

Week Three: *The Cost of Doing Business*
Colossians 3:12-14

Spend FIFTEEN - Day One

1. What are the most important relationships you have?
2. Estimate how much time, in a day or a week, that you spend investing in those priority relationships.
3. Now read Colossians 3:1-4. Paul is describing our relationship with whom?
4. Now, estimate how much time you spend investing in your relationship with Jesus. How does it compare to your other estimates?
5. What do you think it means, practically, to "die to this life" (v.3)?
6. What are real, tangible ways you could "set your sights on the realities of heaven" (v.1)?
7. As you end your FIFTEEN, ask God to pour into his relationship with you through the power of his Holy Spirit. Ask him to fan into flame your connection to him as you move through this week.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Two

8. The first part of Colossians 3 is about growing our relationship with Christ. If relationships are like a lawn or garden, think about this: what kinds of things do you need to do to your lawn to get it to grow well?
9. But lawns and gardens are also plagued by weeds. What kinds of things do you need to do to protect your lawn from weeds?
10. Now read Colossians 3:1-9. Just as you have to ruthlessly kill the weeds to protect your lawn, what kinds of things do you need to "put to death" in yourself to protect your relationship with Jesus Christ and others?
11. What is one of these sinful things that doesn't trouble you much — that's already been put to death? What is one that you struggle to truly kill off?
12. Compare the sins grouped together in verse 5 with the sins listed in verses 8-9. What difference do you see between these two groupings?

13. Warren Wiersbe calls the first group the "sensual sins" and the second group the "social sins," or the sins in good standing! He means that Christians consider the former disreputable, but the latter ones aren't so bad. Do you agree with this assessment, and do you think the Bible is treating the second group as less bad?

14. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer: Jesus, when you rose from the dead, you left your old grave clothes behind. Now help me to "take off" these grave clothes that keep me trapped in my old, dying life, so that I may embrace the resurrected living that you now offer me!

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Three

15. Picture, if you will, a Chicago Cubs fan who moved to Saint Louis. He promises to have allegiance to his new city's team and cheer only for them. But he continues to wear his Cubs gear in his daily life, and even wears it when he attends a Cardinals game! How seriously would you take his supposed transition?

16. Paul uses a similar clothing metaphor to discuss our new allegiance to Jesus Christ. Read Colossians 3:10-11. What new thing are we supposed to "put on"?

17. How does Paul say we learn about this new nature?

18. What helps you to "know Christ" better?

19. Try to imagine what your life would look like if you weren't a follower of Christ. What things in your life are different because you're wearing a new nature given to you by Jesus?

20. How do the people around you see the face of Jesus Christ because of your actions?

21. Close your FIFTEEN in prayer. Ask God to help you display the transformation he has brought to your life.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Four

22. When you were little, your parents bought and chose your clothes for you. At what age did you start buying and choosing your own clothes?

23. Interestingly, God our Father never stops picking out our clothes for us. Read Colossians 3:12. What clothes does God want us to wear?

24. Let's spend some time looking through God's closet, shall we? Go to this link:
<https://www.stepbible.org/?q=version=ESV|reference=Col.3.12&options=VNHUG> . Notice how it lists the different

articles of clothing listed in Colossians 3:12. Click on the different words to see the full definition of each of them. Are there any full definitions of these words that you didn't expect?

25. Now pick one of these virtues and click it. On the right side, a link will appear: "Search for this word" with its number of appearances. Click this link, and see all the different instances where this word is used in the New Testament. What different ways is it translated, depending on the context? How does that add to the meaning?
26. Pick one of the other verses you've found that uses that word from Col. 3:12. Write it down somewhere accessible and use it as a prayer prompt this week.
27. As you conclude your FIFTEEN, pray for God to help you "wear" this virtue proudly this week. Ask that it will help you show Christ to the people around you.

Spend FIFTEEN - Day Five

28. Forgiveness is an especially difficult virtue. And it's certainly easier said than done. What's the most difficult thing you've ever had to forgive someone for?
29. Read Colossians 3:12-14. Who does Paul say we're supposed to forgive?
30. What if the person hasn't apologized? Does repentance need to precede forgiveness?
31. Larry Nassar was recently convicted of sexually assaulting over 100 young girls. Here is an excerpt from the statement of one of his victims, Rachael Denhollander:

“You have become a man ruled by selfish and perverted desires. You chose to pursue your wickedness no matter what it cost others....In losing the ability to call evil what it is without mitigation, without minimization, you have lost the ability to define and enjoy love and goodness. You have fashioned for yourself a prison that is far, far worse than any I could ever put you in, and I pity you for that...

The Bible [speaks of] a final judgment where all of God’s wrath and eternal terror is poured out on men like you. Should you ever reach the point of truly facing what you have done, the guilt will be crushing. And that is what makes the gospel of Christ so sweet. Because it extends grace and hope and mercy where none should be found. And it will be there for you. I pray you experience the soul-crushing weight of guilt, so you may someday experience true repentance and true forgiveness from God, which you need far more than forgiveness from me — though I extend that to you as well.”

Whose forgiveness did Denhollander encourage Nassar to seek?
32. Look again at Colossians 3:13. What is the motivating force behind our forgiveness of all others, no matter who they are, what they've done, or whether they've repented?
33. How important would you have to think God's forgiveness of you was in order to forgive someone like Nassar?

34. Close your FIFTEEN by thanking God for his forgiveness and asking him for the strength and comfort to help you forgive others who also need it.