

The MYSTERY

LESSON 18

Hidden for Ages

Is Now REVEALED

This Week's Passage:

Colossians 3:12-14

New International Version (NIV)

¹²Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Memory Verse: Colossians 3:2-3

¹Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²**Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.** ³**For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.**

Day One:

Read Colossians 3:1-14.

"In Colossians 3:1-4, Paul has called on us to take a 'heavenly' perspective on all of life, a perspective that emerges naturally from our new identity as those who have died with Christ and been raised with him. The specifics of this heavenly perspective are spelled out in a mainly negative fashion in vv. 5-11, where Paul focuses on those vices that we are to 'put to death' (v. 5)... But at the end of this paragraph, Paul comes back to the positive side of our new identity: we are people who belong to the 'new self,' 'being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.' In vv. 12-17, Paul enumerates positively some of the attitudes and behavior that should typify the 'new self.'"¹

1. Paul's exhortation to God's people in this passage can be summed up this way:

"Be who you already are in Christ."

What three words or phrases does Paul use in the first half of verse 12 to describe what God's people already are?

2. Read Ephesians 1:4-6.
 - a. For what purposes has God chosen his people? (Eph. 1:4a, 6, 11-12)
 - b. What motivated God to choose people for himself? (Eph. 1:4b-5)

Holy means
"set apart" for
the Lord and
for his work."²

3. Consider the fact that you are “chosen, holy and dearly loved” (v. 12). These things are not dependent on your performance, your evaluation of yourself, or anyone else’s evaluation of you. Take a moment to *believe* this and express your gratitude to God.

Day Two: Read Colossians 3:12–14.

4. All of the virtues listed in verse 12—nearly exact opposites of the vices listed earlier in chapter 3—are rooted in God’s own character.

- a. **Compassion** is “a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering.”³ With this in mind, read the following passages and list the ways Jesus demonstrates compassion.

Mt. 14:14

Mt. 15:32, 36–37a

Mk. 6:34

- b. Give a short definition of **kindness**.

How do the following verses about God’s kindness expand your understanding of it? (Lk. 6:35; Acts 14:11–17)

- c. Read Philippians 2:1–8.

How are we to show **humility**?

How did Jesus show unparalleled **humility**?

- d. Jesus calls himself gentle (Mt. 11:28–30). What example from the gospels can you think of in which Jesus demonstrates **gentleness**?

Think of a time when someone could have been harsh with you but was gentle instead. What impact did that have on you?

- e. Many of us struggle with **patience**. What hope do the following verses give you? (Gal. 5:22; Col. 1:10–11)

Day Three: Read Colossians 3:12–14.


Bear with each other

Ephesians 4:2 “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.” As we live in community, believers will inevitably annoy or offend one another. Humility, gentleness, and patience enable us to bear with others and recognize that others will have to bear with us.

5. The “as” in “Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (verse 13) gives this statement a double meaning: “We are to forgive *because* God forgave us. But we are also to forgive...*in the same manner* that he forgave us.”⁴
- a. Read Matthew 18:23–35. What point Jesus is making about forgiveness in this parable?
- b. Since we are to forgive “in the manner” that God forgives, let’s look at God’s forgiveness. What do these verses show us about how we should forgive?
Micah 7:18

Rom. 4:7–8

Day Four: Read Colossians 3:12–14.

6. In verse 14 Paul says that love is the virtue that “binds everything together” (ESV). What is the goal of all the exhortations that Paul gives in this chapter? (Col. 2:2a; * Eph. 4:2–3)

Day Five: Read Colossians 3:12–14.

7. Dick Lucas writes, “The appeals for open truthfulness with one another, and for a spirit of forgiveness and mutual tolerance, sharply demonstrate Paul’s concern for unity in the local church, a concern which governs all that he writes from verse 9 to verse 17.”⁵

Now read through Colossians 3 on the handout in your folder. Highlight all the things that Paul exhorts his readers to do that promote unity among believers.

8. Focus again on verses 12–14. Consider which virtue or action you would especially like to see yourself grow in. Pray that God would work this quality into your life more and more. “The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it” (1 Thess. 5:24).



Reminder: Remember to read the entire book of Colossians this week.

* Indicates verses for further study

¹ Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 273-274.

² William Hendriksen, *Philippians, Colossians and Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985), 156.

³ <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/compassion?s=t>

⁴ Sam Storms, *The Hope of Glory: 100 Daily Meditations on Colossians* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 267.

⁵ Dick Lucas, *The Message of Colossians & Philemon* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1980), 152.