

Clothed with Compassion

The Old Made New

“Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.”

-Colossians 3:9-10

A popular saying goes, “The only things in life that are for sure are death and taxes.” I would like to add another sure thing in life...weight fluctuation. If we are honest with ourselves, we hear it (or hear reference to it) mentioned everywhere...the doctor’s office, the gym, our job, church, etc. How many times have those older than me warned that one day, ONE DAY, eating a banana split, three cookies, pizza, and Mountain Dew for a midnight snack will surely catch up to me? I suppose they are correct. But it tastes so good! For now. That is the very definition of sin (gluttony in this case) being fun for a season.

In Colossians 3:9-10, Paul continues his plea to the Christians in Colossae by telling them to put off the old self and put on the new self. Unintentionally, Paul is placing the mental image in my head of someone in their 30s who had far too many late-night snacks trying to squeeze into a tight t-shirt that fit back in middle school. I can pull and push and pray that this Abreadcrumb and Fish shirt from youth group suddenly slides on perfectly. But for some reason, that size small just doesn’t fit like it once did. And guess what, that’s quite alright! We grow, mature, change, and move from adolescence to adulthood.

Scripture lists plenty of sins we should not take part in including greed, idolatry, murder, hatred, etc. It is easy to read those and think, “Well, yeah, those are terrible, and I would try to never do those.” We could call these sins the most blatant, notorious, or greater ones. However, the sins Paul tells us to do away with in verses 8 and 9 are just as important. We may consider them lesser or below the surface, but these are the ones that will cripple us without us even knowing what is happening. They are the silent killers.

It is important to keep in mind what N.T. Wright said, “When a tide of passion or a surge of anger is felt, it must be dealt with as the alien intruder it truly is and turned out of the house as having no right to be there at all, let alone to be giving orders.” You and I have been made alive in Christ and a completely new creation! We give far too much credit where it is not due by passively saying, “Well, that’s just my sin nature, so it is what it is.” Paul is pleading with us to see that we can throw off the hand-me-down rags of the first Adam and put on the new and fresh garment of Christ, the second Adam. You and I were intimately united with Christ and clothed with his righteousness at the moment of salvation. You see, the “image of God” here does not refer to the shape of our bodies, but instead to the mind and heart. Our divine character is displayed through holiness, love, humility, compassion, kindness, and forgiveness.

If you are a Christian, you are a new person. You no longer live under the threat of eternal judgment. So, why do we allow our lives to be controlled by buying the newest technology, eating until we pass out, comparing our outward appearance to others, trying to make more

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money, and intaking so much negativity through social media? Since Christ purchased us with his blood, His very life being given up for us, why do we try as hard as humanly possible to go back to the days before we met Him? We lie to everyone, including ourselves. A white lie, a fib, a tall tale, deception, whatever we want to call it, all happen because we are not happy with the reality of the situation where we find ourselves. Is Christ not good enough? Glamorous enough? Interesting enough? Even saying that He is more than enough does not fit. He is ALL.

You and I were bought at a price. We have been given the greatest gift the world has ever known, our salvation in Christ. How can we look around and not feel compassion and empathy for the lost person beside us who has no hope of eternity with Christ? How can we not look at the orphans, the homeless on the street, the depressed, the suicidal, the beaten down, the dying, the poor, the rich, the popular, those living the “perfect American dream,” and so many others with anything but an intense compassion in our hearts that drives us to our knees? We have been clothed with a new self, one that is made, in part, to show compassion. Open the closet today and see the wonder that you have been given.

- 1) Who can you show compassion to this week who desperately needs it?**
- 2) What imperfection do you struggle with that can and should be given to Christ?**
- 3) What is one hard truth/reality that you need to face this week?**
- 4) Who can serve as a mentor in your life to help guide you and point you to Jesus, especially when you are struggling?**



*Ryan serves as the Short-Term Missions Coordinator at CVM. He is responsible for facilitating **all trip** opportunities, training trip leaders, maintaining current host relationships, and educating volunteers about domestic and international short-term missions. He attended Liberty University where he obtained his M.Div. and Ed.S. degrees. Before joining CVM, Ryan served in East Asia for five years. While there, he helped start and lead an international school. He also has experience managing a non-profit organization as well as leading more than 15 international mission trips. Ryan and his wife, Alyssa, along with their three young children (Lydia, Abel, and Juliana), live in Louisville, KY. He enjoys sports, traveling, running, and teaching ESL. Those interested in short-term missions at CVM can contact him at rjeffers@cvm.org.*