

Colossians 3: 12-17

Modelling Godly Character

1. Do you like dressing-up to go out? If so, what is your favourite outfit?
2. What's your most comfortable piece of clothing?

Read: Colossians 3:12-14

¹² 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 one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

3. Paul tells the Colossian church that they are: Chosen, Holy and Dearly Loved. These three statements apply today as they did two thousand years ago. The Amplified Version translates this verse as: *'So, as God's own chosen people, who are holy [set apart, sanctified for His purpose] and well-beloved [by God Himself],'*
 - a. God has chosen you - how does this make you feel? Do you believe it?
 - b. God has made you holy (set apart, sanctified for His purpose) – how does this make you feel? Do you believe it?
 - c. God dearly loves you – how does this make you feel? Do you believe it?

4. In Colossians 3: 9 we read:

... since you have taken off your old self with its practices

Then, in verse 12 we are told to put on five different virtues (Paul, in Galatians 5:22 expands this list and describes them as fruit – the fruit of the Spirit) – take off to put on. These virtues help us model Godly character and putting on suggests that we must consciously ‘put on’ these virtues every day, just like we put on our clothes every day. How easy do we find it to ‘clothes ourselves’ or have we become complacent?

5. Score yourself on the how well you are modelling these virtues:

	Low					High				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Compassion										
Kindness										
Humility										
Gentleness										
Patience										

Overall score:

How can you do better / what areas do you need to work on?

6. Whilst verse 12 focuses on our personal relationship with God, verse 13 moves the focus to how we model Godly character in community. A Christian community should be one that forgives. The Lord’s prayer says that we should forgive because we have been forgiven (Matthew 6: 9-15).

- How easy do we find it to forgive others?
- Is there anyone we need to forgive today?
- Is there anyone we should ask forgiveness of?

7. If you are able, share the Lord’s Prayer together (if you don’t know it, read it together from Matthew 6: 9-15)

9. In verse 14 we are told to put on a 6th piece of clothing, love, *'which binds them together in perfect unity.'*
- What does love 'bring' to our 'outfit'?
 - Why is so important?
 - It has been written: *'love gives cohesion to the perfect life by producing the perfect fellowship that ought to exist among Christians. Love is the blood that unites them in a common service.'* The 'perfect fellowship' – how can our fellowship become more perfect / what can you do to make it more perfect?
10. Whilst we have focussed on modelling Godly character in our Christian community, how important is it to model Godly character in all the communities which we walk in – school, work, college, community groups etc.?
11. Think of the most irritating person that you know. How can you be more: compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, patient, forgiving and loving to them? May be the group can help you with an 'action plan'.

Read Colossians 3: 15-17

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 message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.* 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.*

12. Paul suggests that in all situations, Christ should be the decider, arbiter, umpire.
- How often do we argue with the ref – to quote John McEnroe: 'You cannot be serious'?
 - How often do we think we know better than God?
 - Can we only achieve peace when 'Christ rules our hearts'?

13. In verse 15, Paul uses another favourite metaphor, one body (1 Corinthians 12:12-30). Whilst the church is made up of many individuals, we are one body, a single organism.
- How can we act and move as one, whilst being many parts?
 - What do we do/can we do, to help the process (model Godly character)?
 - What is the outcome if we do?
 - What is the outcome if we don't?
14. Williams writes: 'be at home in the Gospel story, and let it be at home in yours, so that it may be always ready for use.' If we are to model Godly character, then we need to '*be at home in the Gospel story*'. How 'at home' are we 'in the Gospel story'? Do we need to learn more?
15. Lohse has written: '*man should not only praise God with his lips. The entire man should be filled with songs of praise.*' In what ways do we praise God when we're not at church?
16. Vs 16 '*... singing to God with gratitude in your hearts*'. What have you got to be grateful to God for today?
17. Compare verse 17 with Romans 12:1

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.*

"So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life – your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life – and place it before God as an offering." (Romans 12:1 The Message)

- From these readings, where should we be modelling Godly character?
- As you think about the coming seven days, can you identify an area where you can model Godly character?
- If appropriate, tell the group so that they can support you over the coming week.
- Be ready, next week's group, to share both the successes and disappointments.
- Pray for each other as you strive to model Godly character.