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— LESSON 1 —



WHAT NOT TO WEAR

YOUR SUPERSUIT

Picture a superhero. It could be one you have read about or seen on TV, or it could be one you invent in your imagination.

What does that superhero wear?

How does his or her clothing fit with the name he or she goes by?

A superhero's clothes should match his or her identity. Spiderman *looks* like Spiderman because of his suit, and his suit allows him to act like Spiderman. The clothes he wears fit who he is. We are going to learn that a Christian's "clothes" should also fit who they are . . . sort of.

See, when we talk about "clothes" in this study, we don't mean what we actually wear. The clothes we're going to talk about are not made of cloth. They're not things we can put on our bodies. They're not even things we can touch. But they *are* real.

The book of Colossians in the Bible is a letter to a church in a town called Colossae.

Find Colossians 1:1–2 in your Bible. Read it and answer the questions below:

Who wrote this letter?

Who did they write it to?

How do the writers describe the people they're writing to?

We will learn more about this church tomorrow. ***But for now, check the end of verse 2. Fill in the blanks below with the greeting that Paul and Timothy send to the church at Colossae:***

" _____ to you and _____ from _____
our _____."

We can tell that Paul and Timothy love these Christians in the Colossian church. They want them to grow in their faith and to know God's grace and peace.

That is my hope for you as you go through this study. I pray that you will grow in grace and peace, and that you will know how much your Father God loves you. I also pray that you will learn more about your identity in Christ and how to wear the "clothes" that match that identity.

Take a moment to pray the prayer below. Ask God to help you grow through this study:

Father, I want to understand Your Word, the Bible. I want to grow in grace and peace, and I want to learn about having my identity in You. Please help me grow closer to You as I study my Bible. I love You. Amen.

ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY

Yesterday we learned that Paul (and Timothy) wrote a letter to the Colossian church. The people in this church were new Christians. Some of them already knew about God because they were Jews. They had studied and learned the Old Testament. But now they were Christians because they believed Jesus is God's Son and that He had died and been raised again back to life. Others were learning about God for the first time because they had followed false gods and worshiped idols. Yet all of them had come together to follow Jesus and live their lives for Him.

Can you think of any reasons why it might have been hard for the people in this church to get along with each other?

The church is supposed to be a family, but some of these people were very different from each other. Some were rich; others were poor. Some knew a lot about God's Word; others didn't. They ate different foods and wore different clothes. If they focused on those differences, they would never become a family.

Why is it sometimes hard to get along with people who are different from us?

The people in the Colossian church were family because they were all following Jesus, and their sins had been forgiven by God so they could be part of His family.

Before we learn about our identity as Christians, we need to know that we are part of God's family. Have you ever trusted Jesus with your life? You can join God's family right now, and once you're in His family, you'll always be His child. The Bible says God made all things good, but humans have disobeyed His good rules for living. This is called sin, and sin separates us from God because He is perfect and holy.

But Jesus came to make a way for us to be in God's family. He took the punishment we deserve for our sin and paid for it by dying on a cross so that we don't have to be punished. And then He rose again from the grave and went to heaven where He is making things ready for everyone who is part of that family to be together with Him one day. So, even though we disobey God every day, we can be forgiven because Jesus bought our forgiveness with His death.

If you haven't joined God's family, you can talk to Him now:

- *Tell Him you know you're a sinner and you're sorry for disobeying Him.*
- *Thank Him for sending Jesus so that you can be forgiven and saved from the punishment all human beings deserve.*
- *Tell Him you want to live for Him and share His love with others.*
- *Thank Him for saving you and making you part of His family.*

If you are already part of God's family, take a minute to stop and thank Him again for saving you and making you part of His family.

YOUR NEW IDENTITY

Let's review what we have learned so far: The book of Colossians is a letter from Paul (with encouragement from Timothy) to the church at Colossae. This church was a family of Christians from different backgrounds, and they needed to learn how to be a closer family.

Today, we're going to talk about identity. Remember when you thought of your superhero on Day 1? We talked about how a superhero's clothes should match their identity. Identity is just a word for who someone truly is.

In chapter 3 of Colossians, Paul tells the people in this church that their identity (who they are) has changed because they are now following Jesus. Their differences are not as important anymore because they have a new identity.

Read verses 1–4 below:

So if you have been raised with Christ, seek the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

In verse 1, Paul says we should seek the things _____. Why? (Hint: It's in the very next words.) Because _____ is there.

In verse 2, he says, "Set your _____ on things _____."

Unlike earthly things, the things that are above will never break or fade away. What do you think some of the "things above" are?

In verse 3, Paul tells the people that they have died, and their life is now _____ with Christ in God. But they haven't died . . . he's writing them a letter, so they're still alive. What do you think he means?

Paul wrote these things to the Christians in Colossae so that they would know that their old lives had to die so they could live their new lives in Jesus. This doesn't mean their bodies had to die. But they had to say goodbye to the old way that they lived—the way that didn't fit with their new identity.

For some of the Colossians, the old way they lived included worshipping idols and living in very sinful ways. For others, the old way of life meant trusting in themselves for salvation. They thought they could try to choose the right actions and live the right way and that would be enough to go to heaven with God.

Are there any things that you need to say goodbye to if you are now following Jesus? What do you think they are?

Tomorrow we will learn about some of the thoughts and actions the Colossians needed to “take off,” or say goodbye to. Many of them are the same things we still need to take off almost two thousand years later.

Take a minute to pray:

Jesus, thank You for being the Messiah—the Promised One who came to save us. Please help me set my mind on things above and not get caught up in things that don't matter. Help me say goodbye to things that don't fit with my new identity. Thank You for loving me. Amen.

OUT WITH THE OLD

So far this week, we have learned that the Colossians were a group of Christians from different backgrounds who were learning to be a family and to follow Jesus together. They said goodbye to their old lives and identities because they had changed.

And because who they were had changed, they need to “dress” to fit their new identity. So, Paul uses the idea of clothes to help the people in this church understand. He gives them a list of things to take off and put on.

This list is not just for the Colossians, but for everyone who follows Jesus. Paul uses clothes to give us a picture. What he really means is that what we do should reflect who we really are. And if we have trusted in Jesus for salvation and hope, then who we really are is followers of Him.

Read Colossians 3:8–10 below:

⋮ But now, put away all the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and filthy language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self. You are being renewed in knowledge according to the image of your Creator.

Finish writing each of the traits or behaviors listed in verses 8 and 9:

A _____ W _____ M _____
 S _____ F _____ L _____
 L _____ (Hint: verse 9 says “do not _____ to one another”)

Did you notice that these are all things that hurt other people? The Colossians had to take them off so they could be a family and love each other. And we need to take them off too!

On the figure below, draw the most ridiculous, disgusting outfit you can imagine. Think of something you would never wear in public and draw it.

Here are some definitions to help you understand the list of traits better:

Anger: a strong feeling of displeasure that might make you want to hurt someone¹

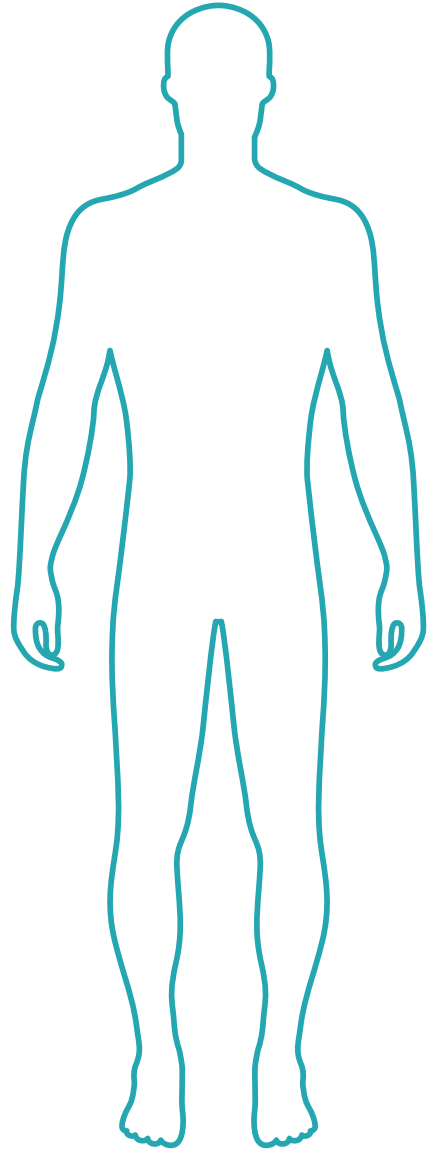
Wrath: great anger that expresses itself in a desire to punish someone²

Malice: a desire to inflict injury, harm, or suffering on another³

Slander: making false and damaging statements about someone⁴

Filthy language: hurtful or gross words meant to harm someone else

Lying: telling someone something that isn't true



1. Cambridge Dictionary, s.v. "anger," <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/anger>.

2. Vocabulary.com, s.v. "wrath," <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/wrath>.

3. Dictionary.com, s.v. "malice," <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/malice>.

4. Cambridge Dictionary, s.v. "slander," <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/slander>.

Which ones are the hardest for you to take off?

Can you think of examples of stories you've read or seen where one of these things hurt someone?

How do these things change our relationships with other people?

Now, around the edge of your picture, write the words you listed above. This picture is a little silly, but hopefully it will remind you that these things Paul says to take off are not the characteristics you want to wear or display in your life.

Pray and ask God to help you take off the old things and put on the new ones:

Father God, I don't want to wear these gross things. When I'm struggling with anger or lying or other things from the list, please help me remember this picture. Help me remember that I don't want to wear these things and help me take them off and put on Your good clothes instead. I definitely need Your help with that. Thank You for promising to keep working on me. Amen.