



## **Growth Group Questions: May 21, 2023 – “What Do I Wear to Follow Jesus?”**

### **Context**

The Apostle Paul addressed the church in Colossae with a letter from prison to encourage them to a greater devotion to Jesus. This section of the letter is in the context of how to live a new life in Christ.

These practical suggestions are a stark contrast to what life is like without Jesus. The old humanity looked differently because that was crucified with Jesus on the cross. Now the new humanity should look more like heaven as we live out our salvation.

When the Apostle Paul describes the new characteristics, he uses the term “clothe.” This has a rich meaning from back in the garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve eat from the tree of Good and Evil, they recognize their nakedness. This is profound as humanity is introduced to shame. God uses this theme throughout the Bible to illustrate issues of vulnerability and what we project to others.

RC Sproul, a theologian, states that there are 192 primates on earth and only one of them (humans) use clothes. This is definitely a unique characteristic of humans. It is interesting to note that God makes Adam and Eve clothes as a response to their behavior.

As we look into the book of Colossians, we see the Apostle Paul creating a new way to live as we put on clothes that are not actual material, but are characteristics of godly behavior that demonstrate the condition of our hearts that are ruled by peace.

Following Jesus means being connected to the resurrected life that impacts every part of your life. And this life is fully changed because the shame and guilt that you had was paid for by the blood on the cross. Now peace is what rules our hearts and the clothing that we wear reflects that change.

## Scriptures:

### Genesis 3:6-11

6 The woman was convinced. She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her. So she took some of the fruit and ate it. Then she gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it, too. 7 At that moment their eyes were opened, and they suddenly felt shame at their nakedness. So they sewed fig leaves together to cover themselves. 8 When the cool evening breezes were blowing, the man and his wife heard the LORD God walking about in the garden. So they hid from the LORD God among the trees. 9 Then the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?” 10 He replied, “I heard you walking in the garden, so I hid. I was afraid because I was naked.” 11 “Who told you that you were naked?” the LORD God asked. “Have you eaten from the tree whose fruit I commanded you not to eat?”

### Genesis 3:20-21

20 Then the man—Adam—named his wife Eve, because she would be the mother of all who live. 21 And the LORD God made clothing from animal skins for Adam and his wife.

### Isaiah 61:10-11

10 I am overwhelmed with joy in the LORD my God! For he has dressed me with the clothing of salvation and draped me in a robe of righteousness. I am like a bridegroom dressed for his wedding or a bride with her jewels. 11 The Sovereign LORD will show his justice to the nations of the world. Everyone will praise him! His righteousness will be like a garden in early spring, with plants springing up everywhere.

### Colossians 3:12-17

12 Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. 13 Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. 14 Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. 15 And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful. 16 Let the message about Christ, in all its richness, fill your lives. Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he gives. Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs to God with thankful hearts. 17 And whatever you do or say, do it as a representative of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through him to God the Father.



## Questions:

1. Have you ever felt like you were in a situation where you were inadequately or inappropriately clothed? What did it feel like? What did you do?
2. In Isaiah 61:10, the prophet says “. . .for He [God] hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness. . .” What does it mean that God has “clothed us with the garments of salvation” and the “robe of righteousness”?
3. Can you identify any other Bible verses that refer to “garments of salvation” or “robes of righteousness”? How do these other verses compare or amplify the meaning of Isaiah 61:10?
4. In Genesis 3 we read that Adam and Eve were ashamed of their nakedness after eating the forbidden fruit, so they made garments for themselves from fig leaves. Since they were already clothed, why did God make them garments from the skins of animals? What is the significance of this act of God?
5. In Colossians 3:12, the Apostle Paul tells us that we must clothe ourselves with “tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.” Why do you think the Apostle Paul used the metaphor of “clothing ourselves” in this verse to describe Christ-like behaviors?
6. What does it look like to clothe yourself in love?
7. In Colossians 3:15, we are told to “let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts.” What does this mean? How do you do this?
8. In verses 16-17 of Colossians 3, we are told to let Christ’s message fill our lives and to do everything as a representative of Jesus. What does this mean? Why is this so important? How do we do this?

