



## **Merry Christmas!**

**Scripture Reading:** Colossians 3:12-17

When I think of Christmas, I often think of a quote from the Third Century Church Father, Irenaeus: *Because of his boundless love, Jesus became what we are that he might make us to be what he is.* Amid all the gifts we give and receive, this is the great one that God offers us in Christmas. The Son of God comes to us that we, too, may become children of God.

“But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or the will of man, but of God,” we read in the opening words of the Gospel of John. And so, the question comes to us as we celebrate, have you received this gift? Have you taken this gift of God to heart? Do you so believe the Good News of God’s love that Jesus made so clear that you have committed yourself to trusting him, following him, and living out his good purpose in your life?

I remember Dr. John Weborg talking about being baptized into Christ and how in our baptism we are putting on the new life that God offers us in Christ. He said that we spend the rest of our lives growing into the clothes of our older brother, Jesus. As we look back and remember our baptism, we are reminded that we’ve put on the clothes of our new life in Christ and are called to grow up into them.

There is a reading on the First Sunday after Christmas this year from Colossians 3:12-17 that gets very specific and practical about what these clothes look like. The verses are part of a longer passage urging those who have received Christ to put off the ways of thinking and acting that belonged to their old life and to put on the ways, the new clothes according to the metaphor of Colossians 3, of their new life in Christ: “As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, meekness, and patience.”

Too often, we treat this great gift of new life as children of God like so many of the others we receive. We rejoice in it for a few days, even for a season, but quickly forget about it. We mean well but get caught up with other shiny things around us or with the daily grind of life and neglect it.

“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him,” Colossians 2:6 exhorts us. Live the gift of life you’ve been given! Continue to live your new life in Christ as a beloved child of God! This Christmas may this be our resolution. Place a note by your bedside or on the mirror where you brush your teeth. Remind yourself each day to cast off the old clothes (Colossians 3:5-9) and put on your new ones, those graciously given you by your big brother, Jesus (Colossians 3:10-17). 1 John 3:1 exclaims, “See what love the Father has given us that we should be

called children of God; and that is what we are!” This Christmas let’s give thanks for such an incredible gift and daily rise to live it out.

**Prayer:**

Lord Jesus, Son of God, I welcome you into my life and world. Thank you for becoming a tiny infant that I might become a child of God. Help me to live my new life in you and for you, and to grow up to be more like you every day. May your compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and love be evident to everyone in all I do and say, to the glory of your name and the good of this world you love so much. Amen.

**Suggested Verse for Meditation and Memorization:**

As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

Colossians 3:12

**Some Thing(s) to Try:**

- Prayerfully read Colossians 3:12-17 several times out loud, stopping after each time to note what word, phrase, or thoughts catch your attention. Is there something God is encouraging you to take to heart, to think more about, or to do?
- Place a note by your bedside or on the mirror where you brush your teeth. Remind yourself each day to cast off the old clothes (Colossians 3:5-9) and put on your new ones, those graciously given you by your big brother, Jesus (Colossians 3:10-17).
- Practice sitting still with God away from distractions for five minutes or more each day Try slowly breathing in and out, repeating the words of 1 John 3:1, “See what love the Father has given us that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are!” or, “I am a child of God,” or, “Thank you, Lord, for loving me.”
- Practice praying in the way the Apostle Paul urges us to in Philippians 4:6-7. Talk with God about the things that trouble you, raising up your head toward heaven to the God who loves you. Give thanks for God’s faithfulness, that he sees you, hears you, and answers you as you pray. Pray with joyful confidence and thanksgiving. Breathe in God’s peace.
- As you head into challenging situations today/this week, stand still, raise up your head, give thanks for God’s presence, and pray for the Holy Spirit to fill you with wisdom, faith, and love.

**Further Suggested Readings:**

- John 1:1-14
- 1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26
- Psalm 148
- Luke 2:41-52
- 1 John 3:1-2