

## Growth Group Questions – Week 9

### Introduction Questions:

- How are you doing?
  - How is this Mother's Day for you?
  - [This question will always be here – it's optional, but may help bring the passage back to mind if you meet later in the week] - If you heard the sermon this week, was there any part of the message or scripture passage that was particularly important or meaningful to you? If so, what?

Read: Colossians 3:1-17

### Understanding Questions:

- What things does Paul characterize as “from above,” and what things does he characterize as “earthly?”
- In using language of “earthly things” in a negative sense, is Paul advocating Christians withdraw themselves from the world around them? Why or why not? What does he mean?
- How does Paul believe we should orient ourselves and behave considering our resurrection with Christ?
- What does Paul mean when he says we have “stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self [3.9-10]”?
- According to Paul, how should Christian communities sort out disputes when they arise?

### Application Questions:

- Why do you think Paul would associate the symbolism of stripping off old clothes and putting on new clothes with both baptism [see Col 2.11-12]. and now ethical behavior [Col 3.8-14]? What connections is he drawing between baptism and the way one lives one's life?
- Colossians 3:8-14 provides examples of behaviors to take off and new ones to put on. What are some of the negative, old ways of living that you want to take off? What are some of the new ways of living you want to put on?
- In what ways has the peace of Christ been ruling in your heart this week [3.15]? Or in what ways or for what things do you hope the peace of Christ will come to you soon?
- Paul encourages his readers to “sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God” with “gratitude in our hearts” [3.16]. What are your favorite psalms? What are your favorite hymns or spiritual songs?

### Additional Notes:

- In this section, Paul is not advocating that Christians live an 'other-worldly' life, separate from the world around them. Rather he means for the Colossians to engage their baptismal vocations by living out the love of Christ with all they meet. They are able to do this because they now see and judge their actions and lifestyle in light of the eternal, rather than viewing them in purely worldly terms.
- Vice lists were a common form of exhortation during Paul's time. See also Romans 1.29-31 and Galatians 5.19-21
- Paul speaks of Christ, "who is your life" [3.4]. For more on Paul's understanding of Christ as 'life,' see Galatians 2.20.
- Later in this same verse, Paul speaks of how both Christ and believers are "revealed." For more on Christ and believers being revealed in the fullness of time, see Luke 17.30, Romans 8.19, and 1 John 3.2
- In Colossians 3.11, Paul repeats a revised version of the baptismal formula found in Galatians 3.28 and 1 Corinthians 12:13. All three formulations refer or allude to water baptism, make a principal statement about the inclusiveness of the new people of God, and use two or more pairs of opposites to illustrate this inclusiveness.
- Relatedly, however, as we later see in the household code in 3:18-4:1, the people of the Christian community maintain their gender, familial, and social identities. Jews are still Jews in Christ, Gentiles are still Gentiles in Christ; men and women are still men and women in Christ. But these earthly identities are no longer what is most important: solidarity in Christ is now the ruling paradigm for the new community.