

BE WITH JESUS

LIFE GROUP LEADER GUIDE

Sermon Date: Sunday, May 24, 2026

Sermon Passage(s): Colossians 3:1-17 (ESV)

Pastor John Hilton

This Week's Main Takeaway

God calls us to live according to our new identity in Christ.

This Week's Memory Verse

Colossians 3:17 (ESV), "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."

Five Inductive Questions

1. GOD :: What does this passage imply about God?

This passage begins by highlighting what one commentator calls "God's work instead of our efforts" in our freedom and new life in Christ (v. 1; also a thought seen in chapter 2, verse 20). This is significant because it highlights the starting point for our spiritual growth, which is our identity in Him and not anything we can do on our own efforts or ability.

Verse three continues this thought as "the basis for the commands (vv. 1–2) lies in believers' union with Christ. *Hidden* connotes that God fully completed the action in the past with permanent results." In verses six and seven, Paul reminds us that our former way of life (before we were hidden in Christ) was immersed in sin, and God takes living in sin seriously. Furthermore, in verse four, we see the reminder of the glorious inheritance that awaits us when Jesus returns.

Finally, the phrase "Christ is all and in all" (v. 11) refers to His supremacy (Colossians 1:17) and indwelling presence in believers (Colossians 1:27). One commentator puts it this way: "The old order was characterized by ethnic and social division, but the new order obliterates those distinctions in the body of Christ." He is our life.

2. MAN :: What does this passage imply about man?

This passage is a crucial reminder of where our life's pursuits, perspective, and purpose should be. Our identity in Christ reshapes and repositions all these things. Verse one speaks to "the reorientation of our heart's affections." Verse two "describes a reshaping of the thought process and overall perspective of believers based on the eternal realities of their salvation." In verse three,

the description of the believer's "hidden" life in Christ signifies our personal relationship with him." Finally, in verse 17, we are reminded that everything we do should be in obedience to God's will.

3. PROMISE :: Is there a *promise* to claim in this passage?

In Genesis 3, Adam and Eve's attempt to clothe themselves was completely inadequate. We still attempt to do the same today. One commentator puts it this way: "In the same way, our sinful nature, the 'old self,' is clothed in our unrighteous works, and any attempt we make to strip them away apart from God's grace is futile." However, in Christ, the sacrifice was made to cover and cleanse our sin. "And through Him we are made righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21) and clothed in Christ and His righteousness (Galatians 3:27). Through Jesus, we are re-created and being conformed into His image."

It is only through God's grace and His provision that our sin and shame can be covered as "He clothed them" (Genesis 3:21). Our only hope is Jesus.

4. COMMAND :: Is there a *command* to obey in this passage?

This passage is full of commands, but is summarized well by one commentator, who says, "God has called us to live according to our identity in Christ by putting off the sinful habits of our former nature and by putting on the godly virtues of our redeemed nature." In doing so, Paul identifies the behaviors that correspond with our respective spiritual condition.

Things to put to death: Sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry (v. 5). Furthermore, we are to put away the following: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk (v. 8).

Things to put on: Compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness, and love (vs. 12-14). These behaviors are fit for God's people.

Other commands in this passage include the following: Letting the peace of Christ rule in your hearts (v. 15a), being thankful (v. 15b), letting the word of Christ dwell in you richly (v. 16), and doing everything in the name of Jesus (v. 17).

5. REPENT :: Reflecting on this portion of God's Word, what can I *repent* of this week?

Consider this week the things you are pursuing that you called to put to death.

Are you living according to your identity in Christ?

Sources:

Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary: Exalting Jesus in Colossians and Philemon (Holman Publishers)

CSB Study Bible Notes (B&H Publishing)