

## Community Group Guide

### new clothes

The Gathering

Paul Jenkins

January 8, 2012

Colossians 3:5-14

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups around our area that will enable people to begin to move from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word through His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

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## HEY!

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

**Greet each other**—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

**Week in review**—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time. Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to revisit the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

**Opening prayer**—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

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## SAY!

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications in our lives:

### Message Summary

The second week of our "new" series focused on the new clothes that Christ has given us and Pastor Paul taught on 3 steps we can take to make sure we don't have a spiritual fashion disaster. Without taking care to follow the steps in our Scripture passage, we're bound to wear some of the new and old clothes at the same time, and our lives won't match. It's vital that we:

1. **Take off our old clothes.** Seems odd to think we wouldn't, but the reality is that the typical brand of American Christianity is about adding Jesus to what we already have instead of making Jesus all we need. In Colossians 3:5-11, Paul lists a number of old clothes that we must take off before we can even think of wearing our new clothes.
2. **Get cleaned up.** It's so important that we not only wear new clothes, but that we also have a new character first. Just like we wouldn't wear clean clothes without first cleaning our bodies, Colossians 3:12 says we can only put on new clothes spiritually if we've had our character changed by knowing that we've been chosen, set apart, and loved by God. Making Him the center is essential before the final step.
3. **Put on the new clothes.** The list of new attitudes and actions listed in our Scripture passage reveals clothes that are all about others. Clothes don't just jump on us; we have to make the choice to put them on.

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*The obvious question that must be asked is how can we ensure that we are wearing the new clothes and living consistent Christian lives? The answer is that good spiritual fashion happens in the context of good spiritual relationships. Strangers may never tell you that what you're wearing doesn't look good, but family always will.*

*Of course, anytime people point out shortcomings in our lives, it can lead to friction, and that's why verses 13-14 make it so clear that we need to have patience, forgiveness, and love ruling our lives. The Community Groups are a big part in how we help each other wear the new clothes Christ gave us.*

### **Discuss**

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- Read through the list of “old clothes” in Colossians 3:5, 8, 9, and 11. Do you believe that this list is an accurate description of how we are without Jesus? Explain your answer.
- Read the following passages: James 1:21; Ephesians 4:22, 25; 1 Peter 2:1. Discuss with the group your initial reactions to each one.
- Admittedly, those verses are hard to read and the truth in them about us is even harder to accept. But what hope is found for us in James 1:21?
- Read Ephesians 1:13-14. What other help do we receive when we believe the gospel?
- According to John 16:13, what is one of the functions of the Holy Spirit? Cold, hard truth is difficult to hear, but John 14:16 gives the Holy Spirit another title that can help us hear the truth. What is it?
- Read Ephesians 4:15-16. God never intends for us to speak truth apart from giving love. How does this help us grow in our faith?
- Describe a time that being loved motivated you to do something great. How can the love of God and others help you “wear the new clothes” Jesus has given you?
- How does being loved help us through the ups and downs of the process?

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### **PRAY!**

*Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of the message. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:*

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from the message?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from the message, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your desires/values need to change to align with His desires/values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this message?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength in the application of these truths and for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel.