoughts should still be fixed on gratitude.

When we step onto a field, play an instrument, or engage in a hobby we love, we ought to have a heart of thankfulness towards God. And in dark or painful seasons, gratitude reminds us that God is able and faithful—that He will one day bring relief to our weary souls. We will not be left in broken homes forever, for He will bring us into His own home, where we will cherish Him and be cherished as His adopted children. We will not remain trapped in bodies burdened by pain or sin, for He will resurrect and make them new at His return. And even in loneliness, we can give thanks, because He has promised never to leave or forsake us. He is knitting us together into a new family, where we will share true and eternal fellowship with Him and one another.