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From the Barnes Notes
From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

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By forgiving because mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13)
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**A Loving spirit (14)**

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**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR**
Introduction

Overview and Approach to Lesson

The outline of the lesson came from a previous SS Lesson dated 08/20/2000. The lesson teaches how we should be Clothed with Jesus Christ. The study's aim is to establish the right guidelines for living and thinking. The study's application is to learn through practice to stop what is destructive and to use what is constructive in our spiritual and physical lives.

Key Verse: Col 3:14

14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

Commentary on Col 3:14 from Barnes Notes Commentary

[And above all these things] Over, or upon all these things. Not "above all" in point of importance or value, but upon all, over all; as the outer garment envelopes all the clothing, so let charity or love invest and encompass all the rest. Even bowels of mercy are to be set in motion by love; from love they derive all their feeling, and all their power and promptitude to action. Let this, therefore, be as the upper garment; the surtout that invests the whole man.

[Charity] Love. The English word charity is used in a great variety of senses; and some of them cannot be included in the meaning of the word here. It means:

(1) In a general sense, love, benevolence, good-will;
(2) In theology, it includes supreme love to God and universal good-will to mankind;
(3) In a more particular sense, it denotes the love and kindness which springs from the natural relations, as the "charities" of father, son, brother;
(4) Liberality to the poor, to the needy, and to objects of beneficence, as we speak commonly of "charity," meaning almsgiving, and of charitable societies;
(5) "Candor" liberaliity in judging of people's actions indulgence to their opinions; attributing to them good motives and intentions; a disposition to judge of them favorably, and to put on their words and actions the best construction. This is a very common signification of the word in our language now, and this is one modification of the word "love," as all such charity is supposed to proceed from "love" to our neighbor, and a desire that he should have a right to his opinions as well as we to ours. The Greek word agape means properly "love," affection, regard, good-will, benevolence. It is applied:

(a) To love in general;
(b) To the love of God and of Christ;
(c) The love which God or Christ exercises toward Christians, (Rom 5:5; Eph 2:4; 2 Thess 3:5);
(d) The effect, or proof of beneficence, favor conferred: Eph 1:15; 2 Thess 2:10; 1 John 3:1.

Robinson, Lexicon.

In the English word "charity," therefore, there are now some ideas which are not found in the Greek word, and especially the idea of "almsgiving," and the common use of the word among us in the sense of "candor" or "liberality in judging." Neither of these ideas, perhaps, are to be found in the use of the word in the chapter before us; and the more proper translation would have been, in accordance with the usual mode of translation in the New Testament, LOVE. Tyndale in his translation, renders it by the word "love." The "love" which is referred to in this chapter, and illustrated, is mainly "love to man" (1 Cor 13:4-7); though there is no reason to doubt that the apostle meant also to include in the general term love to God, or love in general. His illustrations, however, are chiefly drawn from the effects of love toward people. It properly means love to the whole church, love to the whole world; love to all creatures which arises from true piety, and which centers ultimately in God-Doddridge. It is this love whose importance Paul, in this beautiful chapter, illustrates as being more valuable than the highest possible endowments without it. It is not necessary to suppose that anyone had these endowments, or had the power of speaking with the tongues of human beings and angels; or had the gift of prophecy, or had the highest degree of faith who had no love. The apostle supposes a case; and
says that if it were so, if all these were possessed without love, they would be comparatively valueless; or that love was a more valuable endowment than all the others would be without it.

[Which is the bond of perfectness] The bond of all perfection; the thing which will unite all other things, and make them complete; compare the parallel place in Eph 4:3. The idea seems to be that love will bind all the other graces fast together, and render the whole system complete. Without love, though there might be other graces and virtues, there would be a want of harmony and compactness in our Christian graces, and this was necessary to unite and complete the whole. There is great beauty in the expression, and it contains most important truth. If it were possible to conceive that the other graces could exist among a Christian people, yet there would be a sad incompleteness, a painful want of harmony and union, if love were not the reigning principle. Nor faith, nor zeal, nor prophecy, nor the power of speaking with the tongue of angels, would answer the purpose.

Approach to the Major Outlines in Lesson
The concept of the major outlines came from NIV Standard Lesson Commentary and was determined by reviewing the Scriptural Text.

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Lesson Background

From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Christians in Colosse faced a choice: whether to continue in their new faith in Christ or to follow some other belief system. Pagan religions surrounded them, as did the philosophical teachings of the day. Judaism was also influential. Whether confronted by a single alternative or several, the Colossian Christians were faced with the temptation to give up faith in Jesus for something else (see the Lesson Background to last week’s lesson). In the first half of his letter to the Colossians (lessons for the previous two weeks), Paul points out Jesus’ complete superiority. No other belief system can rival his good news. In the second half of the letter, Paul turns to the implications of faith in Christ. If God really did enter the world in the person of Jesus, then our world has been turned upside down and inside out. It demands a different kind of life from us. Today’s text comes near the beginning of this discussion of putting faith in Christ into practice. Paul has just told the readers to settle their thinking on Christ, who reigns from Heaven and who will one day return to receive his people in glory. That way of thinking leads (or should lead) to distinct behavior, which Paul describes in our text.

From the Barnes Notes
In the previous chapter, the apostle had showed what a true Christian ought not to follow after. He had warned the Colossians against the dangers of false philosophy, and the doctrines of erroneous teachers. In this chapter, he teaches them what they ought to pursue and to seek. He therefore enjoins various duties in the different relations of life, which they ought to perform in such a way as to show that true religion had a controlling influence over their hearts. He specifies the following:

1. The duty of setting the affections on things above; Col 3:1-4. They were risen with Christ (Col 2:12), they were dead to sin (Col 3:3); they were soon to he like Christ (Col 3:4), and they should, therefore, fix their affections on heavenly things.
2. The duty of mortifying their corrupt passions and carnal propensities; Col 3:5-8.
(3) The duty of speaking the truth, since they had put off the old man with his deeds; Col 3:9-11.
(4) The duty of kindness, gentleness, charity, and the spirit of peace; Col 3:12-15.
(5) The duty of edifying one another by psalms and songs of praise; Col 3:16-17.
(6) The duty of wives, Col 3:18;
(7) of husbands, Col 3:19;
(8) of children, Col 3:20;
(9) of fathers, Col 3:21;
(10) of servants, Col 3:22-25.

There is a very striking similarity between this chapter and Eph 5:6, and a full exposition of the principal subjects adverted to here may be found in the notes there.

From the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

This week's lesson focuses on the practical daily behavioral implications of our awe at Christ's greatness and our completeness in Him as seen in our previous two lessons. This is instruction on how to "do" Christianity, how to be Christlike, and how to live out what we have been given in Christ. The picture given is that of removing a garment, such as an old coat, and putting on another garment that is of a different character, quality, and appearance. We all have seen the change in the behavior of someone who puts on a clown suit or any other costume. The person tends to take on the character and actions of the persona depicted by the costume. In the Greek plays of Paul's day, actors wore tragic and comic masks. Today we all have seen old Western movies in which the hero has a white horse and a white hat and the villain has a black horse and a black hat. These are symbolic stereotypes. But a Christian should always seek to be like Christ, to act like Him, and to talk like Him.
Major Theme Analysis

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

**Vices to Eliminate (3:5-9)**

5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience,

7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them.

8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.

9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,

**Immoral Behavior (5-7)**

*Eliminate because we sin against our own body (1 Cor 6:18)*

18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.

*Eliminate because it is an act of our sinful nature (Gal 5:19-21)*

19 The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20 idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

*Eliminate because we are God's holy people (Eph 5:3)*

3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

*Eliminate because we should be sanctified (1 Thess 4:3)*

It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;

**Hostile Attitudes (8)**

*Eliminate because it leads to evil (Ps 37:8)*

Refrain from anger and turn from wrath; do not fret--it leads only to evil.

*Eliminate because it stirs up dissension (Prov 29:22)*

An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.

*Eliminate because we will be subject to judgment (Matt 5:22)*

But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

*Eliminate because it could lead to destruction (Gal 5:15)*

If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.
Eliminate because we shouldn't let the sun go down while we are angry (Eph 4:26)
"In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry.

Improper Speech (8-9)

Eliminate because it causes disputes to break out (Prov 17:14)
Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.

Eliminate because it means we are still worldly (1 Cor 3:3)
You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?

Eliminate because we must only speak those things that are helpful (Eph 4:29)
Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

Eliminate because it is out of place (Eph 5:4)
Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.

Meanings of types improper speech (From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)
Slander describes the kind of insulting talk that can be directed toward God or toward other people. Filthy language translates a Greek word that suggests communication that is abusive or obscene. This is another term that seems especially relevant in our day. Nearly every movie and television program contains what might be described as filthy language. The language is used either to shock or to provide a twisted form of humor, neither of which is an acceptable use of God’s precious gift of speech.

Virtues to Cultivate (3:10-17)

10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. 12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Remember Who We Are (10-11)

We are a new creation (2 Cor 5:17)
Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!
We are God's workmanship (Eph 2:10)
For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

We were created to be like God (Eph 4:24)
and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

We are transformed (Rom 12:2)
Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

We are in Jesus (1 Cor 1:30)
It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption.

We are of Christ who is of God (1 Cor 3:23)
and you are of Christ, and Christ is of God.

We are heirs to the promise of Abraham (Gal 3:29)
If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

A Meriful spirit (12)

By cultivating compassion (Eph 4:32)
Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

By cultivating peace loving (James 3:17)
But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

By cultivating harmony (1 Peter 3:8)
Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.

By cultivating cheerful mercy (Rom 12:8)
if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.

By cultivating merciful judgment (James 2:13)
because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

By cultivating being a witness to the lost (Jude 22-23)
22 Be merciful to those who doubt; 23 snatch others from the fire and save them; to others show mercy, mixed with fear-hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.
A Forgiving spirit (13)

By forgiving so that God will forgive us (Matt 6:14-15)
14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

By forgiving as many times as wronged (Matt 18:21-22)
21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" 22 Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

By forgiving during prayer (Mark 11:25)
And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins."

By forgiving because God is merciful (Luke 6:36)
Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

By forgiving because mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13)
because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

By forgiving so that Satan will now outwit us (2 Cor 2:10-11)
10 If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, 11 in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

A Loving spirit (14)

By loving others (John 13:34)
"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

By being willing to lay down our life (John 15:13)
Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

By making love an outstanding debt (Rom 13:8)
Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.

By seeking love as if it was the greatest gift (1 Cor 13:13)
And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

By living a life of love (Eph 5:2)
and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

By responding to the teaching of God (1 Thess 4:9)
Now about brotherly love we do not need to write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love each other.
By having a pure heart and a good conscience (1 Tim 1:5)
   The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.

By loving others deeply (1 Peter 4:8)
   Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

A Peaceful spirit (15)

By depending on the peace Jesus gives us (John 14:27)
   Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

By relying on the power of Jesus' peace who overcame the world (John 16:33)
   "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

By the justification through faith (Rom 5:1)
   Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

By the reconciliation of Jesus (Eph 2:13-14)
   13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility,

By remembering that God's peace transcends understanding (Phil 4:7)
   And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

A Grateful spirit (16-17)

By always giving thanks to God for everything (Eph 5:20)
   always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

By giving thanks to God regardless of the circumstances (1 Thess 5:18)
   give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

By offering sacrifices of thanks to God (Heb 13:15)
   Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise-the fruit of lips that confess his name.

By having and sharing our faith so that God gets the thanksgiving (2 Cor 4:15)
   All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

By always praying with thanksgiving (Phil 4:6)
   Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
By devoting ourselves to thankful prayer (Col 4:2)

Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

Conclusions and Other Thoughts

Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

1. We must never feel superior to those who live as we once did (Col. 3:5-8)
2. A Christian's truthfulness is a sure demonstration of how Christ can change a person (vs. 9-10)
3. When we reject fellow Christians for any reason, we are actually saying that God was wrong to accept them (vs. 11)
4. Being patient with someone is a testimony to God's patience with His children (vs. 12-13)
5. A Christian who shows love to others will enjoy a wider and more fruitful ministry (vs. 14-15)
6. Correct living for Christ affects others in ways we may never know (vs. 16-17)

Concluding Thoughts from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator

Frequently in the Bible, believers are exhorted in very practical ways on how to act as members of God's family. Such terms as "walk," "run," "wait," "endure," and "resist" are used. We are also told to put on certain things and to put off other things. At other times the writers of God's Word describe realities that are true of all God's people or that need to become true for them. An excellent example of one of these realities is used in the title of this week's lesson —"Clothed in Christ." This title gets to the very heart of the lesson. It is a most blessed and assuring truth to know that each and every believer is clothed in Christ. The priests in Israel in Old Testament times were to be "clothed with righteousness" (Ps. 132:9). God promised to "clothe ... with salvation" (vs. 16) those same priests in that old order. In the New Testament there are similar uses of the word "clothe." Paul used it in his second letter to the Corinthians (5:2): "For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." Peter urged all his readers, "Be clothed with humility" (I Pet. 5:5).

All of us have natural impulses. That is, we have drives and desires within us that are not pleasing to God. Becoming a believer does not deliver us from these impulses. However, God the Holy Spirit does provide for us the need and the strength to say no to these impulses from our old nature. In ourselves we cannot live a life that is pleasing to God. We must cooperate with the Spirit of God to do so. That is precisely what the Colossian Christians were urged to do. A man's T-shirt had a rather sad message on it: "Confidence: The feeling you have just before you understand the situation." The longer I thought about that, the more I realized the message was a reminder to me. When we do things, even good things, in our own strength with little or no trust in God, we have a false confidence that is not at all pleasing to God. Apparently, some of the believers in the church at Colosse had a number of sins they needed to put off—that is, put aside. That is just as true of believers today as it has always been. The command from God to all His children is still the same—"Sanctify yourselves therefore, and be ye holy: for I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 20:7). In the New Testament the command is the same. God chose us in Christ so "that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. 1:4).

We need to put off the old "clothing" that we wore before we became believers. In the old clothing's place we put on new clothing—new spiritual realities. One of the garments we who know God as our Heavenly Father need to put on is humility. When this is true of us, the other spiritual qualities will follow. There is a true story about a pastor who served faithfully in a small church a long time ago. His story illustrates the quality of humility we all need. "Isaac Hann was a little-known pastor who served a small church in Loughwood, England, in the mid-18th century. At the close of his ministry, the membership of the church numbered 26 women and 7 men" (Roper, Our Daily Bread, Radio Bible Class). Today this man's ministry would hardly be considered a success. But the members of that little assembly put a plaque on the wall that reads, in part, "Few ministers so humble were, yet few so much admired."