

FAITH
IN THE FACE OF
FEAR

KEVIN FAWCETT

Time to Get Dressed

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. (Col. 3:12)

You've probably seen the jokes on your newsfeed: a picture of five different colours of sweatpants with the caption "I bought a new wardrobe for work during Covid-19."

Or the video of a guy ending a Zoom meeting and getting up from his seat, revealing that he's not wearing pants. I recently heard this referred to as the "work-from-home mullet:" business up top and party down below. This season of physical distancing is taking Casual Fridays to a whole new level.

Lots of research will tell you that it's important to get up and get dressed, even in a pandemic. Maybe even especially in a pandemic! Putting on the right clothes will help you put on the right mindset - it can encourage you to be more productive and intentional with your day.

The apostle Paul has some important wardrobe advice for us in the book of Colossians. That's probably not the first thing you look for when you open your Bible but bear with me. Paul describes the Christian life as a matter of stripping down and suiting up. *"Do not lie to each other,"* he says in 3:9, *"since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self..."* Through Jesus, we peel away the old rags we were wearing and replace them with the robe of righteousness he has offered us.

This is both a one-time and an ongoing reality in our lives.

When we first turn to Jesus, he cleans us up and clothes us (the big theological word for this is justification). But, on another level, we need to choose every day to put on the new clothes he has provided for us. The fancy term for that is sanctification, and it's what Paul is getting at in Col. 3:12-14:

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each

other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

That's quite the wardrobe: compassion, kindness, humility, and the rest.

As I read the list in these verses, I'm struck by how important these things are in the midst of our current season. What you wear around your house today really does matter!

We need the gentleness of Jesus when our kids are driving us crazy. We need the forgiveness Jesus models when our spouse forgets to do the thing we asked them to do... again. We need to "put on love" so we're prepared for every situation that comes our way.

Whether you're reading this in sweatpants or a power suit, take some time to reflect on Paul's wardrobe advice this morning. When you read over the list in verses 12-14, are there one or two virtues you need to remember to clothe yourself with today?

Take a few moments with each item, visualizing yourself putting them on piece by piece. Even better - imagine Jesus dressing you. He has given you everything you need for life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3).

Let's not leave those clothes hanging in the closet.

Further Reading:

Colossians 3:1-17

Key Verse:

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. (v. 17)

Calibration Prayer:

Jesus, what an amazing exchange - our rags for your robe. Thank you for cleaning me up and clothing me in your righteousness. Now, Lord, help me to live into the new life you're provided - offering others the compassion, forgiveness, and love that you have offered me. Clothe me and use me.