

# Giving up Ourselves for Lent

## Colossians 3:1-14



### THE COLLECT OF THE DAY

O God, who before the passion of your only-begotten Son revealed his glory upon the holy mountain: Grant that we, beholding by faith the light of his countenance may be strengthened to bear our cross, and be changed into his likeness from glory to glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reign with you and the Holy Spirit, on God, forever and ever.



### SERMON OUTLINE

Colossians 3:1-14 invites us to prepare for the Lenten journey by exploring the transformative power of giving ourselves to God, taking off sin, and putting on Christ. As we enter this season of penitence and self-examination, we are called to focus less on external practices and more on internal transformation. Lent is not just about what we are giving up but about whom we are giving ourselves to - namely, Christ, who is the source and sum of our being. We are invited to consider how our Lenten disciplines can help us shed the old self and put on the new self in Christ to experience the fullness of the resurrection life that He offers. This season calls us to deeper introspection, sincere penitence, and a renewed commitment to Christ and His mission. We journey together with open hearts and minds, trusting that we can discover the true and abundant life that God desires for us through Christ.



Easter cannot be properly perceived unless it comes on the other side of the season of sackcloth and ashes.

#### Giving up ourselves for Lent

Colossians 3:3-4

- Lent is a discipline, not a drag.
- The glory of Easter is best perceived after the season of sackcloth and ashes.
- The "life" in Colossians 3:3 refers to our collective life together, which is enlivened by a shared power, not our personal individual existences.
- The life of Christ is our life (Colossians 3:4).
- We are either drawing life from the power of Christ's resurrected body, or siphoning death from the dust of Adam's lifeless corpse.
- The first lesson of Lent is that we must give up ourselves to God, whether it's for the first time or the fiftieth time, because Christ is our life.

#### Taking off Sin

Colossians 3:5-11

- Colossians 3:5 deals with sins of desire, while Colossians 3:8-9 deals with sins of speech.
- In Colossians 3:11, "the old self" is "the old man," referring to Adam.
- We are called to take off not only our personal past but also an old power, an anti-power, the way of death, and "Adam and his practices."
- Fasting is not limited to abstaining from certain foods, nor about fasting from sin itself. Instead, it's about fasting at the on-ramps, intersections, and entry points where the death line reaches out to entangle us in its coils.
- We fast out ahead of sin to cut off its potential entry.

#### Putting on Christ

- Colossians 3:11-14 encourages us to put on Christ, wearing his character as one body and being confirmed to his image.
- The word used, "enduo," is used of God clothing Adam by grace after he exits the Garden, foreshadowing the Gospel in which we are re clothed with the glory Adam lost by being clothed in the New Adam, Jesus.
- In Colossians 3:11, the word "here" indicates that it is as the church that we together put on Christ.
- The "perfecting bond" of Colossians 3:14 is love, which binds people together in a communal bond that leads to perfection.
- Our communion with each other in Christ is the only thing that can lead to our completion, perfection, and wholeness. This comes through the communal bond of love.

Colossians 3:12-14

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## Colossians 3:1-14



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How can we actively engage in communal efforts to form a new character and way of being in Christ?
- How can we overcome the isolation and individualism that is so prevalent in our society and embrace the communal life of Christ?
- What are some practical ways we can give ourselves to the body of Christ during Lent, and how might this transform our lives?
- How can we extend the truth of communal effort beyond our own geographic boundaries and embrace the universal life of God?
- What challenges do we face in shedding the pervasive power of sin in our lives, and how can we overcome them together as a community?
- How can we allow love to operate as the binding force that brings together all other virtues, and leads us to perfection in Christ?



### PRAYER

Dear friends, as we wrap up our time together, I invite you to pray this prayer over one another as we begin our Lenten journey. May this prayer be a reminder of the lessons we have learned and a source of encouragement and strength as we seek to grow in our faith and in our love for one another. May God bless you and keep you always. Amen.

*We thank you for the lessons we have learned today about the importance of communal effort, shedding sin, and putting on the character of Jesus. As we approach this Lenten season, help us to be intentional about giving ourselves to the body of Christ, where we can find all the resources we need to live an abundant life. May we*

*be united with one another in love, and may that I love bind all other virtues together, leading us to perfection. Give us the courage and strength to let go of the pervasive power of sin that operates over all of humanity, and to embrace the new way of being that looks like Jesus. Help us to see the beauty in the diversity of your people and to join together in the one life of God. We pray all these things in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen."*

*Completion is not attained through isolation but through communal effort, as demonstrated by the church gathering to worship as a representation of what Jesus is doing. This truth extends beyond any geographic boundaries and is shared among all who participate in the one life of God, regardless of where they are, including those in Nashville, China, and war-torn countries.*



Further  
Study

- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/scripture/new-testament/colossians/colossians-3/>